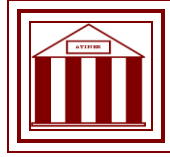


**Athens Institute for Education and Research**

**ATINER**



**ATINER's Conference Paper Series**

**T0U2013-0637**

**An Evaluation of Alternative Tourism  
Opportunities in the Turkish  
Destination of Fethiye**

**Yrd.Doç.Dr.Özgür Özer**

**Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi, Turizm Fakültesi  
Turkey**

**Yrd.Doç.Dr.Mehmet Avcı**

**Muğla Sıtkı Koçman Üniversitesi  
İktisadi İdari Bilimler Fakültesi  
Turkey**

**Öğr.Gör.Nihat Karakuş**

**Muğla Sıtkı Koçman Üniversitesi Ortaca Meslek Yüksekokulu  
Turkey**

Athens Institute for Education and Research  
8 Valaoritou Street, Kolonaki, 10671 Athens, Greece  
Tel: + 30 210 3634210 Fax: + 30 210 3634209  
Email: [info@atiner.gr](mailto:info@atiner.gr) URL: [www.atiner.gr](http://www.atiner.gr)  
URL Conference Papers Series: [www.atiner.gr/papers.htm](http://www.atiner.gr/papers.htm)

Printed in Athens, Greece by the Athens Institute for Education and Research.  
All rights reserved. Reproduction is allowed for non-commercial purposes if the  
source is fully acknowledged.

**ISSN 2241-2891**

23/10/2013

## An Introduction to ATINER's Conference Paper Series

ATINER started to publish this conference papers series in 2012. It includes only the papers submitted for publication after they were presented at one of the conferences organized by our Institute every year. The papers published in the series have not been refereed and are published as they were submitted by the author. The series serves two purposes. First, we want to disseminate the information as fast as possible. Second, by doing so, the authors can receive comments useful to revise their papers before they are considered for publication in one of ATINER's books, following our standard procedures of a blind review.

Dr. Gregory T. Papanikos  
President  
Athens Institute for Education and Research

This paper should be cited as follows:

**Özer, Ö., Avcı, M. and Karakuş, N. (2013) "An Evaluation of Alternative Tourism Opportunities in the Turkish Destination of Fethiye" Athens: ATINER'S Conference Paper Series, No: TOU2013-0637.**

## **An Evaluation of Alternative Tourism Opportunities in the Turkish Destination of Fethiye**

**Yrd.Doç.Dr.Özgür Özer**  
**Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi, Turizm Fakültesi**  
**Turkey**

**Yrd.Doç.Dr.Mehmet Avcı**  
**Muğla Sıtkı Koçman Üniversitesi**  
**İktisadi İdari Bilimler Fakültesi**  
**Turkey**

**Öğr.Gör.Nihat Karakuş**  
**Muğla Sıtkı Koçman Üniversitesi Ortaca Meslek Yüksekokulu**  
**Turkey**

### **Abstract**

This study is important in several respects, namely: highlighting alternative tourism opportunities within the Turkish destination of Fethiye; informing public institutions and organizations, tourism operators and entrepreneurs of more effective ways in which to utilise Fethiye's existing, potential and alternative tourism opportunities; emphasizing the importance of this potential contribution to the development of tourism activities in the region and finally, providing suggestions for the development of alternative tourism opportunities. Existing and potential tourism facilities within the district of Fethiye were determined through research methods such as interview, observation and document analysis. Information on the current and potential tourism of the region was gained via mutual dialogue interview with public and private sector institutions, organizations and associations deemed effective with regards to decision-making, guiding the organization and implementation of tourism activities. The data was analyzed scientifically and consideration of the results enabled the alternative tourism potential of Fethiye to be determined. Suggestions were offered to ensure a more effective use, and involvement, of the current alternative tourism activities in the region.

**Key words:** Alternative tourism, interview method, Fethiye

**Corresponding Author:**

## **Introduction**

In response to an increased demand for alternative tourism products, beyond the sun-sea-sand trio, by today's discerning tourists, tourist destinations have been required to diversify the products on offer.

In this study, the concept of alternative tourism was identified by reference to national and international literature. Methods that would allow for the collection and thorough analysis of information were researched and case study was chosen as the most appropriate method. Fethiye was considered a suitable subject of alternative tourism and consequently was selected as the research area in which to apply the chosen method. The general characteristics of the area were listed.

To investigate the current product diversity and alternative tourism potential of Fethiye, empirical evidence was gleaned through interviews with local tourism agency, hotel managers, academics, professional societies and associations, local authorities, local and foreign tourists and local residents. In addition to interviews, statistical data on Fethiye gained from written reports and brochures on the region were evaluated. After analyzing the data obtained, suggestions were made for the establishment of alternative touristic products for Fethiye.

## **The Concept of Alternative Tourism**

Emerging technologies at the global level and rising levels of education and economic status lead current and potential tourism consumers to have different expectations and to demand varied products. Today's tourists behave more consciously, are more sensitive regarding quality, have regard to environmental and safety issues, want to commune with nature, are in the habit of travelling frequently and go in search of different experiences. (Ege and Demir, 2002; Fennell, 2002:12). Globally, such changes in tourism consumer trends towards their travel destinations has forced touristic destinations to develop new and alternative tourist products in order to meet these changing demands. In this context, alternative tourism may be defined as a form of tourism which is in harmony with nature, social values and the values of local people, engenders positive relationships between visitors and local people, and enables them to share their experiences (Wearing and Neil, 2009:3; Günlü and Sahin, 2007:151). According to another definition of alternative tourism; it is a tourism form that was created to reduce the negative effects of traditional, classic mass tourism and city tourism, and is composed of a combination of new touristic products (Hacıoglu and Avcıkurt, 2008:8; Singh, 2004:4) In summary, alternative tourism can be defined as a tourism diversification activity created as an alternative to available tourism types within a given tourism destination.

The concept of alternative tourism alludes to the presentation of a different product other than mass tourism (Wearing, 2001:6) and is intended to create new types of tourism by evaluating the existing tourism supply potential.

This product represents a slowly developing tourism activity, which takes into consideration optimum profitability, long-term programs, resistance to change, respect for environmental values and integration with the environment (Kulu, 1994; 43; Stronza, 2001:276; Goeldner and Ritchie, 2003:12; Kılıçaslan, et al. 2011).

Main alternative forms of tourism are classified in Table 1. Due regard is given to alternative tourism type classifications from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (Kulu, 1994:80; www.kultur.gov.tr).

**Table 1.** *Alternative Tourism Types (Kulu, 1994:80;T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı,(2012)*

<b><u>1. Recreational Alternative Tourism</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Astronomy tourism</li> <li>• Steam train tourism</li> <li>• Marine aquariums and tourism</li> <li>• Bird watching tourism</li> <li>• Speleological tourism</li> <li>• Landscape tourism                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecotourism &amp; Plateau tourism</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Auto-caravan tourism</li> <li>• Rural tourism</li> <li>• Camping and tourism</li> <li>• National Parks</li> <li>• Botanical tourism</li> <li>• Photo safari tourism</li> </ul>
<b><u>2. Sportive Alternative Tourism</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Horse riding and tourism</li> <li>• Cycling sport and tourism</li> <li>• Mountain climbing sports and tourism</li> <li>• Golf tourism</li> <li>• Skiing and winter sports tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underwater sports and tourism</li> <li>• Water sports and tourism</li> <li>• Trekking</li> <li>• Hang gliding and tourism</li> <li>• Hunting tourism</li> </ul>
<b><u>3. Cultural Tourism</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Silk road</li> <li>• Ancient cities and historical places</li> </ul>	
<b>4. Health Tourism</b>	
<b>5. Yacht Tourism</b>	
<b>6. Faith Tourism</b>	
<b>7. Congress Tourism</b>	
<b>8. Cruise Tourism</b>	
<b>9. Youth Tourism</b>	

In the academic literature, alternative tourism types can be classified under the main topics as in the above mentioned chart.

### **Fethiye as a Research Area**

In this study, Fethiye, a district of Muğla Province in south western Turkey which has been an important settlement since ancient times, was chosen as the research area (Figure 1). Fethiye district which attracts attention due its natural beauty and wealth as well as its historical and touristic importance, is located southwest of Anatolia and between 37° 00' north, 36° 15' south, 28° 50' west, 29° 50' east longitude lines. It is a typical coastal city in the Mediterranean region which separates Aegean and Mediterranean regions.

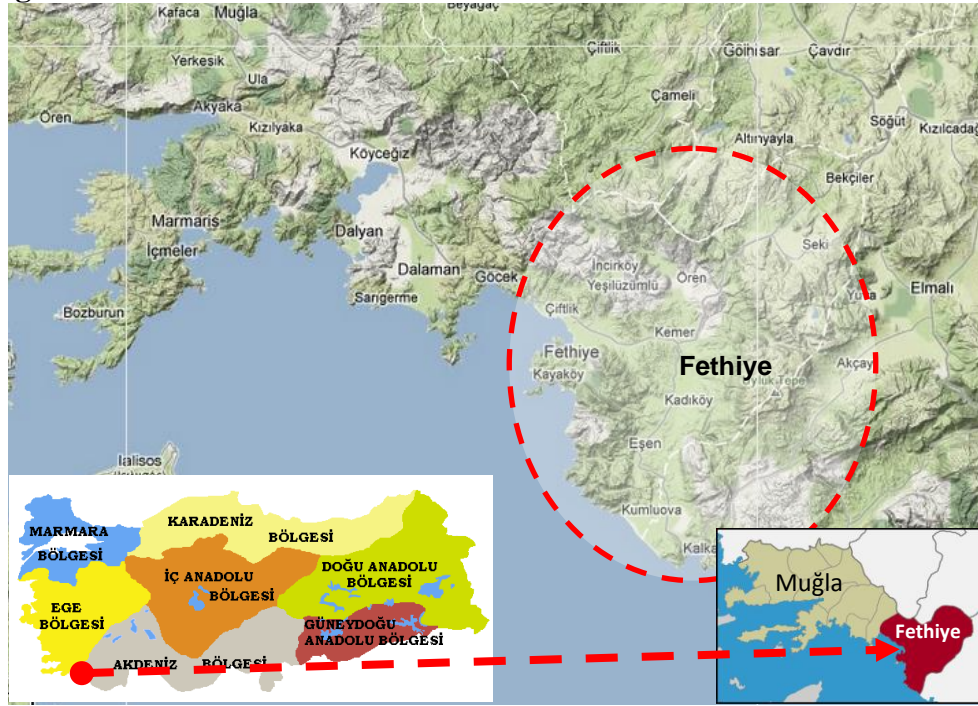
Fethiye district has 2.686,411 km<sup>2</sup> land area and the largest surface area including Muğla centre. Besides, the population of Fethiye at the centre is 77 237 according to 2010 data and is bigger than Muğla centre and other districts in terms of population density.

During the third geological time, intense tectonic movements occurred around Fethiye and led to the formation of many small coves and forelands as well as high mountains. As a result of subsidence, valleys caved by rushing streams were filled with sea water and transformed into bays and gulfs which created a wonder of nature around Fethiye.

In the north of Fethiye district, western ends of the Middle and West Taurus Mountains rise parallel to the sea like a wall, and the district has a mountainous characteristic. In the southeast of Fethiye, Babadağ, which is a mountain with the closest (5 km) overlooking summit to the sea in the world, rises near Ölüdeniz and is the highest western extension of the mountain run perpendicular to the sea until the beach of Patara (Kumluova). The Akdag chain is located in the northeast reaching a height of 3050 m, the Boncuk mountains are to the north with a height of 2700 m and the Çal mountains are located to the West with a height of 2200 m; all these mountains are in an east-westly direction.

There are 180 beautiful bays-gulfs most of which run perpendicular to the sea within the borders of the district. The coastal length of the district is 167 km and there are 18 islands located at the coastal line, including: Şövalye, Kızılada, Katrancı, Tersane, Domuz, Yassıca, Gemile, Ayanikola and Karacaören islands. The district has the characteristic Mediterranean climate; summers hot and dry, winters mild and rainy. 72% of the district's land area is covered by forest and maquis shrubland (www.fethiye.gov.tr; Fethiye Sosyo-Ekonomik Rapor, 2010: 13-14).



**Figure 1. Research area**

## Methodology of Research

Case study was the chosen research method. This method is preferred as it allows for the collection and analysis of wide information forms about a topic, region, enterprise or event, and enables the development of new theories or the reinterpretation of the present ones (Yin, 1994). Fethiye destination was chosen as the research area for this study due to its natural and cultural structure. Interviews, observations, and document analysis techniques were used to collect empirical data. The use of multiple data collection techniques was considered necessary in order to lead to more reliable and comprehensive research findings (Rabson, 1993; Veal, 1992). Furthermore, Yüksel et.al. (1999), Okumuş and Topaloğlu (2004), Özer and Karakuş (2012) used the interview technique in a similar study, and recommended this data collection technique to be used in similar studies.

Empirical data were collected between November 2011 and February 2012. The interviews were conducted with the local tourism agencies, hotel managers, academicians, professional societies and associations, local authorities, local and foreign tourists and local people. These interviews were conducted as mutual dialogues regarding products within the scope of alternative tourism. Organisations, institutions, tourists and local people interviewed within this study are presented in Table 2. The interviews lasted from half an hour to an hour. The researchers took detailed notes during the interviews. The data collected through the interviews were written down verbatim, and general themes were obtained by comparing the responses for

each question (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Participant-observation data collection techniques were used in order to obtain more reliable data and a better analysis of the subject. In addition, statistical data pertinent to Fethiye; local reports and brochures were evaluated. Finally, the findings obtained by different data collection techniques were analyzed.

First of all, the findings gained through interviews and observations in accordance with the advice of Yin (1993) and Miles and Huberman (1994) were collated. Next a summary describing the content of each document studied was prepared. Then the findings were classified according to the research of alternative tourist products within Fethiye's destination. Similar and different views were included when the research findings were presented. Miles and Huberman (1994) stated that empirical findings obtained by interview, observation and document analysis data collection techniques consist of explanatory, depictive, and descriptive verbal statements rather than numerical and statistical analysis.

**Table 2.** *Institutions and organizations interviewed*

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Çalış Tourism and Promotion Association</li> <li>FTSO No 1 Mining and Manufacturing Industry Professional</li> <li>• Committee</li> <li>• Fethiye Tourist Hoteliers Association (FETOB)</li> <li>• Municipality of Fethiye</li> <li>• Fethiye Tourism, Promotion, Training, Culture and Environment Foundation (FETAV)</li> <li>• District Governorate of Fethiye</li> <li>• Muğla University</li> <li>• Turkish Aeronautical Association, Young Wings Fethiye Branch</li> <li>• Domestic and Foreign Tourist</li> <li>• Local People</li> </ul> |
|---|

## **Araştırma Bulguları**

### **Research Findings**

Fethiye is an extremely convenient destination with its different geographical structure and climatic characteristics. In addition, Fethiye boasts different and exceptional landscapes, a traditional way of life offering important rural and cultural elements, underwater diving activities, horse trekking, trekking, paragliding, flora / fauna study, jeep safari, rafting, etc., water sports and areas available for nature sports.

Outstanding statements regarding alternative tourism and tourism products from the focus group discussions are listed below. Contributors include: local tourism agencies and hotel managers, academics, professional societies and associations, local authorities, local and foreign tourists and local people in Fethiye.

- Making Kayaköy a city of culture,
- Construction of the marina,
- Ensuring the entrance to cruises,
- Organizing international swimming competitions,
- The creation of Turkish Village representing Yoruk culture,
- Traditional Yoruk festival organization,
- Revitalization of the Lycian way,
- Revitalization of Eren Mountain ski resort,
- Extending organizations such as air games due to so many tourists visit for paragliding,
- Putting Amphitheater into service,
- Construction and implementation of Babadag telfer,
- Competition of nature-based competitions watched on the TV,
- Opening new walking paths,
- Construction of a sea aquarium,
- Building secure cycling roads in the town center and natural areas,
- Enhancing and organizing the water-based activities,
- Making organizations for cooking Turkish foods,
- Easy accessible tourist map for common use,
- Organizing nature and adventure sports in addition to sea, sand and sun trio.

In addition, when other studies of Fethiye are examined, it is seen that (FTO, 2011) conducted a survey with German, British, French, Dutch, American and Scandinavian tourists and highlighted the particular touristic products in which they participated and demanded. In this study, German tourists were seen to participate in Scuba diving, trekking, rafting, gastro tourism, Turkish nights, fishing, boat tours, sea sports, shopping, jeep safari, canyoning, visiting museums and historical ruins. British tourists participated in boat tours, visiting museums and historic ruins, sea sports, jeep safari, Turkish night, shopping, scuba diving, rafting, gastro tourism, canyoning, fishing, trekking. French tourists participated in boat tours, visiting museums and historic ruins, shopping, sea sports, Turkish nights, jeep safari, scuba diving, canyoning, rafting. Dutch tourists participated in boat tours, museums and historic ruins to visit, jeep safari, scuba diving, sea sports, rafting, trekking, Turkish nights, shopping, canyoning. The activities in which American tourists participated are listed as visiting museums and historical ruins, shopping, boat tours, Turkish night, gastro tourism, jeep safari, trekking, scuba diving, canyoning, sea sports. Scandinavian tourists participated in boat tours,

shopping, jeep safari, Turkish night, scuba diving, visiting museums and historical ruins, sea, sports, rafting, fishing, gastro tourism.

Innovative touristic products which were in demand by the tourists who participated in the Fethiye survey included;

- Innovative product demands of German tourists have been identified as boat trip with different activities, traces of Turkish culture, shopping venues that sell traditional products in the city centers, hiking trails, jeep safari, paragliding and baths.
- Innovative product demands of British tourists have been identified as flight in winter terms, rafting, Turkish bath and massage, scuba diving, water sports, mountain hiking and canyoning.
- Innovative product demands of French tourists have been identified as hiking trail, water sports, golf, cultural activities, traditional shopping tours, and dance competitions.
- Innovative product demands of Dutch tourists have been identified as bicycle path, youth hostels, more frequent and easy flights, hiking paths for the elderly, traditional Turkish organizations.
- Innovative product demands of American tourists have been identified as cultural activities, sightseeing tours, shopping tours, concerts and living a typical Turk's daily life.
- Innovative product demands of Scandinavian tourists have been identified as original Turkish bath, massage, activities related to the sea except for swimming, children's activities, open-air disco, different Turkish dishes at the hotel, canyoning, mountain climbing, seeing wild animals in the mountains, rafting, different activities on the mountains in a warm climate.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study was carried out to evaluate the alternative tourism possibilities and tourism products within the Turkish southwestern destination of Fethiye. Some basic conclusions can be drawn from the findings and resulting discussion. First of all, interview evidence points to a demand for recreational and sports-oriented alternative tourism in Fethiye and Kayaköy being turned into a culture city.

As stated in the FTSO (2011) report, the activities in which the tourists who visit Fethiye participate display some obvious differences in line with the nationalities of the tourists. German tourists prefer scuba diving and Turkish night; British tourists enjoy boat tours, visiting museums and ruins and sea sports; French tourists list boat tours, visiting museums and ruins and shopping; Dutch tourists prioritise visiting museums and ruins and boat tours;

American tourists especially enjoy visiting museums and ruins and shopping; and for the Scandinavian tourist boat tours and shopping become prominent.

The second conclusion is that as specified by FTSO (2011) when the innovative product demands of the tourist who visit Fethiye are classified with regard to nationality: German tourists opt for boat tours including different activities, American tourists prefer cultural activities, French tourists enjoy trekking paths, Dutch tourists cycle paths, and for Scandinavian tourists the traditional Turkish bath becomes prominent.

Comprehensive and long term plans and programs should be made for every new innovative touristic product in Fethiye. Some suggestions are presented below:

- Kayakoy is the only settlement in the region describing the recent history. As Kayaköy is still standing, it can be restored without the need for excavation and so on. Besides the restoration of the church in Kayaköy, opening its doors to worship during certain times of the year would be an important symbolic innovation for the region.
- In addition to the construction of the Marina and the development of cruise tourism in Fethiye, touristic activities in the city centre could be improved. With an increase in cruise tourism in Fethiye, natural and cultural tourism may become more active and lead to further participation by the local population.
- A traditional and international Yoruk festival may be organized at certain times of the year, especially at the beginning and the end of the tourism season. It is important that the festival should be organized with cognisance taken of the indigenous culture. Organisation of such a festival, should help to preserve cultural values for future generations.
- Organizations such as cooking Turkish meals can be done in the villages and in the natural habitat. In this way, both tourist attraction and participation will increase and the villagers will profit economically.
- Without damaging the natural beauty and environment of Fethiye, suitable routes for cycle paths could be mapped.
- The routes and camping areas for daily hiking and accommodated trekking should be established. Mapping for these routes and camping areas should be created. Along the routes from beginning to end, benchmarks and guidance for the camping areas should be located. Such benchmarks and guidance should be marked on the map. Additionally, observation terraces overlooking the sea can be built without damaging the natural habitat, for example with nature compatible materials, where the sea and the nature come together.

As a result, where a tourism product is to be developed, any attack upon the natural structure of the region should be avoided at all costs. Spatial planning should be done when creating a spatial area for a new touristic product. During this planning phase, the concept of sustainable environment and the protected status of the region should be paramount. Finally, sustainability of regional tourism and the environment should be ensured by balancing the potential for tourism with the capacity of the region. As specified by Yücel (2005), ensuring the sustainability of the environment will ensure a clean, quiet and rich natural environment for people to enjoy both recreation and entertainment. The destination of Fethiye can become a first choice in terms of nature-oriented alternative tourism activities in a sustainable environment. Planning and implementation of existing and future tourism activities within Fethiye should be conducted in accordance with the characteristic of the region allowing for healthy tourism development in the region.

## References

- (2011). Turizmde Yenileşim (İnovasyon) Esaslı İş Geliştirme Projesi Pazar Araştırması Raporu, FTSO İş Geliştirme Raporu, Fethiye.  
Fethiye Sosyo-Ekonomik Rapor, 2010: 13-14).
- Ege, Z. ve Demir, O. (2002). Turistik Ürün Çeşitlendirme Kapsamında Kültür Turizmi ve Aydın İlinin Kültürel Varlıkları. First Tourism Congress of Mediterreanean Countries, Antalya.
- Fennel,D.A. (202). Ecotourism Programme Planning. Cabi Publishing. UK.
- Günlü, E. and Şahin, N. (2007). Turizmde Ürün Geliştirme ve Alternatif Turizm, (Ed. Orhan İçöz), Genel Turizm, Ankara: Turhan Kitabevi.
- Goeldner C.R., and Ritchie, J.R.B. (2003). Tourism Principles, Practices & Philosophies, John Willey & Sons, Inc: New Jersey.
- Hacıoğlu, N. and Avcıkurt N. (2008). Turistik Ürün Çeşitlendirmesi. Nobel Yayınevi: Ankara.
- Kılıçaslan, Ç., vd. (2011). Evaluation of tourism alternatives in the national park of Dilek Peninsula Büyük Menderes delta. Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences 19, 270–279
- Kulu, O. (1994). Turizmde Arz Kaynaklarının Çeşitlendirilmesi ve Ege Bölgesinde Alternatif Turizm Potansiyeli Yayınlanmış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, D.E.Ü. Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü İzmir.
- Miles, M. and Huberman, A. M. (1994) Qualitative Data Analysis, London: Sage.
- Okumuş, F., and Topaloğlu, C. (2004). Turistik Destinasyonlarda Ürün Geliştirme ve Farklılaştırma: Dalyan Örneği. Seyahat ve Araştırma Dergisi 4 (1) s:54-67.
- Özer, Ö. and Karakuş, N., (2012). Dalyan Destinasyonundaki Rekreatiyonel Olanakların Değerlendirilmesi ve Rekreatiyonel Potansiyelin Araştırılması. I. Rekreatiyon Araştırma Kongresi: 12–15 Nisan 2012, Kemer, Antalya, ISBN: 978-975-96260-3-7
- Robson, C. (1993). Real World Research, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Singh, T.V., (2004). New Horizons in Tourism.Cabi Publishing:UK.

- Stronza, A. (2001). Anthropology of Tourism: Forging New Ground for Ecotourism and Other Alternatives. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, (30), pp.261-283.
- T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, (2012). [http:// www.kultur.gov.tr](http://www.kultur.gov.tr). Erişim Tarihi: 09.Eylül 2012.
- Veal, A. (1992). *Research Methods for Leisure and Tourism*, London: Longman.
- Wearing, S. & Neil, J. (2009). *Ecotourism: Impacts, Potentials and Possibilities*. Butterworth-Heinemann, Great Britain.
- Wearing, S. (2001). *Volunteer Tourism Experiences That Make A Difference*. Cabi Publishing:UK.
- Yin, R., (1994). *Case Study Research Design and Methods*, London: Sage.
- Yüksel, F., Bramwell, B. ve Yüksel, A. (1999). 'Stakeholder Interviews and Tourism Planning at Pamukkale, Turkey *Tourism Management*, 20(3):351-360.