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AN INVESTIGATION OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE VALUES WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF ECOTOURISM; CASE OF BILECIK, TURKEY

ABSTRACT

In this research, the aim is to make the ecotourism assessment of Bilecik province which can be approached within the context of tourism with its cultural, natural and historical qualities. In line with this objective, it is aimed to identifying the natural and cultural landscape values of the research area, ensuring the sustainability of these characteristics, specifying whether or not it is suitable for ecotourism, setting forth the approaches by visitors towards ecotourism while ensuring it to serve as a model for ecotourism studies in the future within this area. The respondents were asked to address questions in order to show their preferences within the scope of 5-point likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Don't know, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly agree) and in the scope of ecotourism, the cultural and natural values of Bilecik province were measured using 9 items. Survey-analysis and questionnaire processes of this study were carried out in summer 2018 to spring 2019. The gathered data were subjected to an analysis by utilization of normal statistical methods within SPSS version: A set of ecotourism opportunities items were defined using the factor analysis, in order for designating the main and underlying factors, followed by a group mean comparison (t-test) in order to identify between the demographic information and availability factors.

Keywords: Ecotourism, Cultural landscape, Natural landscape, Bilecik

1. INTRODUCTION

Ecotourism is a subset of the tourism industry that reflects an ethos of responsible involvement with the environment and with local cultures. Ecotourism includes, but is not limited to, nature hiking, diving, wildlife viewing, and cultural tourism, usually with some attention given to the ecosystem, biodiversity education, or sustainability (Mckinney, 2016). Ecotourism as a concept dates back to the 1970s, although it was only defined in 1990 by the International Ecotourism Society, which described ecotourism as, 'Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the wellbeing of local people' (Honey, 2008). Culture is a term that can be defined in various ways. The meaning of "culture" may vary depending on the field dealing with it. It was lexicalized from the term "cultivate", which means planting, harvesting". However, the term "culture" may be connected to the term "cult", as well. The cult is a religious term, which means worship. The object that is worshipped is also referred to as "cult". In the historical process, any mutual interaction between people, along with the habits of creating and inventing, all the material and spiritual structures and products are named as culture (Izbul, 2004). Ecotourism is one of the sustainability approaches, emerged especially against the negative effects on the environment regarding tourism sector which natural, cultural and historical values are used as sources. Ecotourism has a sustainable tourism character in the context of being for nature and assessment of natural and cultural sources. Ecotourism which secures the sustainability of natural resources, enables the development of locals and assessed as the protection of socio-cultural values; is a nature-based tourism activity carrying the responsibility of the protection of ecological system and handing it down to the next generations.

In this research establishing an environmentally-conscious tourism plan, sustainable tourism suggestions will be built in this research by means of examining the relationship between environment and tourism for natural and cultural resources, and accordingly for Bilecik province bearing the potential for ecotourism.

2. CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

The cultural landscape is an object of the change either by the development of a culture or by a replacement of cultures through human interfaces, their interaction and reciprocity. Of course, the datum line from which changes are measured is the natural condition of the landscape that has a primordial instinct (Singh, 2017). The 1990s saw a remarkable flowering of interest in, and understanding of, cultural landscapes: what David Jacques nicely calls „the rise of cultural landscapes“.2 As a result of the rise – with associated emergence of a different value system inherent in cultural landscapes – there came a challenge to the 1960s and 1970s concept of heritage focussing on great monuments and archaeological locations, famous architectural ensembles, or historic sites with connections to the rich and famous (Taylor and Lennon, 2011). The cultural landscape is described as spaces that involve cultural and natural elements which have been placed by people over time. The cultural landscape combining the nature and the culture is the harmony of culture to the natural landscape. The cultural landscape is a mosaic involving natural characteristics and elements, physical factors occurring following the activities of people within the historical process, including the elements generated on the landscape in time. As different from natural landscapes, the cultural landscape is the areas that have been drastically changed due to human activities (Lennon and Mathews, 2006). UNESCO suggested that cultural landscapes can be recognized as world heritage, categorizing them under three groups as follows:

- **Designed cultural landscape:** This is the cultural landscape type that is specifically designed and clearly defined by people. Public areas, particularly the parks and gardens created with aesthetic concerns are included in this group (Lennon and Mathews, 2006).

- **Organically developing and continuously changing landscape:** The second type of cultural landscape are the areas have been formed organically in time. Social, economic, administrative a sometimes religious factors play a role in the formation of such areas, while the characteristics of the natural environment are the main determinants of the area’s figural and functional quality. For this kind of areas, two sub-groups have been defined: relict landscapes - the evolution of which ended in a certain time, and the dynamical cultural landscape areas – the evolution of which continue (International Council on Monuments and Sites [ICOMOS], 2010). The first one is the landscape type which is named as the relicts, the evolution of which have come to an end instantly or following a long period. The most distinct characteristic-defining feature of it is that they have visually effective forms. Archaeological areas can be cited as distinct examples for the same. The second category, on the other hand, continual and dynamic landscapes that continue to evolve, in addition to being closely connected with the traditional lifestyle of the public and playing an active role in the life of today’s societies. These landscapes bear the characteristics of a document that belong to the development process of itself and to the stages that constitute the basis, thus witnessing it, as well.

- **Landscapes that can be identified with religious, artistic or cultural reality:** Despite not having superior characteristics and impacts in terms of cultural aspects, these landscapes have been included in the World Cultural Heritage List due to being natural elements with strong religious, artistic or cultural bonds (Lennon and Mathews, 2006). As defined by International Union for Conservation of Nature, ecotourism is the environmentally responsible visiting off and travelling to unspoilt natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations. Ecotourism is defined by The International Ecotourism Society as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people (Kurdoglu, 2001). Within the scope of both of these definitions, ecotourism can be summarized as protecting and opening natural and cultural assets to tourism. Such terms as green tourism, alternative tourism, natural tourism, wild-life tourism, adventure tourism, cultural tourism, etc. are used within the concept of ecotourism. Where ecotourism is engaged in line with its intended purpose, it can turn into a tool to create resources in order for

protecting sensitive ecosystems and developing the population living in and around these areas in terms of socio-economic aspects. Taking the poverty of people living in villages that are located in highlands and forestry areas with higher ecotourism potential into consideration, ecotourism can be recognized as a factor to minimize the imbalance amount social classes (Altıparmak, 2002). Ecotourism is a blooming section within the nature-based tourism industry, which is believed to be a type of sustainable tourism. Ecotourism community defines ecotourism as responsible tourism that is oriented at natural areas, protecting the nature and maintaining the wealth of the local public (Blamey, 1997). Therefore, ecotourism has been presented as a nature-based visiting of unspoiled natural areas, in which environmental training is emphasized from the beginning. Respect, Accountability and Sustainability are the main characteristics of ecotourism. (Erdogan, 2003). These can be summarized as being nature-based, ecological and cultural sustainability, education & description of the matter and appreciating the value of the resource (economic benefits on a local scale).

3. MATERIAL AND METHOD

3.1. Case Area; Location, Boundaries and Geographical Characteristics of Bilecik City

The main materials of this research are comprised of cultural landscape values of Bilecik province and the districts near it. Bilecik province comprises of Merkez and seven other districts and the most important features the province has which have reflected onto this day are its historical and cultural values and natural environment. These features are the main materials which are enabling the shaping of the province's cultural landscape fabric. Bilecik is located on the south-east of Marmara Region and the junction point of Marmara, Black Sea, Central Anatolia and Aegean Regions. It is located between 39° and 40° 31' north latitudes and 29° 43' and 30° 41' east longitudes. It is surrounded by Bolu and Eskişehir to the East, Kütahya from the South, Bursa from the West and Sakarya from the North. Bilecik, along with its 4.302 km² zone, is one of the smallest provinces in Turkey. It is ranked 65th in terms of zone size. Its total population is 204.116 and the population density of the province is (person/ km²) 47. The districts of Bilecik province are; Bozüyük, Gölpazarı, Inhisar, Osmaneli, Pazaryeri, Söğüt and Yenipazar (Bilecik Governorship, 2019).

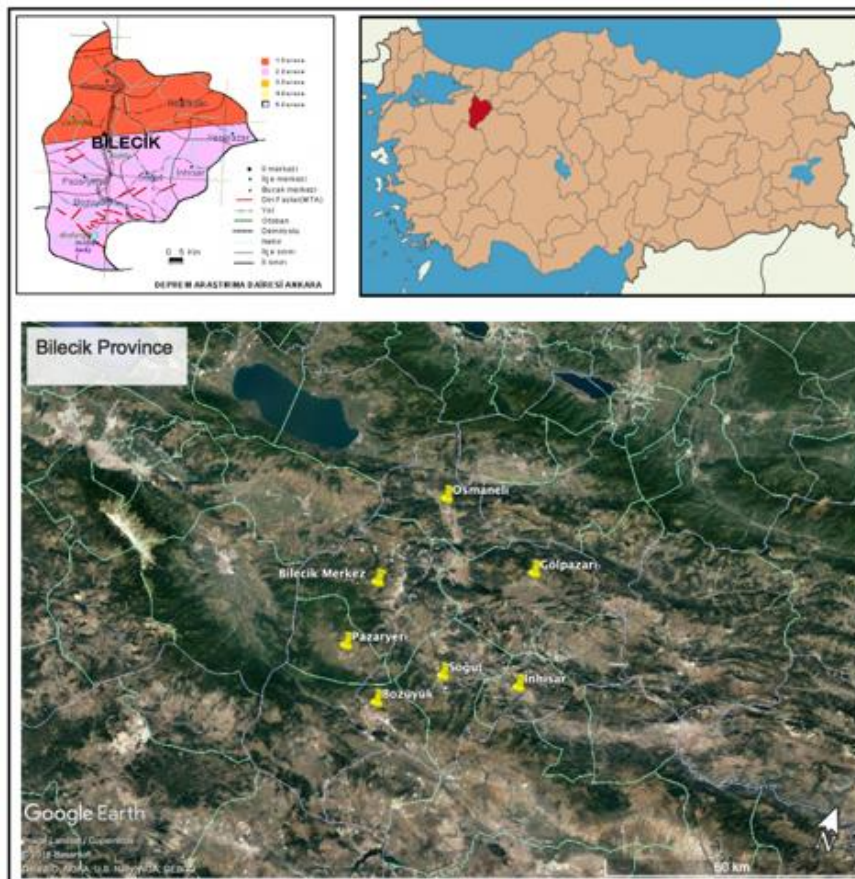


Figure 1. Map of Case Area (Earth Pro, 2019)

3.2. Data Collection Instrument

Base data which will direct the results of planning and research within the context of the study field are consisting of the main material of the research. These data are as follows;

- 1/100.000 scale topographic maps prepared by General Command of Mapping,
- Bilecik population census results, socio-economical indicators and agricultural census results gathered from State Institute of Statistics,
- Photographs and videos are taken from the reseach area,
- Foreign and domestic literature data

In the method part of this study, natural, cultural and historical landscape values of the research area to be examined in accordance with the approach which aims to assess the rural areas with regards to tourism and recreation activities. Also, in addition to the method applied in this research, a questionnaire is to be done in order to facilitate the presentation of ecotourism activities and potentials (aimed at visitors) of the area along with the determination of its priorities regarding this subject. Accordingly, the method process consists of the phases below. With the aim of determining the ecotourism potential of the research area, a questionnaire is conducted with visitors. The data are assessed in three categories (learning tourism, leisure tourism and recreational tourism). The respondents were addressed questions in order to show their preferences within the scope of a 5-point Likert scale (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Don't know, 4 = Agree, and 5= Strongly Agree) and in the scope of ecotourism the cultural and natural values of Bilecik province were measured using 9 items.

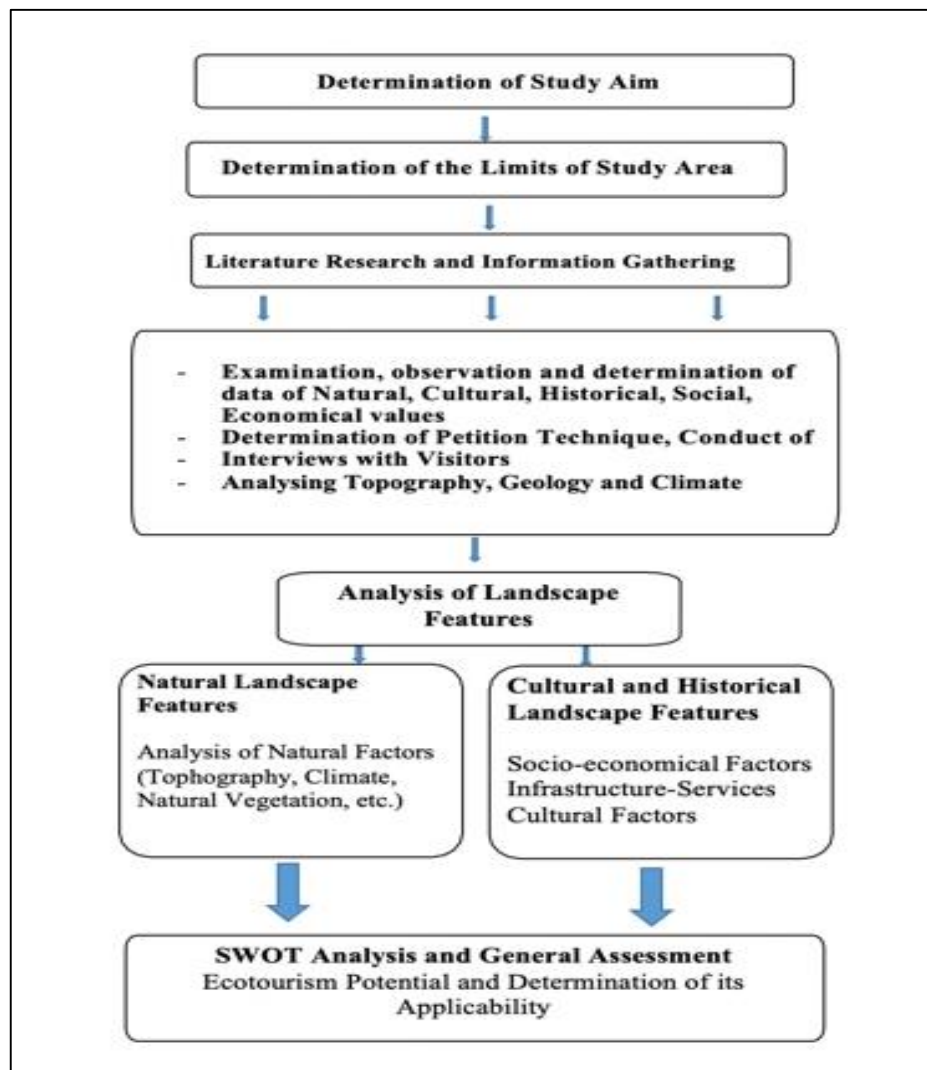


Figure 2. Research Method (Orijinal, 2019)

4. DATA ANALYSIS

The gathered data were subjected to an analysis by utilization of normal statistical methods within SPSS version: items, identifying the natural and cultural landscape values within the scope of ecotourism activity, were defined using the factor analysis, in order for designating the main and underlying factors, followed by a group mean comparison (t-test) in order to identify the differences between the demographic information and availability factors.

4.1. History of Bilecik City

The known history of Bithynia region originates from Thyns, one of the Thracian tribes which were living here in 1950 B. C's. The region then relayed into Egypt, Hittite, Phrygia, Cimmeria, Lydia, Persia, Macedonia, Bithynia Kingdom, Roman Empire, Byzantine Empire and Ottoman Empire's dominion. Bilecik's first name was Belekoma. Bilecik which have witnessed a lot of nation's civilization and dominion in history is the place where the foundation center of the Ottoman Empire after the Kayı Tribe's arrival from Middle Asia with 400 tents to Söğüt. Besides the province's history tracing back to ancient times and being at the location where the Ottoman Empire was founded, it had an important role in the foundation of the Republic due to harsh struggles and victories in Turkish War of Independence. Bilecik province has many archaeological and historical values and these cultural properties are generally consisting of mosques, shrines, inns, bathhouses, civil architecture examples, missions and similar structures constructed during the Ottoman era.

Bozüyük: It is a center of population founded during the Phrygian era. After the year 1908, is connected to Ertuğrul Brigade and became a subprovince center. Together with Bilecik becoming a province, Bozüyük has also become a district in the year 1924.

Gölpazarı: Gölpazarı which was connected to Harmankaya Feudality in Byzantine era, it was conquered by Osman Ghazi. Gölpazarı was known as Resulşel, Dönen and Akçaova (Akçaoba) respectively since its foundation and lastly, it took the name of Gölpazarı.

Inhisar: While being a burg connected to Söğüt, even though its population was small, Inhisar's status has changed to the district in 1991 due to considering its geographical location.

Pazaryeri: First settlement in Pazaryeri has started in 1273. Also known as Ermenipazarı in Ottoman era, Pazaryeri's topographic pattern is rough and mountainous. It consists of small plains inside the valleys which looks like tablelands.

Söğüt: It has taken from the Byzantine Empire in 1232 by Ertuğrul Ghazi after a siege and combat. The districts which also has Ertuğrul Ghazi Shrine is an important tourism center.

Yenipazar: Formerly known as Kırka, Yenipazar was connected to the Göynük district of Bolu Province before the Republic. Connected as a burg to Gölpazarı in 1926 and became a district in 1988.

In this section, the natural features belonging to the Bilecik province are examined. A detailed inventory of natural and cultural resources of the district is created. The assessment is made on geographical location, access, historical development, socio-economic structure, land use, abiotic, biotic and cultural features of the province.

4.2. Natural Features of Research Area

It is possible to classify Bilecik Province's natural values as waterfalls, ponds and nature parks. The mainstream inside the province boundaries is Sakarya River and main rivers and brooks which influences it is from south to north; Karasu Brook, Göksu River, Göynük Brook and Papaz Stream. According to the Bilecik Forestry Operation Directorate's data, %54 of Bilecik Province is forested land and %46 is open green areas. This situation renders the Bilecik Province rich in terms of natural environmental resources (Vatan, 2017).













Bilecik Center		
Bilecik City Forest	Pelitözü Pond	Edebalı Valley
		
Pazaryeri		
Bozcaarmut Pond	Kınık Waterfall	Edebalı Valley
		
Bozüyük		
Dodurga Dam	Kömürsu Tableland	Çiçekli Highland
		
Söğüt		
Söğüt Pond	Dursun Fakih Hill	Ertuğrulgazi Park
		



Figure 3. Natural Values of Bilecik (URL-1,2,3,4)

Cultural Values; Bilecik, due to being a host for many different civilizations starting from ancient periods, is a historically and culturally rich province. Some of the historical and cultural values are as follows;

Table 1. Cultural Vales of Bilecik (Orijinal, 2019)

BILECIK	OSMANELI	PAZARYERI	GÖLPAZARI	SÖĞÜT	BOZÜYÜK
Şeyh Edebali Shrine	Rüstem Paşa Masque	Kinik Village	Kuşunlu Village	Ertuğrulgazi Türbesi	Atatürk Mansion
Orhan Gazi Masque	İçmeler Thermal Spring	Bozcaarmut Lake	Mihalgazi Masque	Dursun Fakih Shrine	Metristepe martyrdom
City Forest	Aya Yorgi Church	Bozcaarmut Park	Taşhan Building	Hamidiye Masque	Kasımpaşa Masque
Pelitözü Lake		Günyurdu Village		Kuyulu Masque	
Emirler Masque		Küçükelmali Park		Hamidiye İdadisi	

4.3. Determination of the Ecotourism Potential of the Research Area

Bilecik province provides tourism opportunities for various activities and actions towards nature with its mountain ecosystems, forest landscaping, wildlife and plant diversity, geomorphological structures, plateaus, canyons, waterfalls, rural architecture compatible with nature, cultural history and cultural structures of the villages, temperate climate. The questionnaires of visitors were conducted to determine the ecotourism potential of Bilecik city and its immediate vicinity. The questionnaire conducted to visitors were performed to obtain an idea of the relationship between the environment and tourism. The overall aim of the questionnaire is to examine the recreational and touristic activities, experiences and relevant environmental impacts of visitors. In addition, it is aimed to set forth attitudes towards tourism development and environmental protection. The questionnaire was conducted between summer 2018 to spring 2019 with the participation of 150 participants in Bilecik province. In order to reach the results obtained by the sample size method, the sample volume was determined to be 150 with a 95% confidence interval and 5% error. The two different analysis methods named frequency analysis and percentage analysis were used in the statistical analysis of the questionnaire that was applied to the research area.

5. RESULT

Demographic profile of the participants

A total of 150 participants took part in the study. Table 1 shows the participants' demographic information. The majority of participants were male (%59, n=88), 41- 50 years old (%42, n=136), married (%77, n=112), and had High School level education (45%, n= 54).

Table 2. Demographic Description of the Survey

Variables	Number	Percent
Gender	150	% 100
Male	62	%41
Female	88	%59
Age		
Under 20	17	%11
20-30	34	%23
31-40	26	%17
41 – 50	63	%42
Above 50	10	%7
Marital status		
Single	38	%25
Married	112	%77
Education		
Guidance school	36	%10
High School	54	%45
Diploma	48	%38
University	12	%7

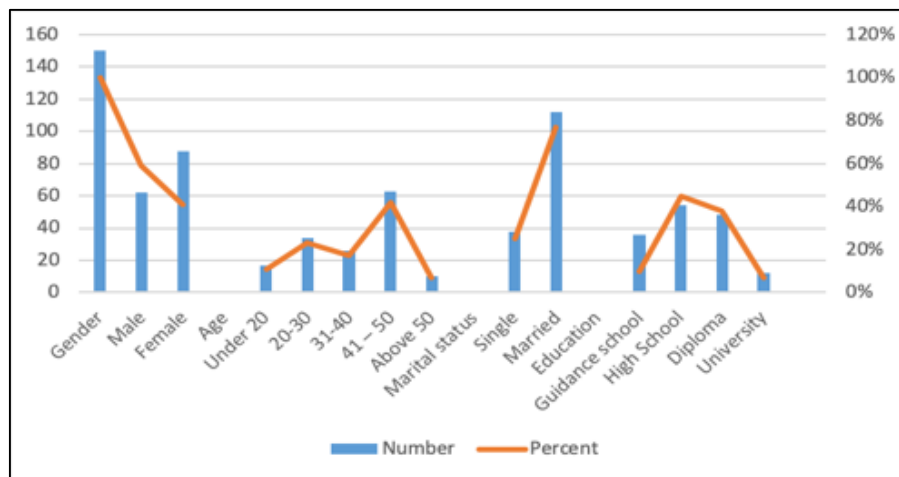


Figure 4. Description of Survey by Gender, Sex, Age, Marital Status and Education

- The answers of 150 people who participated the questionnaire for the question **“Are there any factors which are seen as incompetent and disturbing to your around Bilecik?”** were assessed; 140 people chose (Insufficient and neglected rest areas), 126 people chose (Not enough presentation of local food and handcrafts) and (Deficiencies caused by restaurants and similar service sector), 119 people chose (Insufficient guidance services), 94 people chose (Need regulations for nature activities (signs, tracks, etc.), 48 people chose (Lack of infrastructure), 42 people chose (Lack of security), 22 people chose (Residents' point of view on tourism and tourists) and 15 people chose (Transportation hardships) options. In this direction; the most important deficiencies are determined as “Insufficient and neglected rest areas”, “Deficiencies caused by restaurants and similar service sector” and “Not enough presentation of local food and handcrafts”.

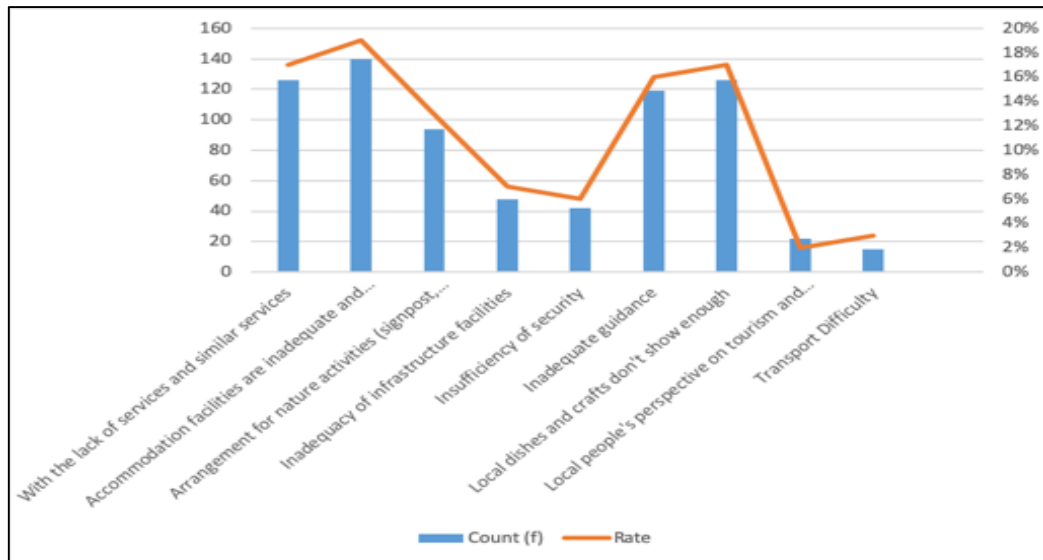


Figure 5. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Answers Given Regarding the Factors Which are Seen as Incompetent and Disturbing Around Bilecik Province

- The answers of 150 people who participated in the questionnaire for the question **“Which eco-friendly tourism activity or activities you can recommend for Bilecik?”**; 78 people answered (Trekking, hiking), 34 people answered (Photography), 16 people answered (Harborization), 2 people answered (Wildlife watching), 73 people answered (Camping), 26 people answered (Activities based on water), 150 people answered (Tour to historical places) ve 15 people answered (No idea). Accordingly, the most important effect in answers given to eco-friendly tourism activities is as determined as “Tour to historical places”.

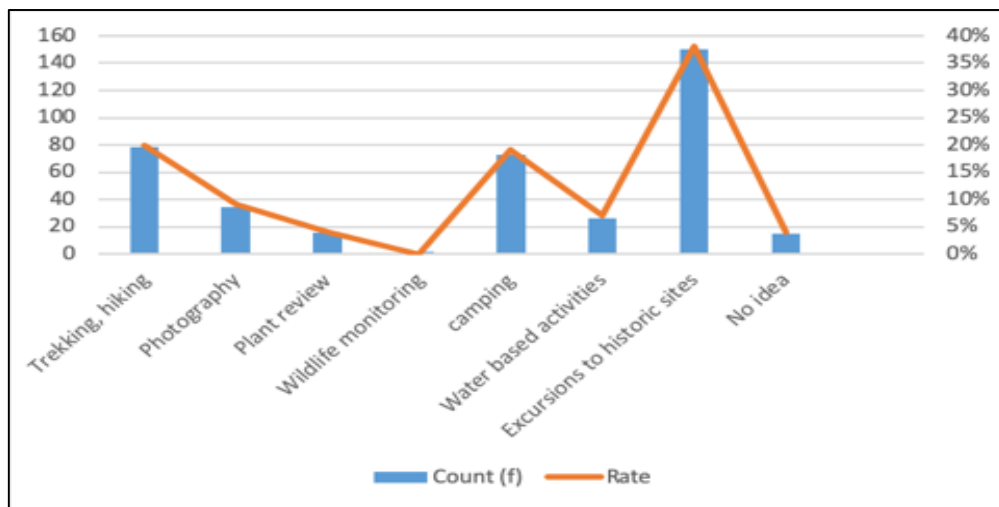


Figure 6. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Answers Given According to the Question of Which Eco-friendly Tourism Activity or Activities You can Recommend for the Bilecik Province

6. DISCUSSION

6.1. SWOT Analysis Related to the Field Researches




The cultural landscape values which are determined by taking the inventory of spatial features, recreational usage facilities, cultural resource values and issues of Bilecik province are assessed via SWOT analysis according to the area studies. These are addressed within taking notice to headlines such as history, archaeology, local architecture, handcrafts, religious places, festivals, environmental subjects, monumental object and areas (See: Table 3).

Table 3. SWOT Analysis (Scientific Research Project Report, 2019)

NATURAL AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE VALUES	
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having wetlands - Surrounding area of the ponds bearing the characteristics to be used as camping site. - Having archeological protected sites, - Natural parks bearing the characteristics to be used as camping sites - Being free from urban pollution and noise due to being distant from urban areas - Having protected areas in the urban areas and immediate vicinity, - Having historical structures and sites in and around the urban areas - Having advertisements and icons for archeological sites in the urban areas - Traditional events - Having various religious and cultural structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of HPP projects - Insufficient resources and services in terms of ecotourism - Having insufficient accommodation facilities in the natural parks, or not having any. - Not taking the required measures for areas that are to be protected - Not benefitting recreationally from historical and cultural resources - Pressure by new-developing areas on traditional urban fabric - Structures from different religious losing their functionalities - Insufficient utilization of green areas, which are not aesthetic - Insufficient recreation areas
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Being accessed conveniently - Allowing fishery for having a pond in the natural parks - Having certain areas in the city, of which historical-cultural fabric is preserved - Historical sites continuously welcoming visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contamination of pond - Uncontrolled usage of culturally-enriched areas - Irregular and unplanned housing - Challenges in renovating and expanding the historical street in the center of the city - Religious structures losing their original textures

In the determination of Ecotourism potential of the study area; the questions related to recreational opportunities, plant presence, picnic areas, cultural and natural presence presence, tourism opportunities are asked and analyses are made. Tourism Activities are categorized in three groups and analysed (See: Table 4).

Table 4. Tourism Activities (Orijinal, 2019)

ECOTOURISM ACTIVITIES		
LEARNING	RECREATIONAL	LEISURE
		
BIRD WATCHING	BICYCLE TOURISM	CAMP/MOTOR CARAVAN TOURISM
NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY	NATURE HORSEBACK RIDING	TABLELAND TOURISM
WILDLIFE OBSERVATION	HIKING	SPORTIVE HANDLINE FISHING
FARM TOURISM	TREKKING	THERMAL SPRING TOURISM
TRAVELING TO HISTORICAL PLACES	HANDLINE FISHING	
	WATER-BASED ACTIVITIES	

6.2. Ecotourism Opportunities Underlying Dimensions

In order to identify the underlying dimensions within the scope of ecotourism facilities, factor analysis was carried out on the collected data. Three dimensions were obtained following the analysis on the respective items (See: Table 5).

Activities like Mountain / Rock Climbing may seem appealing to more people for visiting Bilecik. What's interesting is that there is a relation between cultural tourism contribution to activities done in Bilecik. A factor analysis on activity set forth that Tourism Based on Leisure (mean= 4.53, sd= 0.69), Tourism Based on Learning (mean= 4.45, sd= 0.67) and Tourism Based on Recreational (mean= 4.43, sd= 0.67) acquired the highest rate, respectively (Table 6).

Residents' thoughts and disposition in the context of the suitability of ecotourism activities based on Leisure are in line with "Hiking", "Mountain and Rock Climbing and "Nature Discovery". In the context of the suitability of learning based ecotourism; "Festival Tourism", "Agriculture and Farm Life" and "Religious Tourism" are preferred. For the content of the suitability of recreational based ecotourism; "Camp / Caravan Tourism" and "Tableland Tourism" are preferred.

Table 5. Classification of Ecotourism

Tourism Based on Leisure	Factors	Mean	Sd. dv.
		4.53	0.69
Mountain / Rock Climbing	,624		
Bicycle Tourism	,592		
Jeep safari	,723		
Nature discovery	,612		
Trekking	,544		
Atv trips	,595		
Equestrian	,243		
Bike Safari	,347		
Tourism Based on Learning		4.45	0.67
Photo safari (Nature Photography)	,307		
Monitoring of geomorphological formations	,276		
Observing wild animals	,388		
Tradition- custom tourism	,582		
Scouting	,154		
Orienteering	,126		
Cultural walks	,618		
Plant recognition-examination trip	,253		
Festival tourism	,748		
Agriculture-Farm life	,663		
Bird watching	,268		
Butterfly Watching	1,14		
Hunting	,328		
Belief tourism	,514		
Tourism Based on Recreational		4.43	0,67
Camping / caravan tourism	,736		
Hot Springs tourism	,173		
Highland tourism	,745		
Fishing	,337		

In line with the field-etude study and the data collected in the field of research, the ecotourism activities which can be made in Bilecik province and its proximity are addressed. In this context; the ecotourism is listed as below while taking climate, nature and cultural landscape values into consideration;

- **Trekking**

Trekking is done on Bilecik Province and its districts and there are open trekking areas present. In this context, some sample trekking routes and also altitude profile, trekking distance and elevation information are given.

- **Bicycle Tourism Routes**

Bicycle tourism, a low-cost tourism type which is socially, environmentally and economically beneficial for both the participants and the residents. Generally done in rural areas, the economic contribution of bicycle tourism is seen on a very local scale. Within consideration to the climate, topography and environmental conditions of Bilecik province, it is seen that there is a potential to do both of two bicycle tourism types (hard/soft). Sample routes are created for the bicycle tourism events on Bilecik province / districts and villages.

- **Camping and Picnic**

Natural values of Bilecik province are important reasons for a preference regarding travellers with cars and motor caravans. However, while there are organized camping areas, their numbers and level of service are not adequate. As examples for the camping areas located in the area, Bilecik Pelitözü pond, Bozca Armut Lake Campsite, Harmankaya Canyon Campsite, Küçükemalı Camp Site, Göl pazarı Kurşunlu Village campsite can be listed.

- **Religious Tourism**

Emirler Mosque, Sheikh Edebali Shrine, Orhangazi Mosque located in Bilecik historical city center; Hamidiye Mosque, Ertuğrul Ghazi Shrine, Dursun Fakhı Shrine located in Söğüt district, Kasımpaşa Mosque located in Bozüyük district and Rüstem Pascha Mosque and Hagios Georgios (Aya Yorgi) church located in Osmaneli district are important examples of religious architecture.

- **Traditional Food Culture**

Villages and counties of Bilecik province have quite rich food culture and local dishes made with natural products are important symbols that constitute cultural infrastructure. In many villages, organic products and good agricultural products are cultivated and local dishes culture has been sustained especially by Women Producers of Kurşunlu Village with their ancestral local seeds without using pesticides, chemical fertilizers, hybrid seeds.

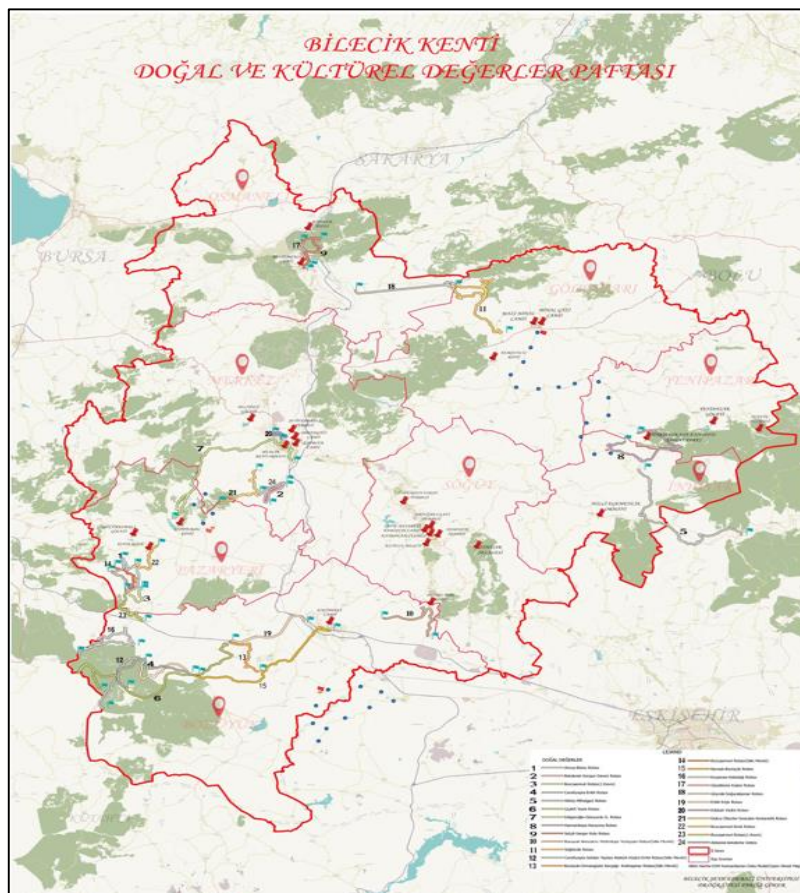


Figure 7. Natural and Cultural Values of Bilecik Province (Orijinal, 2019)

7. CONCLUSION

It should be attached importance that the ecotourism activities are realized in the Bilecik province, due to the positive opinions of a resident about the realization of ecotourism activities in the region for economic development, the suitability of climate and geographical conditions and the presence of nature parks, forests, plateaus, lakes and ponds. Accordingly, the “Ecotourism Action Program” should be prepared in the region, in order to application and development of social, cultural, natural, sport and recreational activities which are the part of ecotourism.

The actions plan to be prepared should be rendered leading by being integrated into the tourism planning of the region. Actions to be performed as an ecotourism activity to be ecologically beneficial should be included within the context of aims. Ecotourism activity areas, inventory of all natural and cultural values in routes should be created. For the preparation and implementation of the action plan, work should be carried out with experts and relevant stakeholders from respective professional disciplines. Data obtained during inventory creating studies should be processed in the digital maps, the data should be documented with multiple media formats (film, photograph, audio etc.) and generated information should be processed in GIS (Geographic Information System) and updated continually. As a result; it has been determined that better protection of natural and cultural resources, the realization of necessary infrastructure and organizations for region visitors, resident and visitors’ management and marketing studies should be conducted.

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