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### Perspective of Local People on Rural Tourism: The Case of Lavender Stream in Burdur / Akçaköy\*

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#### Abstract

Our study aims at investigating the economic contributions of the Lavender Stream Project and sustainable rural tourism on local residents of Akçaköy which has become a center of attraction for rural tourism. In line with this objective, several visits have been made to Lavender Stream area and many interviews have been made with local residents during the two years. In this study, the Lavender Stream Project was investigated using the case study method. We use qualitative research method. The in-depth interviewing technique was used to getting data in our research. Twenty one interviews were conducted with the convenience sampling method. In the interview technique, two distinct forms were used as data collection tools. The first form covers the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the second form uses the interview form containing semi-structured questions. Our results suggest that the project's architect Veterinarian Öztürk Sarıca's briefings and education programs on rural tourism have yielded successful outcomes. Our results also indicate that this project has also provided significant contributions to particularly economic and social structure of the local people.

**Keywords:** Burdur/Akçaköy, rural tourism, Lavender Stream, local people.

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## INTRODUCTION

Parallel to the changes in touristic trends, perception of tourism has begun to shift from mass tourism to alternative tourism. Interest in rural tourism, which is one of the alternative tourism types, has also increased due to reasons such as improving living conditions, increasing economic income, ecological nutrition, increasing interest in nature and natural life (Köroğlu & Köroğlu, 2006: 234). It turns out that the tendency of tourists to participate in the tourism movement is gradually changing and the investments to be made in this context will also be shaped in the direction of rural tourism.

Rural tourism is one of the alternative tourism types that integrates with the natural environment and agriculture and is well adapted to other types of tourism (Uçar, Çeken & Ökten, 2017: 4). For this reason, rural tourism has an important role in the protection and promotion of nature and culture (Soykan, 2003: 1).

Considering the facts that a certain part of the Turkish population lives in the countryside and the livelihood of the rural population is agricultural activities, the integration of rural tourism with agriculture is more important in the development of rural areas. Rural tourism is one of the leading sectors in rural development in this respect. With the development of the countryside, positive contributions to the local people are also expected to increase (Çeken, Karadağ & Dalgın, 2007: 9).

With the development of rural tourism in the rural areas, it is possible that positive and negative effects will occur in the social, cultural and economic areas for the local people. When these effects on local people are examined, positive effects are predicted to outweigh negative effects. In order to keep the negative effects to a minimum level, awareness of local people on rural tourism needs to be raised. Positive effects of rural tourism include changing the role of women in rural areas by employing rural women at the local level. Rural tourism increases the economic strength of local people. In addition, local people who have increased their economic strength do not leave the region they live in, therefore immigration is partly prevented (Çeken et al., 2007). Thanks to rural tourism, rural cultures are prevented from disappearing. Natural areas are preserved in this respect and transferred to future generations. As rural tourism can be easily adapted to other types of tourism, tourism activities can be extended up to twelve months and it is possible to provide a permanent employment opportunity.

In this research, the effects of rural tourism will be examined in Burdur Akçaköy, which has started the

rural tourism activities through the Lavender Stream Project and has the potential to become an attraction center in terms of rural tourism in the future. Within the scope of this project, it is aimed to revitalize rural tourism in Akçaköy, to provide income of local people by providing product variety of Lavender and thus to activate employment and entrepreneurial potential in the region.

In line with the aim of the work, visits were made to the villagers in certain periods of the year, and meetings were held with the local people to inform the local people about the rural tourism. In June-July, during the visual beauty of the Lavenders, we observed the village in its natural environment and analysed what kind of activities could be done and performed in the village. The initiator of this project, Öztürk Sarıca provided us with sufficient access to the data. In this study, firstly the theoretical section will be given as a basis for the research, and then the results and recommendations will be mentioned.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Considering the rural tourism in Turkey and the studies about the local people, it is seen that there has been a significant increase in number of studies in recent years. These studies and the findings will be briefly summarized below.

Muhacir & Özdemir (2017) obtained some useful data through a questionnaire in the work entitled "People's Opinions on the Physical, Social and Cultural Effects of Rural Tourism: Case of Artvin", in which there were 26 questions on 73 people living in Artvin. This questionnaire was evaluated by performing a Chi-square independence test and cross-tabulation analysis in the SPSS v.19 program. According to the results of the survey, it is determined that the city supports rural tourism activities with a rate of over 80% and regards it as a tool for rural development.

The study entitled "The Attitude of the Local People for Rural Tourism", was carried out in Çomakdağ-Kızıllağaç village of Milas district of Muğla by Ayazlar (2017). The study utilized a semi-structured interview technique, which is a qualitative method for obtaining data. Interviews were held with 15 people from the local community. A sampling method, one of the improbable sampling methods, has been used in the identification of interviewed persons. According to the study findings, the local people who express the positive effect of providing rural tourism income and employment opportunities see the changes in socio-cultural structure and the incoming of many foreigners as negative aspects.

Denk & Mil (2016) evaluated the potential of the rural tourism in the Oltu region in the study entitled “The Rural Tourism Potential of the Oltu District of Erzurum and Local Perceptions of Tourism” and tried to determine the opinions of the local people living in the region about the touristic activities. The data were collected by survey technique. As a result of the study, although the existing rural tourism potential of the Oltu region is an important source of supply in terms of rural tourism activities, it has been determined that the local people think that the touristic activities carried out in the region affect the region in different dimensions in terms of environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects.

Güney & Göller (2016) gathered data using qualitative interview technique, which included 17 questions in order to determine the approaches of rural people in the village of Misi in Bursa province in their work entitled “Determination of Local People’s Approach to Rural Tourism: Example of Misi Village”. Findings from this study indicate that local people are aware of the tourism values in the village of Misi and that the expectations from tourism are high.

Eren & Aypek (2012) obtained data by using the questionnaire method in the work entitled “Attitudes of Local People to Tourism Development in Rural Tourism Region: Cumalıkızık Village Example”. One of the important findings of the research is that 69 local people participating in the survey have a favorable attitude towards the development of tourism in the region in general. A significant proportion of the respondents declared that they were generally positive to the development of tourism in terms of economic and socio-cultural factors and that tourism and tourism enterprises did not have any harm to the environment but that public services did not increase.

In the work of Uçar, Uçar, Kurnaz & Akyurt Kurnaz (2012), “The Impact of Socio-Economic Structure of Rural Tourism and The Case of Fethiye”, semi-structured interview method is used as qualitative research methods of social sciences. This study tries to determine the potential of rural tourism in Fethiye region. The result of the study is that rural tourism potential exists in Fethiye and it will be the attraction center of rural tourism in the future. However, local people believe that their awareness on rural tourism should be raised and that the state should implement various projects related to rural tourism.

Ertuna, Güney, Güven & Aydemir (2012) interviewed 60 people in the four villages of Kastamonu province in their study entitled “Factors Affecting the Demand for Participation in Rural Tourism Development by Local

People: The Case of Kastamonu”. In this study, they tried to reveal the factors which affect the attitudes of local people about rural tourism and their willingness to participate. The findings show that the desire to participate in tourism activities in the region increases when the local people perceive tourism as positive.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In terms of theoretical framework, since rural tourism is a type of tourism that takes place in rural areas, it is necessary first to explain the concepts of ‘rural area’, ‘rural development’ and ‘rural tourism’.

### Rural Area

Rural areas are the settlements where rural tourism-specific activities are carried out. Rural areas are secluded, rich in terms of vegetation and free from artificial environments unique to cities. (Soykan, 2004: 10). Rural areas in Turkey are defined by considering various criteria. These criteria are: population status, geographical location and administrative form. When the population of rural settlements in Turkey is taken into consideration, they are places with a population of less than 20.000 (Akça, Esengün & Sayılı, 2001: 30). When the rural area is mentioned, settlements with a population density of less than 150 people per km<sup>2</sup> are understood (Kiper, 2006: 19).

Some of the important features of rural areas are as follows (Soykan, 1999: 68, Akça, 2004: 62, Haberal, 2015: 61-62, Khabbazi & Yazgan, 2012: 6).

1. The local economy is generally based on agriculture and animal husbandry,
2. Population density is low,
3. The income level of the local people is low,
4. Having a large family structure living together,
5. Determination of social relations of families according to tradition and customs,
6. In rural areas, natural landscaping and arable land are more than those of the cities.

Rural areas usually have their own natural areas and a socio-cultural structure. The division of labor, specialization is not developed much here, the collective life style is dominant and the relation between people and the city is still continuing (Çeken, et.al., 2007: 3).

Rural areas are attraction centers for tourism activities due to their landscape features, lifestyle and authenticity of local people (Uslu & Kiper, 2006: 305).

## Rural Development

Development is a concept expressing the change of economic, social and cultural structure with the increase of production and per capita national income (Tolunay & Akyol, 2006: 118). The concepts of development and growth are often used in the same sense. However, the concept of development is the result of the growth process (Cengiz & Akkuş, 2012: 62).

Rural development initiatives are generally directed towards the development of the villagers. It refers to the development of people living in rural areas as a whole, particularly in terms of agricultural, economic and social factors. It is also based on the mobilization of all elements that will help to promote environmental awareness (Ongun, 2015: 70).

Rural development is defined by the United Nations Organization as follows: “*Rural development is defined as the process by which small-scale communities consolidate their efforts to improve the economic and social conditions they are in, to integrate small communities into the national whole, and to make necessary contributions to national development efforts*” (Akça et al. 2001: 30).

Finding solutions to problems such as geographical features of Turkey, the socio-economic situation, the problems of the local people living in rural areas, the irreversible migration from the rural areas to the urban areas, the low welfare levels, the sub-structure inadequacy and underdevelopment is among the most important topics of the agenda on rural tourism and therefore rural development (Torun, 2013: 35).

Rural development refers to the whole process of developing the production of local people living in rural areas, raising the levels of income and wealth, eliminating socio-economic imbalances, establishing physical and social infrastructure and evaluating agricultural products at their real value (Çeken et al., 2007: 3).

There is a linear relationship between rural tourism and rural development (Ün, Tutar, Tutar & Erkan, 2012: 350). One of the most important and pioneering sectors in rural development is rural tourism. Natural beauties and cultural riches in rural areas are important for the development of rural tourism (Çeken et al., 2007: 9).

In rural areas, there should be differences in the education of women, men, young people and children in rural tourism. Because the roles of men and women are different in the countryside. The education of the young population in the rural areas is important in terms of their functions in rural tourism and their being candidates for managing the sector in the future. Young

and children's education should be formal and practice oriented. It should be ensured that young people take their rural tourism practices in rural areas themselves (Özçatalbaş, 2006: 277). In the development of rural areas, we can consider the positive contributions of rural tourism to the local people in the following forms.

1. Local people in rural areas usually deal with agriculture and farming. Because of these, they have unstable and low income. In rural areas, with the development of rural tourism, it will allow the increase of the income of the local people, the increase of the production in agriculture, the standardization and the sale of the products at real market prices. Thus, the income levels of the local people living in agriculture and farming will increase and the levels of poverty will decrease (Çeken et al., 2007: 10).
2. Local people living in rural areas will provide additional income through rural tourism. Because accommodation and other services in rural tourism usually take place in small family businesses or in countryside hotels, job opportunities will be created for all of the family members (Ün et al., 2012: 347).
3. Living standards and quality of life will rise because local people will obtain direct income without brokers from the sale of agricultural products as well as services. Tourism-based industry in the region will develop and employment opportunities will increase (Demircioğlu, 1993: 9).
4. Rural tourism provides cultural interaction and development as well as economic contribution to people living in rural areas. In addition to the agricultural incomes of local people, there are incomes from rural tourism, which causes an increase in the incomes of local people living in rural areas as a whole. The living standards of the people living in the countryside increase due to the growing income (Torun, 2013: 33).
5. Rural tourism can partially prevent migration from rural to urban areas by providing employment for the women in rural areas and reviving rural economies (Akça et al., 2001: 31; Kiper, 2006: 48) and influencing the development of rural areas. Thus, rural tourism can play an important role in keeping population in their place (Ün et al., 2012: 347).
6. Rural tourism prevents disappearance of natural environment and rural culture. In addition, as rural tourism is in harmony with other tourism

types in the region, it allows tourism to be sustainable over the year (www.kirsalturizm.gen.tr, 2017).

7. Rural development accelerates with the improvement of rural tourism. Because there is a direct relationship between these two concepts. The development of rural tourism in these regions leads to an increase in tourism investments and the inadequacy of physical infrastructure in the region eventually comes to an end. (Çeken, Dalgın & Çakır 2012: 14). Improvement in education and health services is ensured (Akça, 2004: 63). With the increase in such investments, local economy is revitalized.
8. Tourists participating in rural tourism activities are very sensitive to the environment. Because of this, the natural areas where tourism is opened will be preserved and left to future generations. This is important in terms of sustainability (Karafaki & Yazgan, 2012: 57).
9. The supply of tourism resources in rural areas always attract people from urban areas to rural areas. Cohesion between rural and urban areas occurs, resulting in removal of differences in behaviour and life style of people (Çeken et al., 2007: 11, Çeken et al., 2012: 14).
10. Due to the development rural tourism in rural areas, there is a double interaction in culture and life styles of local people and tourists. As a result, enrichment occurs in clothing, food culture and customs of local people (Çeken, 2012: 14).
11. Due to the fact that the tourists who are engaged in rural tourism activities are sensitive to the environment, restoration works of the structures in the rural areas can be protected and the traditional architectural style can be preserved and the region can be more planned and organized in terms of landscape (Akça et al., 2001: 32; Köroğlu & Köroğlu, 2006: 238).
12. The importance given to natural and archaeological areas with potentials in terms of rural tourism in rural areas will be increased even more. In addition, rural tourism contributes to the protection of biological diversity (Akça et al., 2001: 32, Köroğlu & Köroğlu, 2006: 238).

Rural tourism offers an important income and employment opportunity for rural areas. Agricultural and farm activities are concentrated in rural areas. The local people in this areas can only increase their wealth levels with rural tourism by using their natural,

social-cultural and historical values without resorting to agriculture (Çeken et al., 2007; Ün et al., 2012: 350).

The main objective in rural development can be summarized as “*reduction of migration through rural employment, promotion of local people’s participation in development decisions, improvement of current physical infrastructure, strengthening of access to public services such as education and health, provision of rural environment and proper use of natural resources and sustainable management*” (Emekli, Südaş & Soykan, 2006: 330).

In the first years of development of the tourism sector, tourism has been considered in terms of economic benefits such as economic development and employment opportunities, but negative social, cultural and environmental influences have begun to emerge in time (Ahmadova & Akova, 2016: 16).

The arguments for the negative aspects of rural tourism can be listed as follows.

1. Rural tourism can cause natural life in the region to deteriorate, increase environmental pollution and change the culture and traditions of the local people living in the region (Kasalak & Akıncı, 2015: 236).
2. These negative effects may cause the agriculture to decline, leading to the people who provide income from agriculture to move out of agriculture. Land and real estate prices may increase. Local residents may leave the agricultural activities and try to maintain their life only with land rent. Moreover, it is an undesirable result that rural areas become totally dependent on tourism (Morgül, 2006: 70, Soykan, 1999: 74).
3. In rural areas, with the rapid development of rural tourism, uneven urbanization which is not suitable to the natural structure can be experienced. It is possible to experience adverse effects such as changes in habitat, degradation of the life cycle of wild life, loss of plant cover and plant species (Erdoğan, 2003: 84-85).
4. Due to the fact that the region is overcrowded because of rural tourism, it can cause decrease of attractiveness and loss of authenticity in the region (Uçar et al., 2017: 96).
5. In addition to these, there may be economic leaks, local price inflation, deterioration of local employment structure resulting in widespread nomadic work, the increase in the employment rate of low-paid and part-

time working women with widening local roles, deterioration of local house structure and seasonal demand model are some of the adverse conditions that rural tourism can create in rural areas (Robert & Hall, 2003: 5).

One of the most important issues in order to eliminate these and similar problems is to educate and raise awareness of local people about tourism before starting tourism activities in rural areas.

### Rural Tourism

When we try to define rural tourism, the first thing that come to our mind is the type of tourism that takes place with visits to rural settlements in order to be in harmony with people in different cultures, to watch local activities or to participate in the events themselves or to relax in the nature comes to mind (Kiper & Yılmaz, 2008: 160). Rural tourism emerges as a new type of tourism which is continuing in the regions that are strong in terms of agricultural activities and which is the result of agriculture-tourism association in the sectoral sense (Çeken et al., 2012: 12). Rural tourism has become a current issue as a solution to the socio-economic problems of the people living in rural areas with the contraction in the traditional rural agriculture economy (Tekin & Kasalak, 2014: 131). When expressed differently, rural tourism is a sustainable variety of tourism that is attracting and growing in terms of contributing to the social and economic development of rural areas (Perales, 2002; Pina & Delfa, 2005).

There are two types of tourism that are intertwined with rural tourism. One of them is agricultural tourism and the other is farm tourism. Both types of tourism are used in place of rural tourism as they are reminiscent of rural areas. If the accommodation activities in the rural areas are carried out on the farms instead of the villages, this type of tourism is called farm tourism. If any kind of rural activity is farming-oriented and agricultural-based activities are carried out in practice, this type of tourism is referred to as agricultural tourism (Soykan, 1999: 68). In agricultural tourism regions, beneficial interaction is achieved through integration of agriculture and tourism. While agricultural activities continue in fertile lands, inefficient or nonarable agricultural lands can be evaluated within the scope of tourism and recreation (Küçükaltan, 2002: 150).

Rural tourism, agricultural tourism and farm tourism are an important tool in the development of rural areas, especially those with favourable conditions for tourism activities throughout the year (Ahmadova & Akova, 2016: 17). It is possible to stimulate the economic activities in the countryside by introducing

an integration project covering the fields of tourism, industry, agriculture and education in order to evaluate and develop the rural tourism potential for the local people living in the rural areas (Zurnacı, 2012: 65).

Rural tourism is attractive for tourists because it is realized in rural areas and it is a nature-based tourism type. Today, with the increase in the number of tourists who prefer the naturalness and authenticity of rural areas, the development of rural areas is accelerating (Ongun, Gövdere & Çiçek, 2016: 80). The improvement of the socio-economic conditions of the city's residents, the desire to move away from the stress of business life and escape from environmental pollution and noise have played a major role in the rapid spread of rural tourism (Halbway & Taylor, 2006: 199).

### Akçaköy and Lavender Stream

The Lakes region is rich geographically in terms of medical and aromatic plants such as Lavender, Rose, Thyme and Sage (Bilgiç, Demir & İşler, 2016: 618). Located in the region called the Lake District in the Mediterranean Region, Burdur is a major attraction in terms of geographical features, suitable climate, historical and cultural heritage and alternative tourism potential. İncuyu Cave, Sagalossos Antique City, Burdur Museum, Salda Ski Center, Lake Salda, Burdur Lake, İncirhan, Susuz Kervansaray, Lisinia Nature-Wildlife Conservation and Rehabilitation Center are important attraction centers within the boundaries of Burdur province.

The Lavender Stream Project is a project carried out in the Akçaköy district of the province of Yeşilova in Burdur province. With this project, it was aimed to canalise the local people in the region to dry farming by drawing attention to the drawdown of water sources. Within the scope of this project, mainly Lavender, Thyme and Sage were planted especially in the mountainous and stony areas where the chrome mine has left. Within the scope of the project named Lavender Stream, it is envisaged that these plants will be cultivated in all non-irrigated and non-agricultural land in the future in Akçaköy, which is affiliated to the province of Burdur in the province of Yeşilova.

The objectives of the Lavender Stream Project are as follows;

1. To extend the longevity of lakes with aromatic plants (Lavender, Thyme, Rose, Sage, Balm and Peony) that consume water in a small amount and to create a rescue model for all wetlands especially in Burdur Lake, Turkey and the world.

2. It is aimed to encourage nature friendly agricultural practices without using any chemicals and to attract attention to cancer-like diseases.
3. To show local people that they can earn money by means of agriculture made with aromatic plants, to ensure that local people stay in their villages without leaving their homes and to provide rural development.
4. To contribute to the rural tourism with the visual beauty of aromatic plants forming a panoramic image.
5. To promote honey production by providing aromatic plants to grow in poor soil areas.
6. It is aimed to grow products from aromatic plants and export them for the purpose of providing more value-added income to the national economy by using barren and arid lands.
7. To prevent erosions that may occur in risky areas by planting aromatic plants on mountainous, stony and steep slopes. In addition, it is aimed to ensure that the areas abandoned by marble quarries are rehabilitated.

From the beginning of May to the end of August, the village, which has a visual beauty, displays a panoramic view for both domestic and foreign tourists. Activities such as photography, walking, trekking, camping, cycling, horse riding and goat grazing at the Lavender level are possible in Akçaköy. With the Lisinia Lavender Stream Project, it is possible for local people to benefit economically from both agriculture and tourism in the villages located between Lake Burdur and Lake Salda in the future. In addition, these villages will be acquainted with rural tourism integrated with agriculture through the production of Lavender, Thyme, Sage, Balm, Rose and Peony (Ongun et al., 2016: 83).

Agricultural activities in Akçaköy have been diversified with the planting of aromatic plants such as Lavender, Rose, Peony, Balm, Sage and Thyme in an area of about 2000 decares. These plants have been identified for three purposes. The first is that water consumption can be kept to a minimum and the sustainability of the ecological cycle is ensured by the fact that the plants in question do not need excess water. Secondly, it is anticipated that these plants, which have aromatic properties, will generate more economic benefits for the local people. Because the vegetable oils obtained from Roses and Lavender are an additional source of income for the local people. It is foreseen that the economic gains obtained from aromatic plants will positively affect the tendency of the local people to protect the nature. The third is that

tourists visiting Akçaköy enjoy being photographed in Roses and Lavenders and visit the village within the scope of a recreation activity (Ongun, Sop, Yeşiltaş & Ekiztepe, 2017: 50).

Among the products that can be obtained from Lavender and other aromatic plants in terms of tourism supporting products are: Lavender Honey, Lavender Cheese, Lavender Tea, Lavender Oil, Lavender Water, Dried Lavender, Lavender Cologne, Lavender Soap, Lavender Shower Gel, Lavender Cream, Thyme Tea, Thyme Water, Thyme Oil, Thyme Honey, Sage, Rose Water, Rose Oil, Rose Soap, Rose Cream, and Rose Jam. It is possible to increase the income level of the local people through the sale of these products.

### **Purpose of the research**

The main aim of this research is to investigate the effect of rural tourism on rural development on behalf of Akçaköy village. In the current research, the Lavender Stream is examined as a case study. This case study is shaped as a social responsibility activity in Akçaköy/Yeşilova of the province of Burdur which attracts attention with the Lavender Stream Project aimed at protecting nature. The Lavender Stream in Akçaköy also enables the diversification of agriculture and farm activities within the scope of the ecological life.

### **Research Methodology**

This research is a case study. When the related literature is examined, it is understood that the case study design is suitable for the researches that are subject to a single case (Dul & Hak, 2008; Gerring, 2007; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Kılıç & Kurnaz, 2010; Köklü, 1994; Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2010; Selvi & Demirel, 2012; Şimşek, 2012; Woodside, 2010; Ongun et al., 2017). Reasons for choosing Akçaköy as an example are as follows; the lack of a similar project in Turkey, the fact that the researchers live within the boundaries of the region and that no previous work has been done on Akçaköy before.

The case studies are carried out with a detailed description of a particular case. Data collection techniques such as document analysis can be used to identify the case (Şimşek, 2012). In this research, document analysis and interview techniques have been applied in order to describe conclusions for the purpose of the research in detail. Semi-structured interview form was used as a data collection tool in the interview technique. Akçaköy was also visited several times by researchers on Lavender Stream.

In the semi-structured interview, prior permission is taken for the record of the interview. Then the

interview is recorded, the recorded interview is resolved, interpreted and the results are reported. Obviously, this technique allows researchers to use open-ended questions, to make active listening, to record answers, and to investigate the research subject in detail with related questions (Akıncı & Sönmez, 2015: 99).

Interviews, document analysis techniques were used to collect data for the survey. Local, national, printed and electronic sources about the Lavender Stream area were searched firstly. Afterwards, documents about the research topic were examined and document analysis was carried out accordingly.

Thereafter, Akçaköy was observed in its natural environment in different months of 2015 and 2016. The project architect Öztürk Sarıca was informed about the importance and purpose of the research and an interview appointment was taken for June 2017. Twenty people from village Akçaköy were interviewed in village coffeehouse.

Five open-ended questions were included in the semi-structured interview form prepared with the information as a result of the related literature

1. What does Akçaköy mean to you?

2. What is the meaning of rural tourism for you?
3. How will the visuality and economic return of Lavender and aromatic plants contribute to the development of the village?
4. Are you thinking about planting Lavender and aromatic plants in your fields? If so, have you planted Lavender and aromatic plants up to now?
5. What are your expectations from rural tourism developed by the virtue of Lavender and aromatic plants?

The villagers were informed about the importance of this research, and an appointment was made for the 21 interviews. This study is a qualitative study and in the identification of the people passing through the village center and the persons involved in the interview, we use the convenience sampling method which is one the improbable sampling methods. The interviews with the participants were carried out by the researchers in the coffeehouses located in the village square, by taking the participants' permission to record the interview on the voice recorder. In addition, the necessary notes were taken from time to time by one of the researchers.

**Table 1.** Demographic Characteristics of Participants

<u>Participants</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Education Status</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Marital Status</u>	<u>Hometown</u>
K1	Male	Veterinarian	University Graduate	45	Married	Akçaköy
K2	Male	Farmer	Secondary School Graduate	47	Married	Akçaköy
K3	Female	Farmer	Secondary School Graduate	45	Married	Akçaköy
K4	Male	Farmer	High School Graduate	40	Married	Akçaköy
K5	Male	Farmer	High School Graduate	25	Single	Akçaköy
K6	Male	Farmer	High School Graduate	24	Single	Akçaköy
K7	Male	Farmer	High School Graduate	50	Married	Akçaköy
K8	Male	Farmer	Secondary School Graduate	44	Married	Akçaköy
K9	Male	Farmer	High School Graduate	46	Married	Akçaköy
K10	Male	Farmer	High School Graduate	45	Married	Akçaköy
K11	Male	Farmer	High School Graduate	21	Single	Akçaköy
K12	Male	Retired	Primary School Graduate	76	Married	Akçaköy
K13	Male	Retired	Primary School Graduate	66	Married	Akçaköy
K14	Female	Retired	Secondary School Graduate	60	Married	Akçaköy
K15	Male	Retired	Secondary School Graduate	60	Married	Akçaköy
K16	Male	Retired	Primary School Graduate	66	Married	Akçaköy
K17	Male	Tradesman	Secondary School Graduate	75	Married	Akçaköy
K18	Male	Tradesman	High School Graduate	56	Married	Akçaköy
K19	Male	Tradesman	Primary School Graduate	43	Married	Akçaköy
K20	Male	Retired	High School Graduate	53	Married	Akçaköy
K21	Male	Headman	High School Graduate	60	Married	Akçaköy



The researchers did not interact with the local people during the observation. The interview with each participant as an individual took about 45 minutes. Participants were given codes such as K1, K2, K3, ..., K21.

### Analysis of Data

In processing the data, the stages of description, analysis and interpretation were followed. The frameworks of the thematic codes developed during the description phase were created during the analysis phase. In the interpreting phase, uncorrected participant expressions are included.

## FINDINGS

### Demographic Characteristics

The demographic characteristics of the participants are given in Table 1. In addition, the findings obtained as a result of interviews are transferred descriptively.

Demographic characteristics of the participants, as shown in Table 1, are generally middle-aged, although they vary from 21 to 76 years old. All of the participants are born in Akçaköy and all but one resides in the village. Participants belong to various professions such as farmers, tradesmen and headman. Participants in the study include nineteen men and two women. Three of the participants are single and eighteen of them are married. Looking at the educational status of the participants, it is seen that one participant has a university degree, ten participants are high school graduates, six participants are high school graduates and four participants are primary school graduates.

### Empirical Findings

Participants in the interviews were directed primarily to the question "What does Akçaköy mean to you?" The purpose of asking this question is to find out whether the first thing that comes to the minds of the participants is 'Fakir Baykurt' or 'Lavenders' because Fakir Baykurt, a famous Turkish writer, was born in this village. All participants answered this question first as 'Fakir Baykurt' and secondly as 'Lavenders.' Participant K21 expostulated as follows; "*This is the village of Fakir Baykurt, in the past years visitors came here to visit the house where Fakir Baykurt was born, which is now a museum. But tourists are giving priority to see the beauty of the Lavender fields in recent years. In fact, visitors even leave the village without visiting the museum.*"

Participants were asked, "What is the meaning of rural tourism for you?" Participants responded to this question in general by saying, "*Visitors from the*

*city visit the villages, see the beauties of the village and take lots of pictures.*" Participant K5 "*The cities are very crowded and the tempo work is very busy. People come to the villages to find peace, comfort, fresh air and natural products. Rural tourism is to serve tourists in rural areas and earn money with natural beauties. In addition, the visitors want to buy natural products from us. We do not have to go to their cities to sell our products, they come to the village and buy it ...*". Participant K9 answered this question as "*rural tourism is the visit of people to rural areas in order to relax and to find peace.*"

The question of "how Lavender and aromatic plants and their economic impact will contribute to the development of the village" was asked. Water consumption is higher in Burdur province because most of the fodder needs of cattle breeding are provided from irrigated agriculture. Participant K1 answered this question as "*The Lavender Stream Project is important for the cultivation of aromatic plants that do not consume water. This project, which is followed by many people in Turkey, has provided protection of the environment and increased the interest of people to nature. We planted Lavender and the other aromatic plants on the 670 decares field that we rented from the state in 2015. We extract oil from Lavender and other aromatic plants and advertise at home and abroad and make money from it. We are especially trying to reach people who are sensitive about consuming additive and chemical free foods. We think that Turkey needs such projects and we ensure the continuity of our project. The villagers will earn income in the future with these plants.*"

Participant K1 expressed his views as follows; "*Another project alternative to cattle breeding in Burdur is the goat project. Since the need for fodder of goats is not obtained from irrigated agriculture, the goat project is expected to contribute to the water resources of the lake region. Because the goats eat the dried grass in the fields and forests near the road, the goats also prevent forest fires. With the spread of the goat project, the need for milk and especially meat of the country will be partially met naturally. Goats fulfill the pruning process in the wooded areas because they eat the lower part of the trees, which contributes to our forests. Goats increase the amount of organic substance in the soil by natural fertilization because they leave urine and feces in the areas they are grazing. With this project, production of agricultural goods such as oats, barley, wheat and rye will be done in the form of dry farming, therefore the goats will graze on these fields, and from time to time they will be grazed in the forested areas where the vegetation has been completed and the transition to the nature economy will be achieved. With the goat project, migration from the city to rural areas will begin and people will make money from goat breeding.*"

Participant K1 carried on his opinions and predictions with the following words: *“In addition to their use in pharmaceutical, cosmetics and food industries as an intermediate input; Lavender, Rose and aromatic plants have also significantly mobilized rural tourism activities in the region. The rural tourism activities that started with Rose gardens in the region in May, last until the end of July, together with the Sage and purple Lavender in Akçaköy. In particular, the region welcomes about two thousand visitors on weekends in July. It is a fact that this number will increase over time. Turkey and especially the Burdur region will be in competition with France in the production of Lavender.”*

Participants were asked the following questions; *“Are you thinking about planting Lavender and aromatic plants in your fields?”* and *“If so, have you planted Lavender and aromatic plants up to now?”* The majority of participants expressed that they planted aromatic plants, even though in small quantities. Most of the participants stated that Öztürk Sarıca planted most of the Lavender-cultivated land and sold the products he obtained at the Lisinia Nature and Rehabilitation Center. It is generally concluded that as a result of Öztürk Sarıca’s informing activities towards the villagers, young people focused on Lavender planting. The people who planted Lavender on their fields are: in behalf of headman (70 decares), K1 (670 decares), K5 (300 decares), K7 (100 decares), K9 (100 decares), K12 (100 decares), K14 (80 decares), K16 (40 decares), K17 (40 decares), K19 (10 decares), K20 (10 decares). The great majority of the participants said that the planting of Lavender and aromatic plants also began in other villages. In addition, it is generally mentioned that after realizing the people who planted aromatic plants earn money in the village, new people are expected to plant aromatic plants.

The question of “what are your expectations from rural tourism developed by the virtue of Lavender and aromatic plants” was asked. The majority of the participants think that they will get an additional income from Lavenders and that the people leaving the villages will return back again. Lavender and aromatic plants have been a hope for the villagers. Participants expressed that the similar kind of economic healing based on rural tourism by means of Lavender production in the village of Kuyucak in the town of Keçiborlu in Isparta province seem potentially possible to occur in their own villages in the future.

The majority of the people who participated in the survey emphasized that owing to the Lavender Stream there was an increase in the number of people who came to the village especially on weekends, which is important for the promotion of their village.

They expressed that visitors drank tea and chatted in coffeehouse of the village. Thus, a social cohesion and exchange of information between villagers and urbanized people have been realized. The majority of participants emphasized that meeting new people was positive for the villagers. They also stated that young people are making efforts to plant Lavender on their land and that there is an increasing awareness on rural tourism. They stated that during the planting period of Lavenders, the majority of the people in the village worked as daily workers and earned income.

## CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to eliminate the regional development differences and poverty, the villagers should go for product differentiation in tourism. Akçaköy should use the opportunity obtained due to Lavender and aromatic plants well. With the Lavender Stream Project, some positive developments were observed in Akçaköy.

Especially in Akçaköy and surrounding villages, the mountains damaged by the mines started to be rehabilitated with the planting of aromatic plants such as Lavender, Thyme and Sage. The planting of aromatic plants has reduced the risk of erosion in the mountains. The lake, which is known as Çorak Lake and does not hold water for many years, has reached a visible water level by the dry farming for the last two years.

Known as the village of Fakir Baykurt, Akçaköy became famous with the Lavender Stream Project.

The opportunity to earn additional income is provided for the women living in rural areas through making local dishes. Instead of cattle breeding, sheep and goat breeding have been adopted in villages. The Lavender Stream Project, which is a hope for young people in the region, partially prevented young migrants from migrating from their villages.

There has been an increase in the number of beekeepers in the village. The villagers increased their income by selling honey. Steps have been taken to raise generations respecting nature and protecting nature life. Awareness for ownership and protection of nature has increased in villagers.

One of the most important problems of the local people living in the Akçaköy countryside is inadequate level of economic prosperity. As long as the local people who live on agriculture and animal husbandry do not abandon these two sectors and add rural tourism to them, their income levels are expected to increase gradually. Especially in barren soils outside

agricultural areas, the planting of plants that require minimum water consumption will increase the level of prosperity.

It is seen that local and foreign tourists coming to Akçaköy countryside are daily tourists. The tourists who visit daily, first visit Fakir Baykurt Museum, travel Lavender fields and take lots of photos. In order to ensure that the arriving tourists are accommodated in the village, accommodation facilities suitable for the texture of the village are required. The state should provide support for the development of the house pension system. Visitors should be informed about the color richness of aromatic plants at sunrise and at sunset in advance. By this means, the stay of tourists can be extended and the level of income and prosperity of local people may increase.

In Akçaköy, tents should be made suitable for nomadic cultures where aromatic concept gift items can be sold. Local agricultural tourism products and services should be advertised. Lavender and other aromatic plants grown in the village under the brand name Lisinia should be commercialized in domestic and foreign markets. Income from sales of gift items should be used for village development. It would be appropriate for the village to establish a cooperative soon and to carry out its activities through this cooperative.

In Akçaköy, especially the development of handicrafts of countrywomen should be emphasized and these women should be encouraged to participate in training programs.

The necessary promotions should be made so that the agents who organize nature tours include Akçaköy to their tour destination scope. Burdur is located on the transition route between Antalya and Denizli. For tours coming from Denizli, a tour program including Salda Lake, Akçaköy, Lisinia Nature and Rehabilitation Center, Insuyu Cave and Sagalassos can be arranged. For tours coming from Antalya, a tour program covering Sagalassos, Insuyu Cave, Lisinia Nature and Rehabilitation Center, Akçaköy and Salda Lake can be organized.

It is possible to do all the activities that can be done in rural areas such as bird watching, photo safari, hiking, trekking, goat grazing in Lavender fields, camping, cycling and horse riding in Lavender, Thyme, Thyme, Sage, Peony and Balm fields spreading in arid areas around Akçaköy. With a good organization, tourists should be canalized to join these fun activities.

Roads, drinking water, sewage and treatment facilities should be modernized in Akçaköy. With development of rural tourism, both infrastructure and

upper structure need to be improved.

It is important that local people be trained occasionally by the experts of the subject and act together for the promotion of the village. The local and national press should make the necessary promotions and utilize internet sites.

In conclusion, this study is limited to the local people living in Akçaköy, which is affiliated to the Yeşilova district of Burdur province. Interviewing was adopted as a method of data collection in the survey and attempts were made to obtain in-depth information from the participants. The Lavender Stream Project is a good example of rural tourism for the development of rural areas. Care must be taken that the planting aromatic plants should be made in arid areas, not in irrigated areas. Local people should aim to earn additional income from tourism by means of aromatic plants as their primary sources of income without leaving agriculture and animal breeding. Aromatic plants such as Lavender, Thyme, Sage, Rose, Balm and Peony will provide important contributions for rural tourism in the future. In Akçaköy, Lavender Stream Project will provide economic input for rural people as well as rural tourism for sustainable rural tourism. Rural tourism is one of the fast growing economic sectors in Burdur province. It is a well-known fact that the tourism movement in the region will provide positive contributions to regional development by reviving new economic activities.

Due to the qualitative nature of the work, it can be considered as a constraint that Akçaköy have a limited number of sample group and people related to rural tourism. It is suggested that new researches try to expand the sample with qualitative and quantitative techniques in the future so that more detailed results can be reached.

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