



## A Study on Attitude and Perceptions of the Local People in Trabzon Towards Ecotourism\*\*

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### Abstract

As the desires and needs of individuals are growing, so the significance of ecotourism is becoming more prominent. Ecotourism, which is one of the cornerstones of the sustainability of natural resources in the tourism sector, supports the relationship between natural areas, local people, and tourism, and thus it is a concept that can help to ensure natural and cultural values are used without damage and to strike the balance between conservation and development. The purpose of the study is to determine the awareness of the local people in Trabzon and evaluate their attitudes towards ecotourism. The data regarding the research has been obtained by the survey method and the population of the study is the local people of Trabzon. The results of the research determine that the local people living in Trabzon have a positive attitude towards the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental development of ecotourism.

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## INTRODUCTION

In tourism, using environmental values without management plans can cause a deterioration of natural balance in terms of changes in climate characteristics, air, water soil pollution, destruction of flora and fauna species and changes in climatological features. Therefore, environmental problems have an impact on human life as well as affecting activities such as the tourism sector which is dependent on the natural environment. Due to our senseless consumption of natural resources and the escalation of environmental pollution, the idea of using resources in a sustainable way has come to prominence in recent times. It requires careful planning which is sensitive to environmental factors in order to avoid negative effects within the protection-utilization balance. As a result of foremost globalization, technological, economic, and environmental changes primarily lead to differentiation in consumption habits.

This reflection on the tourism sector manifests itself when people incline towards special interest tourism types rather than mass tourism. The changing perspective of holiday concept and desire to gain an advantage in the tourism sector by spreading tourism over the years have caused many alternative tourism types to unfold which has created new concepts such as sustainable tourism and soft tourism. One of the developing alternative tourism types is the concept of ecotourism.

Consumers who participate in ecotourism activities wish to escape to natural environments, move away from the city environment and spend their time in nature in tranquility, therefore these individuals should be aware of protecting the environment and are expected to act accordingly considering the fact that they attach such importance to the environment (Kement, 2019). Ecotourism is an important phenomenon due to its benefits such as spreading tourism from some concentrated regions to a wider area, helping local regions to develop and creating employment. However, in order to have these trips to those unspoiled areas to be beneficial to the areas visited and the people living in that region, it is essential to have the views of the people living in the region as well as those interested in tourism. It is important to consider regions which have a potential for tourism in a framework that includes all factors before they are opened to tourism. Thus, it is possible to talk about a tourism movement that is agreed upon and in which local stakeholders are also participants. Local stakeholders are an important factor in the tourism industry due to their approach to tourism, interaction with tourists, and shaping the future of tourism (Kızılırmak, Kaya, Yıldız & Kurtulay, 2017).

### Concept of Ecotourism

Ecotourism is broadly accepted as a sector of the tourism industry which is expanding at a fast pace and its priority components are still open to a debate which brings about many challenges in definition, implementation, and monitoring (Black & Crabtree, 2007; Dodds, 2008). Ecotourism is the sort of tourism that is shown as one of the first examples when we talk about tourism which is processed with environmental sensitivity and its development relies on environmental resources. The concept of ecotourism is frequently used in international publications, and for some people it is used as one type of tourism and according to the others, it is used as a meta-concept that collectively expresses the types of tourism fed by environmental sensitivity (Kahraman & Türkay, 2014).

Although there has been a lot of research into the concept of ecotourism, the definition and conceptualization of it has been diverse and contrary. One suggestion of the broad definition is that ecotourism contributes to the protection of natural areas and biodiversity (Goodwin, 1996). The definition of ecotourism is travelling to unspoiled and

uncontaminated natural areas, studying, watching and enjoying wild plants and animals as well as the existing cultural landscapes (Blamey, 2001). Ecotourism is a type of alternative tourism which prioritizes the protection of the environment and culture and also aims to eliminate the negative effects of mass tourism (Öztürk & Yazıcıoğlu, 2002). In other words, unlike mass tourism, ecotourism favors participating in activities throughout the year, rather than in a certain period or season, with fewer tourists, reducing the pressure on the natural environment, acting on the basis of the policy rather than fixing the damage and providing long-term economic development. Therefore, the main objective is to leave smaller ecological footprints in nature, to prevent environmental degradation and to ensure the enhancement of local people (Dinç & Karakök, 2021).

Some principles should be set out with regard to ecotourism travels in order to be able to conserve the environment rather than depleting it (Kahraman & Türkay, 2014). These principles should be envisaged to minimize the socio-cultural effects and at the same time they should maximize the social benefits of tourism (Wearing, 2001). The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) has set some principles for participants who take part in ecotourism activities and for those who implement and promote these activities (TIES, 2019);

- Minimize physical, social, and behavioral effects,
- Create environmental and cultural awareness,
- Provide positive experiences for hosts and visitors,
- Understand the experience of local people to increase the environmental and social awareness of the region
- Create financial benefits for conservation, local communities, and private sectors

Ecotourism, which is conceived as the best way of sustainable development in tourism, is in a versatile interactive relation with the regions where physical, economic and socio-cultural environment is developing (Demir & Çevirgen, 2006). Many countries, who are interested in tourism, focused on ecotourism and began research on this subject, some of which are about the impact of ecotourism on local people because ecotourism involves economic, socio-cultural, and environmental activities. This effect covers the local people's perceptions of economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impact (Turpcu & Çelikkanat Paslı, 2019). The aim of this research is to obtain information about the attitudes and perceptions of the local people towards ecotourism, as they are important stakeholders in the tourism sector. Bearing the above information in mind, answers will be sought to questions of how aware and knowledgeable the local people are in the city of Trabzon about ecotourism activities and how they define ecotourism. One of the other aims of the study is to determine how the local people perceive ecotourism in economic, environmental, and socio-cultural terms.

### **Trabzon and Ecotourism**

The research topic of Trabzon has a surface area of 4685 km<sup>2</sup> and is located in the Eastern Black Sea Region of Turkey, between 38°30' and 40°30' east meridians and 40°33' and 41°30' north parallels. The city is surrounded by Rize in the east, Giresun in the west, Gümüşhane and Bayburt in the south, and the Black Sea in the North. This destination has thriving flora and fauna due to its geographical situation. A total of 127 endemic plants were detected in Trabzon, 85 of which are species, 26 subspecies, and 16 varieties. Of the 345 bird species found in the region, 139 are native bird species that can always be found in the region (Trabzon Tabiat Turizmi Master Planı, 2016).

As of 07.01.2020, according to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism Certificated Accommodation Facility Statistics, the number of facilities with operation certificate is 65, the number of rooms with operation certificate is

3.595 and the number of beds with operation certificate is 7.349 in Trabzon. The number of facilities with investment certificate is 24, the number of rooms with investment certificate is 2138, and the number of beds with investment certificate is 4625. Again, as of 07.01.2020, according to the statistics of accommodation facilities with municipality certificate, the number of facilities with municipality certificate is 46, the number of rooms with municipality certificate is 1280, and the number of beds with municipality certificate is 2848 (TÜRSAB, 2020).

**Table 1.** Ecotourism Resources of Trabzon Province

Lakes of the Research Area	Tourism Centers of the Research Area
Lake Sera	Akçaabat-Karadağ Tourism Center
Lake Balıklı	Araklı-Pazarcık Tourism Center
Uzungöl and Crater Lakes	Araklı-Yeşilyurt-Yılantaş Tourism Center
Protected Areas of the Research Area	Araklı Tourism Center
	Maçka-Şolma Tourism Center
	Trabzon-Tonya-Armutlu-Gümüşhane-Kürtün-Erikbeli Tourism Center
Beşikdağı Nature Park	Trabzon-Giresun-Sisdagi Tourism Center
Çalcamil Nature Park	Highlands of the Research Area
Çamburnu Nature Park	
Görnek Nature Park	
Kadıralak Nature Park	Akçaabat-Karadağ Highland
Kayabaşı Nature Park	Araklı-Pazarcık Highland
Uzungöl Nature Park	Araklı-Yeşilyurt-Yılantaş Highland
Lake Sera Nature Park	Çakirgöl Highland
Caves of the Research Area	Çatma Highland
	Düzkoy Highland
	Harmantepe Highland
	Hıdırnebi and Kuruçam Highlands
Çalköy Cave	Kadırga Highland
Akarsu Village Cave	Kulindağı Highland
Monasteries of the Research Area	Lapazan Highland
	Maçka-Kiraz Highland
	Maçka-Mavura Highland
Sümela Monastery	Sisdağı Highland
Vezalon (Yahya) Monastery	Sazalan Highland
Kuştul – Hızır İlyas Monastery	Sultanmurat Highland
Kızlar (Panagia Theokephastros )Monastery	Trabzon-Tonya-Armutlu-Gümüşhane-Kürtün-Erikbeli Highland
Kızlar (Panagia Keramesta) Monastery	Kayabaşı Highland
	National Parks
	Altundere Valley National Park

**Source:** Created by the authors by expanding from the study of (Taş & Karaman, 2015).

In addition, many researchers have concluded that the cultural and natural resources of Trabzon province are suitable for ecotourism activities (Ünlü & Erbaş, 2021; Kaya & Yıldırım, 2020; Taş & Karaman, 2015; Zaman, Şahin & Birinci, 2011).

## Methods

Since the survey was conducted on the local people in Trabzon the results were stated as numerical expressions. As statistical verifications can be made about the reliability and validity of the obtained data, the quantitative data collection method has been selected, hence, the research is a quantitative study (Yüksel & Yüksel, 2004). Questionnaire is used as the data collection method. In the study, the questionnaire scale was used in the research

titled. "Consciousness and Attitude of the Local People of Northern Coast of Edremit Gulf Towards the Ecotourism in the Local Area " by Kavak (2015) was utilized.

The range of the research is confined to the local people living in Trabzon, the main mass of the research consists of 808,974 people which is the population of Trabzon (TÜİK, 2020). Considering the determining factors affecting the sample size, starting from the sample table capable of representing the range, the number of 384 is sufficient for the sample in population sizes greater than 100.000, which is specified at the 0.05 significance level and 0.05 sampling error (Krejcia & Morgan, 1970). Simple random sampling, which is one of the probability sampling methods, is used in this study for sample selection. In the research, 600 surveys were applied to the participants between February 26, 2021 and March 28, 2021. 90 of them were not evaluated due to missing or incorrect filling of the statements in the surveys. The remaining 510 surveys were evaluated. The first part of the survey consists of the variables prepared to determine the demographic characteristics of the participants. In the second part, the participants were asked how they define ecotourism and what ecotourism activities are based on entertainment, learning, and relaxation that can be applied in Trabzon. In the third part, 27 activities were defined and it was asked which ones could be ecotourism activities. In the last part, there are questions prepared according to a 16-item 5-point Likert scale to measure the ecotourism attitude of the respondents.

Giresun University Social Sciences, Science and Engineering Research Ethics Committee with its decision dated 03 February 2021 and numbered 07/03 ethically approved the research.

## Findings

Descriptive statistics were designated in the survey to determine the demographic characteristics of the participants, descriptive statistics such as age, gender, marital status, occupation and how long they have lived in Trabzon.

**Table 2.** Numerical and Percental Distribution of the Sample Profile

<i>Gender</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Duration of living in Trabzon</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Male	221	43,3	1-20 years	201	39,4	Student	162	31,8
Female	289	56,7	21-40 years	210	41,2	Employee	42	8,2
			41- 60 + years	99	19,4	Unemployed	34	6,7
						Tradesman	36	7,1
<i>Marital Status</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>				Retired	30	5,9
Married	213	41,8				Civil Servant	123	24
Single	297	58,2				Other Professions	83	16,3
<i>Age</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Income status</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>			
0-20	80	15,7	0 – 2323 TL	193	37,8			
20-39	290	56,9	2.324 TL – 3.324 TL	98	19,2			
40-60	107	21	3.325 TL – 4.325 TL	70	13,7			
61 +	33	6,5	4.326 TL – 5.326 TL	85	16,7			
			5.327 TL – 6.327 TL	34	6,7			
			6.328 TL+	30	5,9			

According to the table 2, 56.7% of the participants are women and 43.3% are men. Hence, the gender ratios of the participants are almost equal. When the marital status of the participants are examined, 41.8% are married and 58.2% are single which shows that the majority of the participants are single. When the occupational groups of the respondents are examined, 31.8% are students, 8.2% are employed, 6.7% are unemployed, 7.1% are tradesmen, 5.9% are retired, 24.1% are civil servants and 16.3% are from other professions, therefore, the majority of the participants are students and civil servants. The life expectancy indicator in Trabzon shows that 39.4% of the participants have lived in Trabzon for 1-20 years, 41.2% for 21-40 years, and 19.4% for 41-60 years and longer. According to this, the majority of the participants in the research are those who have lived in Trabzon for 21-40 years. When the income status of the participants is examined, 37.18% of the participants have below the minimum wage, 19.2% have 2.324 TRY – 3.324 TRY, 13.7% have 3.325 TRY – 4.325 TRY, 16.7% have 4.326 TRY – 5.326 TRY, 6.7% of them have 5.327 TRY – 6.327 TRY, 5.9% of them have 6.328 TRY and above. The majority of the participants consist of people with income below the minimum wage.

**Table 3.** Findings Regarding Ecotourism Definitions of Participants

Definition of Concept of Ecotourism	Number (f)	Percent (%)
Environmentally friendly tourism	231	%45,3
Tourism which provides interpretation and education relating to nature	150	%29,4
Tourism that involves nature-related tours and activities.	165	%32,4
Tourism that provides escape from stress and relaxation.	95	%18,6
Tourism that conserves the environment and contributes to the well-being of local people	237	%46,5
Tourism that encourages knowledge of different cultures and traditions	93	%18,2
Tourism that offers expensive and fashionable travel	5	%1
Tourism that offers comfortless, simple and plain facilities	52	%10,2
A kind of tourism where I can perform sporting activities	62	%12,2

Examination of Table 3 shows that the participants defined ecotourism as “tourism which protects the environment and contributes to the welfare of local people” at a rate of 46.5%, while the statement “It is environmentally friendly tourism” was the second most preferred expression with a rate of 45.2%. The least preferred statement was “It is tourism that offers an expensive and fashionable travel”.

Research findings coincide with the definitions of “tourism which provides interpretation and education relating to nature”, “environmentally friendly tourism”, “tourism that includes nature-related tours and activities”, which emerged in Cevirgen's (2003) study. The least preferred definition of the respondents was “tourism offering an expensive and fashionable travel” option, 1%. In the study of Nayir (2009), the least preferred definition of ecotourism was the option that "tourism offering expensive and fashionable travel". The conclusion we can reach according to these results is that the local people define ecotourism correctly and have knowledge about ecotourism.

**Table 4.** Findings of Participants with Regard to The Possibility of Entertainment Based Ecotourism Activities

Ecotourism Activities	Number (f)	Percent (%)
Balloon Tourism	26	%5,1
Mountain/Rock Climbing	272	%53,3
Nature Discovery	360	%70,6
Horseback Nature Trail	73	%14,3
Cycling Tourism	128	%25,1
Nature Walk	419	%82,2

The majority of the participants' responses were nature walks and nature discovery. Balloon tourism was the least selected option with 5.1%.

**Table 5.** Frequency Statistics of Participants' Responses to the Possibility of Conducting Educational Ecotourism Activities

	Number (f)	Percent (%)
Nature Photography	428	%83,9
Monitoring Geomorphological Formations	54	%10,6
Wildlife Watching	180	%35,3
Cultural Tourism	215	%42,2
Cultural Walks	236	%46,3
Historical Area Tourism	254	%49,8
Botanical Tourism	177	%34,7
Watching Extraordinary Events	26	%5,1
Festival Tourism	161	%31,6
Land Route Tourism	69	%13,5
Agriculture Tourism	139	%27,3
Faith Tourism	112	%22

Table 5 shows that the most selected option by the participants was nature photography whereas the least favored option was watching extraordinary events.

**Table 6.** Frequency Statistics of the Participants' Responses with Regard to the Possibility of Conducting Ecotourism Activities Based on Relaxing

Ecotourism Activities	Number (f)	Percent (%)
Klimatizm	123	%24,1
Camping/Caravan Tourism	373	%73,1
Spa Tourism	76	%14,9
Marine Tourism	289	%56,7

Analysis of the responses by the participants concerning the possibility of relaxing ecotourism activities in Trabzon showed that the most preferred option was camping/caravan tourism which differs from the study of Kavak (2015).

**Table 7.** Frequency Analysis of Acceptability as Ecotourism Activities by Participants

Ecotourism Activities	Appropriate	Partially Appropriate	Inappropriate
Underwater Diving	%40,4	%35,9	%23,7
Bird Watching	%50,4	%31	%18,6
Cycling Trip	%51,4	%32,2	%16,5
Botanical Tourism	%72,2	%20,6	%7,3
Festivals	%47,5	%29,4	%23,1
Canoeing – Rafting	%51,8	%29,4	%18,8
Nature Walks	%91	% 6,5	%2,5
Photography	%79,4	%14,3	%6,3
Jeep Safari	%33,3	%32	%34,7
Historical Archaeological Excursions	%53,9	%31,4	%14,7
Paragliding	%39,6	%37,3	%23,1
Hunting	%39,2	%20,8	%40
Caving	%41,8	%34,1	%24,1
Horse Riding	%35,7	%37,3	%27,1
Mountain Climbing	%76,5	%17,8	%5,7
Winter Tourism	%55,3	%32	%12,7
Agriculture Tourism	%58,4	%27,5	%15,9
Thermal Tourism	%32,4	%32,5	%35,1
Yacht Tours	%24,1	%32,5	%43,7
Wild Animal Observation	%54,1	%29,6	%16,3
Adventure Sports Tourism	%52	%32,4	%15,7
Land Route Travel Tourism	%39,8	%33,9	%26,3
Amateur Line Fishing	%52,5	%31,4	%16,1
Orienteering	%43,3	%35,3	%21,4
Balloon Tourism	%22	%29	%49
Bungee Jumping	%25,1	%33,5	%41,4
Camping	%70,8	%22	%7,3

The most favored options of ecotourism activities are nature walks, photography, mountain climbing, botanical tourism, and camping respectively, which are suitable for ecotourism activities, receive high votes from the local people, and that the local people are conscious about this issue.

**Table 8.** Tendency of Local People Living in Trabzon on Ecotourism Perceptions

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. The development of ecotourism has improved the economic situation of your region.	138	27,1	199	39	81	15,9	37	7,3	55	10,8
2. Ecotourism has created new job opportunities for local people.	138	27,1	204	40	69	13,5	53	10,4	46	9
3. Ecotourism stimulates purchasing power of locals	112	22	182	35,7	111	21,8	62	12,2	43	8,4
4. Ecotourism accelerates the urbanization of rural areas.	84	16,5	169	33,1	119	23,3	80	15,7	58	11,4
5. Ecotourism acts as a bridge in the recognition of different cultures.	164	32,2	217	42,5	49	9,6	41	8	39	7,6
6. Ecotourism improves the quality of life of the people.	124	24,3	194	38,0	99	19,4	47	9,2	46	9
7. Ecotourism helps to preserve the historical-cultural texture.	127	24,9	185	36,3	100	19,6	51	10	47	9,2
8. Ecotourism contributes to the promotion of the region.	217	42,5	190	37,3	31	6,1	29	5,7	43	8,4
9. Ecotourism ensures that public keeps the environment even cleaner.	109	21,4	170	33,3	118	23,1	61	12	52	10,2



**Table 8.** Tendency of Local People Living in Trabzon on Ecotourism Perceptions (Continuation)

10. Ecotourism supports the protection of nature.	132	25,9	182	35,7	86	16,9	61	12	49	9,6
11. Ecotourism ensures the development of other commercial and industrial activities in the region.	62	12,2	175	34,3	135	26,5	88	17,3	50	9,8
12. Ecotourism brings people closer together.	122	23,9	238	46,7	79	15,5	32	6,3	39	7,6
13. Ecotourism causes people to take pride in their national and cultural values.	147	28,8	206	20,4	80	15,7	41	8	36	7,1
14. Ecotourism provides relief from stress.	161	31,6	224	43,9	51	10	31	6,1	43	8,4
15. Ecotourism enables our city to open up to the outside.	170	33,3	212	41,6	52	10,2	36	7,1	40	7,8
16. Ecotourism offers a holiday alone with nature.	159	31,2	214	42	64	12,5	28	5,5	45	8,8

### Perception of Local people on Economic Dimension of Ecotourism

An analysis of the expressions about the economic sub-dimension of local people in Trabzon who participated in the research shows that the statement "Ecotourism contributes to the promotion of the region" was the most preferred choice with 79.3%. An examination of other statements of the economic dimension of ecotourism indicates that "Ecotourism enables our province to open up" is 74.9%, "Ecotourism has created new job opportunities for the local people" 67.1%, "The development of ecotourism has improved the economic situation of your region" 66.1%, "Ecotourism improves the quality of life of the people" 62.3%, "The purchasing power of the local people increases thanks to ecotourism" 57.7% and the statement "Ecotourism provides the development of other commercial and industrial activities in the region" 46.5% have the support of the local people.

### Local People's Approaches to the Socio-Cultural Dimension of Ecotourism

An inspection of the statements about the socio-cultural sub-dimension of ecotourism by the local participants in Trabzon shows that "Ecotourism provides relief from stress" was the most supported statement with 75.5%. The other most supported statements were; "Ecotourism acts as a bridge in the recognition of different cultures" had 74.7% support and "Ecotourism brings people closer to each other" had 70.6% support whereas "Ecotourism causes people to be proud of their national and cultural values" had 49.2%. The study of Çalışkan (2020) in Hatay concluded that the ecotourism activities of the local people serve as a bridge in the recognition of the culture of the region.

### Attitudes of Local People towards the Environmental Dimension of Ecotourism

Examining the statements regarding environmental sub-dimension by the local participants in Trabzon indicates that the statement "Ecotourism offers a holiday alone with nature" was the most preferred choice with 73.2%. When the other expressions of the environmental dimension of ecotourism are examined, the statement of "Ecotourism helps the protection of nature" has 61.6%, the statement "Ecotourism helps to preserve the historical-cultural texture" has 61.2%, "Ecotourism helps people to keep the environment cleaner" has 54.7% and "Ecotourism accelerates the urbanization of rural areas" had 49.6% selection by the local people.

### Conclusion

Participants' choices regarding the acceptability of the activities as ecotourism activities, the most preferred activities were nature walks with 91%, photography 79.4%, mountain climbing 76.5%, botanical tourism 72.2%, and

camping 70.8%. The study of Kavak (2015) shows that the most preferred activities are trekking 87.18% and photography 76.41%.

The research shows that the local people living in Trabzon have a positive attitude towards the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental development of ecotourism. Although the statement "Ecotourism enables the development of other commercial and industrial activities in the region" was accepted by the local people, it was the least supported statement in comparison to the other statements. The study which was carried out by Çavuş and Zere (2021, p. 180) in Giresun reaches the same conclusion and the local people living in Giresun province supported the statement "Ecotourism provides the development of other commercial and industrial activities in the region" compared to other economic sub-dimensions.

The local people's most preferred definition of ecotourism is "a tourism that protects the environment and contributes to the welfare of the local people", therefore the acceptance of ecotourism as a type of tourism that will contribute to the welfare of the local people offers an important opportunity for public and private sector investors. Local people's support would enable investors to get more positive economic and social results. With the support of all stakeholders and good planning, the destination of Trabzon can take important steps in terms of ecotourism.

According to the attitude scale, "Ecotourism contributes to the promotion of the region" was the most popular statement by the participants. Taking the sustainable nature of ecotourism into consideration, the promotion of the events taking place in the destination can be done more effectively. Local people have expressed that conducting ecotourism activities will increase the interest in ecotourism and thus enable Trabzon to open up to the outside, contribute to the development of the region by providing job opportunities to the local people, and increase the quality of life and purchasing power of the local people as well as opportunities being offered through ecotourism activities to strengthen the economic situation of the local people in the region. Booklets should be published containing information about the date range and how the ecotourism activities can be implemented in Trabzon, festivals and advertising campaigns should be organized.

Training programmes about ecotourism should be organised in order to create awareness amongst the local people, local administrators and anyone who has an interest in tourism and also to protect cultural values and environment.

Local people state that ecotourism has an aspect that allows people to get away from stress and allows them to get to know different cultures. Being alone in nature, participating in nature-oriented activities and getting to know different cultures reduce the stress and anxiety of city life. When the perspective of the local people on the environmental dimension of ecotourism is scrutinized, it is stated that ecotourism offers a holiday alone in nature and helps to conserve nature, historical and cultural texture. The protection of nature, which constitutes the essence of ecotourism, and the adoption of the sustainability goal by the local people will be welcomed by environmentally friendly tourists who will participate in ecotourism activities in the region. In order to prevent any damage to the natural and cultural structures in the environment in the areas where ecotourism activities will be carried out, it should be aimed to provide an ecological contribution on the basis of protection and development at the core of the activities. By minimizing the negative effects of tourism activities in Tourism Conservation Zones, ecotourism tracks, and the whole region, biological diversity should be protected and contribution should be made to its development. The quality of the roads on the ecotourism tracks must be improved and their safety must be ensured. Tourists, who want to visit the region for the purpose of contributing to the protection of the visited areas and the culture of the local

people should be instructed by Eco-guides. Wildlife observation points should be established in order not to disturb the animals on the tour routes.

If sustainable development is ensured not only for the tourism industry, but also ecologically, economically, and socially, by supporting it with legislation and laws, and respecting the right to life of every living thing, it will be ensured that sustainable tourism and its species, thus ecotourism, will be realized in accordance with its goal.

The research is confined to the city of Trabzon. If there are other similar studies of other cities and the east of the Black Sea region in the future, the results can be compared.

## Declaration

The authors of this article have equally contributed to this article and they have no conflict of interest to declare nor have they received any funding from any company. Giresun University Social Sciences, Science and Engineering Research Ethics Committee with its decision dated 03 February 2021 and numbered 07/03 ethically approved the research.

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