

Attitudes of Mayors Toward Tourism In Rural Areas: The Case Of The Turkish Rural Municipalities

Nurettin Ayaz^A, Yüksel Öztürk^B

Received: February 2016 | Accepted: October 2016

DOI: 10.18421/TRZ20.03-04

Abstract

It is essential that attitudes of stakeholders towards tourism be examined in today's extreme competition among the destinations. It is further essential to carefully analyze the stakeholders of destinations, which are going to be developed in rural areas and which plan to have a share in tourism gains. The objective of this study is to present the relationship between the attitudes of mayors towards tourism and tourism activities of rural municipalities during the participation of the stakeholders in rural areas which are selected as areas for alternative tourism development. To this end, two-phase research process is followed where, in the first phase, secondary sources are thoroughly examined and where, in the second phase, the relationship between the attitudes of mayors towards tourism and the activities of municipalities in rural areas is analyzed by the means of questionnaires conducted to the mayors. In the end of the research process, an intermediate relationship is identified between the attitudes of mayors towards tourism and the activities of municipalities towards tourism. In the context of research findings, certain suggestions are accordingly presented which might improve the mayors on tourism patterns and which might increase the level of participation of rural area municipalities in tourism.

Key words: Rural area tourism, stakeholder analysis, mayors, mayor's attitude, Turkey.

Introduction

The economic potential of tourism to decrease the poverty in rural areas has recently become much more evident and the efforts to improve the legal and political framework to diversify the economies of the rural areas have gained speed (Hall, Jenkins, 1998; United Nations, 2007; Zecevic, 2011). Tourism is started to be seen as an important tool for development (Long, Lane, 2000; Farrell, Russell, 2011; Ertuna, et al., 2012) as tourism is a potential opportunity in terms of being a significant input and bringing dynamism to local economies; preventing migration from countryside to cities; increasing female employment; improving the entrepreneurial spirit among the

^A Karabük University, Faculty of Tourism, Karabük, Turkey; ayaznurettin@yahoo.com

^B Gazi University, Faculty Tourism Gölbaşı-Ankara, Turkey; oyuksel@gazi.edu.tr

* Corresponding author: yukselozturk66@gmail.com

local populace; decreasing the development gap among the regions; increasing the possibilities to better market for the agricultural products of the local populace; encouraging the interaction between the rural and urban population; implanting a stronger sense of ownership of the land in the rural populace; contributing to the improvement of life quality in the countryside and in terms of reservation of the historical buildings in rural area and bringing back the traditional activities to life such as village festivals (Oppermann, 1996; Sharpley, Sharpley, 1997; Hall, 1998; Smith, Krannich, 1998; Lewis, 1998; Campbell, 1999; Sharpley, 2000; Momsen, 2000; Lesley, Hall, 2001; Kokkranikal, Baum, 2002; Ribeiro, Marques, 2002; Holland, et al., 2003).

At the same time, tourism is developing at a slow pace and therefore, it is suggested that various public and private stakeholders need to be organized to make tourism, which is believed to be a source of solution for economic problems, an efficient means of development (Godfrey, 1998; Ertuna ,et al., 2012; Ayaz, 2012).

Therefore, this paper is aimed at studying the relationship between the activities of municipalities, which are accepted as an important stakeholder by rural population and are expected to play a role in the development process, and the attitudes of mayors towards tourism. More specifically, it aims to experimentally test the relationship between the tourism activities of municipalities and the attitudes of mayors towards tourism and to examine various relationships among the dimensions to be determined. Therefore, the outputs of this study are believed to help the stakeholder authorities, who are expected to participate in the tourism development at public level in rural areas. During the research, the attitudes of mayors in rural areas towards tourism are examined at two levels, namely cognitive and emotional attitudes while the tourism activities of municipalities in rural areas at four levels, namely creation of social awareness, organizational structure development, product development, and product marketing thereby the level of relationship between the attitudes of mayors in rural areas towards tourism and the tourism activities of those mayors is analyzed.

Literature Review

Rural tourism

It is believed that a high percentage like 75% of the poor population in the world live in rural areas. Particularly in developing countries, the majority of chief tourism destinations such as national parks, unspoiled natural areas, mountains, lakes, and cultural heritage areas are located in rural areas. Therefore, tourism in those rural areas is approached as a driving force for economy (Holland et al., 2003). Tourism has recently been accepted as a means to encourage the regional development, mostly in those distant to sea, mountainous, and underdeveloped regions, through its features of potential employment, income, and creating synergy in other sectors (Ribeiro, Marques, 2002). Tourism, as a strategy to level down the increasing developmental imbalance problems in rural areas (Kokkranikal, Baum, 2002), is adopted as a significant component of rural development by the rural population and the non-governmental societies which support the population (Ashley, 2000). Furthermore, the increasing trend towards daily walks in the countryside, perception of rural areas as the true representative of natural history heritage, conception about the countryside to be source of clean air and water and open air activities, growing availability of those areas to transportation and communication, and the elimination of various political and economic barriers can be counted as the major factors which have played an important role in the growing demand for tourism in rural areas (Tchetchik, et al., 2006).

In today's world, more people are participating than ever in rural tourism as it is gaining more ground as a fast growing sector particularly in Europe and North America. To illustrate, while in the United Kingdom, annual income obtained from rural tourism amounts to 14 billion dollars and 380,000 people are employed in this field, in Canada, 3% of employment in tourism belongs to rural tourism. In the United States, it is reported that 90 million people traveled to the countryside in 2002-2004 (Tchetchik, et al., 2008). Furthermore, in Spain, as one of the major countries in the world in terms of tourism income, bed capacity in rural tourism, which was 46,354 in 2001, reached to 120,517 in 2008 and the number of tourism orientated accommodation facilities, which was merely 1,074 in 1994, reached to 14,442 in 2010 (Garay, et al., 2011). As of 2012, there was a bed capacity of 100,000 for rural tourism affiliated to various professional organizations in 28 member countries of the European Union (Ayaz, 2012).

Assumptions about the rural tourism and how the rural population will realize and maintain the tourism activities have been of great concern to planners and policy makers. Especially, tourism policies and management of those policies are of major importance. However, organizational structure of rural tourism, the mismatch of rural development policies of ruling ideologies with tourism policies in general, and the variation of those policies from country to country create an important challenge to the formulation and management of tourism policies (Sharpley, 2006).

It is evident that natural resources, activities based on authentic agriculture and ecology, history, and "the attraction of a small town" do not suffice by themselves. Those factors can only turn into a local source of income only when local authorities as well as local businessmen start to deal with venues such as developing and marketing of a successful product and establishment of an adequate infrastructure. The level of knowledge that the local authorities have is of great importance to make wise business decisions (Woods, 2000). However, local authorities have so far much less participated in rural tourism for holding the idea that the "development of tourism is based on the initiatives of the private sector." Therefore, local authorities do generally have minor experience in the fields of planning, development, and management. Nevertheless, this situation has changed in recent years and there has occurred awareness about the important role to be played by the local authorities. Consequently, those areas, which have managed to diversify their products despite the similar physical conditions, have started to take a bigger share from tourism income when compared to earlier times (Kotler, Gertner, 2002).

Stakeholders of rural tourism

The main problems facing the rural tourism are the lack of knowledge by the demanders, lack of ability related to the presentation of product, and insufficient information about the market which is worked on (Mitchell, Derek, 2005). It is essential that public support to be provided first to minimize those problems and develop rural tourism. Rural population needs to be hierarchically organized to conduct plans and projects for tourism in a healthy pattern. Organization and team work are matters of importance to integrate the rural tourism into the regional, national, and international tourism (Soykan, 2004). Planning and coordination are indispensable to activate a society in general and to activate rural tourism at particular (Stynes, O'Halloran, 1987). It is generally accepted that a well-coordinated tourism is more valuable than a less coordinated one (Clark, Chabrel, 2007). Management organizations and leadership, especially in destinations where the planning, development, and the coordination of tourism is single-handedly executed, are major factors for public approach towards tourism in rural areas and for creating difference in tourism development (Wilson, et al., 2001).

Stakeholders in destinations are key players in planning, development, and organization of tourism. Those stakeholders undertake positions of investors, planners, developers, and organizers within a sustainable development program (Timur, Getz, 2008). Therefore, to rightfully identify, organize, and manage the stakeholders is an important matter. It is vital that many various public and private stakeholders be organized for tourism, which is presented as a source of solution for economic problems in rural areas where a fast economic and social change is experienced, to become a major means of development. In this process of organization, to know the attitudes of stakeholders might make a contribution to tourism development.

In rural areas, natural and historical appeals, public protection of authentic features, tourism consciousness managed to harmonize the local cultural characteristics, transportation, accommodation, and achievement of international standards in food and beverage services, and the interest of local, regional, and national authorities in tourism constitute the factors of supply for tourism (European Commission, 1999). Local authorities are the players who can undertake roles to present those factors of supply by the means of making developmental fund, meeting the need for essential infrastructure, reconstructing, sustaining, and cleaning places which appeal to tourists, and providing the staff and entrepreneurs in tourism as well as the local population with essential training and professional assistance (Wilson, et al., 2001).

Under the motto of “think global, act local,” local authorities have started to be expected to manage and improve their performances, harmonize their own sustainable objectives with activities and policies of local authorities, give weight to the efforts of awareness and education, counsel to and include the public, establish partnerships with various groups within the local population, and to track this process through measurement and reporting in the context of sustainability (Leslie, Hughes, 1997; Middleton, Hawkins, 1998).

Efforts for the improvement of rural tourism have also gained speed in Turkey. In the analysis, namely, Turkey as Tourism Destination, prepared by the SWOT through giving full consideration to the tourism trends in the world as well as in Turkey, and the Ninth Development Plan, prepared by the Turkish state, local dynamics, formation of a venue for development based on internal potential, improvement of institutional capacity at local level, acceleration of rural development, and the formation of sufficient interest in tourism by the public, primarily by the local authorities are highlighted. Provincial institutions of the central administration, local authorities, non-governmental organizations, endowments, cooperatives, unions, and universities are identified as main actors to play a role in tourism development. Among those various establishments, municipalities, as an important subunit of local authorities, are seen as institutions which know the rural area best, therefore which have the best power to direct the rural population. Tourism and touristic activities are counted as the fundamental duties and responsibilities of municipalities in accordance to the Law No 5393 and Law No 5355 (Ayaz, 2012). Municipalities are assessed as actors to maintain the balance between protection and use in tourism regions, manage sustainability, harmonize the needs of local population and tourists, and to direct the local authorities in usage of historical monuments to the touristic ends (Azaklı, Özgür, 2004).

Research hypothesis

The chief objective of this study is to measure the relationship between the tourism activities of municipalities, seen as important stakeholders in tourism development and management, and the attitudes of mayors towards tourism. Furthermore, to support the localization process of

public services in rural areas by the means of tourism, to present a field research based-point of view towards tourism services that are aimed to be localized in rural areas, and so to guide similar studies which would improve suggestions for rural tourism are the other objectives of the research. This study is distinct in terms of identifying the tourism activities of municipalities in rural areas from the perspectives of mayors towards tourism and emphasizing the importance of empowering of mayors in tourism.

In the present study, the hypotheses to reach the objectives counted above are defined as follows:

- H₁:** There is a correlation between the attitudes of mayors towards tourism and the tourism activities of municipalities in rural areas.
- H_{1a}:** There is a correlation between the cognitive attitudes of mayors and the activities of municipalities to create social awareness about rural tourism.
- H_{1b}:** There is a correlation between the cognitive attitudes of mayors towards tourism and the activities of municipalities to develop organizational structure in rural tourism.
- H_{1c}:** There is a correlation between the cognitive attitudes of mayors and the activities of municipalities to develop products in rural tourism.
- H_{1d}:** There is a correlation between the cognitive attitudes of mayors and the activities of municipalities to market products in rural tourism.
- H_{1e}:** There is a correlation between the emotional attitudes of mayors and the activities of municipalities to create social awareness in rural tourism.
- H_{1f}:** There is a correlation between the emotional attitudes of mayors and the activities of municipalities to develop organization structure in rural tourism.
- H_{1g}:** There is a correlation between the emotional attitudes of mayors and the activities of municipalities to develop products in rural tourism.
- H_{1h}:** There is a correlation between the cognitive attitudes of mayors and the activities of municipalities to market products in rural tourism.

Tourism and attitude researches

The very first researches on attitude in tourism were based on the positive impact of tourism on local population. Later researches started to examine the tourism attitudes in the context of negative impact of tourism. Beginning from the 1980s and 1990s, both the positive and negative impacts of tourism were examined in a more balanced and systematic pattern (Latkova, 2008). Surveys have so far indicated that “while the attitude of host society towards tourism was affirmative at the early stage of tourism development, this trend started to decline at a later stage of the tourism development (Long, et al., 1990). Furthermore, there started studies to establish a relationship between attitude surveys and social change theory. Those surveys point out that local population who benefited from tourism presented a positive attitude towards the development of tourism (Latkova, 2008).

Butler in his model, “Tourism Area Life Cycle” of 1980, asserts that significant changes might take place in course of time in the infrastructure system, marketing strategies, naturally and artificially constructed environments, and in the attitudes of local population towards tourism and adds that those changes need to be followed up.

As the literature indicates, attitude research carries special significance for tourism. Surveys on attitudes are important sources of information for a healthy tourism development in a certain area or region. Furthermore, given their features to define the case and to detect information, those surveys are significant sociological resources which might be applied in tourism

development and which might be of use in venues of sustainable tourism, strategic planning and development, execution and supervision of programs. This study, aimed at analyzing the attitudes of mayors in rural areas, distinguishes from early studies on attitudes of local population towards tourism, such as Long, et al. (1990), Smith and Krannich (1998), Claudia and Gürsoy (2004), Ishikawa and Fukushige (2007), Wang and Pfister (2008), Latkova (2008) and Byrd, et al. (2009) mainly for its extensive research on attitudes of public stakeholders, thereby making a modest contribution to the literature in tourism.

The Case Study Area and Methodology

Study areas

Given its natural, historical, cultural, and human resources, Turkey is a country which can meet the demands in tourism at international level. General analyses indicate that tourism as a sector has been fast growing in Turkey, yet with a concentration largely in urban areas and centers with touristic appeal. The country with its each region having its own unique tourism diversity is still of much less use in the development of rural areas through tourism. It is asserted that what Turkey achieved in coastal areas in terms of tourism development and increasing tourist number could be duplicated in rural and developing areas (Tosun, et al., 2003). Therefore, Turkey aims to show the same success in rural areas as it showed in coastal regions and to turn tourism into a sustainable economic activity in accordance with the Action Plan, 2007-2013 under the national Tourism Strategy in Turkey for 2023.

The research field of this study is specified according to the “Tourism Strategy in Turkey 2023: Action Plan, 2007-2013” prepared by the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Therefore, cities, shown of first priority for tourism development, namely, Afyonkarahisar, Ağrı, Amasya, Burdur, Çankırı, Çorum, Diyarbakır, Erzincan, Erzurum, Giresun, Hatay, Isparta, Kahramanmaraş, Kars, Kastamonu, Konya, Kütahya, Mardin, Nevşehir, Ordu, Samsun, Sivas, Şanlıurfa, Tokat, Trabzon, Uşak, Van, and Yozgat, are selected to be research fields.

Study methods

A two-phase study is followed in the present research. In the first phase, literature on the topic, earlier similar researches and the methods applied, and the secondary data are thoroughly examined. In this phase, research question and theoretical framework are set as well. Regarding the second phase, a scale is developed to define the attitudes of mayors towards tourism in rural areas and the tourism activities of municipalities in those areas.

In the process of preparing the questionnaire, the studies of Campanhola and Graziano da Silva (1999), Kastenholz (1999), Hegarty and Prezeborska (2005), Ishikawa and Fukushige (2007), Yüksel and Yüksel (2008), Wang and Pfister (2008), Eraqi (2010), and Strömngren and Andersson (2010) are benefited from while specifying the questions on the questionnaire. However, specific questions towards the field are prepared by the author. While preparing the questions in the research, opinions of experts (four tourism academics) are applied. Suggestions and critics of academics are utilized in the context of expert opinion.

A questionnaire of two sections is prepared to identify the attitudes of rural mayors towards tourism and the activities of rural municipalities towards tourism in rural areas. In terms of

pretesting, 50 mayors are conducted questionnaires in the cities, namely, Amasya, Çankırı, Erzurum, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Konya, Mardin, Nevşehir, Ordu, Samsun, Sivas, Şanlıurfa, Tokat, Trabzon, and Van. Pretesting is subjected to factor analysis and reliability analysis. Factor analysis is made at two levels on one hand including the cognitive and emotional attitudes of mayors towards tourism and at four levels on the other including activities of municipalities towards tourism in rural areas, creating a social awareness, developing organizational structure, and developing and marketing product of tourism. In the end of the pretesting, scale is reorganized through 9 questions regarding the cognitive attitudes of mayors, 2 questions about the emotional attitudes, 3 questions about the creating social awareness, 12 questions regarding the efforts to develop a product, 2 questions regarding the product marketing, and 2 questions about the handicaps to participate in tourism. In the end of the reliability analysis, the value of Alpha (Cronbach) was defined as 0,90. Questionnaires, by the means of pollsters, were conducted to mayors face to face in the period of January-August 2012.

In the region defined as research field, there are 1,390 municipalities in total. Given the spaciousness of the area as well as the matters of time and cost, sampling is applied in the research field. Sampling is determined to be 359 in accordance with the study of Ryan (1995). During the research, 500 questionnaires are spread out, while 467 of them are responded. Therefore, the rate for response to questionnaire is identified as 93,4% and the research is carried out over those 460 questionnaires.

Data analysis

Data, collected through the questionnaires conducted during the research, is uploaded to computer and so the database is formed. Reliability and factor analyses regarding the database are subsequently held. Kasier-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) coefficient, the results of Barlett's test, the results of factor analysis, and the reliability coefficient for each factor, all which are applied to examine the relevance of data to define the attitudes of mayors towards tourism and the activities of municipalities towards tourism in rural areas, are presented in Table 1 and Table 2:

Table 1. Factor Analysis for the Attitudes of Mayors towards Tourism

Factor	Mean	Standard Deviation	Factor Loading	Cronbach Alpha	Variance Explained (%)
Cognitive Attitudes Towards Tourism (n=460)				0.918	34.553
Tourism increases the employment opportunities for the local population.	4.34	0.880	0.824		
Tourism revives the local economy.	4.37	0.844	0.820		
Tourism increases the income of local population.	4.34	0.890	0.801		
Tourism increases the life quality of local population.	4.16	0.917	0.776		
Tourism diversifies the local economy.	4.20	0.928	0.769		
Tourism makes a contribution to the development of physical infrastructure.	4.12	1.047	0.698		
Tourism helps the protection of historical monuments.	4.30	0.910	0.686		
Tourism supports the development of local crafts.	4.10	0.951	0.680		
Tourism encourages the local capital based investment.	3.93	0.986	0.657		

Factor	Mean	Standard Deviation	Factor Loading	Cronbach Alpha	Variance Explained (%)
Tourism helps the protection of natural beauties.	4.08	1.029	0.610		
Emotional Attitudes Towards Tourism (n=460)				0.888	26.556
Municipalities should contribute to the tourism activities through equipment.	3.76	1.020	0.817		
Municipalities should contribute to the tourism activities through information.	3.99	0.897	0.769		
Municipalities should support the cooperative tourism activities.	4.01	0.988	0.767		
Municipalities should encourage the citizens to participate in the tourism activities.	3.86	1.012	0.761		
Municipalities should contribute to the tourism activities through planning.	4.05	0.871	0.751		
Municipalities should contribute to the tourism activities through staff.	3.60	1.060	0.742		
Municipalities should support the tourism oriented commercial partnerships.	3.57	1.072	0.718		
Total Cronbach Alpha / Variance explained (%)				0.927	61.109

K-M-O Measure of Sampling Adequacy: 0,909

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Sig: 0,000)

As seen in Table 1, in the context of defining the attitudes of mayors towards tourism, for 2 factors belonging to 17 judgments, KMO coefficient (0,909), Bartlett's test for level of significance ($p= 0,000$), the sum of ratio for variance explanation (61,109), and the sum of reliability coefficients (0,927) are calculated as such. This situation clearly indicates that all requirements for factor analysis are met in this research and the measurement is quite reliable.

Table 2. Factor Analysis for the Rural Tourism Activities of Municipalities

Factor	Mean	Standard Deviation	Factor Loading	Cronbach Alpha	Variance Explained (%)
Creation of Social Awareness (n=460)				0.898	19.999
We are organizing art shows.	2.57	1.470160	.786		
We are organizing opening days.	2.82	1.465	.766		
We are organizing exhibitions and festivities.	3.02	1.572	.716		
We are making public meetings.	2.76	1.392	.700		
We are periodically publishing bulletins.	2.85	1.407	.632		
We are sharing information with the local media.	3.59	1.309	.587		
Organizational Structure Development (n=460)				0.954	19.833
We are making cooperation to supervise the visions, goals, and objectives for the development of our region.	3.73	1.166	.819		
We are making cooperation to efficiently manage the visions, goals, and objectives for the development of our region.	3.73	1.171	.776		
We are making cooperation to prepare educational programs for the development of our region.	3.88	1.187	.774		

Factor	Mean	Standard Deviation	Factor Loading	Cronbach Alpha	Variance Explained (%)
We are making cooperation to determine the priorities for the development of our region.	3.78	1.187	.758		
We are making cooperation to determine the visions, goals, and objectives for the development of our region.	3.84	1.123	.749		
We are making cooperation to market the economy products of our region.	3.91	1.177	.748		
We are making cooperation to develop products for the improvement of economy in our region.	3.91	1.097	.706		
We are making cooperation to improve relationships with institutions outside our region.	3.87	1.171	.688		
We are making cooperation to find financial support for tourism development in our region.	4.00	1.200	.585		
Developing Tourism Products (n=193)				0.904	12.785
We are working to develop the handicrafts in our region.	3.71	1.420	.760		
We are participating in the efforts to create a trademark of our own for our tourism products.	3.53	1.517	.754		
We are working towards the types of tourism that are suitable to our region.	3.45	1.580	.714		
We are working to promote the agricultural products that might come to the fore in the agricultural tourism of our region.	3.54	1.492	.707		
We are working to support the sport activities that might be done in natural environments in our region.	3.53	1.482	.695		
We are participating in the restoration of the historical houses reflecting the culture of our region.	3.36	1.652	.690		
We are working to identify the spots that might be used to watch the natural beauties in our region.	3.67	1.504	.642		
We are providing guides for the daily travels to towns and villages in our region.	2.94	1.636	.633		
We are organizing small scale congresses and meetings towards tourism products in our region.	3.30	1.470	.621		
Marketing Tourism Product (n=197)				0.858	9.515
We are making market segmentation in accordance to the features of potential tourists who might visit our region.	2.79	1.329	.759		
We are making market surveys towards the potential tourists who might visit our region.	3.52	1.372	.727		
We are making analyses to determine the strong and weak aspects as well as the opportunities and the challenges of the tourism market in our region.	3.44	1.426	.674		
We are organizing travel programs to the promotional spots to introduce the tourism of our region to various guests such as, but not confined to, tour operators, press staff, political leaders, etc.	3.06	1.547	.584		
Total Cronbach Alpha / Variance explained (%)				0.931	62.130

K-M-O Measure of Sampling Adequacy: 0,881

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Sig: 0,000)

As seen in Table 2, in the context of defining the activities of municipalities towards rural tourism, for 4 factors belonging to 28 judgments, KMO coefficient (0,881), Bartlett's test for level of significance ($p=0,000$), the sum of ratio for variance explanation (62,130), and the sum of reliability coefficients (0,931) are calculated as such. This situation clearly indicates that all requirements for factor analysis are met in this research and the measurement is quite reliable.

In Table 3, there are the results of "Correlation Analysis" to measure the relationship between the attitudes of mayors towards tourism (cognitive and emotional) and the activities of municipalities towards rural tourism (creation of social awareness, development of organizational structure, product development, product marketing). In this analysis, while the cognitive and emotional attitudes of mayors towards tourism are defined as independent variables, the activities of the municipalities such as the creation of social awareness, development of organizational structure, product development, and product marketing identified as dependent variables.

In accordance with the data presented in Table 3, there found a correlation at the level of significance of 0,01 between the attitudes of mayors (cognitive and emotional) and the activities of municipalities towards tourism (creation of social awareness, development of organizational structure, product development, and product marketing).

Table 3. Indicators of Correlation for the Attitudes of Mayors towards Tourism and the Activities of Municipalities towards Tourism

		Works of the Municipalities on the Creation of Social Awareness (A)	Works of the Municipalities on the Development of Organizational Structure (B)	Works of the Municipalities on the Product Development (C)	Works of the Municipalities on the Product Marketing (D)	A+B+C+D
Cognitive Attitudes of the Mayors towards Tourism	Pearson Correlation	.313**	.492**	.253**	.354**	.464**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	460	460	193	197	460
Emotional Attitudes of the Mayors towards Tourism	Pearson Correlation	.481**	.494**	.373**	.472**	.572**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	460	460	193	197	460
Attitudes of the Mayors towards Tourism	Pearson Correlation	.439**	.560**	.350**	.449**	.581**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	460	460	193	197	460

**($p<0,001$)

Given the correlation analysis, there is a positive relationship between the attitudes of mayors towards tourism and the activities of municipalities towards tourism. Therefore, attitudes of mayors might be utilized to increase the activities of the municipalities to participate in tourism. In the context of those conclusions, the fundamental and sub hypotheses made in this research are verified following as:

H₁: There is a correlation between the attitudes of mayors towards tourism and the tourism activities of municipalities in rural areas.

H_{1_a}: There is a correlation between the cognitive attitudes of mayors and the activities of municipalities to create social awareness about rural tourism.

- H_{1b}:** There is a correlation between the cognitive attitudes of mayors towards tourism and the activities of municipalities to develop organizational structure in rural tourism.
- H_{1c}:** There is a correlation between the cognitive attitudes of mayors and the activities of municipalities to develop products in rural tourism.
- H_{1d}:** There is a correlation between the cognitive attitudes of mayors and the activities of municipalities to market products in rural tourism.
- H_{1e}:** There is a correlation between the emotional attitudes of mayors and the activities of municipalities to create social awareness in rural tourism.
- H_{1f}:** There is a correlation between the emotional attitudes of mayors and the activities of municipalities to develop organization structure in rural tourism.
- H_{1g}:** There is a correlation between the emotional attitudes of mayors and the activities of municipalities to develop products in rural tourism.

Conclusion

The research is concentrated on the activities of rural municipalities towards tourism through the attitudes of mayors towards tourism. In this context, by the means of a quantitative technique, whether the attitudes of mayors have an impact on the activities of municipalities towards tourism is tested experimentally.

According to the results of the research analysis, the impact of the attitudes of mayors on the activities of rural municipalities towards tourism is important. The data might be useful for the development tourism in rural areas and indicates that mayors might play an efficient role in tourism development in rural areas.

The conclusions of the present study might be utilized to increase the tourism activities in rural areas where tourism is developing at a slow pace and to ensure the participation of the local population, who is not sufficiently informed about tourism, in rural tourism (Sharpley, 2006; Ertuna, et al., 2012). Despite the fact that there are many theoretic studies on rural areas and the development of tourism in those areas, there is a limited number of empirical studies to define the theoretic studies. Therefore, this study meets the urgent need to conduct case studies by the means of quantitative techniques.

Public participation in organizations is of great importance in the achievement of tourism development in rural areas (Verbole, 2000; Tosun, 2001; Tosun, 2006; Briedenhann, 2007; Tao, Fuying, 2009). The realization of these organizations under the leadership of public institutions has further significance in terms of sustainable tourism. Therefore, it is essential that the key role of public leaders be emphasized to enhance their political control over tourism sector (Clark, Chabrel, 2007). In the literature, the strengthening of the staff is approached through “cognitive dimension” and “behavioral dimension” (Spreitzer, 1995; Honold, 1997). In the light of those approaches, social responsibility, local agenda-21, and eco-municipality might be applied to reinforce the mayors at behavioral level. Through those application tools, level of participation of municipalities in tourism might be increased. In case of Turkey, governorships, district governorships, Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, Ministry of Development, Union of Municipalities in Turkey, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, provincial tourism directorates, and universities might be made use of to empower the mayors at cognitive level largely through seminars, conferences, panels, visual and auditory publications, projects, encouragement awards, and technical trips all which are organized by those institutions.

Limitations

The research is based on the positive cognitive and emotional attitudes of mayors towards tourism. Therefore, future studies on negative cognitive and emotional attitudes of mayors towards tourism might lead us to new conclusions from a different perspective. Furthermore, the application of scales developed during the research to local government units other than the municipalities might make a contribution to the development of different assumptions.

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