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THE IMPACT OF REGIONAL FOOD PRODUCTS ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: With the diversity of agricultural products combined with cultural richness, local food products are gaining importance. The impact of local food products development has increased over time. People living in rural areas mostly provide a livelihood for farming, agriculture and livestock are made intensively. Therefore, the locals can contribute to the rural development of the region by marketing local food products that reflect their own food culture, tradition, as well as producing their food requirements.

Saroz Bay, located in northeastern Turkey, is an important region regarding reflecting the diversity of agricultural products to food products with its cultural richness. In this study, locally produced food products and how they affect development are investigated. For this purpose, 271 questionnaires were applied to the tourists who visited Saroz Gulf, and the results were analyzed and interpreted through charts. As a result, it was mostly preferred to purchase the regional food products as visitors participated in the region, and the sale of foodstuff produced in the region is considered important.

Keywords: rural development, local food, local people.

INTRODUCTION

Along with the increasing population in the world, the rapid decrease of natural resources and food resources has led countries to increase production. Increased commercial competition, economic concerns, and regional backwardness have caused obligation for the development. According to Gülçubuk (2013), the reasons for the concept of development in

the world include poverty, regional development disparities and economic imbalances and injustices, rapid pollution and depletion of natural resources.

As economic backwardness concentrates mainly on rural areas, economic development has been the priority for the country targets, and rural development has been the priority for the regional targets. Various projects and studies have been carried out for the rural development with the help of national and international voluntary organizations.

The concept of development includes not only the increase in revenues but also the increase and diversification of the society as socio-economic and educational. According to İnan et al. (2010), development is a multidimensional concept. It involves not only the economic but also the progress of all elements of the society including the increase in prosperity. For example, the transformation of a seedling into a tree can be defined as growth and produce of the fruit can be defined as development.

In order for rural development to take place, it is necessary to raise awareness and awareness of education and awareness among rural communities and to create and implement sustainable approaches and policies aimed at the public and social institutions people and natural structure. Before addressing the concept of rural development, it is necessary to emphasize the concept of development. According to Acar (2008), economic development refers to the transition process of economies based on urban, industry and services as an economy based largely on rural and agricultural structures.

Development is the effort to increase the socio-economic well-being of citizens in developed and developing countries. Harris (1992) describes developing countries as economies by changing growth, improving income distribution, and making improvements in the cultural, managerial area. İnan (1980) considered development as a comprehensive concept that includes multi-dimensional, growth and structural development. Therefore, the concept of development and growth need to be considered separately. The concept of growth emphasizes the increase in economic income, while the development stands on socio-cultural structure besides the economy.

In this study, the roles of locally produced food products in the development of rural areas and the attitudes and behaviors of tourists who prefer these local products are examined.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The material of the study constitutes the primary data from face-to-face surveys conducted with tourists in Saroz Gulf and local residents living in rural areas. In the analysis of research data, descriptive statistics such as frequency analysis and averages were used. The research area is located in the southwest of the Marmara region, north of the Aegean Sea, in the Gulf of Saroz within the boundaries of the Edirne and Çanakkale provinces. The region is governed by Çanakkale and Edirne.

271 questionnaires were applied to the tourists who visited Adilhan, Güneyli, Sazlıdere, Gökçetepe, Danişment, Erikli, Yayla villages, Mecidiye township, Karaincirli, Vakıf, Büyükevren, Gülçavuş and Sultançe villages. Survey results were analyzed and interpreted by means of charts.

LOCAL FOOD

With increasing population, genetically altered food products, or additive substance is added, resulting in deterioration of human health as a result. These consecutions have attracted people's attention to natural food products. Some pesticides used in agricultural products have also adversely affected human health. The tendency to start consuming similar kinds of food, being away from nature and culture, has led to the abandonment of authenticity over time. However, the demand for traditional food products has increased in recent years. Therefore, people living in rural areas benefit from the economic contribution as well as by

meeting the basic food needs of traditional food products. Consumer demands for foods that are perceived as "traditional" and "local" can also be seen in connection with the quest for authenticity (Taylor, 2001, p.8, Sims 2009). At the same time, there are different definitions among food supply chains that competition between countries. Consumer demands and new producer sources are exemplified in different forms of production codes (organic, integrated, regional, artisanal, etc.). These differences are due to the diversity in agricultural systems and land settings, the diverse cultural and gastronomic traditions, the diversity of organizational structures of food supply chains, the diversity of consumer perceptions, as well as significant differences in institutional and policy support (Renting et al., 2003).

Terms such as "local food," "local food system" and "re-localization" can be used interchangeably to relate consumed food to a contemporary or mainstream food system (Peters et al., 2008, Martinez et al., 2010).

According to Cutter (2012), today people are getting more and more interested in what they eat and drink. There are lots of news about food, beverage types in all kinds of virtual and printed publications. In addition, the number of local markets in the United States, which was 1775 in 1994, increased by 245,5% to 6 132 in 2010, which is another indication of the increased importance given to local organic products. Food and beverage culture should be evaluated in the promotion of the level of economic income of the people, the level of prosperity, protection of cultural items, advertising and promotion. With its rich food and drink culture that has the big advantage of Turkey can evaluate these benefits in many areas. Located in the south-western part of the Marmara region, Saroz Bay has hosted many cultural habits in the past and has thus played a role in appearing various kinds of food by the help of immigrant cultures.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

When assessed in terms of rural development, expenditures made for local products are an additional source of income for the producers in the region. The expense of the tourists who came to the Saroz region increased due to the increase of the residents in Saroz in the summer season. According to Table 1, the highest of average expenditure made is 801 TL and shares 34,7%. The share of tourists who spend 200 TL or less is 22,4%. The high level of daily travel made to the region leads to lower expenditure.

Table 1. Average expenditure spent while staying in Saroz

Average Spending	Share(%)
Below 200 TL	22,4
201-400 TL	21,3
401-600 TL	10,4
601-800 TL	11,2
Over 801 TL	34,7
Total	100,0

According to the spending made for the local products within the expenditures made on Saroz travels, the maximum spending share occurs as 48,8% share (Below 200TL). When assessed in this direction, the amount of spending that tourists make for local products is quite low. This amount includes cultural and traditional products as well as local food products (Table 2).

Table 3 shows the expenditure rate for local food products within the all food expenditures during the tourist's stay. Accordingly, consumers who spend 21-40% of total expenditure spend 29,3% of this on local food products. The proportion of food consumed by

local tourists with 41-60% of their spending on local products is 31,9%. Although spending is low, the spending rate for local products has been answered as half and more.

Table 2. The share of Expenditure for Local Products in Total Expenditures of Tourists

Average Spending	Share(%)
Below 200 TL	48,8
201-400 TL	22
401-600 TL	10,7
601-800 TL	3,6
801-1000 TL	9,5
Over 1000 TL	5,4
Total	100,0

Table 3. The rate of Local Product Expenditures in Total Food Expenditures

Food Spending Share in Total Expenditure (%)	The share of Regional Products in Food Expenditures (%)
0-20	22,3
21-40	29,3
41-60	31,9
61-80	9
81-100	7,5
Total	100,0

The traditional products preferred during the stay in the region, an average of 2,3 pieces of handicraft products such as lace, locally handmade items are bought and paid an average of 55,8 TL. The price is higher than the others, indicating that the value given to handmade products is higher. The gift items representing the region are 2,7 pieces, and they are sold as 32,4 TL. 9,5 pieces of brochure introducing the local area are bought at the price of 10,2 TL. These documents are generally distributed free of charge for promotional purposes, so the result is low. The average number of visitors who buy village bread during their stay is reported as 8.4 and the amount paid is 33,3 TL (Table 4).

Table 4. Food and Traditional Products Purchased by Visitors

№	Food Products	Amount (kg/piece)	TL	Traditional Products	Quantity	TL
1	Tomato Paste	1,91 kg	16,09	Local handicrafts (lace, hand work, etc.)	2,33 piece	55,83
3	Pickle	1,88 kg	12,83	Souvenirs, figures etc. symbolizing the region.	2,70 piece	32,41
4	Tarhana	2,51 kg	35,20	Introductory book, brochure etc.	9,58 piece	10,22
5	Noodle	2,30 kg	18,33	Village bread	8,40 piece	33,43
6	Boiled Grape juice	2,00 kg	25,25	Traditional local food	7,92 times	83,33
8	Cheese	4,33 kg	75,19	Greengrocery	31,67 kg	158,45
9	Yoghurt	5,84 kg	22,97	Honey	2,25 kg	39,37
10	Jam	2,05 kg	21,82	Other	4,00	15,66

Local food is also preferred in the region, and it is preferred about 8 times during the stay. 83,3 TL is paid, and 31,6 kg vegetable fruit purchased is paid 158,4 TL. Other specified, purchased products are tomato, cucumber, pepper, eggplant, apple, pear, honey, okra, cherry, melon, watermelon, grape, peach, bean, milk, egg, strawberry, corn, olive oil, olive, cherry, plum.

It is stated that visitors are most likely to purchase local food products in the region (63,1%). The purchase of traditional food products is another high-ranking option (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Activities Attended by the Visitors in the Rural Areas

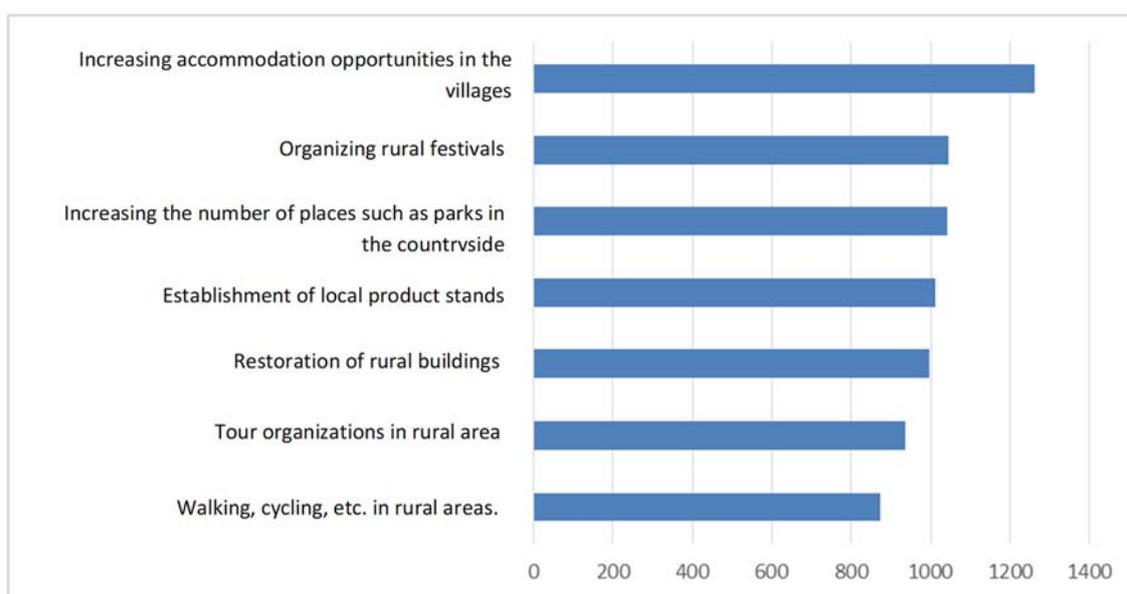
Table 5. Visitor's Provisions for Contributing to Rural Development

Order of importance (points received)	Frequency							Total Points	Averages
	1 (7 p.)	2 (6 p.)	3 (5 p.)	4 (4 p.)	5 (3 p.)	6 (2 p.)	7 (1 p.)	Σ (Frequency x Points)	Total score / n
Increasing accommodation opportunities in the villages	90	39	26	26	32	23	20	1156	4,51
Organizing rural festivals	24	37	50	50	36	37	21	1043	4,09
Increasing the number of places such as parks in the countryside	19	47	42	56	33	34	25	1041	4,06
Establishment of local product stands	43	36	39	23	29	33	53	1010	3,94
Restoration of rural buildings	25	41	36	40	43	35	36	996	3,89
Tour organizations in rural area.	21	30	39	33	48	53	32	936	3,65
Walking, cycling, etc. in rural areas.	34	25	23	28	36	41	69	874	3,41

In order to enable tourists to contribute to rural development, the level of importance of what should be done in the region was asked, and 7 options were given. These options include establishing local product stands, increasing accommodation opportunities in the villages, organizing rural festivals, restoration of rural buildings, increasing the number of places like parks in the countryside, organization of rural area tours and hiking, cycling, etc. in rural areas.

According to Table 5, the proposal for the contribution of tourists to rural development was graded according to their importance. Points are given in this scheme; 7 points for the first row, 6 points for the second row, 5 points for the third row, 4 points for the fourth row, 3 points for the fifth row, 2 points for the sixth row and 1 point for the seventh row. The most important factor that will provide the rural development in the given order has been the increase of accommodation facilities in the villages with an average of 4,51.

The sum of the points and frequencies of each sequence is the total score of that objective $((43 \times 7) + (36 \times 6) + (39 \times 5) + (23 \times 4) + (29 \times 3) + (33 \times 2) + (53 \times 1)) = 1010$.



Organizing rural festivals (4,09) and increasing the number of places such as parks in the countryside (4,06), are the most preferred options during the stay. The average was found by dividing the total score by the number of respondents $(1010/256 = 3,94)$. The option “setting up rural product stands” was found to rank moderately and significantly at the 4th most popular choice for traditional food products (3,94).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Local products are essential, which have the possibility of direct sales to provide additional income to the producers in the development of rural areas. These products, are reflects the tradition of the region, also become an attraction factor for tourists.

Overall, when the results are evaluated, it is shown that the amount of the expenditure and the high proportion of the foreign visitors to the traditional food, is an important local food potential.

The impact of local food products on the rural development of the region is crucial in increasing the incomes of local people by generating additional income, in advertising of the region, in planning the tourism activities of the region. However, some issues should be noted:

- Hygiene and health conditions in local food production should be paid attention,
- A certain price policy should be established; the price issue should not be arbitrary,
- Hygiene and price issues should be audited,
- Local products must be registered. Cultural property, place, and authenticity must be protected,
- Women's employment should be supported in local food production,
- Training programs should be established for the future generations.

The most important factor that can contribute to rural development is seen as an increase in accommodation opportunities in the region. The organization of the festivals in the countryside, the development of parks, recreation areas, the establishment of local product stands, the restoration of rural buildings, the organization of tours, hiking and cycling, have been seen as factors that provide rural development in close priority.

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