

EVALUATION OF LOCAL PEOPLE'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE TOURISM ACTIVITIES DEVELOPMENT REGARDING DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

Avaliação das Percepções da População Local sobre o Desenvolvimento das Atividades Turísticas em Relação à Gestão de Destinos

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ABSTRACT

In terms of destination management, the research sought to determine local people's perspectives of the development of tourism activities in Mersin Province [Turkey], which aims to offer differing tourism types of alternatives, including sea-sand-sun tourism. For this objective, a questionnaire was applied in which data was obtained from 385 persons living in Mersin. This questionnaire asks participants about their perceptions of the socio-cultural, economic development, social distortion, cultural distortion, environmental distortion, and cumulative impact of the development of tourism activities. The collected data was analyzed, and the study findings were attained. The research results were evaluated concerning demographic variables such as gender, age, education level, and income. It was concluded that local people's perceptions about the development of tourism activities were not differentiated by gender. Furthermore, it was discovered that there is a considerable difference in their perceptions of socio-cultural, social distortion, cultural distortion; and their overall impact according to age, particularly among persons between the ages of 18 and 35. When the research findings were reviewed by education and income variables, it was discovered that the participants' perceptions about the impact of tourism activities on socio-cultural and economic development differed significantly, particularly among those with an income of 9000 TL or more and a graduate education.

KEYWORDS

Tourism; Perception; Destination Management; Local People; Mersin Province, Turkey.

RESUMO

Considerando a gestão de destinos, a pesquisa procurou determinar as percepções da população local sobre o desenvolvimento das atividades turísticas na Província de Mersin [Turquia], que visa oferecer diferentes tipos de turismo alternativo, incluindo o segmento sol-praia. Para atender ao objetivo foi aplicado questionário, obtendo dados de 385 pessoas que vivem em Mersin. O questionário perguntava aos participantes sobre suas percepções do

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desenvolvimento sociocultural e econômico, distorções sociais, culturais, ambientais e outros impactos cumulativos no desenvolvimento das atividades turísticas. Os dados coletados foram analisados, e os resultados avaliados em relação a variáveis demográficas como sexo, idade, nível de educação e renda. Concluiu-se que as percepções da população local sobre o desenvolvimento da atividade turística não se apresentam diferenciadas considerando gênero. Além disso, constatou-se diferença considerável nas percepções de distorções socioculturais, sociais e culturais; e de seu impacto geral de acordo com a idade, particularmente entre pessoas entre 18 e 35 anos de idade. Quando os resultados da pesquisa foram analisados por variáveis de educação e renda, descobriu-se que as percepções dos participantes sobre o impacto das atividades turísticas no desenvolvimento sociocultural e econômico diferiram significativamente, particularmente entre aqueles com renda de 9.000 TL ou mais e com pós-graduação.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Turismo; Percepção; Gestão de Destinos; População Local; Província de Mersin, Turquia.

INTRODUCTION

Every year, billions of tourists go internationally to take part in tourism activities. These journeys generate a significant tourism market and, as a result, tourism revenues on a global scale. Countries are engaging in a variety of actions to enhance local tourism income and gain a portion of the global tourism market. Consequently, destination management is one of the most crucial of these activities. The countries' ability to obtain the percentage of tourist income they really want is contingent on the proper implementation of destination management in the tourism regions they control because competent destination management means that more tourists will be drawn to destinations with a more sustainable perspective and that tourism activities will be spread out throughout the year rather than being seasonal. Furthermore, considering the tourist attractions' carrying capacity, correct destination management ensures that these attractions are used more actively.

Destinations comprise a myriad of physical elements, such as tangible attractions, resources, structures, and landscapes (Camilleri, 2018). Because these sites have diverse qualities, tourists can select from a variety of destinations based on their preferences. The attractiveness of destinations creates enormous opportunities for tourism development in almost every country and every region (Hall, 2008). In addition, in the globalizing world, in which the resemblances increase, tourists have begun to be interested in experiences in different destinations (Yarış, 2019).

On the other hand, tourists visiting a destination are in frequent contact with the residents (Yenipinar and Kardeş, 2019). When evaluating the issue in this context, it is critical to also include the locals' opinions of tourism activities through the lens of destination management because attempting to establish tourism operations without people's consent, particularly in small, closed cultures, can result in aversion, anger, and hostile behavior. The desire and support of the local community for the development of tourism activities contribute to the success of the proposed plans. Conversely, local people's objection to tourism in a region is a major impediment to the development of tourism operations in that region (Karakuş et al., 2020; Tosun et al., 2021). As a matter of fact, when developing and planning a destination, it is vital to forewarn local people about the tourism activities that will be developed; it is also necessary to help make sure that the locals adopt the tourism activities; and, when necessary, the economic and social benefits that the people will receive from tourism should be thoroughly indicated by training and seminars. Finally, people must be willing to accept any changes that may occur and contribute to tourism development.

Even though Mersin province has a high potential for many divergent types of tourism, most notably sea-sand-sun tourism, according to the conducted literature research, there is no study evaluating local people's perceptions of tourism activities regarding destination management in Mersin province. However, there are many studies carried out in international (Mason & Cheyne, 2000; Yoon et al., 2001; Pimentel & de Carvalho, 2014) and national literature (Karakuş et al, 2020; Meriç & Erten, 2020; Seçkin & Akgündüz, 2021; Altuntaş & Sağlam, 2021; Türkeri & Akyürek, 2021; Kodaş, 2021). Following a review of the research stated above, it was discovered that there is no study evaluating the locals' perceptions about the positive or negative effects of tourism in Mersin concerning the management of destinations. As a result, it was deemed reasonable to conduct this research. Therefore, this study aims to find out how local residents feel about tourism activities in terms of destination management. To achieve this goal, data was collected from a sample of local residents in Mersin province, the data was analyzed using relevant methodologies, and multiple proposals for destination management were presented based on the findings.

LOCAL PEOPLE'S PERCEPTION OF TOURISM IN DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

Destination, a French concept, is described in several ways in tourist literature; nonetheless, there is not a universally acknowledged meaning. In terms of its qualities, Buhalis (2000)

categorized the destination definition as a physical place with specific borders, such as a city, a town, an island, or a tourism center, as well as any country consisting of a combination of touristic products. According to Bosnić et al. (2014), a destination is a geographical region where touristic items are generated and consumed, apart from the tourist's regular residence. In this context, the terms touristic station, touristic place, tourism attraction center, touristic destination, and tourism region are used interchangeably.

In a destination, there are countless actors, including tourists' perceptions and images of the destination, touristic products, businesses in the destination, and people who live there (Karakuş & Çoban, 2018). Destination management encompasses all the players mentioned above involved in tourist activities in the region to work collectively in terms of tourism development and the development and administration of tourism activities in the determined destination (Türkay, 2014). However, a destination product is a service infrastructure consisting of individually produced touristic goods and services such as accommodation, food and beverage, entertainment, transportation, and the destination experience that emerges with the combination of the destination environment consisting of many public products (such as socio-cultural environment, natural environment, seas, lakes). All these components that comprise the destination product are branded with the destination's name and made available to tourists (Buhalis, 2000). In short, together with the destination experience, service infrastructure, and destination environment, the destination product is one of the most fundamental pillars of tourism.

It is unavoidable that destination stakeholders engage in concert and collaborate in order to maintain the long sustainability of destinations (Acuner, 2015). In terms of destination management, local people emerge as a possessive and supportive power of the destination at this moment. To avoid losing this authority, other stakeholders must embrace the opinions of the local people and their engagement in tourism (Sariahmetoğlu and Toylan, 2020) because it is acknowledged that when local people's impressions of tourism are positive, they may provide all types of assistance for the development of tourism.

Therefore, the perception of local people towards tourism and tourists is extremely important to understand the reasons why local people support the development of tourism, to minimize the negative impacts of tourism, and to maximize the support given to tourism enterprises (Karakuş, 2022). Nevertheless, it appears improbable that an area will thrive in the field of

tourism without the input and support of the local community. Furthermore, tourism is recognized to be a set of movements that bring about some changes in the region in which it is developing, and it is acknowledged that tourism can affect economic factors such as income, employment, and inflation, as well as spiritual elements such as local people's lifestyle, traditions, and customs (Yeşiltaş, 2013). As a result, considering stakeholder engagement, assessing local people's impressions of destination management is crucial for developing tourism activities in the destination. Besides, it is considered that this development is critical in limiting the impact on the social, cultural, and economic life of the destination's residents.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

In recent years, there has been a substantial increase in the number of research conducted in the national and international literature to investigate local people's perceptions of tourism. In this regard, the following are some of the studies published in the international literature after 2000 and in Turkey after 2020. Karakus et al. (2020) investigated the viewpoints of residents in Göreme Town, Nevşehir Province, on the conception of gastronomy tourism and their expectations towards this sort of tourism. Because of the investigation, it was determined that the locals have a conceptual understanding of gastronomic tourism. In addition, the local people's expectations for gastronomy tourism were explained, and some recommendations for decision-makers in terms of planning, policy, and strategy development were offered.

Meriç and Erten (2020) conducted a study to determine the favorable and negative aspects of tourism development to assess the tourism views of Van Yüzüncü Yıl University students and move the destination to a higher position. According to the study's findings, most students felt that the positive aspects of tourist growth in destinations are desirable. Eser and Akgündüz (2021) aimed to investigate how the favorable and unfavorable consequences of tourism affect local people's views of visitors' presence and the impact on the local people's quality of social life. According to research, the suitable climatic and socio-cultural consequences of tourism improve the quality of local people's social lives. Further, tourism's negative environmental and socio-cultural repercussions have been found to reinforce locals' perceptions that tourists are harmful to the place. Also, it has been determined that the negative economic repercussions of tourism erode locals' perceptions of tourists as undesirable.

Altuntaş and Salam (2021) undertook a qualitative study to create awareness about rural

tourism's growth and assess forest villagers' attitudes towards communication and rural tourism. According to the study's findings, the forest villagers' attitudes toward the applicability of rural tourism in the Anamur Kükür Villages of Mersin province were favorable. Türkeri and Akyürek (2021) studied the effects of local people's perceptions of 'opportunity', 'physical appearance', and 'social environment' toward the destination on their support for tourism in Erzurum. When the research findings were analyzed, it was discovered that the 'physical appearance' and 'social environment' dimensions of the destination image dimensions, and the support given to tourism by the local people had a positive and significant relationship and influence. However, no relationship was found between the 'opportunities' dimension of the destination image and the support given by the local people to tourism.

Through a hypothetical model, Kodaş (2021) investigated the relationship between local people's perceptions of the economic, cultural, negative social, and environmental consequences of tourism and their support for life satisfaction and tourist development. According to the research's result, it was found that there are significant correlations between local people's perceptions of tourism's economic and cultural impacts and their support for its development. Mason and Cheyne (2000) investigated the reactions of the locals residing in a specific region to tourism in the case of tourism development in a particular region. They evaluated these reactions in terms of the development of rural tourism. They also covered in their study the potentially detrimental effects of tourism-related developments on local people and the positive benefits they may provide.

Yoon et al. (2001) divided the elements that influence tourist development into four categories: social, cultural, economic, and environmental aspects, and generated study hypotheses to evaluate these effects, which were then tested using structural equation modeling. The study discovered a favorable and significant relationship between the four identified tourist impacts and the local people's perceptions of tourism in the destinations. Secondly, the authors introduced the tourism perception scale to the literature with this study, which may be used to gauge local people's perceptions. Pimentel and de Carvalho (2014) performed some research on public institutions in Brazil to distinguish the effects of elements in the tourism industry and factors in tourist destinations on planning. According to the study's findings, municipalities were advised on how to promote decisions and actions in the management and planning of tourist destinations.

METHODOLOGY

Population and Sample of the Study, Data Collection Tools, and Data Collection - The variables that serve as a basis of the concept of the local people's perception were specified in this study in order to evaluate the perceptions of the local people concerning the development of tourism activities in terms of destination management, and numerous items were introduced under each factor. In determining these expressions, primarily the scales used by Gündüz (2018), Okuyucu and Somuncu (2012), and Yoon et al. (2001) were considered. The scale developed in this context was mainly constructed with the opinions of 10 expert academicians working in Mersin University's tourism faculty. Considering their suggestions and recommendations, the socio-cultural impact of the local people, the impact of economic development, and the impact of social distortion were measured with 4 statements, while the impact of cultural distortion and environmental distortion was measured with 5 statements. The expressions in the scale were evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Undecided, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree).

Mersin was considered the study region because it compasses a lot of tourism assets and is one of the country's major destinations in terms of destination management. Individuals aged 18 and over who live in Mersin make up the study's sample in this context. The survey approach was chosen to collect relevant data to the study's goal. The survey was posted on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and others) to reach more people and make it easier for them to access. The survey was conducted between January 5th and February 17th, 2022. The convenience sampling method was employed to collect data in this study. Thus, it was ensured that everyone who reached the questionnaire filled in the questionnaire. In this context, a total of 385 participants were reached.

Research Hypotheses - The goal of this experiment is to assess local residents' views regarding tourist activities in terms of destination management. The study is a descriptive and explanatory research that includes quantitative methodologies, and the following are the research hypotheses:

H1: Local people's perceptions of the development of tourism activities differ significantly by gender.

H1_a: Local people's perceptions of the impact of tourism activities on economic development differ significantly by gender.

H1_b: Local people's perceptions of the impact of tourism activities on socio-cultural development differ significantly by gender.

H1_c: Local people's perceptions of the social distortion impact of tourism activities differ significantly by gender.

H1_d: Local people's perceptions of the environmental distortion impact of tourism activities differ significantly by gender.

H1_e: Local people's perceptions of the cultural distortion impact of tourism activities differ significantly by gender.

H2: Local people's perceptions of the development of tourism activities differ significantly by age.

H2_a: Local people's perceptions of the impact of tourism activities on economic development differ significantly by age.

H2_b: Local people's perceptions of the impact of tourism activities on socio-cultural development differ significantly by age.

H2_c: Local people's perceptions of the social distortion impact of tourism activities differ significantly by age.

H2_d: Local people's perceptions of the environmental distortion impact of tourism activities differ significantly by age.

H2_e: Local people's perceptions of the cultural distortion impact of tourism activities differ significantly by age.

H3: Local people's perceptions of the development of tourism activities differ significantly by education level.

H3_a: Local people's perceptions of the impact of tourism activities on economic development differ significantly by education level.

H3_b: Local people's perceptions of the impact of tourism activities on socio-cultural development differ significantly by education level.

H3_c: Local people's perceptions of the social distortion impact of tourism activities differ significantly by education level.

H3_d: Local people's perceptions of the environmental distortion impact of tourism activities differ significantly by education level.

H3_e: Local people's perceptions of the cultural distortion impact of tourism activities differ significantly by education level.

H4: Local people's perceptions of the development of tourism activities differ significantly by income level.

H4_a: Local people's perceptions of the impact of tourism activities on economic development differ significantly by income level.

H4_b: Local people's perceptions of the impact of tourism activities on socio-cultural development differ significantly by income level.

H4_c: Local people's perceptions of the social distortion impact of tourism activities differ significantly by income level.

H4_d: Local people's perceptions of the environmental distortion impact of tourism activities differ significantly by income level.

H4_e: Local people's perceptions of the cultural distortion impact of tourism activities differ significantly by income level.

Reliability Analysis of the Scales Used in the Research - The impact of local people's socio-cultural impact, the impact of economic development, and the impact of social distortion were all measured with four expressions in this study. However, the impact of cultural distortion and environmental distortion was measured with five expressions, and the alpha coefficient was used to analyze the scales' reliability.

Table 1. Reliability Analysis Results

Scale	Cronbach Alpha Coefficient (a=)
Socio-Cultural Impact Scale	,771
Economic Development Impact Scale	,863
Social Distortion Impact Scale	,833
Cultural Distortion Impact Scale	,922
Environmental Distortion Impact Scale	,862
Perception of Development of Tourism Activities	,882

Source: By Authors (2022)

With Cronbach Alpha coefficients of more than 0.70, it can be confirmed that the socio-cultural impact scale, economic development impact scale, social distortion impact scale, cultural distortion impact scale, and environmental distortion impact scale employed in the study are quite reliable.

FINDINGS

Demographics of Participants and Findings Related to Determining their Perspectives on Tourists - The results of the demographic and descriptive questions are presented in Table 1 below. According to the demographic data acquired, female participants (199 people) outnumber male participants (186 people), and female participants account for 51.7 percent of the research.

Table 2. Demographic Information on Participants

Gender	N	%	Income	N	%
Female	199	51,7	3000-4500 TL	33	8,6
Male	186	48,3	4500-6000 TL	38	9,9
Total	385	100	6000-7500 TL	106	27,5
Tourism Education	N	%	7500-9000 TL	98	25,5
Yes	77	20	More Than 9000 TL	110	28,6
No	308	80	Total	385	100
Total	385	100			
Educational Status	N	%	Age	N	%
Primary Education	18	4,7	18-25	23	6
High School Ed.	64	16,6	26-35	144	37,4
Associate Degree	52	13,5	36-45	109	28,3
Bachelor's Degree	163	42,3	46-55	83	21,6
Graduate Degree	88	22,9	56 and older	26	6,8
Total	385	100	Total	385	100

Source: By authors (2022)

When the ages of the research participants were analyzed, it was discovered that the persons who engaged in the research the most are between the ages of 26 and 35, and that 80 percent of the participants did not receive tourism education. Most of the participants were 163 (42.3%) undergraduate graduates. The least number of participants was 18 (4.7%) elementary school

graduates, and the income of all the participants was estimated to be around 9000 TL (28.6 percent). When the ages of the research participants were investigated, it was discovered that the people who participated in the study the most were between the ages of 26 and 35. Furthermore, it has been discovered that the average tenure of these individuals is 11 years (54.5%), with most of them working in the private sector.

Some questions were addressed to the participants to decide Mersin residents' opinions about visitors, and the results are provided in Table 3, based on their responses.

Table 3. Distribution of Expressions Regarding the Views of The Participants Towards Tourists

Questions	Options	N	%
What kind of tourists would you most like to see in your city?	Domestic	26	6,8
	Foreign	81	21,0
	Both Domestic and Foreign	272	70,6
	No tourists should come	6	2,2
	Total	385	100
Which aspects of foreign tourists are you uncomfortable with the most?	They spend less money	29	7,5
	Their religions are different	5	1,3
	Their cultures are different	12	3,1
	They behave in a Relaxed/Free way	68	17,7
	I'm not uncomfortable with them	271	70,4
	Total	385	100,0
Which aspects of foreign tourists do you like most?	They behave in a relaxed/free way	65	16,9
	They are warmhearted	44	11,4
	Their cultures are different	97	25,2
	They are modern	53	13,8
	They keep the environment clean	105	27,3
	I don't like any aspect of them.	21	5,5
	Total	385	100,0

Source: By authors (2022)

Only 1.6 of the participants responded that they do not want any sort of tourists coming to their city in response to the question "What kind of tourists would you most want to see in your city?". 70.6 percent of the participants, on the other side, said, "We want both domestic and foreign tourists to come.". Several questions were asked to determine which characteristics Mersin

inhabitants like in tourists and which characteristics render them uncomfortable with tourists, and 70.4 percent of the participants mentioned they are not bothered in any way, while 17.7 percent remarked they are disturbed by tourists' relaxed/free acts. Similarly, 27.3 percent of the participants said they appreciate tourists because they clean up the environment, and 25.2 percent loved the truth that their culture is unique.

Descriptive Statistics Regarding the Variables Included in the Study - Table 4 shows the arithmetic mean and standard deviation values for the socio-cultural influence, economic development impact, social distortion impact, cultural distortion impact, and environmental distortion, all of which are the focus of the research hypothesis.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics Regarding the Variables Included in the Study

Variables/Expressions	Avr.	SD
Socio-Cultural Impact	4,35	,565
SK1	4,11	,990
SK2	4,42	,688
SK3	4,41	,648
SK4	4,47	,535
Impact on Economic Development	4,44	,576
EG1	4,50	,582
EG2	4,51	,693
EG3	4,36	,738
EG4	4,39	,718
Social Distortion Impact	2,63	,908
ST1	2,36	1,042
ST2	2,78	1,111
ST3	3,08	1,213
ST4	2,34	1,080
Cultural Distortion Impact	2,53	1,009
KT1	2,63	1,181
KT2	2,47	1,111
KT3	2,43	1,148
KT4	2,68	1,158
KT5	2,46	1,177

Environmental Distortion Impact	2,39	,863
ÇT1	2,16	1,005
ÇT2	2,17	,997
ÇT3	2,52	1,150
ÇT4	2,06	,969
ÇT5	3,08	1,233
Development of Tourism Activities	3,19	,529

Source: By authors (2022)

According to the findings, the general average of the expressions connected to the socio-cultural effect variable was 4.35. The general average of the expressions relating to the variable of economic development was found to be 4.44, and the general average of the expressions pertaining to the variable of social distortion was reported to be 2.63. Finally, the overall average of expressions related to the cultural distortion impact variable was 2.53, whereas the overall average of expressions attached to the environmental distortion impact variable was 2.39.

Findings Related to Hypothesis Testing - The data were examined for normal distribution before the hypothesis was validated. The normality tests revealed that the data did not provide a normal distribution. Hence, non-parametric tests, such as the Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis tests, were performed to verify the hypotheses. The Mann-Whitney U test results of local people's perceptions of the development of tourism activities by gender are given in Table 5.

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Table 5. Mann-Whitney U test results of locals' perceptions of the development of tourism activities by gender

Variables	Gender	N	Ranking Avg.	Value of Mann-Whitney U	p
Socio-Cultural Impact	Female Male	199 186	197,38 188,32	17636,000	,409
Impact on Economic Development				17822,500	,515
Social Distortion Impact				18058,000	,679
Cultural Distortion Impact				18424,500	,939
Environmental Distortion Impact				18235,500	,802
Perception of Development of Tourism Activities				18316,000	,861

Source: By Authors (2022)

The results of the analysis show that there is no significant difference by gender in the perceptions of the participants regarding the development of tourism activities on the socio-cultural impact ($U=17636,000$ $p>.05$), the impact on economic development ($U=17822,500$ $p>.05$), the impact of social distortion ($U=18058,000$ $p>.05$), cultural distortion impact ($U=18424,500$ $p>.05$), environmental distortion impact ($U=18235,500$ $p>.05$). It has been determined that there is no significant difference by gender in the perceptions of the participants regarding the development of tourism activities in general ($U=18316,000$ $p>.05$). ($U=18316,000$ $p>.05$). Therefore, **H1, H1a, H1b, H1c, H1d and H1e** hypotheses were **rejected**. The results of the Kruskal-Wallis test to measure the perceptions of the locals by age regarding the development of tourism activities are given in Table 6.

Table 6. Results of the Kruskal-Wallis test of locals' perceptions of the development of tourism activities by age

Variables	Age	N	Ranking Avg.	X ²	df	p
Socio-Cultural Impact	Between 18-25	23	214,00	11,132	4	,025
	Between 26-35	144	207,46			
	Between 36-45	109	166,13			
	Between 56-55	83	201,39			
	56 years and older	26	180,23			
Impact on Economic Development	Between 18-25	23	185,78	4,706	4	,319
	Between 26-35	144	201,99			
	Between 36-45	109	185,80			
	Between 56-55	83	199,79			
	56 years and older	26	158,08			
Social Distortion Impact	Between 18-25	23	91,61	25,686	4	,000
	Between 26-35	144	214,73			
	Between 36-45	109	195,11			
	Between 56-55	83	185,10			
	56 years and older	26	178,73			
Cultural Distortion Impact	Between 18-25	23	128,76	11,595	4	,021
	Between 26-35	144	206,56			
	Between 36-45	109	192,35			
	Between 56-55	83	181,83			
	56 years and older	26	213,12			
Environmental Distortion Impact	Between 18-25	23	162,33	7,177	4	,127
	Between 26-35	144	209,09			
	Between 36-45	109	194,33			
	Between 56-55	83	176,56			
	56 years and older	26	177,88			

Perception of Development of Tourism Activities	Between 18-25	23	120,65	14,619	4	,006
	Between 26-35	144	212,30			
	Between 36-45	109	189,77			
	Between 56-55	83	186,93			
	56 years and older	26	183,02			

Source: By Authors (2022)

According to the results of the analysis, it was deduced that there is a significant difference by age in the perceptions of the participants regarding the development of tourism activities on the socio-cultural impact ($X^2 = 11,132$ $p < .05$), the social distortion impact ($X^2 = 25,686$ $p < .05$), the cultural distortion impact ($X^2 = 11,595$ $p < .05$). Moreover, it has been discovered that there is a significant difference by age in the perceptions of the participants about the development of tourism activities in general ($X^2 = 14,619$ $p < .05$). However, it was observed that there is no significant difference in their perceptions of the impact on economic development ($X^2 = 4,706$ $p > .05$) and the environmental distortion impact ($X^2 = 7,177$ $p > .05$). Searching the calculated ordinal mean values, it was obtained that the highest value for the socio-cultural impact of the development of tourism activities took place between the ages of 18-25 (214.00), but the lowest value was found to be between the ages of 36-45 (166.13). On the other hand, the highest value for the social distortion impact occurred between the ages of 26-35 (214.73), and the lowest value was between the ages of 18-25 (91.61). In addition, the highest value for the cultural distortion impact was 56 and above (213.12), and the lowest value came out between the ages of 18-25 (128.76). In general, the highest value in the perceptions of the participants regarding the development of tourism activities was between the ages of 26-35 (212.30), and the lowest value was between the ages of 18-25 (120.65). According to the results, **H2, H2_a, H2_c, H2_e** hypotheses were **accepted**, while **H2_b and H2_d** hypotheses were **rejected**.

The results of the Kruskal-Wallis's test to measure the perceptions of the locals by education regarding the development of tourism activities are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Results of the Kruskal-Wallis's test of locals' perceptions of the development of tourism activities by education

Variables	Education	N	Ranking Avg.	X ²	df	p
Socio-Cultural Impact	Primary Edu.	18	186,03	21,333	4	,000
	High School Ed.	64	167,28			
	Associate Deg.	52	192,63			
	Bachelor's Deg.	163	179,85			
	Graduate Deg.	88	237,70			

Impact on Economic Development	Primary Edu.	18	202,61	16,911	4	,002
	High School Ed.	64	165,54			
	Associate Deg.	52	214,82			
	Bachelor's Deg.	163	178,82			
	Graduate Deg.	88	224,39			
Social Distortion Impact	Primary Edu.	18	176,17	7,116	4	,130
	High School Ed.	64	188,05			
	Associate Deg.	52	218,46			
	Bachelor's Deg.	163	200,03			
	Graduate Deg.	88	171,97			
Cultural Distortion Impact	Primary Edu.	18	187,22	1,888	4	,756
	High School Ed.	64	202,21			
	Associate Deg.	52	207,22			
	Bachelor's Deg.	163	189,29			
	Graduate Deg.	88	185,95			
Environmental Distortion Impact	Primary Edu.	18	191,64	2,799	4	,592
	High School Ed.	64	197,76			
	Associate Deg.	52	181,33			
	Bachelor's Deg.	163	186,95			
	Graduate Deg.	88	207,92			
Perception of Development of Tourism Activities	Primary Edu.	18	185,42	2,708	4	,608
	High School Ed.	64	186,73			
	Associate Deg.	52	203,54			
	Bachelor's Deg.	163	185,75			
	Graduate Deg.	88	206,31			

Source: By authors (2022)

The analysis results indicate that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of the participants regarding the development of tourism activities on the socio-cultural impact ($X^2 = 21,333$ $p < .05$) and the impact on the economic development ($X^2 = 16,911$ $p < .05$) according to their educational status. However, it was seen that there is no significant difference in the perceptions of the participants regarding the development of tourism activities on the social distortion impact ($X^2 = 7,116$ $p > .05$), the cultural distortion impact ($X^2 = 1,888$ $p > .05$), the environmental distortion impact ($X^2 = 2,799$ $p > .05$), and there is no significant difference in the perceptions of the participants regarding the development of tourism activities in general ($X^2 = 2,708$ $p > .05$). Considering the ranking average of the values calculated, it was learned that the highest value regarding the socio-cultural impact of the development of tourism activities is in postgraduates (237.70). The lowest value is in high school graduates (167.28). In addition, the highest value regarding its impact on economic development was in the group of those who received a postgraduate degree (224,39), while the lowest value is found in the group of those

who received high school education (165,54). According to these results, **H3_a** and **H3_b** hypotheses were **accepted**, while **H3**, **H3_c**, **H3_d** and **H3_e** hypotheses were **rejected**.

Kruskal-Wallis's test results on the development of tourism activities by income are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Results of the Kruskal-Wallis's test of locals' perceptions of the development of tourism activities by income

Variables	Income	N	Ranking Avg.	X ²	df	p
Socio-Cultural Impact	Between 3000-4500TL	33	149,58	24,722	4	,000
	Between 4500-6000TL	38	128,74			
	Between 6000-7500TL	106	215,83			
	Between 7500-9000TL	98	196,74			
	9000 and more	110	202,89			
Impact on Economic Development	Between 3000-4500TL	33	126,98	35,705	4	,000
	Between 4500-6000TL	38	122,87			
	Between 6000-7500TL	106	209,55			
	Between 7500-9000TL	98	203,04			
	9000 and more	110	212,15			
Social Distortion Impact	Between 3000-4500TL	33	196,41	1,412	4	,842
	Between 4500-6000TL	38	196,57			
	Between 6000-7500TL	106	188,24			
	Between 7500-9000TL	98	202,85			
	9000 and more	110	186,56			
Cultural Distortion Impact	Between 3000-4500TL	33	219,55	4,616	4	,329
	Between 4500-6000TL	38	180,04			
	Between 6000-7500TL	106	180,00			
	Between 7500-9000TL	98	202,62			
	9000 and more	110	193,48			
Environmental Distortion Impact	Between 3000-4500TL	33	225,18	5,535	4	,237
	Between 4500-6000TL	38	181,71			
	Between 6000-7500TL	106	182,69			
	Between 7500-9000TL	98	204,56			
	9000 and more	110	186,89			
Perception of Development of Tourism Activities	Between 3000-4500TL	33	183,00	6,697	4	,153
	Between 4500-6000TL	38	155,34			
	Between 6000-7500TL	106	191,25			
	Between 7500-9000TL	98	208,55			
	9000 and more	110	196,84			

Source: By Authors (2022)

As the analysis results indicate, it has been determined that there is a significant difference according to income in the perceptions of the participants regarding the development of tourism

activities on the socio-cultural impact ($X^2 = 24.722$ $p < .05$) and the impact on the economic development ($X^2 = 35.705$ $p < .05$). Yet, it was concluded that there is no significant difference in income variable in the perceptions of the participants regarding the development of tourism activities on the social distortion impact ($X^2 = 1.412$ $p > .05$), cultural distortion impact ($X^2 = 4.616$ $p > .05$), environmental distortion impact ($X^2 = 5.535$ $p > .05$). Additionally, it was observed that there is no significant difference in the perceptions of the participants regarding the development of tourism activities in general ($X^2 = 6.697$ $p > .05$). When the calculated ordinal average values were analyzed, it was resolved that the highest value regarding the socio-cultural impact of the development of tourism activities is between 6000-7500 TL (215.83) and the lowest value is between 3000-4500 TL (149.58). However, the highest value regarding its impact on economic development is in the income group above 9000 TL (212,15), and the lowest value is in the income group between 4500-6000 TL (122.87). According to these results, **H4_a** and **H4_b** hypotheses were accepted, while **H4**, **H4_c**, **H4_d** and **H4_e** hypotheses were rejected.

RESULTS

In a nutshell, Destination management is the process of presenting tourist attractions in tourism regions in the most acceptable way possible while not surpassing their sustainable, active, and carrying capacities. Stakeholder participation is required for effective destination management. Given that local residents are one of the most significant stakeholders in destination management (Manci, 2022), establishing their attitudes about the development of tourism activities is a critical issue. As a result, the perceptions of local people in Mersin Province about the development of tourism activities were measured in this study.

It was discovered that the locals have a favorable attitude toward both domestic and international tourists. The local people valued the elements of foreign tourists in maintaining the environment clean, according to the replies given by the participants to the questions presented to measure their happiness with the visit of foreign tourists. However, it was showcased that they are dissatisfied with their relaxed and uninhibited behavior.

When the general averages of the participants' responses to the scale statements are probed, it is reasonably apparent that their perceptions of the impact of tourism activities on socio-cultural development are positive, their perceptions of the impact on economic development are productive, their perceptions of the impact of social distortion are moderate, and their

perceptions of the impact of cultural distortion are medium. Their assessments of the impact of tourist development on the environment are low, whereas their perceptions of the influence of tourism development on the economy are moderate.

According to the study's findings, it has been determined that local people's impressions of the development of tourism activities do not change based on gender. However, there is a considerable difference in perceptions of the socio-culture influence of the development of tourism activities, the impact of social distortion, the impact of cultural distortion, and the overall impact, according to age. This disparity was greater among participants between the ages of 18 and 35. This finding revealed that younger people had a more positive attitude toward the development of tourism activities.

As for the participants' educational levels, it was discovered that there was a substantial difference in their perceptions of the socio-cultural influence of tourism development and the impact on economic development. It has been discovered that persons with a postgraduate education possess a higher value for this difference. This finding can be read as people with a high level of education have a strong perception of the impact of tourism activities on socio-cultural and economic development, given that postgraduate education is normally the highest degree of education in education systems.

When the research is explored by income status, it was discovered that there was a significant difference in the participants' perceptions of the socio-cultural impact of tourism development and its impact on economic development, with this difference having a higher value for those with an income of 9000 TL and above. When this result is compared to our country's purchasing power parity, it can be deduced that high-income participants have a positive view of tourism's impact on socio-cultural and economic growth.

In terms of destination management, these findings can serve as a resource for key stakeholders. In light of these findings, it is advised that a greater emphasis should be focused on informing activities by pertinent institutions and organizations to boost local people's perceptions of the development of tourism activities while destination management is underway. Another suggested solution is that, while destination management is being carried out, activities that can augment local people's participation in tourism development should be planned to ramp up the perceptions of local people with lower education and income levels toward tourism development. Furthermore, because participants above a specific age group experience weaker

perceptions of the development of tourist activities, it is imperative for key stakeholders to plan their efforts to strengthen the perceptions of the higher age groups in terms of destination management.

As a result, this study aims to determine local people's perceptions of tourism activities in terms of demographic factors, which will help researchers look into the matter from many angles.

DISCUSSION

This research aims to evaluate the local people's perceptions about the development of tourism activities in Mersin Province, which has attractiveness for many alternative tourism types, especially sea-sand-sun tourism, in terms of destination management. In the literature research conducted for this purpose, it has been determined that many studies have been carried out in the national and international context on the tourism perception of the local people in the destinations (Karakuş at all, 2020; Meriç and Erten, 2020; Seçkin and Akgündüz, 2021; Altuntaş and Sağlam 2021; Kodaş, 2021; Türkeri and Akyürek, 2021; Mason and Cheyne, 2000; Yoon at all, 2001, Pimentel and de Carvalho 2014). When the findings of the mentioned research were evaluated, it was determined that there is a positive and significant relationship between the positive perceptions of the local people in the destinations towards tourism and tourism development. From the perspective of destination management, it is very difficult for tourism activities that are not supported by the local people to be successful (Tosun et al., 2021). Therefore, destination management organizations should create specific plans and strategies for local people within the scope of destination management.

With this current study carried out in Mersin, it was concluded that there is a positive relationship between the positive perceptions of the local people towards tourism and tourism development, thus supporting the studies. Each destination has its own character and consists of many different components (Buhalis, 2000). For successful tourism activities, the integration of these components with each other takes place in a destination-specific manner. For this reason, revealing the role of the local people, one of the most important stakeholders of the destination (Easterling, 2005; Kuvan & Akan, 2012), in the destination specific, will be an important input for the decision mechanism for the strategies of the relevant destination. In addition, this study aimed to close the literature gap in determining whether the tourism

perceptions of the local people differ according to their income status, gender, and educational status.

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