

An Examinatin of Recreational Sports Programs in Turkey

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Abstract: Turkey is one of the most important centers where every kind of recreational sports can be done because of its geographical position. In this study, we aim to draw attention to Turkey's rich natural and cultural areas and show that Turkey is a suitable region for sports activities aimed at recreational purposes. The number of sports activities aimed at recreational purposes have recently increased. The most requested sector in sports industry is sports activities aimed at recreational purposes. Turkey is a wonderful place with its three sea sides, Lakes and Rivers. Four seasons can be seen at the same time in Turkey. For example, it can be possible to both swim and ski at the same time in some regions of Turkey. Not only the domestic but also the foreign demand to the sports activities aimed at recreational purposes in Turkey is increasing highly with the increase of the economic standards. While the number of foreign tourists was 16.3 million in 2003, 0.96 % of them consisted of the visitors who came with the purpose of sports. According to the data of Turkey Statistics Institute, even if all tourists who came with the aim of sports, education and culture was shown in the same group, the general opinion in the sector was that the rate of the tourists who came with the aim of sports was 1.5% compared to the normal tourists. According to Turkish Ministry of Tourism, the number of foreign tourists who came to Turkey reached the amount of 36.8 million. This means that the number of those who came in the frame of sports tourism was more than 552.000. In conclusion; Turkey has been continuing to develop in the field of sports activities aimed at recreational purposes. It is thought that especially the domestic demand to the sports aimed at recreational purposes will be an important factor for the development of this field. Still urban sedentary lifestyle pushes people to do sports activities aimed at recreational purposes. The domestic efforts in the field of sports aimed at recreational purposes will not only meet the need of trained personnel, but also leads the foreign tourists who have come to the country.

Keywords: Recreational Sport Activities, Recreational Sport in Turkey

I. INTRODUCTION

Recreation contains the activities in which the participants choose voluntarily and assess their spare time¹⁶. These activities can be gathered in the group of musical occupations, sports activities, and artistic events, activities that require skills, activities in the nature, social and cultural activities.

Recreation is defined as showing the personality by using the creative forms of sports, physical exercises, art and games. It is also stated that recreation is a concept that contains the activities that are assessed with the expectation of personal satisfaction in the spare time and its subject is the feelings rather than the actions²⁴.

Recommended sports in health protection, coping with the loneliness and being social and recreation activities has an important place among recreation activities. When especially sports, painting and music are compared on being social, it is seen that sports is more effective¹¹.

It is known that recommended sports and physical activities in the recreational activities have positive effects in body health besides mental health benefits in terms of giving the desired, effective results. It is also stated that as a result of people's working together, the feelings of social responsibility can improve and when it has improved, then the process of being social can be granted¹⁷.

People generally tend to do sports for the purpose of assessing their spare time, being stronger, defending themselves, protecting their health²⁵. The basis of sports recreation is physical exercise¹⁵. For that reason, hobbies, sports, games, dances, outdoor activities and group interactions have great importance in protecting health. Recreation is effective in not only avoiding distractions based on physiology and psychology but also curing those⁸.

When we examine today's developed societies, it is seen that one of the most indispensable context is sports and recreational activities. These activities can be named as coming out of monotone life forms, participating in sports organizations or attending the recreational activities¹⁹.

II. RECREATION AND SPORTS

Sports and recreation can affect each other mutually. While sports can provide an important action field, recreation has important roles in the expansion of sports and gaining sports successes³⁴.

People generally tend to do sports for the purpose of assessing their spare time, being stronger, defending themselves, protecting their health etc.²⁵. People's life qualities improve with the provided spare time activities in the society. Recreation is a medium for more active and meaningful life²³. The type that forms the most parts of the recreation activities or underlies on physical exercises and applications of some sports branches for the purpose of recreation is called as sports recreation. The basis of sports recreation is physical exercise³⁶.

Assessing the spare times in physical exercises and sports activities is very important for minimizing the tension of the technology and urbanization over the individuals and societies avoiding the stress that will bring²³. Sports and recreation can affect each other mutually. While the sports provide an important action area in satisfying people's needs, recreation plays an important role in gaining sportive successes.

The researches show that the number of people who prefer to do sports activities is more than those who attend other activities. It is observed that sports activities have increased comparing to other spare time activities in some European countries since 1950. 1960-1970's was the years of rise in sports branches. With the increasing of the spare time, sports activities done per self-have increased a lot such as jogging in sports participation¹⁴.

Today, the importance of sports and recreation is certainly very important in creating healthy societies. Because sports and recreation have great roles in providing happiness and pride to today's societies, decreasing the effects of social economic disadvantages and effecting people's mental and physical health positively²⁶.

III. RECREATIONALSPORTS ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

In protecting health, hobbies, sports, games, dances, outdoor activities and group interactions that are evaluated in the recreation have great importance in protecting health. Recreation is effective in not only avoiding distractions based on physiology and psychology but also curing those⁸.

Exercises done to cope with the negative sedentary lifestyle in people's lives generally tend to protect people's health and their physical fitness. In the lights of conducted researches, the importance of the exercises has increased day after day. The importance of sports activities needed for solving the health and psychological problems of some people are seen in every field of the life²⁰.

IV. RECREATION AND SPORTS TOURISM

Sports tourism is a kind of tourism that has come out because of people's attending the sports activities or their travels to watch them. The sports tourism that has highly developed especially in the late 20'Th century is seen among the tourism kinds that will increase its popularity in the future. Sports tourism divided into sub-categories such as air sports, diving, mountain climbing, canoeing, football tourism, hunting tourism, golf tourism attract many tourists to the host countries due to Olympics games, world and Europe cups and yield profits in terms of politics, economy and socio-culture⁴.

One of the most important application fields of the recreation is our touristic cities rich in nature beauties. The recreation activities that are in the alternative sports tourism vary. (rock climbing, hiking, trekking, hiking, mountain biking, tour skiing etc.) For that reason, it is agreed that searching the contribution of the sports tourism aimed at recreational purposes, extending the tourism season are very important in terms of country's advertisement³⁵.

The transhumance is the most common type of animal breeding based on tradition. Although its basis is an activity based on economy, it also has a social dimension. That is the willingness that people who live in towns or cities go to the highland on the purpose of staying in cool places, relaxation so this activity is defined as "going to highland for the purpose of recreation"^{21,6} or "going to highland for the purpose of summer place"³¹.

The sport activities are classified with the different names as "nature sports", "outdoor recreation", "adventure sports" according to the risk factors in which they are and supporting factors that are used. The participant's having interaction with the environment is called outdoor recreation such as trekking, camping, fishing, canoeing, skiing, horse riding, golf, water skiing, motor sports, air sports³⁰.

Area differences are very important in recreation. While a frozen mountain lake and a tropical beach can be a source of recreation¹², a highland in a mountain can also be a source of recreation. In this context, we can say that the people's going up to the highland for pleasure and relaxation that live in towns and cities is a recreation activity. Since the aim of going to the highland is for recreation, this kind of activity is called as "going to highland for the purpose of recreation". As to those highlands that are the subjects of these activities, they are the highlands used for the purpose of recreation¹⁸.

Establishing an airway needs a great deal of money investment and facilities at the beginning besides many sub-structures and upper-structures in the destination area based on transportation, traveling in groups and organized crowd. This tourism method that generally tends to sun, sand and sea (3S) uses the package tour marketing⁵.

Many writers have defined the adventure tourism in different ways. Buckley (2006) defined the adventure tourism as “held by commercial tours, its main attraction on outdoor activities happening in the nature, needing special sport or similar equipment’s and exiting for the tour attendants”³. The division points of concepts for nature tourism, echo-tourism, adventure tourism, adventure travel, commercial expeditions, outdoor recreation and outdoor trading are not clear concepts³.

Not only Mountain climbing is a type of adventure tourism, but also it is a type of tourism based on nature, containing walking in the mountainsides including ice and rock climbing based on nature. Mountain climbing that contains risk and obscurity is classified as risky sports and recreational activity. Mountain climbing tourists enjoy the opportunity of activity experience in nature, unique nature forms and visiting the places that offer visual beauty¹³. Adventure tourism includes many activities such as air, water and land basis activities. Mountain climbing is a concrete form of adventure tourism. It contains activities such as rock climbing, backpacking, physical fitness programs and cross-country skiing¹³. Rock climbing is a type of activity that has developed in the mountain climbing concept then it has been accepted as a sport activity itself. Rock climbing is among the outdoor and adventure tourism activities that are a trend against the global tourism².

V. RECREATIONAL SPORT TOURISM IN TURKEY

We see that sport tourism have recently been one of a leading branch among other activities in the tourism sector. According to the data of 2015, besides sport tourism has 180 billion dollars share of the tourism income all over the world, it is continuing to rise in the rate of %14 every year. Sport tourism that has had the %25 rate of tourism incomes in some countries is also an important source of income in our country. At the end of 2014, the number of tourists that went on a holiday in Turkey went beyond number 550.000 and their spending reached over 900 million dollars³².

Parallel to Turkey economy’s being free, noticeable improvements were seen in tourism. From 1990 to 2009, tourism activities rose nearly five times³³.

Turkey shouldn’t avoid expressing the idea of Turkey: Home of Sports and should bring that idea into life. The idea of ‘Turkey: Home of Sports’ can be summarized as bringing Turkey the leading name in every sport branch by increasing the service varieties³³.

Turkey has the 14th place in the index of global or regional sport activities. Besides the economic and media effects of the activities, the sport industry experts’ opinions over those countries are taken into consideration in calculating of that index based on the activities that has been done from 2007 to today and will be planning to be done until 2018. According to the index that is renewed regularly every year, Russia is always in the first place and for two years, Turkey has kept its position in the same place³⁰.

Turkey Statistics Institution (TÜİK) showed those in different groups who came for sport activities until the year of 2008 in its data. According to it, while the number of tourists who came to Turkey was 16.3 million, its 0.96% of it consisted of the visitors who came for the purpose of sport activities. That meant nearly 150.000 people. That number reached 1.03% in 2008. Although today, Turkey Statistics Institution displays the people in the same category who came for education and culture, the general opinion in the sector is that the rate of the tourists who came for sports is 1.5% comparing to the others who came for education and culture. According to the data of Turkish Tourism Ministry in late 2014, the number of foreign tourists reached 36.8 million. That means that the number of tourists who came for sport tourism reached over 552.000 tourists³⁰.

Table 1.The Number of Tourists Who Came to Turkey

Year	Total Tourist Number	The number of tourists who came for the sport activities	The rate (%) of those who came for the purpose of sport activities in total
2003	16.302.053	156.499	0.96
2008	30.979.979	319.093	1.03
2012	36.776.645	551.649	1.5
2014	36.837.900	552.568	1.4

(Tuik, 2014)

Tourism sector reached 1.2 trillion dollars income in the world in 2014. If the tourists who traveled to watch sport activities were included, the amount of sport tourism income reached around 180 billion dollars³⁰. Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism published a report about Turkey’s last condition in winter tourism. According to it, there are 24 winter sport centers that were reported with the cabinet decision. Construction plans of 17 of those 24 reported winter sport centers have been completed²⁹.

Turkey as a winter tourism paradise is an important winter sport center with its mountains covered with snow in summer and winter. Winter tourism has been developing from Marmara and Aegean regions to the East Anatolia region, too²⁹.

Turkey's 3049 fields are under protection. The places under protection had been 964 in the year of 2002 and that number tripled in 11 years. In Turkey, 3049 areas of which total size is 7.883.551 hectares are under protection. The city of İzmir is in the first place with the amount of protected fields. If the sorting is made according to the field greatness, then the city of Antalya is in the first place with the areas of 330000 hectares.

Turkey where 9000 of 12000 plant species that are grown in Europe can be found has an advantageous position in the nature and adventure tourism with its rich nature features²⁸.

Nature and adventure tourism has shown growth yearly 20-30%. According to TURSAB's nature and adventure tourism report, while a growth is seen between 4% and 7% yearly in the tourism sector in the world, that rate is nearly between 20% and 30% in the nature and adventure tourisms³⁰.

The number of tourists who travelled abroad reached 1.138.000.000 tourists in 2014. As to the created economic volume, it reached 1.2 trillion. Regarding nature tourism, the amount was 400 billion dollars. Only the 2014 market share of nature tourism is 263 billion dollars²⁸.

Turkey that was in 7th place in the tourist number in the world international tourism list, progressed to the 6th place by leaving England behind. Turkey that wants to be in the first 5 preferred countries for tourism in its vision of 2023, have been progressing with confident steps in this manner¹⁰.

The equipment's that form the main activity subject in air sport tourism vary according the participants' interests. According to the data of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the air tourism equipment's are put in order below⁷.

- Paragliding • Hang-glider • Hot Air Balloon
- Glider • Model Airplane • Parachute • Mikrolite

In the year of 2006, total 3.448.184 people attended air sport activities. The number of people whose main reason of their travels was attending the air sport activities was 1.115.294. The branches of the sports that the attendance was the most were "hot air balloon and parachute. As seen, the participants of air sports are in considerable amount²².

Turkey's proclaimed numbers of national parks are listed below⁹.

- AğrıDağı National Park
- Aladağlar National Park
- AltınbeşikMağarası National Park
- AltındereVadisı National Park
- BaşkomutanTarihi National Park
- BeydağlarıSahil National Park
- BeyşehirGölü National Park
- Boğazköy - Alacahöyük National Park
- DilekYarımadası - Büyük Menderes Deltası National Park
- Gala Gölü National Park
- GeliboluYarımadasıTarihi National Park
- GöremeTarihi National Park
- HattılaVadisı National Park
- HonazDağı National Park
- İğneadaLongozOrmanları National Park
- IlgazDağı National Park
- KaçkarDağları National Park
- Karagöl-Sahara National Park
- KaratepeAslantaş National Park
- Kazdağı National Park
- Kızıldağ National Park
- KovadaGölü National Park
- KöprülüKanyon National Park
- KuşCenneti National Park
- KüreDağları National Park
- Marmaris National Park
- MunzurVadisı National Park
- NemrutDağı National Park
- NenehatunTarihi National Park

- Saklıkent National Park
- SarıkamışAllahuekberDağları National Park
- Soğuksu National Park
- SpilDağı National Park
- Sultan Sazlığı National Park
- TektekDağları National Park
- GüllükDağı (Termessos) National Park
- TroyaTarihi National Park
- Uludağ National Park
- Yedigöller National Park
- YozgatÇamlık National Park
- SakaryaMeydanMuharebesiTarihi National Park

VI. CONCLUSION

Tourism volume has increased very fast in Turkey and the world. With the economic improvement in Turkey, people's life standards have become higher. National income in Turkey reached 10.279\$ per person in 2014¹. This condition increases the tourism activities in domestic market. The domestic tourism demands provide contribution to the sport tourism. In Turkey, 65-70% of the population lives in urban areas. Naturally, this condition limits people's movement. Sedentary lifestyle coming from the urban life causes some health problems. For that reason demands to the sports activities aimed at recreational purposes have increased. The high domestic demand for the sport activities aimed at recreational purposes form the varieties of the sport activities. At the same time, increasing the types of the recreational sport activities has had an important effecting the number of trained personnel in the field.

Turkey has been growing very fast in the tourism sector with its natural beauties and cultural richness. Turkey that was in 7th place in the tourist number in the world international tourism list in 2010, progressed to the 6th place by leaving England behind in 2011¹⁰. According to the data of Turkish Tourism Ministry in late 2014, the number of foreign tourists reached 36.8 million. That means that the number of tourists who came for sport tourism reached over 552.000 tourists³⁰. As to tourism sector, the numbers of the tourists who come for the purpose of sport activities have been increasing day by day.

In conclusion, the sport tourism sector in Turkey and world has been growing very fast. Especially the demand to the sport activities aimed at recreational purposes comes in the first place. People's sedentary lifestyle coming from the urban life attracts their interest to sport activities aimed at recreational purposes. Turkey is a candidate country for sport activities aimed at recreational purposes with its natural beauties and cultural richness.

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