



## Determination of Trailer Park Criteria in Rural Areas\*\*

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### Abstract

The aim of the present study is to determine the important criteria in the planning of trailer parks (caravan parks) in rural destinations based on expert opinions. The present research is an exploratory study, originated from the need to deeply understand and examine a social phenomenon. Delphi technique was used in systematically determining the trailer park criteria based on the consensus reached through expert opinions. Face-to-face interviews were conducted during the first round of the research, in which 19 experts were consulted, and expert evaluation forms were used in the second and third rounds. The main criteria determined for trailer parks were the environmental and natural, recreation activities, recreational elements and the socio-cultural. Based on the outcomes of the present study, it was observed that socio-cultural stood out as a new factor, whereas transport and accessibility were not among the trailer parks criteria. The present study focused on the travel requirements of short-term caravanners (trailer campers) and the basic services that should be provided in trailer camps. In this respect, the present research provides the basic criteria necessitated by trailers in rural destinations, moreover, defines the key criteria that separate trailer parks from campgrounds.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Rural areas are exceptional areas where various individuals are offered a longed-for lifestyle, such as being in touch with nature, or short-term experiences within the tourism context (Çakır and Ergüven, 2016, p. 184). Tourism investments were gradually shifted to the rural areas and the green texture with the intent to provide services for the tourists who prefer nature tourism, and to ensure the growth of the market. Currently, tourism investors capitalize in ecological accommodation facilities that do not harm the nature rather than the profitable, yet natural life deteriorating investments, such as five-star accommodations, resorts, summer luxury sites in rural destinations with tourism attractions. One of such investment alternatives is trailer parks. Trailers are considered as one of the most important accommodation alternatives in trailer camps where the required infrastructure services are provided. In contrast to the hotels frequently preferred in mass tourism, trailers offer an alternative inexpensive accommodation model that preserves the balance of nature and provides a natural outlook without concrete buildings. Trailers produced for touristic purposes are specially manufactured recreational vehicles for traveling, camping and short and long-term accommodation and are self-propelled mobile structures built directly on a chassis that includes an engine and gear system. This mobile structure, constructed on the chassis, could also be towed by an automobile (Davidson, 1973, p. 4). Campers who act with various motivations such as to get away from stressful urban environment, to be independent of fixed spaces, to be alone in nature, to spend a free holiday, to discover new places often travel to camping with qualifications that meet their requirements and these destinations are described with the words 'camp grounds' under the title of 'camping tourism'. Today, however, the increase in the number of trailer parks that provide special services to those traveling with trailers and participation of these individuals in tourism movements with different motivations increased the requirement to investigate caravanning tourism as a separate form of tourism.

While the natural and cultural landscape characteristics of recreation areas are subject to many studies; the characteristics of potential trailer parks have been found in very few studies. The fact that the trailer parks are generally established in the recreation areas reveals that the characteristics required for the recreation areas also apply to the trailer parks. However, it is seen in the literature that trailer parks have some characteristics different from recreation areas (Altan, 2007: 37-38). It is also important that these different features are brought together and resolved and a consensus is reached. In this context, it is aimed to determine the basic criteria that the trailer parks should have by benefiting from the expertise of individuals who have experience and knowledge in the field of caravanning.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Caravanning Tourism**

Trailers, which were considered as a popular entertainment activity by the gypsies for traveling across Europe during the 1880s (Patterson, Pegg and Mahadevan, 2015, p. 539), is currently defined as a type of tourism, in which the basic accommodation used for travelling is a trailer (Prideaux and McClymont, 2006). Patterson et al. (2015) described caravanning tourism as a special type of tourism where trailers serve a dual purpose for providing both

transportation and accommodation. Based on the above-mentioned descriptions, it is possible to consider caravanning tourism as one of the nature-based tourism types where the trailer is used for both transportation and accommodation.

The main resources in destinations that host caravanning tourism include the natural environment. Therefore, it could be observed that the general characteristics of caravanning tourism are closely associated with the natural environment. In this context, the most important characteristics of caravanning tourism include an opportunity to live in nature, to raise environmental awareness, to provide economic contribution to the region, the freedom to stop at a desired location, participation by individuals of all ages, to bring people with similar hobbies together, its availability in all seasons, and to create a new and mobile accommodation capacity. The increasing significance of natural and cultural values in developed countries due to industrialization accelerated the development of caravanning tourism. In European countries such as England, Italy, France, Germany and Croatia, where trailers initially developed as an accommodation model, camping and caravanning tourism hold an important share in tourism revenues and overall accommodation facilities. France is the leader of the segment with 109.7 million overnight stays and is followed by Italy (52.9 million), England (50.2 million) and Germany (46.9 million) (civd.de). In 2016, 17.4 million overnight stays and 2.6 million trailer entries were recorded in Croatia, accounting for the 22.40% of the overall accommodation (as cited in Cvelić-Bonifačić, Milohnić and Cerović, 2017, p. 102).

Germany, which is among the world countries with a developed caravanning tourism, ranks the first in trailer production. According to 2016 European statistics, the number of motor trailers used in Germany is 470.000 and the number of tow trailers is 890.000. France ranks second (touring trailers in use: 845.000, motor trailers in use 436.100). The trailer industry, with high sales figures in 2017 in Europe, also realized high sales figures in the first four months of 2018. During this period, the number of recently registered trailers increased to 76,000 by a growth of 8.7 percent for the overall European market (European Caravan Federation, 2018). According to the European Caravan Federation (ECF), European trailer industry revenues were € 18.7 billion in 2015 (civd.de). Although camping culture barely exists in Turkey, in fact, traveling with trailers dates back to 1950s, thus the first tourism movements to tourist destinations were conducted with trailers. BP Mocamps facilities were initially built next to gas stations in early 1960's in Turkey and hosted several foreign and domestic campers. Trailers are classified as special purpose vehicles with fire engines, ambulances and armored vehicles in Turkey. Thus, although the number of trailers in use is not available, it is known that the number is far behind the European figures. The most important reasons for the lack of development of caravanning tourism in Turkey include the lack of camping culture, lack of demand, low number of licensed camping facilities, low service quality in available facilities, and high tax rates for trailers (Doğantan, 2014).

## **Camping**

Literature review revealed that camps are frequently described as touristic facilities that offer various accommodation alternatives such as tents, bungalows, huts and trailers (Collins and Kearns, 2010; Brooker and Joppe, 2013). Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Turkey defines campgrounds as “the facilities with at least ten units that are established in places of natural attractions such as the seas, lakes and mountains around and in close

vicinity of the motorway routes and usually meet the needs of the customers through their own facilities such as overnight stays, food and beverage, recreation and sports” (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism).

Campgrounds were considered to be places for a spiritual recovering and change, as a result of a prolonged stay in the nature (Jurđana, Milohnic and Cvelic-Bonifacic, 2009). Currently, campgrounds meet the travel requirements of campers with various motivations, such as escaping from the usual everyday routine (Holdnak and Rodgers, 2004; White and White, 2004), freedom (Winter, 2005; Mikkelsen and Cohen, 2015), experiencing the nature (Garst, Williams and Roggenbuck, 2010; Ahn and Lee, 2015), being a part of a social group (Patterson et al., 2015) and recreation (Hassell, Moore and Macbeth, 2015).

Relevant literature indicates that it is possible to categorize the campground attributes as “facilities”, “natural resources and attractions”, “good staff”, “accessibility”, “sustainability”, “recreational activities” and “economic service opportunities”. In this context, the “facilities” category comprises recreational services that meet the needs of campers such as pool (Holdnak and Rodgers, 2004; Warnken, Bradley and Guilding, 2005), laundry (Warnken et al., 2005), conference (Warnken et al., 2005), restaurant (Warnken et al., 2005), beach, sport courts (Holdnak and Rodgers, 2004), cleaning services (White, Richardson, Evesson, McGinley, Lang and Francas, 2007) and accommodation alternatives (Collins and Kearns, 2010, Caldicott and Scherrer, 2013; Birdir, Unur and Dalgıç, 2015). “Natural resources and attractions” include natural landscape elements such as visibility ponds, lakes and rivers for campers (Choi and Dawson, 2002), natural environment (Winter, 2005; Viallon, 2012; Wu and Pearce, 2014; Dođantan, Gülenç and Kozak, 2017; Şalk, Dumanlı and Körođlu, 2018) and climate (Hewer, Scott and Gough, 2015). “Staff” category comprises both the abilities of the employees and their friendly approach to campers (Hayllar, Crilley, Bell and Archer, 2006; Breen, Seers, Robert, Elspeth and Carlsen, 2006; Fjelstul, Wang and Li, 2012; Severt and Fjelstul, 2015; Brochado and Pereira, 2017). “Accessibility” is related to being close to urban development (Reed and Greenhalgh, 2004), distance (Sildoja and Eagles, 2004, Cheng, 2016), access (Winter, 2005), good location near attractions and recreational activities (White, Richardson, Evesson, McGinley, Lang and Francas, 2007) and being close to nature (Birdir et al., 2015). “Safety” is related to ensuring safety in the campgrounds (Winter, 2005, White et. al., 2007; Mikulić, Prebežac, Šerić, and Krešić, 2017). “Sustainability” includes elements based on supply creation through considering the balance between the utilization and preservation in campgrounds via concepts such as recycle, reuse, low energy consumptive (Poudel, 2013) and ecological standards (Mikulić et. al., 2017). “Recreational activities” includes indoor and outdoor activities provided in the campgrounds (Holdnak and Rodgers, 2004; Fjelstul et al., 2012, Wellner, 2015; Mikulić et. al., 2017; Şalk et. al., 2018). “Economic service opportunities” include economic factors such as low cost (Collins and Kearns, 2010; Templeton, Fjelstul, Severt and Shin, 2017). Trailer parks are described as touristic facilities that serve only trailers and provide temporary accommodation, different from the camping.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In creation of competitive supply elements in rural destinations, it is necessary to take the tourist profile and motivations as well as the visitor requirements into account. Thus, the present study aimed to determine the destination elements that are important in the development of trailer parks in rural destinations based on expert opinion. The present research is an exploratory study, originated from the need to deeply understand and examine a

social phenomenon. The Delphi technique was used to determine the trailer park criteria. Delphi technique is defined as a tool of consensus that systematically obtains expert opinions on a problem (Dalkey and Helmer, 1963, p. 15; Dalkey, 1969; Young and Jamieson, 2001). It is indicated that three rounds are sufficient for obtaining information and reaching a consensus as a result of the Delphi technique (Linstone and Turoff, 1975 as cited in Ludwig, 1994, p. 75). The most frequently preferred Delphi method is to form the open-ended questions in the first round and to prepare subsequent rounds questionnaire in line with the data obtained from the first round (Aydın, 1999, p. 233; Custer Scarcella and Stewart, 1999). Statistical analyzes are performed at the end of each round and the results are shared with the participants. Thus, individuals have the opportunity to reconsider their opinions through comparing their results with the different approaches communicated to them (Dalkey, 1969, p. 16).

## **Sample**

Purposive sampling method, of the non-probability sampling types, was preferred in the present study due to its effectiveness compared to random sampling for the selection of panel members (experts) that participated in Delphi rounds (Tongco, 2007). It was stated that the number of experts sufficient for sample selection was 11 to 20 (Crouch and McKenzie, 2006; Guest, Bunce and Johnson, 2006; Latham, 2013). The term “expert” in the Delphi method refers to participants with “the competence and position to express ideas about the subject” as well as “being knowledgeable” about the subject of the research (Hasson et al., 2000, 1010). An optimal sample size of 19 individuals, from the members of 6 associations affiliated to the Turkey Camping and Caravanning Federation (F.I.C.C.) management and federation, was considered as the panel participants of the present study with the intent to benefit from their experience and expertise on trailer activities. The first round of face-to-face interviews with the participants were carried out at the Third Taraklı Caravanning Festival, with the participation of members of the National Camping and Caravan Federation and affiliated associations. The second and third rounds were carried out through e-mail.

The interview questions of the first round of Delphi were formed based on the criteria derived from the literature and the evaluation form for the forest recreations developed by Gülez (1990) and Altan (1976). According to the F.I.C.C. recommendations and the camping operating standards, the factors that should be present in the campground are vegetation diversity, suitable climate, natural attractions, resources for potable and usable water, accessibility to large cities, smooth road conditions, security, toilet, shower, sports facility and food and beverage services. The outcomes of the studies conducted on camp and recreation areas indicated that individuals considered environmental factors such as security, environmental cleanliness and noise significant (Van Hyfte, 2009; Topay and Koçan, 2009; Mikulić et. al., 2017). Sports activities, on the other hand, stood out as activities that could be carried out by the caravanners within the framework of opportunities offered by the environment (Timothy and Teye, 2009; Gračan, Zadel and Birin, 2010, p. 83; Caldicott, 2011, p. 77). It was observed that natural resources were primary and secondary important factors in determining a region as a recreation area or campground (Wilgar, 1972, p. 53; Gülez, 1990, pp. 135-136; Winter, 2005; Topay and Koçan, 2009; Viallon, 2012, Wu and Pearce, 2014; Doğantan et. al., 2017; Şalk et al., 2018). Natural and cultural resources, food and beverage and shopping were determined as significant attraction factors for caravanners (Prideaux and McClymont, 2006, p. 45). Since the stance of local community and administrators is significant for introducing a particular region to tourism (Cengiz and Kırkbir, 2007, p. 20), it was assumed that such

dimension could be considered important for trailer parks as well. 12 semi-structured interview questions were prepared for the interview questionnaire form to be used in the first round, through considering the “natural, environmental, transportation and accessibility, cultural and creative elements” that could be essential for introducing an area to caravanning tourism. At the end of the first Delphi round, an expert evaluation form was prepared to be used in the second and third Delphi rounds with respect to the determined themes and sub-themes and the experts were asked to evaluate the items based on their importance and score each item with the scale “1= Not important at all ... 5= Highly important”.

**Analysis**

Content analysis was used for the analysis and evaluation of the first round Delphi results. In the content analysis, a deductive approach is followed, themes related to the subject of research are developed and then the words and sentences referring to these themes are counted (Silverman, 2001). “Words” and “sentences” were used as the analysis units in creating meaningful expressions and concepts through the analysis of the obtained data and later in classifying the data under relevant themes. During the second and third rounds, the central tendency was determined based on the median, while the interquartile deviation (IQD) was used to determine the degree of consensus. Several diverse methods are utilized in order to determine the degree of consensus in Delphi studies. There exists no standard measurement tool used for consensus. Binning, Cochran and Donatelli (1972) stated that the median provided better results than arithmetic mean in the Delphi method given the case of distortion. Interquartile deviation (IQD) is one of the commonly used methods for determining the median central tendency. Raskin (1994) stated that the interquartile deviation ( $IDQ=Q_3-Q_1$ ) in Delphi with a value equal to or less than 1 was the sign of a consensus. Several studies, which employ interquartile deviation (IQD) as the criterion of consensus accepted the equality  $IQD \leq 1$  as the presence of consensus (Rayens and Hahn, 2000, Raskin, 1994). The present study used the median (M) for the determination of the central tendency and IQD for determining the degree of consensus in the Delphi rounds.

**FINDINGS**

**First Stage Delphi Results**

**Table 1:** Themes Determined by Experts in the First Round

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
<b>Natural</b>	Vegetation (f: 25), climatic conditions (f: 10), water resources (f: 23), surface condition (f: 12), natural visual values (f: 23)
<b>Socio-cultural</b>	Archaeological remains (f: 19), attitude of local people towards tourism (f: 23)
<b>Transportation and accessibility</b>	Distance to large cities (f: 14), physical condition of roads (f: 10)
<b>Recreative elements</b>	Proximity to villages etc. in order to meet needs (f: 17), having the supply of as electricity and water and common areas such as laundry areas and gravel areas (f:17)
<b>Environmental</b>	Noise (f: 23), pollution caused by mines, constructions and factory wastes (f:23), safety (f: 16)
<b>Recreation activities</b>	Outdoor activities (f: 16), baths and thermal (f: 13).

f: frequency

Table 1 presents the results of the analysis of the first-round semi-structured interview questions.

The vast majority of experts considered that a region comprising a forest or tree flora was important. Since the caravanning tourism could take place during all four seasons and preference regarding the climate could exhibit individual variations, experts did not consider climate conditions highly significant. However, they considered the existence of potable and usable water resources in the region significant. It was considered important that the parking spaces were appropriately leveled since kitchen equipment and beds in the caravans should remain in balance. Although experts did not attach primary significance to archaeological remains and outdoor recreation activities, they considered such assets as attractive elements. Furthermore, potential sceneries and bird's eye views from the trailer parks were considered significant by the experts. Given that trailers are motor vehicles and capable of reaching long destinations in a short time the experts did not ascribe any importance to the proximity with large cities. Those who supported the good physical condition of roads emphasized that the roads should be dust and mud free and available for heavy tonnage. The experts considered that roads in good condition would facilitate higher number of individuals visiting the region and such population could result in environmental pollution. Lack of noise, pollution, mines, constructions and factory wastes in the immediate surroundings were considered significant by the experts. Since caravanning tourism is a type of accommodation that is usually carried out with families, the experts also took the security issues into consideration. The experts also anticipated that the local community had the ability to empathize, be friendly, be pleasant, treat tourists fair and not to be conservative and negative. According to the experts, although the trailers have waste water reservoirs, there has to be a waste water reservoir for long-term stays in the trailer park as well. Moreover, having the supply of as electricity and water and common areas such as laundry areas and gravel areas were mentioned among other requirements.

### **Second Stage Delphi Results**

The second round was carried through e-mail correspondence with the participants of the study, in order to receive participant evaluations on the 31 items determined via the content analysis conducted on the data of the first round. According to the outcomes of the second round the data was reduced and the third-round questionnaire form was prepared. First Quartile (Q1) and Third Quartile (Q3) results, which were calculated to observe the degree of consensus for the expert opinions on each item during the second round of the study and the median (M) values, which indicate the central tendency and which were ranked in a descending order were presented in Table 2. 79% of the experts participated in the second round of the study (n=19). Experts reached a consensus on 16 of the 31 items (52%) at the end of this round. The number of items that were not reached a consensus upon was 11 (35%). The number of items with a median value less than 3 is 4 (13%). Moreover, a consensus was reached on two of these items stating that these items were insignificant.

**Table 2:** Consensus Status Based on Second-Round Criteria

Criteria	Mdn	Q <sub>1</sub>	Q <sub>3</sub>	IQD	Consensus
Lack of noise, pollution, mines, constructions and factory wastes in the immediate surroundings	5	5	5	0	√
Lack of environmental noise	5	5	5	0	√
Appropriate terrain slope in trailer parks	5	4	5	1	√
Positive attitude of local community towards tourism	5	4	5	1	√
Having no mines in the immediate surroundings	5	4	5	1	√
The existence of fountains and potable water resources	5	4	5	1	√
Having no security problems in the region	5	4	5	1	√
A calm and silent region	5	4	5	1	√
Facilities for waste water disposal	5	4	5	1	√
Being close to water resources such as lakes, ponds, rivers and sea	5	3	5	2	χ
Being a forest and green area	4	4	5	1	√
Having the opportunity to socialize with the local community	4	4	5	1	√
Toilet and shower facilities	4	3	5	2	χ
Having scenery	4	4	5	1	√
Being in close proximity with settlements such as villages, where exists shopping facilities such as grocery stores and greengrocers	4	2	5	3	χ
Open spaces to take advantage of solar energy	4	3	5	2	χ
Good physical conditions of the surrounding roads	4	3	5	2	χ
Supply for electricity	3	3	4	1	√
Existence of a washing machine in the trailer park	3	1	5	4	χ
Temperate climatic conditions	3	2	4	2	χ
Existence of archaeological remains in the area	3	3	4	1	√
Opportunities to try local flavors	3	3	3	0	√
Gravel covered ground for trailer parking	3	2	4	2	χ
Importance of weather conditions	3	2	4	2	χ
Potential bird's eye views from the trailer parks	3	2	4	2	χ
Existence of outdoor activities	3	2	3	1	√
Trailer parks being on a public transportation route	3	2	4	2	χ
Being in a close proximity to large cities	2	1	3	2	χ
Existence of baths and spas in the region	2	2	3	1	√
Existence of a tourism information office in the immediate surroundings	2	1	3	2	χ
Existence of a large shopping center in close proximity	1	1	2	1	√

Mdn: Median, Q<sub>1</sub>: First quartile, Q<sub>3</sub>: Third quartile, IQD: Interquartile deviation  
 √: Consensus, χ: No Consensus

**Third Stage Delphi Results**

The findings regarding the items that were reduced to 27 based on the outcomes of the second-round expert evaluations were presented in Table 3. At the end of this round, potential trailer parks criteria were determined by the experts. 78% of the experts participated in the third Delphi round (n=18). While the second round yielded a consensus on 16 items, a further agreement was achieved on 21 items (78%) in the third round, adding 5 more items

to the consensus. No consensus was reached for 6 items (22%). It was stated that, usually in homogeneous groups, the targeted number of items in Delphi was between 10 and 15 (cited by Hsu and Brian, 2007, p. 3).

**Table 3:** Consensus Status Based on Third-Round Criteria

Criteria	Mdn	Q <sub>1</sub>	Q <sub>3</sub>	IQD	Consensus
Lack of noise, pollution, mines, constructions and factory wastes in the immediate surroundings	5	5	5	0	√
Lack of environmental noise	5	4.75	5	0.25	√
Appropriate terrain slope in trailer parks	5	4	5	1	√
Positive attitude of local community towards tourism	5	4	5	1	√
Having no mines in the immediate surroundings	5	4	5	1	√
The existence of fountains and potable water resources	5	4	5	1	√
Having no security problems in the region	5	4	5	1	√
A calm and silent region	5	4	5	1	√
Facilities for waste water disposal	5	4	5	1	√
Being close to water resources such as lakes, ponds, rivers and sea	5	4	5	1	√
Being a forest and green area	4	4	5	1	√
Having the opportunity to socialize with the local community	4	4	5	1	√
WC and shower facilities	4	4	5	1	√
Having scenery	4	4	5	1	√
Being in close proximity with settlements such as villages, where exists shopping facilities such as grocery stores and greengrocers	4	3	4	1	√
Open spaces to take advantage of solar energy	4	3	4.25	1.25	χ
Good physical conditions of the surrounding roads	4	3	4.25	1.25	χ
Supply for electricity	3	3	4	1	√
Existence of a washing machine and dish washer in the trailer park	3	1.75	5	3.25	χ
Temperate climatic conditions	3	3	4	1	√
Existence of archaeological remains in the area	3	3	4	1	√
Opportunities to try local flavors	3	3	3.25	0.25	√
Gravel covered ground for trailer parking	3	2.75	3	0.25	√
Importance of weather conditions	3	2	4	2	χ
Potential bird's eye views (panoramic) from the trailer parks	3	2	3.25	1.25	χ
Existence of outdoor activities	3	3	4	1	√
Trailer parks being on a public transportation route	3	1.75	3	1.25	χ

Mdn: Median, Q<sub>1</sub>: First quartile, Q<sub>3</sub>: Third quartile, IQD: Interquartile deviation

√: Consensus, χ: No Consensus

According to the expert opinions participated the Delphi study, an area that would be introduced to caravanning tourism should include the criteria, primarily, classified under “environment” and “nature” dimensions, and in “socio-cultural”, “recreational activities” and “recreative elements” dimensions. The criteria for trailer parks, ranked based on median values, were presented in the below table.

**Table 4:** The Criteria for Trailer Parks

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Mdn</b>
Environment	Lack of environmental, factory and construction waste pollution	5
	Lack of environmental noise	5
	Being located in a calm and silent region	5
	Having no mines in the immediate surroundings	5
	Having no problematic issues regarding safety in the region	5
Natural	Being a zone with forests and green areas	4
	Having the appropriate terrain slope	5
	Being close to water resources such as lakes, ponds, rivers and sea	5
	Having a scenery	4
	Having temperate climatic conditions	3
Socio-cultural	a positive attitude of local community towards tourism	5
	Having the opportunity to socialize with the local community	4
	Having archeological remains in the immediate surroundings	3
	Being able to experience local flavors	3
Recreational activities	Facilitating outdoor activities	3
Recreative elements	The opportunity of waste water disposal	4
	The opportunity of toilets and showers	4
	Having potable and usable water in the immediate surroundings	5
	Having access to electricity	3
	Gravel covered ground for trailer parking	3
	Being in close proximity with settlements such as villages, where exists shopping facilities such as grocery stores and greengrocers	3

**CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION**

In the present study, conducted with the aim to determine the criteria for trailer parks in rural destinations and to reach a consensus on the issue, based on expert opinions, the main criteria were found to be structured as follows; primarily “environmental” and “natural” and further “recreation activities”, “recreative elements” and “socio-cultural”. While “socio-cultural” stood out as a new factor according to the results of the present study, “transportation and accessibility” was not considered as significant trailer park criterion.

As is known, the attractiveness of a region and the activities it offers are among the most important factors that affect the preference of the tourists to visit a destination. Thus, the landscape elements and available activities in trailer parks are important elements of attraction. Previous studies demonstrated that campgrounds that offer various accommodation alternatives such as bungalows and tents should possess similar qualities. Therefore, it is possible to consider “environmental” and “natural” conditions as common criteria that all tourism destinations should have. However, due to their extreme sensitivity for the environment, of the caravanners reject concrete construction that may harm the natural texture of the environment.

As is known, one of the characteristics of rural destinations is the fact that these regions are untouched and without infrastructure development. The main requirements for meeting the infrastructure requirements for trailer parks in these destinations include electric power, water and toilets. In this context, the sub-criteria such as “appropriate terrain

slope in trailer parks”, “facilities for waste water disposal and electricity demand”, “gravel covered ground for trailer parking” determined in the present study are considered quite important for trailer parks technical infrastructure and equipment. Furthermore, these sub-criteria are among the main technical criteria that distinguish trailer parks from other camping facilities.

‘Socio-cultural’ is among the significant factor that attract caravanners to the destinations. This factor differentiates caravanners from other campers. While the studies demonstrated that ordinary campers considered the friendly approach of the campgrounds employees more important than the attitudes of the local residents (Hayllar et al., 2006; Shin, Severt and Fjelstul, 2017), caravanners consider the positive approaches of local residents towards tourism more important. This is due to the fact caravanners consider trailer parks as areas where they could park rather than permanent spaces. Thus, taking advantage of the fact that trailers are motor vehicles, their desire to travel often over short distances and to integrate with the local residents prevail. Although accessibility is one of the most important components of tourism products, research demonstrated that “transport and accessibility” was not among the criterion for trailer parks. Unlike other campers who prefer to stay within the campgrounds, good road conditions are not important for caravanners and they even consider the difficulty of transportation as an advantage in preserving the natural properties of the region. This is due to the fact that caravanners prefer to be alone and their motivation to escape is predominant.

The present study focused on the needs of caravanners, as well as the basic services that should be provided in trailer parks. Thus, it was observed that the study also revealed the key criteria that distinguished trailer parks from campgrounds. It was determined that trailer parks that would be developed based on the criteria determined in the present study would encourage visitors to become an important part of the camping culture and would also contribute to the development of caravanning tourism in rural destinations. Furthermore, a potential trailer park evaluation form could be developed based on the main and sub-criteria determined in the present study. The form, which could be developed by weighting the criteria based on significance, is considered to be used as a guide in assessing the suitability of the destination for trailer parks, especially within the context of rapid rural assessment.

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