

Swot Analysis Ecotourism of Southeast of Anatolia (Turkey)

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ABSTRACT: *There has been a significant change in consumption patterns in recent years parallel to the rapid economic, political and technological developments in the tourism of World. Eco-tourism is an activity performed in natural areas. This activity; while providing experiences to the participants, it also increases the socio-economical welfare of the residents and provides financial gains for the preservation of nature. The purpose of this study is to reveal the eco-tourism potential of the Southeast of Anatolia of the using SWOT analysis. SWOT analysis and visual resource assessment were performed to determine strengths and weaknesses of the Southeast of Anatolia. South Eastern Anatolia, Turkey's most important nature tourism potential is one of the regions. Result of this study contribute Local residents are not aware of the tourism potential of eco-tourism. Also very limited number of hotel and place staying in the study area. Revealing the richness of tourism in streams with advanced planning.*

Keywords: *Eco-tourism, South East Anatolia, SWOT Analysis, Natural Geography*

Date of Submission: 06-02-2019

Date of acceptance: 21-05-2019

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism and tourism economy are as the most essential economical commercial factors of the World (Nasehi, 2017). Tourism is one of the largest industries in the world getting currencies to all around the world economy and creating new employment opportunity as well as providing social and cultural interactions. Depending upon to World Travel and Tourism Councils (WTTC) data, in 2009, tourism industry employed 210 million people worldwide and it meant 7,6% of global employment (Sariisik et.al, 2011). Eco-tourism is an activity performed in natural areas. This activity; while providing experiences to the participants, it also increases the socio-economical welfare of the residents and provides financial gains for the preservation of nature. Ecotourism on the other hand, can be reviewed in two parts as active and potential tourism activities. Potential tourism activity examples are; bird and butterfly watching, wilderness watching, trekking (hiking), landscape viewing and botanical tourism (Yazıcı, Aslan and Ankaya, 2017). Ecotourism is defined as “naturally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed environmental areas in order to enjoy and appreciate nature that support conservation, has low negative visitor impacts, and provides for beneficially active social and economic involvement of local people (Ghorbani et.al, 2015).

In Turkey, eco-tourism began in the 1990s. (Akca, 2006) during the middle and later period of the 2000s, the natural tourism model began to be introduced, and obtained its rapid development, which also had a broad market prospect.

The purpose of this study is to reveal the eco-tourism potential of the Southeast of Anatolia of the using SWOT analysis. SWOT analysis and visual resource assessment were performed to determine strengths and weaknesses of the Southeast of Anatolia (Figure 1). Maps of different scales, satellite images and photographs were used to analyze the Southeast of Anatolia. The ecotourism potential of the Southeast of Anatolia was assessed and recommendations were made to open the area for tourism activities and ensure sustainable ecotourism in the area.



Figure 1. Location map of study area.

II. MATERIAL AND METHOD

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the ecotourism potential of the Southeast of Anatolia and make recommendations for sustainability. The number of studies on the ecotourism potential of the Southeast of Anatolia is limited. The study is expected to pave the way for similar studies in future. SWOT analysis and visual resource assessment were performed to determine strengths and weaknesses of the Southeast of Anatolia. The available eco-tourism potential of the Southeast Anatolia was determined using the SWOT analysis. A SWOT analysis of the area was conducted based on the results of the field analyses, observation, the questionnaire data and literature review. SWOT analysis is a method used to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the studied environment, organization, technique, city, period, etc., and to identify opportunities and threats originating from internal and external environments (Celik, 2018). Evaluations regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the area and the opportunities and threats in the area were made based on interviews with representatives of the Southeast Anatolia Region of Turkey (Figure 2).

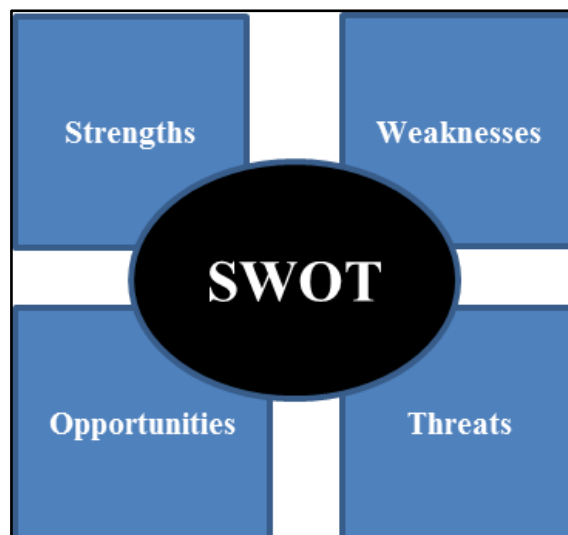


Figure 2.SWOT model

Spatial characteristics of the Southeast Anatolia Region were determined via site visit and photograph were taken from some points. A digital elevation map (DEM), slope map, relief map, and a general drainage network map of the Southeast Anatolia Region using maps in various scales and satellite images of the study area and its surroundings and the Geographic Information System (GIS).

III. RESULTS

3.1. Some of Eco-Tourism Places of Study Area

Mount Nemrut is located in the Kahta district of Adiyaman. Mount Nemrut is UNESCO World Heritage Site. Some consider Mount Nemrut as the “eighth wonder of the World”. Some consider Mount Nemrut as the “mountain of the Gods”. The Mount Nemrut is one the highest peaks of the Mesopotamia, and its summit at 2,206 metres above the sea level contains the tomb of King Antiochus I of Commagene, commissioned by himself. The gigantic statues of gods, each weighing 6 tons and 10 metres tall, indicate what kind of super-human effort was spent on the construction of the tomb. Boulders were the main material used and they were carried up the mountain from the valley below, and similarly the crushed rock pieces used to pile over the main tomb chamber in order to create a 50 metre high cone with 150 metre diameter base were carried the same way. This creative scheme has proven to be effective and prevented grave robbers accessing to the inner sanctum. The tomb chamber is yet to be accessed and the treasures inside are awaiting discovery. However the statues of gods and the sanctuary formed along the three aspects of the tumulus are considered unique, and consequently it was inscribed in the UNESCO List of World Heritage (<https://hometurkey.com/en/destinations/nemrut>). Visitors climbing the mountain early in the morning have the opportunity to watch the sun rise (Figure 3). The summit is reached by a 800-meter walk that lasts approximately 40 minutes from the steep slope. The summit of the mountain, which is reached there, is described as the place where the sun rises and the sunset is the most beautiful (<https://www.ntv.com.tr>).

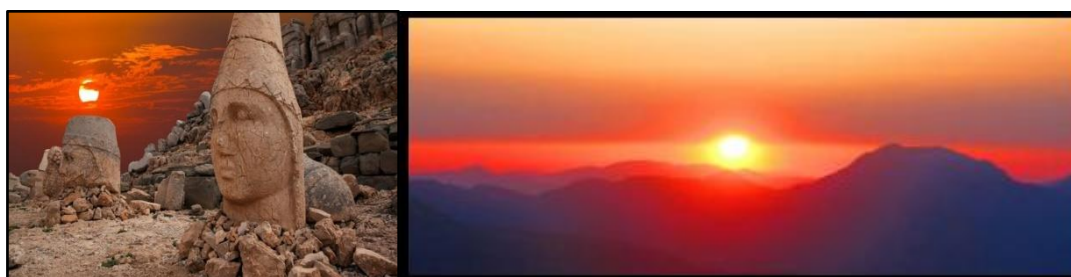


Figure 3. Sunset on the Nemrut mountain

Karacadağ Mountain is a shield volcano located in South Eastern of Turkey (Figure 5). Karacadağ means deer mountain. The central Karacadağ is a mountain plateau with altitudes ranging from 800 to nearly 2,000 metres above sea level in the southeastern Turkish provinces of Sanlıurfa, Diyarbakır and Mardin. In the greater Karacadağ region, a number of Neolithic settlements were established. Karacadağ region consists of basalt, the youngest (Pleistocene and Holocene) is found in the southeast, whereas older (Pliocene and Miocene)

are exposed in the west and North. Weathered basaltic soils would be common in the foothills of the Karacadag region (Haldorsen, 2011).

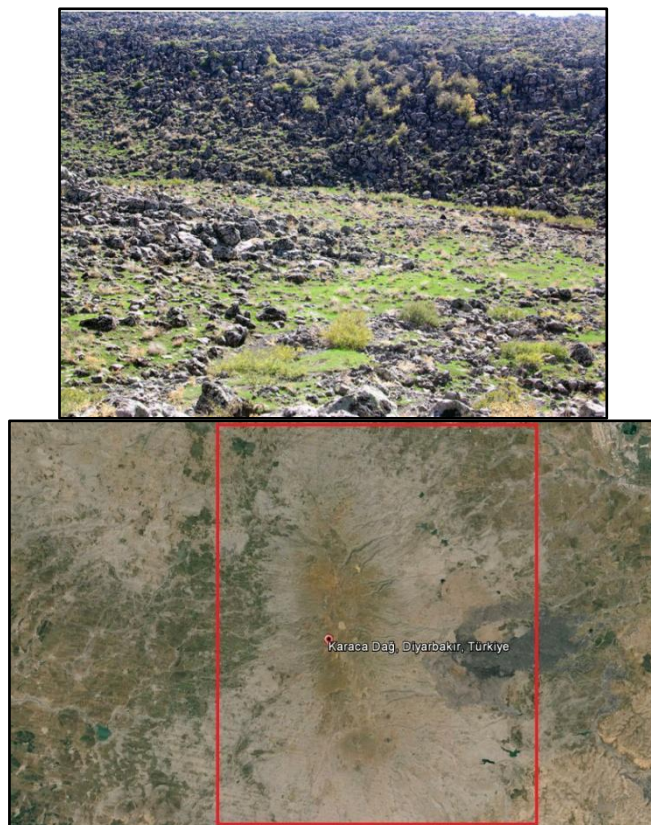


Figure 4. View of Karacadağ Mountain from satellite

Halfeti's Black Rose is a unique rose that only grows in the southeastern province of Şanlıurfa's Halfeti district in the World (Figure 6). Its production has stopped due to changing ecological dynamics and anthropogenic effects but is set to be produced in greenhouses and be reached out to international floral markets with a new project. The production of Halfeti's Black Rose which attracts many local and tourists for its unique color and smell, has neared extinction because of the changing ecological balance in Halfeti, which is renowned for being left underwater thanks to the Birecik Dam.



Figure 5. Halfeti Black Rose

Tek Tek Mountains National Park

Tek Tek Mountains National Park within the boundaries of Şanlıurfa. It is called an oasis in the geography of civilization. Tek Tek Mountains National Park, located in Mesopotamia, also has been home to many civilizations since ancient times. Tek Tek Mountains National Park, especially in terms of nature tourism activities have great importance (Figure 6). Menengiç plant, which is distributed in a large part of the National Park area. Rüstüm Dere Kanyon Valley is the most interesting area of the National Park area in terms of its geomorphological features. Tek Tek Mountains National Park, as the symbol of friendship and peace, is the biggest candidate to be the gate of the Southeast Anatolia Region to the World (<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/seyahat/medeniyetin-dogdugu-cografyada-bir-vaha-tek-tek-daglari-milli-parki-40773196>).



Figure 6. Seem of Tek Tek Mountains National Park

Botan Valley

Born from the mountains to the west of Nordüz Plateau, and at the borders of Siirt-Hakkâri and Siirt-Van, the Botan River forms a deep valley through its route to west. This is called the Botan Valley. Starting from the mountains to the south of Bitlis province in the west, the Botan Valley passes between the 2741 meters high Doğruyol and 2631 meters high Mt. Kapılı, and goes into the Tigris Valley during its trip to south towards Siirt. Botan is one of the most steep and deep valleys of Turkey. Remains of human civilizations from Neolithic Era still survive at the Botan Valley, which was later used by the Greek armies during their march into Anatolia in 500 BC, known as "The Ten Thousand" in history, and located on the route of the Silk Road. Because of its being a geographical corridor and its mild winters, the Botan Valley retains a rich wildlife. One of the most rare species of Turkey, the striped hyena is known to use Botan regularly. Moreover the leopard, which was believed to be extinct in Turkey in 1970s, was discovered in 2010 at Gabar Mountain in the south of Botan Valley. (<http://www.botanvadisi.com/en/index.html>). The most preferred paragliding sport at the Botan Valley. It is located 50 km from the Siirt. The take-off is made from the south-facing slopes of the valley which extends 3 km wide in this area. The soft surfaced track is 960 m above sea level while it is located 470 m high from the landing point at the bottom of the valley (Figure 7).



Figure 7. View of paragliding sport form Botan Valley

Euphrates and Tigris Rivers

Total length of Euphrates River 2,800 km Southeast of the Turkey. The Euphrates River arises in Erzurum, where the Dumlu Mountain rises and passes through the main east-eastern Anatolia region to Syria and Iraq. It joins the Tigris River before pouring into the Gulf of Basra. The starting branches of the Euphrates River are the Murat River and the Karasu River.

Turkey's largest dam on the Euphrates River is located in the Ataturk Dam. Some districts South East Anatolia on the Euphrates River resemble the coastal town. Birecik district of Şanlıurfa can be given as an example to coastal town (<http://www.milliyet.com.tr/firat-in-incisi-turizmde-iddiali--yerelhaber-2751284/>).

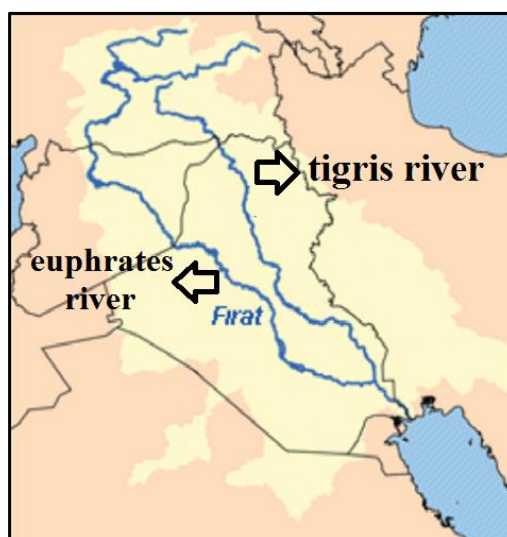


Figure 8. Location of Euphrates and Tigris Rivers.

The Tigris River rises in Turkey, through Iraqi territory, a place called Qurna is the Arab name Şattü'l combine with the Euphrates River and flows into the Persian Gulf. The Tigris River is one of the rivers that formed the old Mesopotamian border. Its length is shorter than the Euphrates, but its flow is higher. There are Kralkizi, Batman, Dicle and Ilisu Dams on Tigris River. Hasankeyf ancient city was established on the edge of the river.

Hasankeyf has a history spanning millennia, with excavations around the citadel dating back to 3000 BCE, and most cliff dwellings being around 2,000 years old (Figure 9). It was perhaps inhabited first by Assyrians and/or Urartians, and then most certainly by successive Roman, Byzantine, Turkic, and Arabic dynasties. Much of the old architecture of Hasankeyf standing today bears the signature of the Ayyubid sultan

el-Melik el-Adil Sultan Salesman (1378-1432). Unfortunately, Hasankeyf is slated to be inundated upon the completion of a dam project that has been in the works for over 50 years now (<https://wikitravel.org/en/Hasankeyf>).

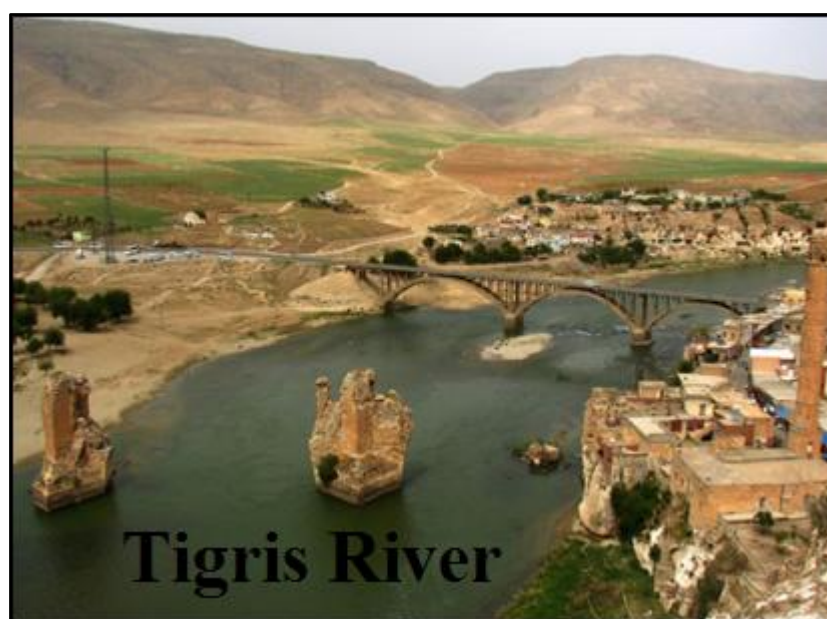


Figure 9. Seem of Hasankeyf.

Zeugma is a city established by the river like Hasankeyf. The ancient city of Zeugma was founded on the edge of the river. Belkıs / Zeugma is a city on the hills, 10 km east of Nizip district of Gaziantep. I. Selevkos Nikator founded a city in 300 BC when The Great Alexander crossed the Euphrates, under the name of Selevkeia Euphrates. This city was captured by Rome from 31 BC and its name was changed to as Zeugma (<https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/gaziantep/gezilecekyer/belkiszeugma-antik-kenti>).

Swot Analysis

A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis is a method of investigation to analyze an exact status-quo. SWOT analysis, also known as SWOT matrix, has frequently been used in field of business and extended to that of natural resource management in order to assess a given decision, project or policy directive in a systematic manner (Reihanian et.al, 2012). Natural geography in the region a tourism structure that will contribute to the socio-economic structure of the region. It is aimed to find out what kind of planning is needed to achieve. For this purpose, SWOT analysis was applied. The results of swot analysis are tabulated as follows (Table 1 and 2):

Table 1. Main factors, sub-factors and alternatives used in the questionnaire

Main factors	Sub-factors	Alternatives
Natural Factors (NF)	Climate	Botanical tourism
	Flora	Trekking
	Fauna	Bird/butterfly watching
	Topography	Photo safari
	Geographical location	Bicycle safari

Result of this study contribute Local residents are not aware of the tourism potential of eco-tourism. Also very limited number of hotel and place staying in the study area. Revealing the richness of tourism in streams with advanced planning. The Study area close to the in the Middle East so misunderstanding. This is Weakness of South East Anatolia Tourism (Table 2).

Table 2. The SWOT analysis for the Southeast Anatolia Region following results:

Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)	Opportunities (O)	Threats (T)
The Study area is located in the tigris and euphrates river	Local residents are not aware of the tourism potential of natural geography	Increased demand for the eco-tourism in Turkey and Worldwide.	Legal Problems arising from status
The study area has economic, cultural, and climatic diversity as	Very limited number of hotel and place staying	Revealing the richness of tourism in streams with	Lack of transportation facilities

well as architectural diversity as a result of the disperse settlements.		advanced planning	
Public awareness of ecotourism	Lack of planning work in the study area about natural area management	Structures such as atatürk and birecik dam	Deficiencies in the field of guidance
Developing via communication tools announcement of the tourism potential of the region	The Study area close to the in the Middle East so misunderstanding	Black Rose of Halfeti Cittaslow City.	Shortcomings in planning services
Presence of old churches such as deyrulzafaran church	Weakness of the regional economy	Rich architecture of the region	Deficiencies in promotional services
Some of the oldest-known cave	Wars in Syria and Iraq	Göbeklitepe Ancient City	Climate due to global warming changes in the study area
Neolithic settlement such as Çayonu hill	Radical terrorist formations	Religious centers such as Urfa Balıklı Göl.	Erosion due to intensive activities of the population
There are topographic structures and geomorphological structure which will allow for different ecotourism activities such as deep valleys (Dicle and euphrates river basin) mountain passes, high mountains (Southeast Taurus Mountains, Karacadağ and Tektek Mountains), small falls, and numerous caves.	Extreme urbanization in natural areas	Having the Ancient City of Zeugma	Unplanned infrastructure

IV. CONCLUSIONS

There has been a significant change in consumption patterns in recent years parallel to the rapid economic, political and technological developments in the tourism of World (Özgen, 2010). South Eastern Anatolia, Turkey's most important nature tourism potential is one of the regions. Firstly attention for not to spoil the nature of South Eastern Anatolia. Study area has rich in terms of natural geography features. The cave, waterfall, interesting tree and rock formation, sportive areas, camping areas, etc., located on the route in selected areas for nature tourism purposes, etc. for charms environmental regulations should be made. Ecotourism richness of various regions of the region (such as bird watching and research of botanical tourism) the establishment of research stations to ensure the application of meaning.

Land selection, transportation, accommodation, pollution, protection of natural areas and water resources, and the available structure should be considered in infrastructure planning efforts to develop ecotourism. Protection of natural and cultural values against possible pollution caused by ecotourism activities will ensure sustainability. Tourism activities have an important role in mitigating imbalance between regions as well (İlhan et.al, 2017).

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Dr. Salman " Swot Analysis Ecotourism of Southeast of Anatolia (Turkey)"International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention (IJHSSI), vol. 08, no. 5, 2019, pp.44-52