



## Evaluation of Tourism Potential of Sinop Destination With SWOT Analysis

\* Aydın ÜNAL <sup>a</sup> , Serap İNCEÖZ <sup>b</sup> , Onur ÇELEN <sup>c</sup> , Emre ÇİLESİZ <sup>d</sup> 

<sup>a</sup> Sinop University, School of Tourism and Hotel Management, Department of Recreation Management, Sinop/Turkey

<sup>b</sup> Sivas Cumhuriyet University, Cumhuriyet Vocational High School of Social Sciences, Department of Hotel, Restaurant and Catering Services, Sivas/Turkey

<sup>c</sup> Bursa Uludağ University, Harmancık Vocational High School, Department of Hotel, Restaurant and Catering Services, Bursa/Turkey

<sup>d</sup> Sinop University, School of Tourism and Hotel Management, Department of Tourism Guidance, Sinop/Turkey

### Article History

Received: 24.04.2022

Accepted: 20.06.2022

### Keywords

Turizm

SWOT Analiz

Sinop

Türkiye

### Abstract

The Black Sea region is one of the regions of Turkey that draws attention with its natural beauties and history. It is extremely important to investigate the tourism potential of Sinop which is shown among the cities that attract attention with its unique structure, originality and historical-cultural beauties in the Black Sea region. Sinop is accepted as the happiest and most livable area of Turkey. The main purpose of the research is to determine the tourism potential of Sinop in terms of tourism. In line with the determined purpose, SWOT analysis was carried out according to the researches made on this subject in the literature and the information on the official website of the Sinop Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism. As a result of the SWOT analysis it has been determined that Sinop has a lot of strengths in tourism and has the necessary resources for culture and nature tourism. It has been concluded that the bed capacity of Sinop should be strengthened and the related situation constitutes the weak side of Sinop. Regarding the opportunities, it has been determined that it is suitable for the development of new types of tourism as it is suitable for activities such as photography and sailing. The presence of stronger and more well-known destinations around Sinop seems to be a serious threat for Sinop.

### Article Type

Research Article

\* Sorumlu Yazar

E-posta: aydin-unal@hotmail.com.tr (A. Ünal)

DOI:10.21325/jotags.2022.1043

## INTRODUCTION

Various alternative tourism potentials that can be experienced in different experiences and seasons are of great importance. At the same time, by increasing the number of days of stay, tourists should be able to spend more time in the region. In parallel with this tourists who spend money will create an important demand for employment and marketing local products for the local people economically. For example; recently, the growth in faith tourism has been surprising when compared to other tourism markets (Özmen and Eren, 2021, p. 64). Tourism potential, a concept that was introduced in the early 1980s and started to be used to describe tourism projects that are generally small-scale, less important and largely involving the local population is mostly used to express preferred strategies against mass tourism (Aytuğ et al., 2020, p. 716). In addition to the grants, incentives and loans given by the European Union, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, development agencies, various public and non-governmental organizations to support the studies in the field of rural tourism, supporting elements such as sectoral trainings and labor force have brought mobility to tourism activities in various provinces. This mobility is also a great economic opportunity for regions that have a great tourism potential with their location and existing resources and have not yet completed their infrastructure and superstructure development or have not found any entrepreneurs in the field of tourism before. It is only possible for developing countries to increase their share in the tourism market by diversifying the tourism products they offer (İpar & Tırıl, 2014, p. 45). Analyzing local resources, planning, creating a strategy and branding have been frequently used regional development concepts recently. However, as in every field, it is a fact that resources are scarce and intense competition is experienced in attracting limited resources in the field of urban and local development. Therefore, there is no doubt that provinces that adopt the right strategy to use limited resources effectively and fulfill the conditions of being a brand have a higher chance of development than others. Along with the developing tourism, the tourism sector has the feature of being the priority or the only sector for the development of many regions, provinces and regions (Met, 2012, p. 164).

It is seen that the first traces of settlement in Sinop, which has a very important place in the Black Sea geography and hosted many civilizations throughout history, date back to the Chalcolithic period (4500-3000 BC). The city, which is one of the important natural ports in the Black Sea, has had a bright and intense commercial and cultural life since ancient times. The province, which preserved its importance in the Byzantine, Seljuk, Çandaroğlu and Ottoman administrations and was one of the most important military bases of the region with its castle and shipyard until the Sinop Raid (1853) during the Ottoman Empire, lost its importance in the following process (Aytuğ et al. 2020, p. 716). It is its geographical location that has made Sinop so indispensable for centuries, where different civilizations have met since the Bronze Age. Throughout history, Sinop has attracted attention with its strong castle, natural harbor and nature. Province; Hamsilos Nature Park has three unique harbors, namely Hamsilos Bay (Hamsaroz) and Akliman Bay. Area; it is one of the most important destinations of the region with its marsh, dune and forest areas and rich biodiversity (Kargiglioğlu & Arifuddin, 2020, p. 369). In this context, one of the most important economic activities in Sinop today draws attention as tourism. However, due to the shortness of the summer season, a tourism season such as June, July, August and September, which lasts for a maximum of four months, limits the tourism-based development of the province (Aytuğ & Uçar, 2019, p. 49). In the context of this information, the main purpose of the research is to determine the tourism potential of Sinop province with SWOT analysis. In line with the determined purpose, first of all, the concept of tourism destination and its importance were mentioned in

order to draw a conceptual framework. Afterwards, a SWOT analysis was carried out for the touristic values and potential of Sinop.

## Conceptual Framework

### Tourism Destination Concept and Its Importance

The destination is of French origin and its dictionary meaning is explained as “destination place” (TDK, 2019). In the definition of tourism doctrine, the places where individuals leave their places and travel to participate in tourism activities are called destinations (Kozak, 2013). Destinations; they are attractive geographical places where people can stay temporarily for many different reasons such as facilities, superstructure, infrastructure, attractiveness and resources (Pike, 2004). The destination is primarily considered as a system that includes inputs and outputs, as well as the people, the services provided and the business areas (Kocaman, 2012). In addition, it can be a destination, or even a vehicle that acts like a cruise ship from several places within the scope of a tour (Holloway, 1989). However, in terms of its destination structure, it has a complex structure consisting of tourism businesses, local people and local governments together with its tourism attractions (Özdemir, 2007). For the tourism industry, Morrison (2013) defines a destination as “a geographical area with definite boundaries, where accommodation, food, beverage and other touristic opportunities are offered, marketed and attracting tourists” in his famous study. Destinations all over the world should have the capacity to provide high quality services to visitors and contain catchy and interesting elements, meeting all their needs (Mogollon, 2014). Kılıç and Akyurt (2011) define the destination as a region as a touristic product for visitors. According to Coltman (1989), the concept of destination is places that are seen as attractive to tourists and contain natural attractions. Kotler (1993) argues that the success of the destination will be determined by meeting the demands and wishes of the target audience living in the current region, namely the local people and investors. Destinations; continents, countries, states, cities and villages are places that attract visitors for short-term stays and include designed holiday regions with a certain feature at very different scales (Pike, 2004). It is a natural beauty and attraction area offered to foreign and domestic tourists or attracting the attention of excursionists (Kozak, 2013). A touristic destination is an area that attracts tourists and eventually becomes the destination of their travel. In addition, it should have attractive elements such as activities, facilities and organizations that will meet the touristic needs of this region (Türkay, 2014). In the study of Atay (2003) touristic destination; “touristic destination is defined as a geographical region that has various touristic values and features and can offer all or some of the touristic products that the tourist may need during his trip”. A touristic destination is a complex product that brings together all of the direct or indirect tourism services provided by many private and public institutions that create tourism demand and host tourists. Although these features make destinations an extremely important element in terms of the tourism sector, it also highlights the fact that it is extremely difficult to create and market touristic products (Özdemir, 2007). In order for a region or destination to find a place in tourism, it must have certain characteristics. These qualities are listed as follows (Kozak et al., 2008; Türkay & Çoban, 2013):

- Attractiveness (nature, climatic conditions, socio-cultural factors, economic and psychological);
- Accessibility (air, land, sea and rail);
- Tourism enterprises (accommodation, restaurants, tourism organizations, shopping, sports resources);
- Events (festival, congress, fair, festival, festival and carnival) and
- Image.

Attractiveness is an important feature that reveals the physical and cultural values in a destination and has the highest effect on the choice of destination by tourists. Usta (2008) emphasizes that touristic attractions are the elements that form the basis of the interest and demand of a country, region or touristic business and that provide tourist mobility. Accessibility is basically provided in four ways. These are the general and common forms of transport, namely air transport, road transport, rail transport and maritime transport. Hacıoğlu and Avcıkurt (2008) expressed that accessibility is the proximity of an attractive touristic destination to its target audience or the ability of tourists to reach the destination at low costs and in a short time. Tourism businesses is a broad expression that covers accommodation businesses, food and beverage businesses, travel agencies and all other businesses that provide shopping opportunities that meet the demand of tourists coming to a destination to a large extent (Hacıoğlu & Avcıkurt, 2008). Events are important events that activate a touristic destination make visitors enjoy it and attract more tourists. Events such as festivals, congresses, fairs and carnivals are included in the scope of the event. Image, on the other hand, is a concept that expresses what the destination means for the tourist and what the perception of the destination is in the mind of the tourist. In other words the destination's image perception is how the customer's mind perceives it. The necessity of evaluating the image perception within the framework of trust has emerged once again, especially in the current issue of Covid-19 (Keleş, 2021a). With the start of the normalization process after vaccination practices, tourists' preference for destinations with high vaccination rates is also a part of that destination's enhanced image. Another important issue for tourism destinations is destination marketing. The importance of new tourism marketing tools in the Covid-19 period has been understood once again. Destination marketing processes, especially with tools that can be considered new such as virtual reality supported virtual museum applications, have been supportive in terms of providing effectiveness even in the isolation and full closure processes applied simultaneously all over the world (Keleş, 2021b).

### **Sinop as a Tourism Destination**

Sinop, with its cultural and natural riches, is included in the “ecotourism and marine tourism-oriented development area in the Tourism Strategy Conceptual Action Plan of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism”. Wide forests, long coastal areas, natural beaches, plateaus and recreational areas are among the leading natural beauties of the province. It is home to castles, churches, mosques, rock tombs, fountains, madrasahs, baths, bastions and tombs, which are inspired by various civilizations from historical periods. It is possible to swim in a section of 70 km of the 175 km long beaches of the city, as in the Aegean and Mediterranean beaches (Met, 2012). There are "one nature protection area, five nature parks, two nature monuments and a wildlife development area" in Sinop. Among them; there are natural beauties of great importance, such as "Sarıkum Lake, Hamsilos Bay, Topalçam, Tatlıca Waterfalls and Boyabat Basalt Rocks". When the archaeological and historical cultural values are examined, there are a total of 462 buildings with civil architectural structures and monumental structures and 69 archaeological sites (Yılmaz & Zorlu, 2018). Coastal areas and beaches have become the most popular destinations for tourism. In this context, Sinop is home to much richer places than other Black Sea cities. Thanks to the advantages arising from its geographical location, it is possible to swim between June and September. Beaches are located very close to the coastal part of the city center. Hamsilos Bay, Bahçeler, Akliman, Karakum and Sarıkum beaches are some of these beaches. The festivals and events held in Sinop province beyond its natural beauties are also important attractive factors. The leading events in Sinop province can be listed as follows (Sinop Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, 2022):

- Boyabat Culture, Tourism and Promotion Festival,
- Dikmen Oil Wrestling, Sırık Kebab and Culture Festival,
- Saray Village Karakucak Wrestling and Kebab Festival,
- Hıdırellez Festivals held in Bektaşağa Village in the center of Sinop,
- Karakucak Wrestling, Keskek Festival and Hıdırellez Festivals held in Sazlı and Akbaş Villages in the center of Sinop,
- Historical Türkeli Fair, Beach Festivals and Honey Festival,
- 23 April International Children's Festival,
- Ayancık Culture-Linen and Wood Festival,
- Ayancık, Boyabat, Dikmen, Durağan Gökırmak, Erfelek, Saraydüzü, Türkeli, Kabalı, Bektaşağa, Alexandroupoli, Topağaç, Gürsökü, Snowy, Halaldı, Kuşçular Fair,
- Hıdırellez Festival held in Bektaşağa village,
- Erfelek Tatlıca Waterfalls Culture, Art, Nature and Nature Sports Festival,
- Gerze Culture and Art Festival,
- Hıdırellez Festival,
- Ilıca village Rice Day,
- An important tradition unique to Sinop is "Selime" or "Helesa" in Ramadan,
- Soku Plateau Festivals,
- Yenicuma Keskek Festival held in Taşmanlı-Dizdaroğlu villages,
- Turkeli Municipality cultural activities and
- Yenikent culture promotion and Wrestling Festival.

Considering that the intensity of touristic activities in Sinop is mostly seasonal and this seasonality is specific to the summer months, it can be seen as insufficient in terms of the number of beds. The places that tourists visit the most in Sinop are stated as follows by the Sinop Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism (Sinop Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, 2022): “Sinop Historical Prison, Erfelek Tatlıca Waterfalls Nature Park, Hamsilos Nature Park, Seyit Bilal Tomb, Alaattin Mosque, Pervane Madrasa, Balatlar Building Society, Archeology and Ethnography Museums, Boyabat Castle, Akgöl, İnaltı Canyon and Cave, Turkey's northernmost point İnceburun, Sarıkum Nature Reserve”.

### **Related Studies**

In the research conducted by Yurdakul (2012); it is aimed to reach conclusions about how tourists perceive the cultural attractions in the city of Sinop. In the study, 202 foreign and 209 domestic tourists took part and three sub-dimensions were made as general tourism-related infrastructure, cultural infrastructure and cultural attractiveness. As a result, it was concluded that there is a significant difference between foreign tourists and domestic tourists in terms of cultural attractions. In addition to this, Sinop Castle and Historical Sinop Prison are among the places that receive the most tourist visits in Sinop. In the research conducted by İpar and Tırıl (2014), a conceptual framework regarding the rural tourism potential was determined with the help of SWOT analysis and it was aimed to determine the economic, cultural and social reflections of the development of rural tourism in Sinop. It has been determined that rural tourism awareness should be developed in the region and coordination deficiencies regarding tourism

stakeholders in the city should be eliminated and initiatives should be made to encourage rural tourism investments to be made by investors in the region. In the study conducted by Demir (2015), it was aimed to determine the effects of the factors affecting the tourism demand levels of domestic tourists who prefer Sinop for their holidays on their repurchase behavior. In the research, the factors affecting the repurchase decisions of tourists; economic, social, environmental and other (advertising, promotion, etc.). It has been determined that most of the 307 domestic tourists in the research prefer Sinop for holiday purposes because of its sea, sand, sun and natural riches. In addition, it was concluded that slightly more than half of the participants had visited Sinop before and about 78% of them were planning to visit again. In the research conducted by Aydın (2017), it was aimed to determine the attitude exhibited by local tourists towards alternative tourism products by examining the alternative tourism resources of Sinop province. In the study, which included 421 local tourists nature, culture and nature tourism were evaluated as the most suitable tourism types in Sinop. In addition, yacht and cruise tourism and gastronomic tourism were also considered among the viable tourism types in Sinop. In the research conducted by Yılmaz and Zorlu (2018), it was aimed to determine what measures should be taken in order to evaluate the Sinop destination more effectively within the framework of sustainable tourism. In this context, first of all, SWOT analysis of Sinop province was created and five alternative strategies were put forward in line with the SWOT matrix. It has been determined that the most important strategy that can be implemented for sustainable tourism development in Sinop destination is to use tourism products that are compatible with the environment, local society and local culture in a beneficial way, instead of being damaged in touristic development. For this reason, the most accurate strategic plan that destination management organizations are expected to take; it has been determined as "the promotion of natural, historical and cultural elements and the protection of these areas".

## **Method**

### **Purpose of the Research**

The first study of SWOT was in the early 1950s by George Albert Smith Jr. and C. Roland Christensen to investigate the relationship between organizational strategies and the environment. Analysis methods similar to SWOT analysis were used at Harvard Business School and other business schools in the USA in the 1960s and Kenneth Andrews (1971-1980) stated that an effective strategy is the harmony between the external situations encountered and the internal situations. SWOT analysis was finally published in 1982 with Heinz Weilrich's article "The SWOT Matrix, A Tool for Situational Analysis" to examine internal and external factors as a new form of analysis in strategic planning (Kaygın and Güven, 2013, p. 1). Sinop is one of the most striking provinces of the Black Sea region. Sinop which has a high potential in terms of tourism with its geographical location and cultural values, is a very important destination in terms of country tourism. Preserving and developing the historical, cultural and tourism values of destinations provides a competitive advantage over competing destinations (Boz, 2016, p. 61). Based on this determination, in this study, it is aimed to evaluate the tourism potential of Sinop province with SWOT analysis and to make inferences in this context.

### **Research Analysis Process**

SWOT analysis, which is one of the basic processes of strategic management; it is a common analysis technique used to evaluate the internal and external environment of the institution, destination, technique, process or situation under consideration. It is usually named after the first letters of the english words "strengths, weaknesses,

opportunities, threats". SWOT analysis; it is used to determine strategies that will make more use of strong features or strengthen weaknesses, increase strong features, make maximum use of opportunities arising from environmental developments and minimize internal and external threats (Boz, 2016, p. 69). Within the scope of the study, academic researches on the tourism potential of Sinop destination between January and April 2022 (Yeşiltaş, Çeken & Öztürk, 2009; Met, 2012; İpar & Tırıl, 2014; Aydın, 2017; Aytuğ & Uçar, 2019; Aytuğ et al., 2020; Kargiglioğlu & Arifuddin, 2020) were used. In addition, information was collected from associations, non-governmental organizations and tourism academicians with tourism expertise in the province. In order to determine the touristic values of the Sinop destination, the information on the official website of the Sinop Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism was also included in the research. According to the source created, SWOT analysis of Sinop province was carried out.

## Results

When the SWOT analysis results (Table 1) of the tourism potential of the Sinop destination are examined; It is understood that Sinop has more strengths in terms of tourism. Especially the high number of festivals is one of the prominent aspects of Sinop in terms of culture. The advantage of geographical location in terms of cruise tourism and having many natural areas is also very important. The lack of a blue flag beach, the partially existing unplanned and unplanned construction, insufficient bed capacity, the inability of public institutions to provide the necessary support, and the inability to provide cooperation between public institutions and the stakeholders that make up tourism are the prominent weaknesses of the destination. Regarding the threats, it can be counted as being overshadowed by competing destinations and the local people's unconsciousness about tourism.

**Table 1.** SWOT Analysis of Tourism Potential of Sinop Destination

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤To be included in the “ecotourism and sea tourism-oriented development area” in the Tourism Strategy Conceptual Action Plan of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism,</li> <li>➤Large forests, long coastal areas, natural beaches, plateaus and resting areas,</li> <li>➤It hosts castles, churches, mosques, rock tombs, fountains, madrasahs, baths, bastions and tombs that contain the breezes of various civilizations from historical periods,</li> <li>➤It is possible to swim in a 70 km section of its 175 km long beaches as in the Aegean and Mediterranean beaches,</li> <li>➤To have “one nature protection area, five nature parks, two nature monuments and a wildlife development area” in Sinop,</li> <li>➤There are natural beauties of great importance, such as Sarıkum Lake, Hamsilos Bay, Topalçam, Tatlıca Waterfalls and Boyabat Basalt Rocks,</li> <li>➤When the archaeological and historical cultural values are examined, there are a total of 462 buildings with civil architectural structures and monumental structures and an archaeological site with a number of 69,</li> <li>➤Swimming in the sea between June and September thanks to the advantages arising from its geographical location,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤Low accommodation and bed capacity,</li> <li>➤The fact that Sinop is heavily preferred in the summer season,</li> <li>➤Exceeding the carrying capacity in summer,</li> <li>➤Insufficient efforts to increase the awareness of Sinop province,</li> <li>➤The absence of a blue flag beach,</li> <li>➤Lack of electricity in some plateaus,</li> <li>➤Vertical and crooked construction in the historical city center within the Sinop city walls,</li> <li>➤Lack of areas suitable for adventure tourism types,</li> <li>➤The absence of alternative types for cultural and nature tourism values,</li> <li>➤Turkey's and Sinop's lack of experience and social awareness in preserving historical and cultural sites when compared to European countries and cities,</li> <li>➤The public administration does not support tourism sufficiently and its resources are limited,</li> <li>➤Inability to attract investors for the tourism sector,</li> <li>➤Lack of accommodation in the highlands,</li> <li>➤Lack of marina,</li> <li>➤Not employing qualified tourism personnel,</li> <li>➤Local stakeholders do not cooperate enough with the university and</li> <li>➤Absence of a tourism promotion office.</li> </ul>

**Table 1.** SWOT Analysis of Tourism Potential of Sinop Destination (Cont.)

<p>➤The fact that there are beaches very close to the coastal part of the city center (Hamsilos Bay, Bahçeler, Akliman, Karakum, Sarikum beaches etc.),</p> <p>➤Leading events held in the province (Ayancık Culture-Linen and Wood Festival, Boyabat Culture Tourism and Promotion Festival, Dikmen Oil Wrestling, Pole Kebab and Culture Festival, Erfelek Tatlıca Waterfalls Culture, Art, Nature and Nature Sports Festival, Gerze Culture and Art Festival, Saray Village Karakucak Wrestling and Kebab Festival, Hıdırellez Festival held in Sinop central Bektaşağa Village, Karakucak Wrestling and Kebab Festival and Hıdırellez Festival held in Sazlı and Akbaş Villages in the center of Sinop, Historical Türkeli Fair, Beach Festivals and Honey Festival),</p> <p>➤Having places that are suitable for various types of tourism and that are frequently visited (Sinop Historical Prison, Erfelek Tatlıca Waterfalls Nature Park, Hamsilos Nature Park, Seyit Bilal Tomb, Alaattin Mosque, Pervane Madrasa, Balatlar Building Society, Archeology and Ethnography Museums, Boyabat Castle, Akgöl, İnalıtı Canyon and Cave, Turkey's northernmost point İnceburun, Sarikum Nature Reserve),</p> <p>➤Airport etc. active transport network,</p> <p>➤Having socio-cultural tourism values (Ayancık Culture-Flax and Wood Festival, Ayancık, Boyabat, Dikmen, Durağan Gökırmak, Erfelek, Saraydüzü, Türkeli, Kabalı, Bektaşağa, Alexandroupoli, Topağaç, Gürsökü, Karlı, Halaldı, Kuşçular Fair, Bektaşağa Village Hıdırellez Festival, Erfelek Tatlıca Waterfalls Culture, Art, Nature and Nature Sports Festival, Gerze Culture and Art Festival, Hıdırellez Festival, Ilıca Village Rice Day, an important tradition unique to Sinop in Ramadan, “going out to sellime” or another named “Helesa”, Sökü Yayla Festivals, Yenicuma Keskin Festival held in Taşmanlı-Dizdaroğlu Villages and Türkeli Municipality Cultural Activities, Yenikent Culture Promotion and Wrestling Festival) and</p> <p>➤To be known as the happiest city in Turkey.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <p>➤Having historical values that can be brought to tourism such as Mihridates Palace, religious buildings, Pasha Bastions, Pervane Madrasa, Rock Tombs, historical Sinop houses and PTT building,</p> <p>➤Being a quiet and untouched place in the winter months,</p> <p>➤Sports federations' interest in Sinop for events,</p> <p>➤The plateau, lake, etc. it owns. natural beauty,</p> <p>➤Photography association, sailing club etc. National meetings held by NGOs from time to time can be organized,</p> <p>➤Being suitable for cruise tourism type and</p> <p>➤It is an ideal area for bird watching due to its more than 250 bird species.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>THREATS</b></p> <p>➤Being overshadowed by the developed provinces of the Black Sea such as Samsun,</p> <p>➤When the Black Sea is mentioned, other destinations such as Rize, Trabzon, Artvin come,</p> <p>➤Failure to establish the right balance between protection and use as a result of practices and/or preferences based on overprotection,</p> <p>➤Sinop people's lack of sensitivity about the preservation of local architecture,</p> <p>➤The destruction of historical areas due to the lack of control over the construction,</p> <p>➤More known destinations in the Aegean and Mediterranean regions</p> <p>➤Sinop Nuclear Power Plant application and</p> <p>➤The decrease in the demand of visitors to come back to Sinop due to the high prices of touristic products and services.</p>

**Discussion and Recommendations**

In order to develop the tourism sector, the development and promotion of regional tourism resources the creation of a tourism image and its marketing and development by considering the resources of the surrounding countries are extremely important. However, another issue that should be emphasized is the diversification of the travel programs applied for those who come to the destination, their spread to the whole destination and the marketing of these products with a new approach (Yeşiltaş, Çeken & Öztürk, 2009, p. 266). Sinop, which stands out especially with its sea, sand and sun tourism has the opportunity to become an important alternative tourism center with its untouched nature, historical and cultural assets and many national and international sports events held within the borders of the province but it has not brought these values to tourism enough (Aytuğ & Uçar, 2019, p. 61). In the 2023 Turkey

Tourism Strategy Plan of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the province of Sinop has been determined as the region where tourism will be developed in terms of biological diversity and eco-tourism potential. However, the fact that studies for this purpose have not yet been carried out in the region have a negative impact on the general development of tourism in the region as well as negatively affecting alternative tourism types. Considering the previous rural tourism development regions and projects in the studies to be done is important in terms of ensuring the sustainability of the relevant resources (İpar & Tırlı, 2014, p. 53).

Considering the tourism potential of Sinop province, activities that prevent tourism should not be carried out. In addition, it is extremely important to create and market areas for bicycle tours, botanical trips, ecosystem-based and nature walks (Aytuğ et al. 2020: 732). In the process after the industrial revolution the development of local tourism is extremely important in solving the problem of regional development differences that arise as a result of the concentration of resources in certain centers. The geographical prevalence and originality of touristic supply sources and the tourism demand that has recently developed as an alternative to the sea-sand-sun trio are a serious source of hope for underdeveloped regions and regions. In Turkey, which is extremely rich in terms of alternative tourism products in addition to traditional coastal tourism, one of the typical regions that can develop with tourism is Sinop destination. While Sinop was an important province in history it is a Black Sea province that has migrated today has a small population and yet has a rich tourism potential (Met, 2012, pp. 175-176).

Sinop destination has a wide variety of natural, historical, cultural and unique tourism resources. In addition to this, a favorable climate is experienced, transportation facilities are easy, there is no excessive destruction on the coast and natural landscape due to touristic construction, and there is a local people living in the region with a positive perspective towards tourism, etc. It is a destination open to tourism development due to its advantages. In particular, the interest in places that contain different touristic products is increasing day by day due to the fact that the coastal tourism centers exceed their carrying capacity and the changes in the demand axis seen in the tourist trends that have occurred in recent years (Yasak & Oğan, 2013, p. 84).

Tatlıca Waterfalls Nature Park in Erfelek, which is one of the most visited destinations in Sinop along with the Historical Prison, is one of the most important stops for tours. Although it receives significant tourism investment some parts of the road to the waterfalls need improvement. Especially in the summer months due to the density of visitors, toilets, parking arrangements, etc. in the area; infrastructure to meet basic needs is insufficient. Standing out with the presence of touristic facilities around it, Bektaşağa Pond is an important attraction point for rural tourism, both with its 17 km distance from the city center and with its forest parts, walking paths, rain shelters and viewing terraces. Apart from these, the other rural tourism destinations emphasized in the study, except İnaltı Cave, are not really activated and effectively serving destinations (Aytuğ et al. 2020, p. 732). The suggestions that can be developed for the development of tourism in Sinop can be summarized as follows (Yılmaz & Zorlu, 2018: 401; Kargiglioğlu & Arifuddin, 2020, pp. 373-374):

- The cooperation between the tourism sector and the university should be developed and a consensus should be reached by Sinop University School of Tourism Management in providing the necessary qualified workforce to the tourism sector, which will satisfy both students and businesses.
- The lack of qualified personnel in protected areas such as nature parks should be eliminated urgently.
- Sensitive protection areas in Sinop should be protected from the destructive effects of mass tourism.

- It is extremely important to pay attention to the carrying capacity in sensitive protection areas in Sinop.
- Efficiency of resources should be sustainable by complying with the protection-utilization balance of touristic values in Sinop.
- The scarcity of qualified tourism facilities in Sinop may cause touristic consumers not to prefer the destination. Therefore, the establishment and operation of qualified facilities in the destination is extremely important.
- Certification systems for touristic products and services offered in Sinop should be implemented and followed.
- It is thought that Sinop Nuclear Power Plant, which will be established in Sinop and will be operational in 2023, will cause negative effects on touristic values and resources. Therefore, it is thought that such projects should be implemented in places that do not have tourism potential. A new tourism master plan should be prepared for the best transfer of cultural and historical heritage to future generations and sustainability by maintaining the balance.
- Care should be taken to solve the infrastructure problems of alternative touristic destinations, especially on the roads leading to these destinations outside the province.
- Cycling and pedestrian paths necessary for sustainable tourism should be established.
- Some of the houses that can be used for tourism purposes in the highlands need to be equipped with the necessary repairs in order to serve as accommodation.
- New market trends can be examined and applied for Sinop so that they can organize special and special tourism programs especially for high-income tourists.

Three concrete steps are needed to implement the above recommendations and the new ones. First; all public and private stakeholders related to tourism in Sinop come together under the leadership of the governorship and the municipality and establish the Sinop Provincial Tourism Commission. Secondly, this commission should organize a few workshops with the participation of all relevant groups and present a roadmap for tourism in Sinop, especially alternative tourism in which the above suggestions are included and the Sinop Nature Tourism Master Plan is developed. In this plan, which consists of a list of concrete activities, each activity should have a budget, responsible institutions and a timeframe for realization. The third and most important is the step-by-step implementation of the plan under the management of the commission and with all stakeholders. Thanks to the monthly meetings of the commission and the annual meetings attended by all stakeholders, the plan can be updated continuously and it can be ensured that all interest groups adopt the plan (Aytuğ et al, 2020, p. 733). With the completion of the Black Sea coastal road stretching from Sinop to Batumi and a great improvement in infrastructure compared to previous years in the transportation opportunities between Ankara and Sinop, Sinop, which has become a frequent destination for many tours organized to the Black Sea Region, in the following years traveled to Istanbul via the Western Black Sea coastal road. It will have a road network reaching up to thus with the disappearance of not being a transit route point, which is one of the biggest problems for provincial tourism, there will be greater increases in the number of regularly increasing visitors (İpar & Tırıl, 2014, p. 53). Brand destinations that Sinop can take as an example are Safranbolu, Beypazarı, Şirince, etc. are places. The project carried out jointly by the EU with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and provided with funding is one of the success assurances of Sinop's tourism strategy. The second important target market of Sinop can be holidaymakers. These can be divided into two groups as potential tourists in the nearby

provinces and foreign tourists in the countries neighboring the Black Sea. In addition, cruises between Black Sea countries and Sinop, cruise ship visits, congress and meeting participants and special interest tourism enthusiasts can increase the number of tourists and incomes of Sinop province (Met, 2012, p. 176).

In addition to the theory, it is aimed that this research will contribute to the practice by performing a SWOT analysis of the current situation. Regarding the limitations of the research, it can be said that it consists of the studies on the tourism potential of Sinop province in the domestic literature and the information on the official website of the Sinop Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism. In future research, semi-structured interview technique can be applied and comparative analyzes can be carried out with current researches.

### Declaration

The authors of this article have equally contributed to this article and they have no conflict of interest to declare nor have they received any funding from any company.

### REFERENCES

- Atay, L. (2003). Destinasyon pazarlaması yönetimine ilişkin stratejik bir yaklaşım. *Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi İşletme Fakültesi Dergisi*, 3(2), 144-158.
- Aydın, Ö. (2017). Turistlerin Sinop ilinin alternatif turizm potansiyeline yönelik algılamalarının incelenmesi. İskenderun Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Hatay.
- Aytuğ, H. K. & Uçar, S. (2019). Sinop ilinin alternatif turizm potansiyelinin değerlendirilmesi. *Artvin International Congress on Social Sciences (Aicoss 19) Proceeding Book*, (pp. 48-64), 17-19 April, Hopa, Artvin.
- Aytuğ, H. K., Eryılmaz, Ç., Uçar, S. & Can, O. (2020). Sinop İlinin alternatif turizm çeşitleri açısından swot analizi. *Balkan, Kafkas, Doğu Avrupa ve Anadolu İncelemeleri Dergisi*, 17(67), 715-736.
- Boz, M. (2016). Turizm destinasyonu olarak gelibolu yarımadası gzft (swot) analizi. *Karadeniz*, (31), 63-75.
- Coltman, M. (1989). *Tourism Marketing*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- Demir, S. (2015). Yerli turistlerin turizm pazarlamasına yönelik talep düzeylerini etkileyen faktörlerin yeniden satın alma davranışlarına etkisi Sinop ili örneği. Hitit Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Çorum.
- Hacıoğlu, N. & Avcıkurt, C. (2008). *Turistik Ürün Çeşitlendirmesi*. Ankara: Nobel Yayın Dağıtım.
- Holloway, J. C. (1989). *The Business of Tourism*. London: Pitman.
- İpar, M. S. & Tırıl, A. (2014). Sinop ilinin kırsal turizm potansiyeli ve geliştirilmesine yönelik önlemler. *Türk Bilimsel Derlemeler Dergisi*, 7(2), 45-54.
- Kargiglioğlu, Ş. & Arifuddin, J. (2020). Analysis of silent tourism potential for sinop. *MTCO'20 Conference on Managing Tourism Across Continents Proceedings Book*, (pp.368-374), 02-05 September, Ankara.
- Kaygın, E. & Güven, B. (2013). *Çorum ili Swot Analizi*. İstanbul: Veritasakademi Yayıncılık.

- Keleş, A. (2021a). Covid 19 pandemisinin kültür turizmi bağlamında müze ve ören yerlerine etkisi. *Multidisipliner Turizm Çalışmaları*, içinde (pp.42-51), G. S. Ergün (Ed.), Konya: Çizgi Kitabevi.
- Keleş, H. (2021b). *Covid-19 Salgınının Turizm Sektörüne Yansımaları*. Multidisipliner turizm çalışmaları içinde pp. (94-104), G. S. Ergün (Ed.), Konya: Çizgi Kitabevi.
- Kılıç, B. & Akyurt, H. (2011). Destinasyon imajı oluşturmada hüzün turizmi: afyonkarahisar ve başkomutan tarihi milli parkı. *Gaziantep Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 10(1), 209-232.
- Kocaman, S. (2012). Destinasyon yönetimi kapsamında marka kimliğine etki eden faktörlerin marka imajına etkisi: Alanya örneği. Akdeniz Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yayınlanmamış Doktora Tezi, Antalya.
- Kotler, P. (1993). *Marketing Places*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Kozak, M. (2013). *Sürdürülebilir Turizm Kavram-Uygulamalar*. Ankara: Detay Yayıncılık.
- Kozak, N., Akoğlan Kozak, M. & Kozak, M. (2008). *Genel Turizm*. Ankara: Detay Yayıncılık.
- Met, Ö. (2012). Turizm ile yöresel gelişme: sinop için bir turizm gelişim önerisi. *Karadeniz Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 34, 163-179.
- Mogollon-Hernandez, J. M. (2014). Event tourism analysis and state of the art. *European Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Recreation*, 83-102.
- Morrison, A. M. (2013). *Marketing and Managing Tourism Destinations*. New York: Routledge.
- Özdemir, G. (2007). Destinasyon yönetimi ve pazarlama temelleri: İzmir için bir destinasyon model önerisi. Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yayınlanmamış Doktora Tezi, İzmir.
- Özmen, N. & Eren, M. (2021). Safranbolu destinasyonunun inanç turizmi potansiyeline yönelik swot analizi çalışması. *Ekonomi, İşletme ve Yönetim Dergisi*, 5(1), 62-82.
- Pike, S. (2004). *Destination Marketing Organizations*. Oxford: Elsevier.
- Sinop Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism. (2022). [http://www.sinopkulturturizm.gov.tr /TR-168344/genel.html](http://www.sinopkulturturizm.gov.tr/TR-168344/genel.html); Erişim Tarihi: 22.03.2022.
- TDK. (2019). *Güncel Türkçe Sözlük*. <https://www.tdk.gov.tr/> Erişim Tarihi: 22.03.2022.
- Türkay, O. (2014). *Destinasyon Yönetimi Yönetim Bilim Bakış Açısıyla İşlevler, Yaklaşımlar ve Araçlar*. Ankara: Detay Yayıncılık.
- Türkay, O. & Çoban, S. (2013). *Turistik Destinasyon Olma Kriterleri ve Sakarya Örneği*. Edt. Zengin, B. In: Geçmişten Günümüze Sakarya Turizmüne Akademik Bir Bakış (pp. 231-242). Sakarya: Melisa Matbaası.
- Usta, Ö. (2008). *Turizm Genel ve Yapısal Yaklaşım*. Ankara: Detay Yayıncılık.
- Yasak, Ü. & Oğan, O. (2013). Foça'da (İzmir) turizm potansiyelinin swot analizi yöntemiyle değerlendirilmesi. 4. *International Research Congress on Social Sciences Proceeding Book*, (pp.74-85), 11-13 September, Turkistan/Kazakhstan.

- Yeşiltaş, M., Çeken, H. & Öztürk, İ. (2009). Karadeniz bölgesindeki turizm olanaklarının swot analizi ile değerlendirilmesi. *Adıyaman Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 2(3), 250-269.
- Yılmaz, A. & Zorlu, K. (2018). Swot-ahs analizi kullanarak sinop'ta sürdürülebilir turizm stratejilerinin önceliklendirilmesi. *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmacılar Dergisi*, 11, 390-403.
- Yurdakul, S. B. (2012). Sinop ilinde kültürel çekicilikler ve turizm amaçlı kullanım olanakları. Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Çanakkale.