

The Impact of Tourism on Residents' Quality of Life: The Case of Van, Turkey

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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on the economic, social, and environmental impacts of tourism on residents' quality of life in Van province in Turkey. Because of its positive economic impacts on the local community, residents' expectations of tourism industry are high. In order to determine the impacts of tourism on quality of life in Van, a survey was conducted using a sample of 351 residents. The findings show a relationship between the impacts of tourism and the local residents' material and cultural wellbeing, and indicate that economic and cultural influences of tourism have a positive impact on the material and cultural wellbeing of local residents.

Keywords: Quality of Life, Impacts of Tourism, Van, Turkey.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past several decades, increasing emphasis has been put on the impacts of tourism on local communities. The lives of communities are affected by tourism activities in ways the literature has categorized as economic, social, cultural, and environmental. Tourism enhances the quality of life of communities by providing employment opportunities, increasing investment, improving standards of living and local services, and increasing recreational activities and environmental quality. However, tourism also creates some negative impacts on communities, such as increasing the prices of goods and services and the cost of living, creating social problems, causing traffic congestion and environmental pollution, and disrupting traditional culture. Studies on the impacts of tourism have long been focused on residents' quality of life, which is affected by the development of the tourism industry.

Determining the perceptions and attitudes of residents towards tourism is an important tool in the evaluation of tourism development and its sustainability. It is important to understand these aspects so that policies can be developed to improve the sustainability of

tourism destinations. Many scholars have pointed out that residents are the major actors within the tourism development process, since they are directly affected by the development of the industry, and that they should be considered as the major stakeholders (Choi and Sirakaya, 2005).

Factors created by tourism may have positive or negative impacts on the quality of life of local residents. Quality of life is closely related to the level of economic development and expectations of people from their lives. In its most general sense, life quality refers to the general life situation in both individual and societal terms. Campbell et al. (1976) define life quality as a subjective sense of well-being as a consequence of the individual's experiences within their overall life.

Quality of life is based on objective notions such as the way of life, physical living conditions, standard of living, lifestyle, life situation, etc. Its subjective pillars are complacency, hope, happiness and priorities. 'Welfare' refers to objective elements in quality of life (such as income, state of health, technological infrastructure, educational system or public safety), while 'well-being' refers to subjective factors, such as happiness, appreciation or love. Thus, quality of life comprises the two pillars objective well-being and subjective well-being (Michalkó, Bakucz and Rátz, 2013).

Puczko and Smith (2011) underline the importance of the relationship between tourism and life quality, and state that life quality involves a sense of satisfaction about life, which is determined by the mental impetus belonging to the person that is evaluating their life. Tourism plays an important role in the process of constructing an individual's ideas, which are based on objective factors.

Life quality is analyzed in the literature on tourism in two groups. The first group of studies deals with the relationship between tourism activities and the life qualities of tourists. These works presume that tourists participate in touristic activities and visit touristic sites in order to increase their life qualities in mental and physical terms (Griffin and Stacey, 2011). The second group of works analyzes the changes in life qualities of local residents living in touristic areas, which are caused by interactions with tourism. Tourism makes an important contribution to the social life of residents by providing opportunities for the development of social interaction, personal development and personal identities. Furthermore, participating in touristic activities has direct and indirect positive impacts, including providing a healthier and happier life, higher life expectancy and self-esteem, and, consequently, higher life satisfaction (Sarı and Özdemir, 2014).

Jafari (2012) states that a destination that does not provide adequate life quality to local residents is unable to provide high-quality tourism experiences to visitors. Jafari underlines the importance of local residents in providing tourist satisfaction, and argues that higher tourist satisfaction is associated with higher revenues obtained from touristic activities. In this sense, satisfaction of local residents positively influences tourist satisfaction and leads to an increase in income raised in the region.

A study by Kim et al. (2013) shows that the development of tourism positively influences general life satisfaction of local residents. The authors argue that there are four dimensions of life quality, namely material well-being, community well-being, emotional well-being and health and security. The study found that material and emotional well-being have an overwhelming impact on life satisfaction. On the contrary, a study by Khizindar (2012) in Saudi Arabia found that tourism has little impact on the life quality and satisfaction

of local residents. A study by Crofts and Holland (1993) shows that tourism has a positive impact on rural populations.

There are a limited number of studies on the impacts of tourism on residents' quality of life in Turkey. Sarı and Özdemir (2014) conducted a study on local residents living in Eskişehir Odunpazarı, and found that tourism positively influences their life quality. A study by Küçük (2014) in Konya Beyşehir found that the local residents believe that as tourism develops in the region, the services provided will increase in both quantity and quality, which, in turn, will lead to an increase in life quality. Similarly, a study by Saatcı and Ülkü (2014) in Bursa Harmancık showed that local residents believe there will be an increase in life quality as a consequence of the development of ecotourism in the region. Against these, a study by Altıntaş (2010) in Alanya found that sustainable tourism practices may influence the life quality of local residents in a negative way. A study by Turker et al. (2016) in Safranbolu found that tourism positively influences local residents' overall life quality. Economic, cultural and environmental effects of tourism have positive impacts on the life quality of residents living in Safranbolu, whereas social influences have negative impacts. Correlation analysis in the same study showed that local residents expect to see minor changes in their life quality as tourism development progresses.

The current work, analyses the impact of tourism on residents living in the province of Van, Turkey. The first part of our study deals with the impact of tourism in the province in quantitative terms. Within this context, the study provides information about the number of incoming tourists and the number of touristic enterprises. In order to determine the impact of tourism on the life quality of the local residents, a survey was conducted to find out their perceptions regarding their life quality.

Van province is located in the east of Turkey, near the borders of Iran and Iraq. The city, which was once the capital of the Urartu Civilization, hosts a number of historical (castles, churches, mosques, bridges etc.), cultural (local food, festivals, museums, faith-related sites, old style Van houses, literature, folk traditions, etc.) and recreational (entertainment facilities, water sport and ski facilities, etc.) attractions.

The development of tourism in Van and its benefits for local residents run in parallel to the development of tourism in Turkey. The city, which was visited by nearly 200,000 European tourists in late 1980s, received 737,000 tourists in 2014, including 235,000 foreign tourists. Although terror events in the region led to a slight decrease, the number of tourists visiting the province has increased in recent years. Today, Van is the most important tourism destination in the Eastern Anatolia region. The number of food and beverage facilities and other touristic facilities prove this issue. Accommodation facilities in Van are in service both for domestic and foreign tourists. There are 19 hotels which is licensed by Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism. These enterprises have 1,774 beds in total (Culture and Tourism Authority of Van, 2016). Compared to the other provinces in the Eastern Anatolia region, Van holds a prominent position in terms of number of overnight visitors and tourists. Various cafés, bars, restaurants, water sports centers, beaches, camping sites and winter sport centers located in the area provide important contributions to the development of tourism around the Van Lake.

As of 2015, there were 251 traditional restaurants, 51 other restaurants and 55 patisseries in Van. In terms of food and beverage services, breakfast restaurants are the primary touristic products within the province in terms of contributing to the domestic touristic promotion of

the city. The city holds a Guinness World Record for its 34 breakfast saloons (Tourist Information office of Van, 2015).

Domestic and foreign tourists, the enterprises providing touristic services, employees working in the tourism sector, and the multiplier effect of tourism not only have economic impacts, but also social, cultural and environmental effects on the life quality of people living in Van. Macroeconomic indicators related to tourism have been associated with the number of tourists visiting Van, and the income increase has improved the life quality of Van's residents.

This work analyzes the perceptions of residents living in Van with respect to the economic, social, cultural and environmental effects of tourism and the perceived impact of these on local residents' life quality.

2. METHODOLOGY

The primary aim of this study is to determine the effects of tourism on the life quality of people living in the province of Van. A total of 285,000 people live in the province. This study involved a survey conducted on 351 participants between November 2015 and January 2016 using random sampling.

The study used the "Quality of Life Scale" developed by Kim (2002). The scale comprises three parts. The first part includes questions to determine the demographic characteristics of the participants; the second comprises 44 items on the economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts of tourism; and the third includes 33 items to measure participants' life conditions, life satisfaction and satisfaction regarding health and security. A five-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree) was used to measure these items. The "Quality of Life Scale" developed by Kim (2002) measures four dimensions:

- Material well-being (income, social security, taxation, cost of living),
- Community well-being (environmental factors, municipality services, people that participants live with),
- Emotional well-being (recreational activities, religious facilities, protection of local culture, interaction with tourists),
- Health and safety (perceptions about security and crime; water quality; air, water and environmental pollution; traffic problems and rate of traffic incidents).

Kim (2002) also added 'life satisfaction in general' as another dimension in order to measure overall life satisfaction. Our study analyzes the impact of tourism for residents living in Van province using Kim's (2002) four dimensions. These dimensions include material well-being, community well-being, emotional well-being and health and safety well-being.

In order to analyze the relationship between the impacts of tourism and quality of life, we constructed the following hypotheses and sub-hypotheses:

H1: The impacts of tourism influence the life quality of local residents.

H1.1: Positive economic impacts of tourism influence perceptions regarding quality of life.

H1.2: Positive social impacts of tourism influence perceptions regarding quality of life.

H1.3: Positive cultural impacts of tourism influence perceptions regarding quality of life.

H1.4: Positive environmental impacts of tourism influence perceptions regarding quality of life.

H2: There is a relationship between the phase of tourism development and perceived quality of life.

H2.1: There is a relationship between the phase of tourism development and perceived material well-being.

H2.2: There is a relationship between the phase of tourism development and perceived community well-being.

H2.3: There is a relationship between the phase of tourism development and perceived emotional well-being.

H2.4: There is a relationship between the phase of tourism development and perceived health and security well-being

The data was analyzed using statistical software. The reliability of the items in the scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which indicates the homogeneity of the expressions in a scale (Kalaycı, 2010: 405). Reliability tests conducted to measure the reliability of the scales constructed to analyze the impact of tourism on the life quality of residents living in Van showed that the scale was reliable. Accordingly, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for general life satisfaction was $\alpha = 0.907$ (material well-being $\alpha = 0.861$, community well-being $\alpha = 0.949$, emotional well-being $\alpha = 0.750$, health and security well-being $\alpha = 0.646$, life satisfaction in general $\alpha = 0.743$), indicating high reliability. On the other hand, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the impact of tourism was $\alpha = 0.882$ (economic $\alpha = 0.847$, social $\alpha = 0.736$, cultural $\alpha = 0.834$, environmental $\alpha = 0.881$), indicating high reliability.

3. FINDINGS

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the participants, Table 2 summarizes the findings regarding the participants' life quality in Van, and Table 3 demonstrates, in the form of frequency and percentage distribution, the perceptions of participants regarding the phase of tourism development in Van.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Gender	f	%
Male	200	57.0
Female	151	43.0
Age	f	%
25 or below	85	24.2
26–30	81	23.1
31–35	82	23.4
36–40	52	14.8
41 or above	51	14.5
Education	f	%
High school	74	21.1
Undergraduate	257	73.2
Graduate	20	5.7
Profession	f	%
Civil servant	77	21.9
Student	81	23.1

Worker	92	26.2
Self-employed	49	14.0
Business Owner	52	14.8
Monthly Family Income		f %
Less than \$350	30	8.5
\$351–700	93	26.5
\$701–1000	95	27.1
More than \$1000	133	37.9
Total	351	100

Table 1 shows that 57% of the participants were male and 43% were female; 24.2% were below the age of 25, 23.1% were between 26 and 30, 23.4% were between 31 and 35, 14.8% were between 36 and 40, and 14.5% were over the age of 40. The majority (73.2%) of participants were university graduates. In terms of profession, 21.9% were civil servants, 23.1% were students, 26.2% were workers, 14% were self-employed and 14.8% were employers. Finally, 8.5% of the participants earned less than \$350, 26.5% had an income between \$351 and \$700 per month, 27.1% earned between \$701 and \$1000, and 37.9% earned more than \$1000 per month.

Table 2. Findings on the Local residents of Van

Residence Period in Van		f	%
1–4 years		106	30.2
5–9 years		76	21.7
10–14 years		88	25.1
15–19 years		52	14.8
Over 20 years		29	8.3
Household Size		f	%
3 or fewer		131	37.3
4 or more		220	62.7
Number of Dependent People		f	%
2 or fewer		252	71.8
3 or more		99	28.2
Income Raised from Tourism		f	%
None		154	43.9
A little		41	11.7
Some		72	20.5
A lot		38	10.8
Almost all		46	13.1
Household status		f	%
Single adult living alone or with other single adults		88	25.1
Single adult with children or living with other family members		83	23.6
Married couple living without children or other family members		64	18.2
Married couple living with children or other family members		116	33.0
How do you define your life?		f	%

My life is far worse than that of most other people	18	5.1
My life is a little bit worse than that of most other people	29	8.3
My life is similar to that of most other people	140	39.9
My life is a little better than that of most other people	113	32.2
My life is much better than that of most other people	51	14.5
Total	351	100

Regarding the residence period in Van, the study found that 30.2% of the participants had been living in Van for a period between one and four years, 21.7% had been in Van for a period between five and nine years, 25.1% had been living in Van for 10 to 14 years, 14.8% had been in Van for 15 to 19 years and 8.3% had been living in Van for more than 20 years. In terms of household size, 37.3% lived with three or fewer people, whereas 62.7% lived with four or more people. A total of 71.8% of the participants stated that they were obliged to look after two or fewer people, whereas 28.2% expressed that they looked after three or more people. While 43.9% of the participants did not raise any income from tourism activities, 11.7% stated that they earned a little from tourism, 20.5% said that some of their income depended on tourism, 10.8% of the participants raised much of their income from tourism and 13.1% stated that almost all of their income was raised from engaging in tourism activities. A total of 25.1% of the participants were single; that is, living alone or with other single people, while 23.6% were single people living with children or family members, 18.2% were married couples with no children or family members living with them, and 33% were married couples living with their children or family members. Finally, 5.1% of the participants stated that their life was far worse than that of most other people, 8.3% believed that their life was a little bit worse, 39.9% expressed that their life was similar to that of most others, 32.2% thought that their life was a little better, and 14.5% stated that their life was much better than that of most other people.

Table 3. Development Phase of Tourism in Van

Development Stages of Tourism in Van	f	%
Exploration	26	7.4
Development	197	56.1
Consolidation	76	21.7
Decline	52	14.8
Total	351	100

As shown in Table 3, 7.4% of the participants stated that tourism in Van is in the start-up phase, 56.1% expressed that tourism in Van is in its development phase, 21.7% stated that tourism is in the maturity phase and 14.8% stated that it is in decline.

Table 4 demonstrates the regression analysis results conducted to determine the effects of tourism on quality of life of the residents living in Van.

Table 4. Results of Regression Analysis on the Effects of Tourism on Quality of Life

Regression Table					
Dimensions	B	Standard Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Invariant	1.690	0.220		7.696	0.000
Environmenta	0.402	0.066	0.309	6.063	0.000

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Not. $F\text{-value} = 36,758$; *Significant* $F = 0.000$; $R = 0.309$, $R^2 = 0.095$, *Corrected* $R^2 = 0.093$

Regression analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between the perceptions of the Van residents regarding the effects (economic, cultural, social, and environmental) of tourism and their quality of life (material well-being, community well-being, emotional well-being, health and security well-being). The regression analysis attempted to determine the effects of tourism as the independent variable, on the quality of life as dependent variable. The analysis found the correlation to be 30.9%, the determination coefficient as 09.5% and a corrected determination coefficient of 09.3%. Accordingly, 09.5% of the change in perceived quality of life is explained by the social, economic, cultural, and environmental effects of tourism. The F-value was 36,758 with a significance level of $p = 0.000$. The analysis, which took the F-value and significance level into consideration, showed a meaningful relationship between perceived quality of life and the social, economic, cultural, and environmental impacts of tourism. Consequently, the coefficient for the invariant was $\beta = 1.690$, and the invariant was meaningful at the level of $p = 0.000$. The results support H1. Furthermore, the findings are consistent with those of Khizindar (2009), Kim (2002), and Sari and Özdemir (2014) that tourism influences general quality of life.

Table 5 shows the results of a regression analysis conducted to determine the economic, cultural, social, and environmental effects of tourism on the quality of life of residents living in Van.

Table 5. Results of Regression Analysis on the Economic, Cultural, Social, and Environmental Effects of Tourism on Quality of Life

Regression Table					
Dimensions	B	Standard Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Invariant	1.614	0.221		7.290	0.000
Social Impact	0.023	0.049	0.027	0.472	0.637
Economic Impact	0.150	0.056	0.155	2.690	0.007
Cultural Impact	0.187	0.051	0.213	3.688	0.000
Environmental Impact	0.047	0.041	0.063	1.136	0.257

Note. $F\text{-value} = 11,288$; *Significant* $F = 0.000$; $R = 0.340$. $R^2 = 0.115$, *Corrected* $R^2 = 0.105$

The regression analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between the perceptions of the Van residents regarding the effects of tourism (economic, cultural, social, and environmental) and their quality of life (material well-being, community well-being, emotional well-being, health and security well-being). The regression analysis attempted to determine the effects of tourism as the independent variable, on the quality of life as the dependent variable. The analysis found a correlation of 34.0%, determination coefficient of 11.5%, and corrected determination coefficient of 10.5%. Accordingly, 11.5% of the change in perceived quality of life is explained by the social, economic, cultural, and environmental effects of tourism. The F-value was 11,288 with a significance level of $p = 0.000$. The analysis, which took the F-value and significance level into consideration, showed a meaningful relationship between the perceived quality of life and the social, economic,

cultural, and environmental impacts of tourism. Consequently, the coefficient of the invariant was $\beta = 1.614$, with the invariant meaningful at the level of $p = 0.000$.

The coefficient of the variable of the economic impacts of tourism was $\beta = 0.150$, with a significance level of $p = 0.007$. This finding implies a meaningful relationship between the economic impacts of tourism and perceived quality of life. Accordingly, one unit of increase in the economic impacts of tourism leads to an increase of $\beta = 0.150$ in quality of life. This result supports H1.1; however, the finding contrasts those of Kim (2002) and Khizindar (2012), who found that economic impacts of tourism have no influence on, or do not negatively influence, the life quality of residents.

The coefficient for the independent variable social impact was $\beta = 0.023$, and the significance level was $p = 0.637$. The significance level shows that there is no meaningful relationship between the social impacts of tourism and perceived quality of life. Additionally, one unit of change in social impacts of tourism leads to an increase of $\beta = 0.023$ in quality of life. Thus, H1.2 is not supported.

The coefficient for the cultural impact variable of tourism was $\beta = 0.187$, and the significance level was $p = 0.000$. This finding implies a meaningful relationship between the cultural impacts of tourism and perceived quality of life. Accordingly, one unit of change in cultural impacts of tourism leads to an increase of $\beta = 0.187$ in quality of life. This finding supports H1.3, and is in line with the findings of Khizindar (2012) on Saudi Arabia.

The coefficient for the environmental impacts of tourism was $\beta = 0.047$ and the significance level was $p = 0.257$. The finding implies that there is no meaningful relationship between the environmental impacts of tourism and perceived quality of life. Accordingly, one unit of change in environmental impacts of tourism is associated with an increase of $\beta = 0.047$ in quality of life. Thus, H1.4 is not supported.

Table 6 shows the results of the correlation analysis conducted to analyze the relationship between the development phase of tourism and the life quality of local residents.

Table 6. Results of Correlation Analysis

Correlation Table							
Variables		Material Well-being	Community Well-being	Emotional Well-being	Health and Security Well-being	General Well-being	Quality of Life Perception
Development Phase of Tourism	Pearson Correlation	0.139*	0.033	0.030	0.034	0.051	0.078
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.009	0.550	0.573	0.521	0.336	0.143
	N	351	351	351	351	351	351

The correlation analysis shows the correlation coefficients for the variables. As Table 6 demonstrates, there is no relationship between the development phase of tourism and community well-being, emotional well-being, health and security well-being, general well-being and perceived quality of life. Furthermore, with a correlation coefficient of 0.139, there is a positive but very weak relationship between the development phase of tourism and material well-being. These findings imply that H2.1 is supported but H2.2, H2.3 and H2.4 are not.

CONCLUSIONS

In regions where a tourism industry has developed, it is primarily local residents that are influenced by the negative and positive impacts. Support for tourism from local residents is shaped by the economic, social, cultural, and environmental impacts of tourism in the destination in which the residents live. Positive perceptions of local residents regarding the impacts of tourism increase support for the industry, whereas negative perceptions result in dissatisfaction in residents regarding the development of tourism. Consequently, the participation of local inhabitants in touristic activities and the development process of tourism lead to an increase in the positive impacts of tourism that mitigate the negative impacts. Within this context, understanding the impacts of tourism on quality of life is highly important for sustainable tourism development.

Although various studies on the context of Turkey have analyzed the perceptions of the residents on the impacts of tourism, few scholars have paid attention to the impacts of tourism on quality of life. In this sense, we believe that this work may contribute to the development of related literature. We believe that it is highly important to analyze the impacts of tourism for local residents of Van and the contributions of tourism to the city, whose history dates back to 7000 BC and where the traditional way of life is still protected. Positive perceptions of those living in Van regarding the impacts of tourism are vital to ensure the sustainable development of tourism in the province. Further qualitative studies are needed in order to determine the perceptions of local inhabitants regarding the impacts of tourism on general life quality.

One of the main conclusions of this study is that the residents benefit from the economic effects of the tourism industry, although the low number of tourists limits this impact. The Iranian tourism market have increased the economic expectations of the local community. For example, most of the customers visiting the two new shopping malls that have been opened in the center of Van are Iranian.

The social impacts of tourism are as important as its economic impacts. A large number of respondents reported negative perceptions of social impacts. Although this varied according to the respondents' income level, occupation, and education, overall they believed that tourism has moderate social impacts on the community. In addition, the perceptions of respondents regarding environmental impacts vary considerably. The respondents stated that pollution arises from the insensitivity of enterprises operating in the region, rather than from tourists. Furthermore, the respondents believed that tourism will lead to improvements in the physical environment to some extent.

This study attempted to reveal the perceptions of residents of Van regarding the impact of tourism on their quality of life. We found that tourism has a positive impact on the general quality of life. A brief analysis of the literature showed a meaningful relationship between the impacts of tourism and the life quality of community residents (Andereck and Nyaupane, 2011; Kim, 2013; Crofts and Holland, 1993). This study found that economic and cultural impacts of tourism positively influence the life quality of residents of Van, while there is no meaningful relationship between social and environmental impacts and life quality. The residents believe that tourism in Van does not negatively affect their quality of life. However, especially during the Newroz period, there are inadequate services for the local community in terms of shopping malls and other tourism businesses because of the concentration of Iranian tourists.

The correlation analysis conducted in this study showed that the local residents perceived minor changes in their material well-being as the development phase of tourism progressed; 56% of the respondents stated that tourism is still in the development stage in Van.

In order to maintain the support of community residents for the tourism sector, and to increase their quality of life, the economic, social, cultural, and physical benefits of tourism should be higher than its costs. Due to this, the participation of local inhabitants in tourism planning activities is highly important. In order to increase the positive impact of tourism on the life quality of local inhabitants, policies that increase the employment of local residents in the tourism sector, and that encourage their investments in tourism, should be developed. In this way, local inhabitants may come to hold a prominent place in the local tourism sector and their revenues obtained from tourism may increase. This may lead to an increase in their life quality.

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