

Evaluation of Amasya city tourism planning using SWOT analysis

Amasya kenti turizm planlamasının GZFT analizi ile değerlendirilmesi

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Abstract

With its natural, historical, and cultural resources, the city of Amasya offers very valuable potential in terms of tourism. The city center was taken under the protection of the 'Tourism Incentive Law' (no. 2634) in 1982. The most notable parts of this potential include the historical texture of the city center in particular and the areas where nature tourism and thermal tourism are carried out in the vicinity of the city. However, in addition to the positive aspects of the city in terms of tourism, there are also negative factors such as the inefficient use of resources, insufficient publicity, and lack of tourism planning. In order to determine the tourism potential of the city of Amasya, this study, by using a SWOT analysis, aimed to reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the city in the field of tourism as well as its opportunities and the threats that it faces. For this purpose, first, a literature review was carried out, followed by a field study, and the current situation and the types of tourism in the city were determined. Using this information, a survey consisting of four questions was prepared. In order to evaluate the SWOT survey objectively, a workshop entitled 'Evaluation of Amasya City Landscape Components in Terms of Tourism (AKPBTAD)' was held at the Büyük Amasya Hotel on 26 June 2018, with tourism-related stakeholders in attendance. Participants included the provincial governor, the university rector, representatives from various public institutions, hotel operators, tourism association officials, tourist guides, neighborhood representatives, self-employed individuals, and academicians. The SWOT survey was conducted through face-to-face interviews with a total of 95 of these experts. The frequency (percentage) values of the SWOT survey responses were calculated using the SPSS 16.0 program. The findings included recommendations for improving the city of Amasya in terms of tourism planning.

Özet

Amasya kenti sahip olduğu doğal, tarihi ve kültürel değerleri ile turizm açısından oldukça önemli bir potansiyele sahiptir. Özellikle kent merkezinde 1982 yılında 2634 sayılı 'Turizmi Teşvik Yasası' kapsamında koruma altına alınan tarihi doku ile kentin yakın çevresinde doğa turizmi, termal turizm yapılan alanlar bu zenginliğin en önemli parçalarını oluşturmaktadır. Ancak kentin turizm açısından sahip olduğu olumlu yönlerin yanında, kaynakların etkin kullanılmaması, tanıtımın yeterince yapılmaması ve turizm planlamasının olmaması gibi olumsuz yönleri de bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışmada; Amasya kentinde gerçekleştirilen turizm potansiyelini belirleyerek kentin turizm alanında güçlü ve zayıf yönleri ile fırsatları ve karşı karşıya bulunduğu tehdit unsurlarını GZFT analizi ile ortaya koymak amaçlanmıştır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda öncelikle literatür taraması ile arazi çalışması yapılarak mevcut durum tespiti ve kentte gerçekleştirilen turizm türleri ortaya konulmuştur. Elde edilen bilgiler çerçevesinde, 4 sorudan oluşan GZFT (Güçlü ve Zayıf Yönler, Fırsatlar, Tehditler) anketi hazırlanmıştır. GZFT anketinin nesnel bir şekilde değerlendirilmesi için turizmle ilgili paydaşların (vali, rektör, çeşitli kamu kurumlarından temsilciler, otel işletmecileri, turizm derneği işletmecileri, turist rehberleri, mahalle muhtarları, serbest meslek çalışanları, akademisyenler) katılımıyla 26 Haziran 2018 tarihinde Büyük Amasya Otelinde 'Amasya Kenti Peyzaj Bileşenlerinin Turizm Açısından Değerlendirilmesi (AKPBTAD)' çalışmayı gerçekleştirilmiştir. GZFT anketi toplam 95 uzman kişi ile yüz yüze görüşme yapılarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. GZFT anketi sorularına verilen cevapların frekans (yüzde) değerleri SPSS 16.0 programı kullanılarak hesaplanmıştır. Bulgular dâhilinde Amasya kentinin turizm planlaması açısından iyileştirilmesine yönelik önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, there have always been those who, for various reasons, wished to travel to lands away from home. In the past, only the rich could afford such travels. Today, with industrial and technological developments, higher standards of living, the increase in per capita

income, and more free time, along with improved transportation possibilities in parallel with lower costs, and the development of hotels, motels, campsites, and holiday villages make it possible for those in all walks of life to satisfy their desire to see new places.

Tourism is a multifaceted, dynamic activity having economic, political, social, cultural, ecological, and environmental impacts. For this reason, it is difficult to explain the concept of tourism in a simple way. However, tourism in general can be defined as all events related to travel and accommodation made by those outside of their place of work and residence, without the purpose of permanent settlement or employment (Hunziker and Kraph 1942). Basically, it is a spatial phenomenon involving a place to stay and a place of destination for a person moving from one place to another (Farsari and Prastacos 2004).

In order to understand the phenomenon of tourism, it is necessary to understand the relationship between leisure time, recreation, and participation in tourism events. In order to participate in tourism activities one must have free time outside of a permanent job. A person leaves the place of permanent work and residence and travels to participate in a recreational activity. In order for recreational activities to be considered within the scope of tourism, the person must travel a certain distance and stay at least one night (Bahçe 2013).

Tourism involves travels carried out to see various sites of natural beauty and historical significance, to learn about different cultures, to participate in sports events or scientific meetings, to visit friends and relatives, and to spend leisure time for reasons of business, health, or religion. For domestic trips, without the intention of earning money, 24 hours is the minimum and 6 months the maximum for accommodation, and for international travel, the minimum is 24 hours and the maximum 12 months (Hazar 2014, Karaküçük 2016, URL-1 2017).

Tourism planning on a global scale started in the 1890s in Frankfurt and other cities in Germany. However, the planning of tourism activities around the world and in our country began in the 1950s in view of the economy in the period after the Second World War. Tourism planning studies were initiated at national, regional, and local levels in order to meet rapidly increasing tourism demands. In this context, five-year development plans have been prepared in our country since 1963. In the 1970s, government support was provided for tourism infrastructure and the policy of making tourism a tool for regional development was adopted (Olalı 1990, Çubuk 1995, İçöz et al. 2002, Liu and Wall 2006, Mercan 2010, Barın Penbecioğlu 2012, URL-2 2018).

In general, tourism planning is an approach that reveals the goals to be achieved in the tourism sector over a certain period, the tools to be used to achieve these goals,

the work to be done, the financial and physical opportunities, by whom the work will be done, when, and how long it will take (Pearce 1989, Inskeep 1994).

Tourism planning generally emphasizes infrastructure services, socio-cultural structure, local economic activities, climatic factors, and physical and economic features. The elements of tourism planning incorporate regulations that are necessary to achieve the targeted purpose. Accordingly, the features of tourism planning include the following: (Pill 1995, Batman and Cömert 2002, Usta 2008, Mercan 2010).

- Tourism planning should have a primary purpose aimed at solving current problems or for future developments.
- To achieve this purpose, a tourism planning method is formed by choosing one of the various methods available.
- A decision-making process is created that requires making a decision by choosing one or more of many options.
- In tourism planning, future changes and uncertainties are estimated and based on assumptions.
- Tourism planning requires an accurate and comprehensive analysis.
- Many factors (social, political, economic, psychological, technological, anthropological, etc.) must be taken into account and integrated.
- Tourism planning is a political event and advocates interaction between planning and professionals, senior managers, local people, and politicians.
- Tourism planning that has been successful under certain conditions may not be able to achieve the same success in a different place or at different times in the same place.
- Tourism planning requires long-term structuring in order to realize the investments in the city or the region, to establish the infrastructure, to raise the awareness of the city's inhabitants, and to set up the necessary marketing activities.
- In tourism planning, the city's inhabitants should be included in the process and their ideas and opinions should be taken.

The stages of the tourism planning process include preparation, determination of goals for tourists, examination of all components related to tourism, analysis and synthesis, and creation of proposals. Generally, a SWOT (Strengths and Weaknesses,

Opportunities and Threats) analysis is carried out in order to improve the tourism infrastructure of the city or region, to reveal existing problems, and to identify touristic products (Inskip 1994, Australian Government 2004, Angelevska-Najdeska and Rakicevik 2012). In tourism planning, in addition to the economic, social, and political advantages of tourism, the negative effects on the economic and social life and the cultural and natural environment of the country should be evaluated realistically. Tourism planning aims to answer the questions: 'Where are we now?', 'How can we get where we want to be?', and 'How can we understand that we have reached where we want to be?' (Olalı 1990, İçöz et al. 2002, Kuntay 2004, Arslan 2005, Özdemir 2006, Usta 2008, Çatal 2010).

Correct planning and management of urban tourism development requires the conducting of an analysis of the current situation in the city, a market analysis, a benchmark analysis, a potential analysis, a SWOT analysis, and a tourism and recreation analysis (UNWTO 2012, URL-3-4 2018).

In the rapidly changing and developing world, tourism planning requires a good evaluation. In tourism planning, the interests of the people should be considered above personal and financial interests. In addition, care should be taken to ensure that the plans developed are dynamic, forward-looking, applicable, balanced, and sustainable and that they are implemented in accord with the decisions of the policies and programs. In the absence of tourism planning, irregular, inadequate, and haphazard

development of tourism has been observed to have negative effects at the physical, individual, social, and organizational levels and on marketing and promotion (Demircioğlu 1997, Kuntay 2004, Mercan 2010, Barın Penbecioğlu 2012).

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The tourism resources consisting of natural, historical, and cultural assets in the city of Amasya constitute the main material of the study.

The city of Amasya, located in the inland area of the Central Black Sea Region, was chosen as the study area (Figure 1). The city of Amasya is between 34° 57' 06" and 36° 31' 53" east longitudes and 41° 04' 54" and 40° 16' 16" north latitudes and city has a surface area of 5.701 km². It is surrounded by the provinces of Samsun in the north, Tokat and Yozgat in the south, Tokat in the east, and Çorum in the west. The inland city of Amasya was established in the Yeşilirmak Valley formed by the Yeşilirmak River and flanked by the Central Black Sea Mountains (Canik) (Anonymous 2007, Anonymous 2010, Anonymous 2015, URL-5 2018). The city's many valuable tourism assets were effective in the selection of the study area. These include the rich natural-cultural-historical resources such as the traditional Ottoman houses, the Yeşilirmak River and Valley, the historical city texture, a prized culinary tradition, local legends, mosques, shrines, baths, hot springs, endemic species, and its quality as an open-air museum.

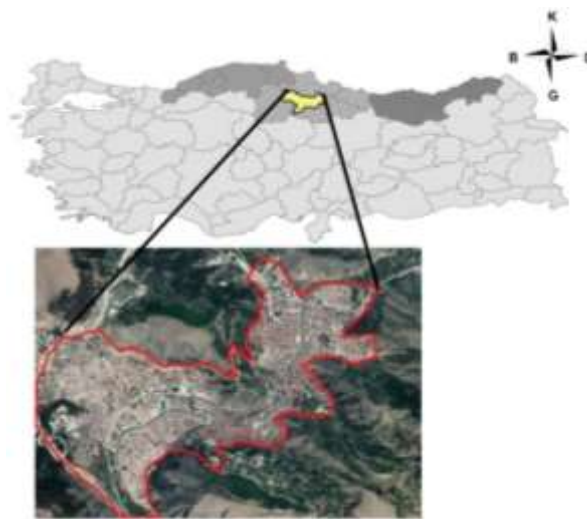


Figure 1. Location of study area

Amasya City is one of the oldest settlements in Anatolia. The city dates back to 4000 BC and has a 7500-year history. The city of Amasya has a rich cultural heritage in

that it has hosted many civilizations throughout history, including those of the the Hittite, Phrygian, Cimmerian, Scythian, Lydian, Persian, Hellenistic-Pontic, Roman,

Byzantine, Danishmend, Seljuk, Ilkhanid, and Ottoman periods (Anonymous 2008, Anonymous 2010, Anonymous 2015, YHKB 2018, URL-6 2018). It was the center of economy and trade for centuries and raised many sultans and princes during the Ottoman Empire. During the War of Independence, it was the place where the 'Amasya Circular', known as the 'birth certificate' of the Republic, was announced to the entire world. Every year, various festivals, celebrations, competitions, and art events are organized in the city in order to bring the people of the city and tourists together. Transportation to the city is provided by road, rail, and air.

The purpose of the study was to determine the tourism potential of the city of Amasya using a SWOT analysis to reveal the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities of the city in the field of tourism and the threats that it faces. In terms of developing urban tourism, it is important to carry out tourism planning in line with this purpose.

Within the scope of the study, the current situation and the types of tourism in the city were revealed by conducting a literature review and a field study. Using this information, in order to assess the current status of the city in the field of tourism, a SWOT survey was prepared before convening the workshop entitled 'Evaluation of Amasya City Landscape Components in Terms of Tourism (AKPBTAD)'. The survey questions were created by referencing the studies of Aktan (1999), Yosmaoğlu and Engin (2002), Kansız et al. (2005), Dinçer and Dinçer (2006), European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD 2014), and using survey studies, field notes, observations, interviews, and strategic plans and reports prepared for the city. The participants were asked a total of four questions. All of the questions were of the close-ended type and they were scored according to the order of importance. The questions were prepared in order to determine the current strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities of the city in the field of tourism and the threats that it faces. The SWOT survey was conducted face-to-face with 95 authorities and specialists, including the provincial governor, the university rector, representatives from various public institutions, hotel operators, tourism association officials, tourist guides, neighborhood representatives, self-employed individuals, and academicians. The frequency (percentage) values of the answers given on the SWOT survey were calculated using the SPSS 16.0 program.

In line with the purpose of the study, answers to the following questions were sought:

- 'In your opinion, what are the strengths of the city of Amasya? (You can choose up to 5 options.)'
- 'In your opinion, what are the weaknesses of the city of Amasya? (You can choose up to 5 options.)'
- 'In your opinion, what are the biggest opportunities for the city of Amasya? (You can choose up to 5 options.)'
- 'In your opinion, what are the biggest threats to the city of Amasya? (You can choose up to 3 options.)'

Qualitative research methods, the SWOT survey, and the workshop technique were used in the study.

RESULTS

Regarding the Tourism Potential of Amasya City

In order for a site to be a center of attraction for local and foreign tourists, it should have natural, historical, and cultural resources, and the city of Amasya possesses all of these assets. Detailed information about the existing types of tourism in Amasya within the characteristics of the city is explained below (according to observations made during the field studies):

Cultural tourism: This city in the Central Black Sea Region is rich in cultural heritage assets as it was established on the historical Silk Road and has accommodated many civilizations (Bingöl 2007). The resources the city has for cultural tourism include the traditional Amasya (Yalıboyu) houses, Amasya Castle, Kral Kaya Cemeteries and the Maidens' Palace, Amasya Archeology Museum, Saraydüzü Barracks National Battle Museum, Hazeranlar Mansion Ethnography Museum, Princes' Museum, Miniature Amasya Museum, Ferhat and Şirin Museum (Ferhat Water Canal), Sabuncuoğlu Medical and Surgical History Museum (Bimarhane), Şeyh Hamdullah Writing History and Hüsn-i Calligraphy Museum, İltekin Bridge, Low Bridge, Station Bridge, Kunç Bridge, Magdenus Bridge, Helkis Bridge, Amasya Bedesten (covered market), Amasya Taşhan (caravansary), Merzifon Bedesten, Gümüşhacıköy Bedesten, Ezine Pazar Hanı (marketplace), Büyük Ağa Madrasa, Sultan Bayezid Madrasa, Haliliye Madrasa, Gök Madrasa, Çelebi Mehmet Madrasa, and the Clock Tower.

Religious tourism: The major religious tourism centers in the city include the Bayezid II Mosque and Complex, Burmalı Minaret Mosque, Mehmet Pasha Mosque, Hatuniye Mosque, Bayezit Pasha Mosque, Yakup Pasha Mosque, Kiları Süleyman Ağa Mosque, Saraçhane Mosque, Yörgüç Pasha Mosque, Gökmedrese Mosque, Station Kurtboğan Mosque, Fethiye Mosque, Gümüşlü Mosque, Hızır Pasha Mosque, Şamlar Ayas Ağa Mosque,

Sofular Abdullah Pasha Mosque, Şirvanlı (Azeriler) Mosque, Pir Mehmet Çelebi Mosque, Kara Mustafa Pasha Mosque, and the shrines/mausoleums of Halifet Gazi, Torumtay, Cumudar, Hamdullah Efendi, Pir Sücaeddin İlyas, Kurtboğan, İğneci Baba, Sultan Mesud, Baba İlyas Horasani, Kadılar, Şadgeldi Pasha, Selamet, Şadgeldi Pasha, Seyh Abdurrahman Çelebi, Kemal Pasha, Yörgüç Pasha, Ehli Hatun, Seyh İsmail Siraceddin Sirvani, Seyyid Mir Hamza Nigari, Oruç Bey, and Taceddin Altunbaş.

Health and thermal tourism: The most important health and thermal tourism centers in and around the city include the thermal springs at Gözlek, Terziköy, and Hamamözü, and the Turkish bathhouses of Kumack, Mustafa Bey, Yıldız, Altuntaş, and Kara Mustafa Paşa.

Nature tourism: Important spots near the city within the scope of nature tourism include Boraboy Lake Nature Park and Yedikuğular Bird Paradise (Yedikır Dam).

Botanical tourism: Important places near the city in terms of botanical tourism include Boraboy Lake Nature Park, and the plateaus of Kabaoğuz, Tavşandağı, Akdağ, Sarıçiçek, Destek, Boğalı, Çatalçam, and İnegöl (Zengin et al. 2014, URL-7 2018).

Tourist events observed in the city center take the form of visiting historical-cultural sites and museums, strolling by the river, taking photos, shopping, enjoying local food, sightseeing, participating in festivals or exhibitions, riding bicycles, having picnics, making religious pilgrimages (visiting mosques and shrines/mausoleums), attending

bathhouses, and taking walking tours around the city. Unlike the touristic activities in the city center, activities found outside the city include trekking, bird watching, nature photography, camping, visiting hot springs, joining adventure trips, fishing, and participating in archaeological tours.

Findings of the Amasya City Tourism Planning SWOT Survey

The easiest way to reveal the current situation and expectations of a sector, a company, or an institution is to make a SWOT analysis using experts on that subject (Akça 2006). The responses received from the participants were tabulated in order of preference. Table 1 shows the percentage values of the SWOT survey conducted with a total of 95 experts in order to determine the tourism potential present in the city of Amasya and to detect the strengths, opportunities, threats, and weaknesses applying to the field of tourism in the city.

‘In your opinion, what are the strengths of the city of Amasya? (You can choose up to 5 options.)’ when asked the most preferred five answers are as follows: ‘The city has a rich and deep history of 7500 years’ (19.0%), ‘The city is rich in terms of cultural and tourism values’ (15.3%), ‘Being one of the 15 branded cities determined by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism within the scope of tourism incentive, UNESCO Heritage List’ (13.8%), ‘The diversity of agricultural land in the city is high’ (6.9%), ‘The city has airport and intercity railway’ (6.7%) (Table 1).

Table 1. Strengths of the city of Amasya according to the SWOT analysis survey

Prefence Order	Strenghts	Number of People (n)	Percent (%)
1	The city has a rich and deep history of 7500 years	88	19.0
2	The city is rich in terms of cultural and tourism values	71	15.3
3	Being one of the 15 branded cities determined by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism within the scope of tourism incentive, UNESCO Heritage List	64	13.8
4	The diversity of agricultural land in the city is high	32	6.9
5	The city has airport and intercity railway	31	6.7
6	Euro-Iran International Transit Highway passing through the city	28	6.0
7	Crime rates and suicidal tendencies in the city are lower than other cities	25	5.4
8	The city has many thermal facilities in terms of the richness of underground water resources	24	5.2
9	The diversity of agricultural products in the city is high	22	4.7
10	The absence of unplanned urbanization and slum in the city	16	3.4
11	The city has bicycle routes	16	3.4
12	Having solid waste and waste water facilities	14	3.0
13	Having regular festivals every year	14	3.0
14	Use bicycles as an alternative means of transportation in the city	13	2.8
15	Having modern neighborhood markets	3	0.6
16	Other (architectural elements, having a rich geographical and cultural potential, religious tourism)	2	0.4
17	Having traditional cuisine based on local products	1	0.2
	TOTAL	464*	100.0

*Since the question had multiple answers, the number of people (N) exceeded the sample size.

'In your opinion, what are the weaknesses of the city of Amasya? (You can choose up to 5 options.)' when asked the most preferred five answers are as follows: 'Tourists do not stay in the city because the number of accommodation facilities in the city is low and the cost is high' (13.2%), 'The problem of settlement and urban traffic caused by the topography of the city' (11.9%), 'The

fact that institutions in the city (Municipality, Governorate, Provincial Culture and Tourism Directorate etc.) and non-governmental organizations do not cooperate on tourism' (10.0%), 'The people working in tourism do not know enough foreign language' (9.8%), 'There isn't any tourist information office, information boards or digital screens in the city' (9.6%) (Table 2).

Table 2. Weaknesses of the city of Amasya according to the SWOT analysis survey

Prefrence Order	Weaknesses	Number of People (n)	Percent (%)
1	Tourists do not stay in the city because the number of accommodation facilities in the city is low and the cost is high	62	13.2
2	Inadequate advertising of natural and cultural values (tourism)	61	13.0
3	The problem of settlement and urban traffic caused by the topography of the city	56	11.9
4	The fact that institutions in the city (Municipality, Governorate, Provincial Culture and Tourism Directorate etc.) and non-governmental organizations do not cooperate on tourism	47	10.0
5	The people working in tourism do not know enough foreign language	46	9.8
6	There isn't any tourist information office, information boards or digital screens in the city	45	9.6
7	Social life is not sufficiently developed and recreational activities are low	27	5.8
8	There isn't any rail system in urban transport	22	4.7
9	The lack of tourism types in the city	22	4.7
10	Few green areas in the city	22	4.7
11	The infrastructure of the city is weak	21	4.5
12	Yeşilirmak River not used in transportation	15	3.2
13	Not enough qualified personnel to provide quality service to tourists	12	2.6
14	Cannot find licensed guide in the city	6	1.3
15	Other (Urban traffic problem and inadequate parking areas arising from the geography of the city)	3	0.6
	Limited sports facilities for the elderly	2	0.4
	TOTAL	469*	100,0

*Since the question had multiple answers, the number of people (N) exceeded the sample size.

'In your opinion, what are the biggest opportunities for the city of Amasya? (You can choose up to 5 options.)' when asked the most preferred five answers are as follows: 'The city is rich in natural, cultural and historical landmarks' (19.0%), 'Having the Yeşilirmak River which is a natural corridor passing through the city' (16.2), 'Alternative tourism types (bicycle tourism, health and

thermal tourism, nature tourism, old and disabled tourism etc.)' (13.6%), 'The potential of local products to be brande' (13.0%), 'The potential to create a joint tourism destination with the provinces of Çorum, Tokat, and Samsun (TR83 Region)' (11.5%) (Table 3). The five most preferred responses are expected results.

Table 3. Opportunities of the city of Amasya according to the SWOT analysis survey

Prefrence Order	Opportunities	Number of People (n)	Percent (%)
1	The city is rich in natural, cultural and historical landmarks	88	19.0
2	Having the Yeşilirmak River which is a natural corridor passing through the city	75	16.2
3	Alternative tourism types (bicycle tourism, health and thermal tourism, nature tourism, old and disabled tourism etc.)	63	13.6
4	The potential of local products to be branded	60	13.0
5	The potential to create a joint tourism destination with the provinces of Çorum, Tokat, and Samsun (TR83 Region)	53	11.5
6	The number of tourists coming to the city will increase when Yeşilirmak Blowing Project is completed	51	11.0
7	Development of SPA & Wellness infrastructure in the city	32	6.9
8	Development of agricultural tourism by encouraging the citizens of the city	26	5.6
9	Recommend tourists to go to the bazaars	12	2.6
10	The growing importance of ethnic tourism in the world and in our country	2	0.4
	TOTAL	462*	100.0

*Since the question had multiple answers, the number of people (N) exceeded the sample size.

'In your opinion, what are the biggest threats to the city of Amasya? (You can choose up to 3 options.)' when asked the most preferred three answers are as follows: 'Insufficient professional preparation to provide quality

services for tourists' (21.8%), 'The deterioration of the historical texture' (21.4%), 'The proliferation of competitive provinces in tourism' (14.4) (Table 4). The three most preferred responses are expected results.

Table 4. Threats of the city of Amasya according to the SWOT analysis survey

Prefrence Order	Threats	Number of People (n)	Percent (%)
1	Insufficient professional preparation to provide quality services for tourists	62	21.8
2	The deterioration of the historical texture	61	21.4
3	The proliferation of competitive provinces in tourism	41	14.4
4	The tendency of the the population to erect multi-storey buildings	36	12.6
5	Opening of agricultural areas as residential area	36	12.6
6	Low income of residents	28	9.8
7	The danger of losing the traditional architectural texture	15	5.3
8	The lack of an agricultural policy in the country	4	1.4
9	Other (unplanned and incongruous construction, anxiety about new activities and museums, and avoiding construction incompatible with urban identity)	2	0.7
TOTAL		285*	100.0

*Since the question had multiple answers, the number of people (N) exceeded the sample size.

An examination of Tables 1-4 shows that the strengths of the city of Amasya in terms of tourism outnumbered its weaknesses. Considering the strengths, the city's 7500-year history and natural-cultural values constitute its strongest aspect. In addition, other strengths of the city include its status of one of the 15 Turkish 'brand cities', the presence of the European-Iranian International Highway, and its agricultural areas and the wide variety of agricultural products.

The weaknesses of the city in terms of tourism are the insufficient number of accommodation facilities in the city and their high cost, the lack of promotion and marketing, the lack of knowledge of foreign languages in the city and of those working in the tourism field, the lack of tourism information offices in the city, and the low number of tourism types in the city.

The city has a deep-rooted history of 7500 years and the tourism opportunities of the city include the Yeşilirmak River, which is a natural corridor rich in terms of natural and cultural assets. Among the threats to tourism in the city are the insufficient number of hotels for domestic and foreign tourists, the insufficient number of qualified personnel to serve tourists, and the limited financial resources for developing the tourism infrastructure in the city.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

By evaluating the city's strengths and weaknesses and analyzing future opportunities and threats, the SWOT analysis provides the local authorities with the opportunity to assess and manage current and future strategies and policies. From the SWOT analysis carried out for this purpose, it was concluded that although the

city of Amasya has a high tourism potential in terms of natural, historical, and cultural resources, it has not used its potential sufficiently.

Because Amasya has hosted many civilizations throughout its history and possesses rich natural, historical, and cultural assets, a culture of Ottoman cuisine, architectural structures from different periods, and bears the title of the 'City of Princes', the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, as part of Turkey's Tourism Strategy 2023, determined Amasya to be one of the 15 Turkish 'branded' cities.

The decision regarding tourism in the 1/100000-scale Amasya Province Environmental Plan (ÇDP 2015) recognizes the development and implementation of cultural tourism, which constitutes an important potential in the city. Where international interests are concentrated, it recognizes the development of natural springs for the health-thermal tourism that has emerged, along with the eco-tourism to be conducted in the unique wetlands. According to this, the necessary infrastructure and improvements in tourism will be realized in the central district, and an urban system will be developed to act as the center of the region's holistic tourism planning. Transportation connections have been established to integrate the various tourism types with each other with the aim of ensuring participation in social life within the framework of a protection-use balance. Under the plan, spatial decisions were also made, including decisions and strategies for the settlement and development areas and the areas detached from residential areas. In this context, these spatial decisions were made within the framework of the general approach regarding urban and rural

settlements, industry, tourism, basic equipment elements, and transportation.

Tourism is used as a tool in the regional development of cities. Tourism planning is carried out and tourism master plans are created for cities in order to reveal the goals to be achieved in the field of tourism within a certain period, the time required to achieve these goals, the financial conditions, and the correct planning decisions. The current tourism situation of the city of Amasya was revealed by conducting a SWOT survey. It was aimed at answering the following questions concerning tourism planning: 'Where are we now?', 'How can we get where we want to be?', and 'How can we understand that we have reached where we want to be?' The purpose of the SWOT survey was to determine the problems and opportunities in the field of tourism in the city and to address the problems detected in the field studies.

In this study, by examining the tourism SWOT surveys conducted by Aktan (1999), Yosmaoğlu and Engin (2002), Kansız et al. (2005), Dinçer and Dinçer (2006), European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development'ın (EAFRD 2014), a SWOT survey was prepared to reveal the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities of the city of Amasya and the threats it faced in the field of tourism. In order to objectively evaluate and discuss the SWOT survey, a workshop entitled "Evaluation of Amasya City Landscape Components in Terms of Tourism (AKPBTAD)" was held in the Büyük Amasya Hotel on 26 June 2018. The SWOT survey was conducted by taking the expert opinions of 95 authorities and specialists. The SWOT analysis is actually a current situation analysis and at the same time, an analysis technique used to predict what the future situation would be. Many institutions conduct SWOT analyses, not only for tourism but also for various other areas.

The SWOT survey, which was the qualitative research method used in the study, determined the problems and opportunities in the field of tourism in the city and examined the problems identified in the field studies. The SWOT survey was objectively evaluated by using the workshop technique.

In conclusion, the city of Amasya has been shown to have sufficient resources for the tourism field. In order to use these resources effectively and efficiently, it is necessary to examine the weaknesses revealed by the SWOT analysis and to produce appropriate solutions. When planning for future tourism, it is important to take into account the strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities and threats of the SWOT analysis for the

development of both local people and tourism in the city. In addition to good planning, strategies should be determined that make the best use of the opportunities revealed in the SWOT analysis.

In addition to its natural, historical, and cultural characteristics, Amasya is known as a city rich in touristic resources such as an enticing array of local handicrafts and culinary delicacies. In addition, although Amasya is suitable for alternative tourism types such as religious, health, thermal, nature, and botanical tourism, these were evaluated as being insufficient to boost its tourism potential. Despite the weaknesses and threats to the city, the statistics of the Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism clearly show an increase in the number of tourists visiting the province. Therefore, by using the existing resources of the city more effectively and giving importance to promoting and reviving alternative types of tourism, an increase in the number of tourists coming to the city and the prolonging of their accommodation periods and subsequent expenditures can be achieved.

It is hoped that future studies may benefit from the findings and recommendations obtained in this study and that it may contribute to boosting the tourist corridors in the city.

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