

The role of cooperatives in the development of rural tourism: The example of Kuyucak

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Abstract

In the development of rural areas whose economy is based on agriculture and animal husbandry, rural tourism activities play an essential role in diversifying rural areas' economic activities and transforming the social structure, with its contribution to employment, income-generating effect, and bringing people from different cultures together. Similarly, cooperatives, an organizational structure where local people come together to meet their own needs in the sense of solidarity, also fulfill a vital function in the development of rural areas. In this direction, the study's primary purpose is to determine whether cooperatives can play an active role in rural tourism development in areas where rural tourism activities occur. Therefore, the study adopted a qualitative analysis method to obtain in-depth information from the participants. In the analysis process of the data, descriptive analysis was used. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with 21 participants consisting of the Women Entrepreneurs Cooperative and local people, established in Kuyucak Village of Keçiborlu District of Isparta Province, which constitute the research sample, and a semi-structured interview form was used in the interviews. Finally, the results in line with the findings were interpreted and some suggestions for future studies were presented.

Keywords: Rural tourism, Rural development, Cooperative, Underdevelopment.

1. Introduction

To understand the reason for the development differences of societies, researchers asked the following question. They sought an answer through various academic disciplines: "Why some societies still live without the most basic freedoms and rights, while some societies have shown remarkable progress in the historical process?" (Acemoglu & Robinson 2018; Sen, 2004). The answer to this question was tried to be sought with the concept of development, which questions the reasons that lead to the separation of developed and underdeveloped countries. At this point, the idea of development refers to a qualitative improvement, including economic growth, but far beyond economic growth and a structural transformation in socio-cultural, political, and technological terms (Slim, 1995). Therefore, one of the critical points in countries' development strategies is to eliminate the development gap between rural and urban areas and take actions that will pave the way for the development of the rural regions. At this point, the importance of the cooperative movement as one of the essential instruments of

achieving rural development goals is emphasized. Thus, the importance of the cooperative movement can be understood more closely, especially when it is considered that cooperatives based on mutual aid provide employment opportunities for approximately 9.4% of the workforce (279.4 million people) on a global scale and that the majority of this number consists of the population living in rural areas (Eum, 2017). In times of crisis, cooperatives also take important roles. For example, the World Labor Organization (ILO) stated that cooperatives based on self-help and mutual solidarity could provide a long-term solution in the face of crisis-affected human communities in building a solid structure again, building an environment of social dialogue, creating employment opportunities, adopting a democratic understanding among communities, meeting socio-economic needs, and addressing crises (ILO, 2001). At the same time, rural tourism, which can be expressed as one of the non-traditional rural development strategies, has similar effects with the cooperatives operating in rural areas, as it diversifies economic activities in rural areas, creates new job opportunities, and supports the increase in retail sales (Wilson et al., 2001).

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In this context, when the findings of the studies involving rural tourism and cooperatives within the scope of rural development are evaluated, the fact that the local people carry out the activities that they try to realize with their own efforts in an organized manner under the roof of the cooperative paves the way for the development of tourism activities in the rural areas. The women who are in the background in terms of participation in the workforce can be recruited to the workforce through cooperatives. In addition, it is seen that the regions that once lost their vitality due to environmental pollution have been revived and turned into a tourist attraction with the efforts of the cooperatives in the ecological field (Yang & Hung, 2014; Iakovidou, 1997; Verma, 2006; Tuğrul, 2018; Gladwell, 2015; Aref & Gill, 2009, Djokovic et al., 2017; Kazakopoulos & Gidarakou, 2003). In this context, the increase in the number of studies involving rural tourism activities and cooperatives and the discussion of the findings from a broader perspective by the relevant academic circles will constitute a roadmap for the steps to be taken to eliminate or reduce the impact of poverty identified with the countryside, and it is thought that it will increase awareness about rural tourism cooperatives. It is thought that this study will contribute to the literature in terms of both revealing the social and economic change experienced by rural women after their participation in the labor force and evaluating the effects of rural tourism activities carried out under the roof of cooperatives in terms of rural development and regional tourism. In this direction, the main purpose of the research is to determine whether cooperatives can play an active role in the development of rural tourism in areas where rural tourism activities take place. The sub-objectives of the research are as follows; 1) Analyzing the effects of rural tourism activities on village life, 2) Drawing a general framework about the steps to be taken as a result of determining the difficulties and needs to be encountered 3) Determining the potential values of the village to carry out rural tourism activities more effectively.

2. Literature

2.1. Rural tourism

In the literature and in daily life, it is seen that many different types of tourism such as agricultural tourism, farm tourism, village tourism, eco-tourism are used instead of the concept of rural tourism. In fact, rural tourism is a more general concept that includes these types of tourism (Uçar et al., 2012). United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines Rural Tourism as *“a type of tourism activity in which the visitor’s experience is related to a wide range of products generally linked to nature-based activities, agriculture, rural lifestyle/culture, angling, and sightseeing.*

Rural tourism, one of the important instruments of rural development, comes into prominence as an increasingly important type of tourism in the world. The prominent factors in rural tourism gaining such importance can be expressed as follows; the search for alternatives to mass tourism, the

changes in the expectations and preferences of tourists, the desire to learn and experience different cultures, providing the participation of women living in rural areas into the workforce, and the dynamism of the local economy by providing diversity in the rural economy based on agriculture and contribute to rural development by preventing migration consequently.

The development of tourism in rural areas is considered as an important driving force for the eradication of poverty, sustainable development, and environmental protection (Ryan, Gu & Zhang, 2009). Since the seventies, the remarkable increase in tourism activities in rural areas in all developed countries worldwide has played a key role in the development of economically and socially depressed rural areas (Perales, 2002). In addition, rural tourism is seen as an important source of income for rural economies (Hummelbrunner & Miglbauer, 1994).

The crisis in the agricultural sector in the 1980s, especially in the Midwest of Europe, led to a decrease in the number of farmers and the restructuring of farm ownership, forcing them to leave farming or declare bankruptcy. In addition, as rural unemployment rates rose above urban levels, real income growth in rural areas ceased. These changes have limited the economic development options of rural communities and forced them to seek unconventional ways to ensure their sustainability (Shaw & Williams, 1994). One of the most popular non-traditional rural development strategies has been tourism and associated entrepreneurship opportunities (Wilson et al. 2001).

In Europe, with the decline of traditional agricultural industries, rural tourism has been relied on, widely supported, and promoted to overcome the social and economic challenges in rural areas (Wang, 2006). For many developed and developing countries, rural tourism is seen as one of the important tools of rural development. Especially in Europe, rural tourism finds strong support as a solution method to overcome the social and economic difficulties of the traditional agricultural industry (Ayhan, Taşlı, Özkök & Tatlı, 2020; Su, 2011). For example, the U.K. government invested in infrastructure for rural tourism in rural areas and provided financial support to farmers to develop tourism units (Robinson, 1990). Until 1980, the U.S. Department of Agriculture encouraged farmers to view farm tourism as a way to supplement their income and helped them establish the holiday farm cooperative (Luloff, Bridger, Graefe & Saylor, 1994). In many other countries, including Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Eastern Europe, and the Pacific region, tourism has been seen as the engine of economic growth and diversity in rural areas (Hall & Jenkins, 1998).

The development of rural tourism has been supported by many national and local organizations in many occasions. (Pearce, 1990). Studies have shown that rural tourism has contributed significantly to both the individual farmers and the region’s economy as a whole (Albright, 1991). A survey of four regions in the U.K. showed that the larger the farm

tourism and the more local ownership, the greater its impact on the local economy (Fleischer & Pizam, 1997). On the other hand, in some studies, it has been concluded that rural tourism is only an auxiliary source of income for the rural family that lives on agriculture (Davies, 1983; Hjalager, 1996).

Worldwide, rural tourism is seen as an important tool for the economic development of mountainous and other rural areas. That is because rural tourism raises living standards by providing additional income to rural people, prevents migration to the city by providing new job opportunities, contributes to the socio-economic development of the region by encouraging the improvement of infrastructure and superstructure, and supports rural development by reducing inter-regional imbalances (Soykan, 1999). Rural areas are attracting more and more tourists every day due to their historical and cultural traditions, ethnic and geographical features, and the advantages of an unspoiled natural environment. More and more European countries consider the development of rural tourism as a new opportunity and accept it as a sustainable local development strategy, as it provides an additional financial gain in rural areas based on agricultural trade. (Dashper, 2014). It is also seen as an essential tool in preserving and promoting cultural heritage (Soykan, 1999; Özçatalbaş, 2006).

In recent years, rural tourism has also shown significant developments in Turkey. As a general view on rural tourism, it has considerable potential to eliminate the development differences between underdeveloped rural areas and developed urban areas (Tuna, 2020).

2.2. Cooperatives

Cooperatives are an enterprise model that enables people to come together and achieve their social, economic, and cultural goals through democratic decision-making. It is an important way of sharing, solidarity, cooperation, and competing against strong capital (Emiroğlu, 2019). According to the definition in Cooperatives Law No. 1163., “*Cooperatives with legal entity are variable partnerships, and variable capital partnerships established by real and legal persons to provide and protect the specific economic interests of their members and especially their professional or livelihood needs through mutual assistance, cooperation, and bail.*” (Cooperatives Law, 1969). Moreover, the International Cooperative Alliance states that “*Cooperatives are people-centered enterprises owned, controlled and run by and for their members to realize their common economic, social, and cultural needs and demands.*” (ICA, 2018).

Cooperatives emerged in the world in the second half of the 19th century. For the first time, a consumer cooperative was established with 28 entrepreneurs in 1844 (Ünal & Yercan, 2006). Today, cooperatives operating in many different forms and all sectors exist in all countries. According to the World Cooperative Monitor (2020), more than 12% of the global population is a member of any of the 3 million cooperatives in the world. In addition, the data obtained show that

the total turnover of the largest 300 cooperatives has reached 2.146 billion USD. When the data is evaluated in terms of contribution to employment, it contributes to sustainable economic growth by providing job opportunities to 280 million people worldwide. In addition, establishing a strong cooperative network, including the European Union member states, is one of the important issues. In the strategic planning of 2020, it is stated that cooperatives are also an effective tool for a sustainable economy (CoopsEurope, 2012).

In Turkey, agricultural credit cooperatives started with “hometown funds” established and developed by Mithat Paşa between 1863-1867. This fund was closed in 1887, and Ziraat Bank was established in its place. The acceptance of cooperatives as a sector worldwide was after George Fauquet’s book “cooperative sector” was published in 1948. However, since the 1920s, Atatürk stated that the cooperatives were the third sector besides the state and the private sector, and that these three sectors should coexist in the development of the country and that the cooperative sector should be the driving force, especially in agricultural development (Mülayim, 1998). The first major developments regarding cooperatives in Turkey took place after the proclamation of the Republic, and many cooperatives were established, especially in agricultural areas (Hazar, 1990). Cooperatives Law was enacted in 1969. Today, 84,232 cooperatives operate in 34 different types and there are 8,109,225 members of these cooperatives in Turkey (Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2021).

The cooperative movement has a vital role in eliminating regional inequalities which is one of the aims of rural development, preventing migration, and diversifying the economic activities of rural areas whose economy is based on agriculture. However, many problems such as the small scale of the enterprises in rural areas, the limited income and savings of the people engaged in agriculture, the lack of information, the instability in the prices of agricultural products, the difficulties in the marketing phase make it necessary to develop an understanding of mutual aid and solidarity to improve the living standards of the rural people (Saner, Uçar & Ağır, 2012). Rural areas are at a disadvantage due to their unique difficulties in providing essential public services and attracting private sector investment. Cooperatives that are established in rural areas are regarded as one of the crucial rural development instruments in both developed and developing countries as a successful model with education, transportation, drinking water supply, market access, and employment opportunities (ILO, 2011).

Agricultural activities, which are the primary source of livelihood of the communities living in rural areas, greatly influence rural communities’ labor force participation and income generation. At the point of maintaining agricultural activities more effectively, the cooperative movement, in which the involvement of mainly small-scale producers as well as the participation of women and the young members in the workforce is supported, plays a vital role in the development of rural areas and reduction of poverty through

providing access to the markets, sharing information, and training provided (FAO, 2012). In addition, cooperatives acting in line with the principle of open membership play a key role in ensuring gender equality. Especially in rural areas, women, whose labor force participation rate is meager, increase their economic development and social competence by directly engaging in production activities through cooperatives. In February 2015, 581 people who participated in the research that was named “The Impact of Cooperatives on Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality Compared to Other Types of Businesses” conducted by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) and the International Labor Organization (ILO) stated that cooperatives increased women’s participation in the workforce by 75% (ICA, 2018).

The reports published by countries also support the development of cooperatives in rural areas on a global scale. For example, while 58% of the electricity supplied to rural areas in Argentina is realized through cooperatives, it is estimated that approximately 900,000 people employed in the agricultural sector in Ethiopia obtain some of their income through cooperatives. In France, 3,200 agricultural cooperatives with 650,000 members employ 150,000 people. Cooperatives meet the needs of 67% of rural families in India. Twenty-eight million people living in rural areas in Iran are either members of cooperatives or benefit from cooperative initiatives. In Japan, 9.1 million farming families are members of the cooperative, and the cooperative employs 257,000 people (ILO, 2007).

3. Methodology

3.1. Sample

The study is a qualitative study aimed at identifying the contributions of the cooperative movement in rural tourism activities to both local people and cooperative members and analyzing the challenges faced and the tourism potential of the region. Qualitative studies are a research method (Corbin, 1997) that allows more detailed data to be obtained and more comprehensively understood. As Meriam (1998) points out, the findings obtained through qualitative studies are richer and more descriptive and are preferred because they allow for a comprehensive examination of data instead of quantitative studies (Bayyurt & Seggie, 2015). The population of the study is the local residents of Kuyucak Village in Keçiborlu District in Isparta Province. The research sample was made up of 21 participants from the cooperative members and local people who agreed to interview.

3.2. Data collection

During the implementation phase of the research, the interview technique was used, and a semi-structured interview form was used to obtain the data. The goal in using a semi-structured interview form within the study is to give the researcher specific flexibility, allowing the researcher the opportunity to move forward in line with the interview guide

and also enabling him to gather information in a deep and systematic way if needed (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2018). In the process of identifying the semi-structured interview form questions, Gladwell’s (2015) study was used.

The reason for the selection of Kuyucak Village of Keçiborlu District of Isparta Province as the research population is the revival of rural tourism in this region with the start of lavender cultivation in the village, which does not have a livelihood other than agriculture and animal husbandry. It will also be seen how much the women entrepreneurship cooperative established in 2015 has increased the tourism revenues in the village especially favored by local tourists. During the data collection process, Kuyucak Village, where the Lavender Scented Women Entrepreneurs Cooperative is located, was visited in July, when tourists visit the region the most. Prior to the interview with co-op members and locals, the head of the co-op was contacted to ensure the meeting continued uninterrupted. With the guidance of the head of the cooperative, the research sample consisted of 21 participants from the cooperative members and local people who agreed to interview. To analyze the views obtained during the interview in detail, permission from the participants for audio recording was obtained. To provide the necessary environment of trust and that the participants could answer the questions sincerely, the participants were informed that the credentials of the participants would remain confidential and that the answers obtained would not be used except for scientific study.

3.3. Data analysis

Descriptive analysis was used in the analysis process of the data. The main purpose of the descriptive analysis is to present the findings to the reader in a regular and summarized form. For this reason, the data obtained is first systematically depicted, and in the next phase, these descriptions are interpreted by the researcher to examine the cause-and-effect relationships and reach several conclusions (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). In terms of the reliability of the study, direct citations in line with the participants’ views are included in the study. For the analysis to be done correctly, the expressions of participants from research questions of each sub-theme previously identified by the researcher were analyzed by transferring them from the voice recorder to the text. In addition, out of 21 participants, local people were coded as Y1, Y2, Y3..., Y11, while cooperative members were coded as K1, K2, K3..., K10.

3.4. Demographic characteristics of the participants

During the interviews, the views of people from as many different age groups and professions as possible were consulted to establish different perspectives to gain in-depth knowledge. Information on gender, age, occupation, educational status of the 21 interviewed participants are presented in the table below.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the participants

Participants	Gender	Education	Age	Profession
K1	Woman	Associate degree	38	Head of Co-op
K2	Woman	Elementary school	48	Vice President of co-op
K3	Woman	Elementary school	68	Housewife
K4	Woman	Elementary school	45	Housewife
K5	Woman	Elementary school	68	Housewife
K6	Woman	Associate degree	24	Housewife
K7	Woman	High school	36	Housewife
K8	Woman	Bachelor's degree	39	Housewife
K9	Woman	Elementary school	59	Retired
K10	Woman	Elementary school	36	Housewife
Y1	Woman	High school	19	Unemployed
Y2	Man	Bachelor's degree	72	Retired
Y3	Man	Bachelor's degree	35	Farmer
Y4	Woman	High school	17	Student
Y5	Woman	Elementary school	49	Housewife
Y6	Woman	Elementary school	68	Housewife
Y7	Man	Elementary school	68	Retired
Y8	Woman	Elementary school	44	Housewife
Y9	Woman	High school	38	Housewife
Y10	Woman	Bachelor's degree	38	Teacher
Y11	Woman	Elementary school	44	Housewife

Of the 21 participants consisting of local people and cooperative members, 14% were male (3 participants) participants while 86% were women (18 participants), as seen in Table 1. Of the participants whose views were consulted, the youngest was a 17-year-old high school student who helped her family sell lavender while the oldest participant was a 72-year-old retired teacher. The average age of the participants is 45. Of the respondents, 57% are housewives, 14% are retired, 5% is teacher, 5% is student, 9% are cooperative presidents and vice presidents, 5% do not have any profession, while 5% engage in farming. Moreover, the percentages for participants' educational status are as follows. 52% of the respondents (11 participants) elementary school, 5% (1 participant) secondary school, 14% (3 participants) high school, 10% (2 participants) associate degree, 19% (4 participants) undergraduate graduate.

4. Results

In this section, the groups involved in sampling were asked to assess the good aspects of village life and its challenges. In this respect, local people and cooperative members were asked about the challenges of village life, its strengths, the basic livelihood of the region, what can be done to make village life better, what alternative work can be done to improve the livelihood of local people. In the first section, the village life's strengths and challenges were identified and whether there were other products of added value in the village other than lavender. It is thought that the research findings will both contribute to determining the tourism potential of the region and enable the identification of local products of added value that can be evaluated in the field of tourism. In this regard, the participants were first asked what the good aspects of living in the village for them-

selves were, and all of the participants answered this question; saying that a natural life free of stress has a calming quality, that a life away from the stresses and crowds of city life is a great chance for them. Moreover, the Y6-coded participant expressed their views on the good aspects of village life, stressing that *"the most positive side of village life is above all a very comfortable lifestyle, escape from stress, a natural environment, everyone knows each other in the village, and communication, solidarity, and cooperation are stronger than city life."* The emphasis on solidarity and unity coincides with mutual aid and solidarity, which underpins cooperatives. Then, on the difficulties encountered in village life, to the question: *"Are there any difficulties in village life? If yes, what are your views on this matter?"* While most participants expressed the lack of irrigation water as the main problem, participants with the codes K1, K2, K4, Y5 especially emphasized the migration problem that arises due to the lack of employment opportunities, which is the main problem of rural areas. *"Migration is a big problem; people are going out because of education and lack of jobs. People are leaving the village because there is no opportunity to earn income."* Due to the limited opportunities of rural areas, the inability to diversify economic activities and the basic problems such as income insufficiency and unemployment caused by this situation result in the migration of the young population and families from the village. However, in addition to the disadvantages mentioned, rural areas which are still trying to preserve their nature, traditions, and cultural values also carry great potential.

Based on this idea, to diversify the economic activities in Kuyucak Village, whose main livelihood is based on lavender, rose, and animal husbandry, the participants were asked what kind of alternative jobs could be done, and quotations about the opinions of the participants were included. *"What*

kind of alternative jobs can be created to increase the income level of people in village life?" All of the participants stated that they could not do any activity other than the production of lavender, which does not need much water due to the lack of irrigation water. Researchers especially asked the opinions of the participants about alternative jobs that can be done apart from tourism, but all of the participants stated that tourism is the only alternative activity that generates income for the region. However, the participant with the code K10 stated that the local people earned a good income from carpet and rug weaving long before lavender production, but these activities are now forgotten and are not carried out. "For example, there is not much in this village because there is no irrigation water. Kuyucak takes its name from the well. We used to draw the water from there. We didn't have it in our fountain in the past. What else can it be? First, there was carpet business, and carpet business is finished, the profit from carpet business was excellent, we used to weave rugs, we had sheep and wool was spun."

The question "What is the main source of livelihood of the region?" was asked by the researchers to all participants. All of the participants answered the question as lavender, rose production, and animal husbandry as the main livelihood of the region. In addition, within the scope of the "Youth Returning to the Village Project," participant K1 stated that she came to the village to do beekeeping. "The main livelihood of the region is agriculture. Animal husbandry is not what it used to be, and it is not seen as a profitable business because animal feed is expensive. Therefore, rose and lavender is the main source of livelihood. Also, I came here to do beekeeping four years ago as part of the youth returning to the village project. I have been beekeeping for four years." Similarly, participants coded K10, Y11 and K13 also stated that beekeeping is the main source of income of the region, along with lavender and rose.

Table 2. Themes and sub-themes of village life

Main theme	Title	Subtitle
Village life	Strengths of village life	A sense of unity and solidarity
		Distance from crowds and stress
		Natural life and natural nutrition
	Difficulties of village life	Unemployment
		Migration
		Inability to produce alternative agricultural products due to lack of irrigation water
	Basic livelihood	Lavender, Rose, Beekeeping
	Diversifying economic activities	Rural tourism is seen as the only alternative
		Carpet and rug weaving lost values

Under the theme of tourism, primarily with the development of tourism activities in the region, the effects of tourism on local people and its potential and constraints in the

context of rural development have been tried to be determined by researchers from different perspectives through both the questions posed and the observations made in the field. First of all, the participants were asked, "Do the tourism activities that develop in the region have an impact on your income?" All of the participants stated that they started to earn income with the development of tourism in the region. However, they stated that their income decreased this year due to the pandemic process, but they still earned a satisfactory wage this year due to the visitor's arrival above their expectations. During the interview, the participant with the code K2 stated that with the tourism opportunities that develop in the region, they could contribute to the family budget by earning additional income. "Tourism has become an additional income, tourism activities resulting from lavender have also contributed to the village. Since I work here, I also contribute to my home." Then, the participants were asked, "Who is the tourist profile visiting the region?" to determine the tourist profile visiting the region.

To the question posed as (Is it mostly foreign or domestic tourists?), while the participants with the codes K20, Y14, and K13 stated that until last year, mostly foreign tourists visited the region, participants with the codes Y14 and K13 noted that the foreign tourist profile mainly consisted of visitors from Asian countries, but the flow of foreign tourists decreased considerably due to the pandemic. "More locals are coming to the region. Last year, the tours were mostly foreigners, there were people from Korea and other Asian countries, but this year it has decreased a lot due to pandemic." The participants were asked a question in order to determine whether the establishment of the cooperative in the region, which is one of the primary aims of the research, has a direct effect on the number of tourists visiting the area, and the participants with the codes K1, K2, K3, K4, K5, K6, K7, K8, K9, K10, Y1, Y2, Y3, Y5, Y6, Y7, Y8, Y9, Y10, Y11 stated that touristic visits to the region started through cooperatives. They stated that it continued to increase until this year due to the promotions, but this year there was a great decrease in the number of visitors, especially in the number of foreign tourists, due to the pandemic process.

The participant coded Y4, on the other hand, stated that there was an increase in tours with the establishment of the women's entrepreneurial cooperative and stated that the cooperative had an indirect effect on the increase in the number of visitors to the region. "After establishing the women's entrepreneurship cooperative here, there has been an increase in the number of tours to the region. We can generate more income when there are tours. In this sense, of course, the cooperative has an impact on the increase in the number of visitors."

Considering that the tourism activities that emerged and developed with the establishment of the women's entrepreneurship cooperative in the region feed each other positively, it is important to evaluate the development potential of rural tourism in the region from the perspective of the local people, who are at the center of these activities. In this

direction, the participants were asked, “Do you think that rural tourism activities in the region can develop more than the current situation? What are your views on this matter?” The question was asked, and the rest of the participants, except for the participant with the code K10, stated that tourism has development potential in the region but that commercial concerns will affect tourism negatively in the long term. The views of the participant coded K10 on this subject are striking. “I don’t see much potential for the development of tourism. There is livestock, but there is no cheese or milk production; they have a milking animal, but he goes and eats the yogurt sold in the supermarket. I am looking for milk to buy in this village, but I cannot find it. There is no one producing local products, we have pickles and tomato paste, but these are not sold at the stands. The price of 400 grams of rose water is 50 liras. These should be inspected, and if it goes like this, tourists will not come to this region in the long run. The wholesaler will come and inspect first. The primary purpose of the cooperative is to promote our goods, not to make a profit. Tourists who encounter these prices will not come to this region again.”

In order to learn about the existence of touristic values specific to the region, the participants were asked what kind of products or traditional activities could attract the attention of tourists visiting the region. In addition, to obtain more information by expanding the content of the question, the presence of endemic plant species-specific to the region, handicrafts, local cuisine, historical artifacts, local clothing style were added to the question and asked the participants. The majority of the participants stated that the village did not have a unique value except lavender, and this situation was due to the Yörük culture. Participants K1, K10, Y7, and Y9 stated that carpet weaving in the sense of local handicrafts was done in the past, but it has disappeared and is no longer made today. “Our culture is very weak, and we don’t have any local food of our own. Everything is bought from the supermarkets, and there is no production here. Carpet and rug weaving has disappeared, but if these are revived, it will contribute a lot. We have ropes, and we can weave carpets and rugs. Let us provide a loom.” It is thought that determining the positive and negative effects of tourism on the local people and thus expressing the existing problems from the perspective of the local people, the steps to be taken to eliminate the problems will pave the way for the development of rural tourism activities in the region. Thus, the cooperative activities can be carried out more effectively in a sustainable way. For this purpose, the participants were asked, “What are the positive and negative effects of tourism?” While all participants emphasized the income increase as a positive aspect, the participants with the codes Y5, P13, Y17 stated that the social structure changed thanks to the interaction with the tourists positively. “As a positive aspect, the recognition of the village increased. The village women were not used to so many people before, it was a closed society, but now many people visit the region. On tour from Antalya, people swim in the “Salda” lake and come here also, tourists visiting the village in their bikinis and

swimsuits have now become commonplace for the villagers. At first, the village people were strange to the way tourists dressed in this sense, but now everyone has gotten used to it. Tourism also generates income.”

When the participants were asked about the negative effects of the development of tourism in the region, the participants with the code Y14, Y5, K13, Y17 stated that environmental pollution and the ambition to gain more income began to be observed among the local people and this situation was an important problem. “Negatively, the villagers started bickering with each other. Apart from this situation, it does not have a negative effect, but the local visitors are damaging the gardens, they are throwing stones into the lavender, I removed the stone thrown by the visitors out of about 30 or 40 lavenders, and when they throw the stone into the lavender, the lavender is broken. “Are there suitable places for visitors to stay? If yes, can it meet the demand in peak seasons?” Participants with the codes K18 and K21 stated that there are hostels where visitors can stay, but the number is not enough during the peak season. “Visitors can stay in village houses. There are hostels in Kılıç Village and Keçi-borlu district, but they are insufficient here.”

Table 3. Main theme and sub-themes of tourism

Main theme	Title	Subtitle
Tourism	Impacts of tourism (positive)	Income-generating effect
		Interaction with visitors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overcoming prejudices about foreign tourists in terms of local people, • cultural exchange
	Impacts of tourism (negative)	Environmental pollution
		Increased competition and commercial concerns conflict with cooperative principles
	Tourist profile (domestic-foreign)	The pre-pandemic Asian market, pandemic-era domestic market
	Presence of touristic values	Lavender is the only alternative Carpet and rug weaving are local values that have been lost in the process but have touristic potential.
Change in the number of visitors (before and after the establishment of the cooperative)	The establishment of the cooperative is the main reason for the increase in the number of visitors.	
Accommodation capacity	Insufficient in peak season	

The questions asked under the cooperative theme were directed to 10 participants who are cooperative members and asked only how Kuyucak Women’s Initiative Cooperative contributes to the development of rural tourism in the region to all participants under the cooperative theme. First of all, the researchers asked the participants, “What do you think

are the benefits of establishing a cooperative?" Participants coded as K2, K3, K4, K5, K6, K7, K8, K9, K10 stated that they gained an additional income by being a cooperative member, and that realized the promotion of the region through the cooperative. Participant K1 emphasized that women's contribution to the family economy through the women's entrepreneurial cooperative increased the self-confidence of women participating in the workforce and that the cooperative increased the sense of unity and solidarity among the villagers. "It provides unity and togetherness. We support women, and they feel safe both financially and morally. As they earn money from here, their self-confidence has increased because their position at home has changed as they provide financial support to their house." The participant coded K2 expressed her views on the benefits provided by the cooperative as follows. "Many people became shopkeepers because of the cooperative, and they generate an income from there. The establishment of the cooperative has also contributed to other villages, and they establish hostels and markets so that they can sell." and then, "Are there any negative aspects of being a part of the cooperative?" asked the researchers to the cooperative members. The participants stated that there was no negative side of being a part of the cooperative, and the researchers tried to expand the scope by asking the participants questions about whether they encountered a problem arising from the internal functioning of the cooperative and whether they received sufficient support from the stakeholders to obtain more in-depth information. Among the participants, K1 stated that they could not get enough support from the authorities and that they tried to achieve something with their efforts, "Cooperatives are not supported, we earn money from the service we provide, but we cannot get enough support during the establishment and development of the cooperative," also K10 stated that people who are not in the production stage are also members of the cooperative and that they are uncomfortable because of this situation. "There is a downside to being a member of the cooperative. The problem is that the person does not reside here and does not produce, but his daughter or daughter-in-law becomes a member of the cooperative. They also bring women from other villages to work. Members should come and work, so those who do not work should not send bundles."

To determine the socio-economic effects of establishing the cooperative in the region on the local people, "What changes occurred in your current life before you became a part of the cooperative and after you became a member?" K1 coded participant said that "After becoming a part of the cooperative, we learn something from the visitors by communicating one-on-one, and they also learn something from us. We also earn money." She emphasized that after becoming a part of the cooperative, she both had income and learned a lot by interacting with the visitors. The participant with the code K4 said, "As a member of the cooperative, the self-confidence of every woman here has increased because we earn our own money." She stated that with women's direct participation in economic life in the community they

live in, their position in the community has changed positively. K16, on the other hand, stated that by becoming a member of the cooperative, she was able to use lavender economically and started to earn money from this business. "What kind of contributions did Kuyucak Women's Enterprise Cooperative make to the development of rural tourism in the region?" directed by the researchers to all participants. The views of the participant coded K2 about the question are as follows. "With the establishment of the cooperative, everyone started their own business, they started to make money on that. It has also benefited for the nearby villages. They can start hostels and supermarkets in their villages and make money." The participant coded Y9 stated that the region's recognition increased with the establishment of the Women's Enterprise Cooperative. "With the establishment of the women's entrepreneurial cooperative, the recognition of the region increased. The touristic value of the region increased when it was promoted on the internet. With the establishment of the cooperative, lavender came into prominence, and visitors began to come to the region. We had lavender before, but with the establishment of the cooperative and promotion, visitors came."

Table 4. Sub-themes of the cooperative theme

Main theme	Hood	Subtitle
Cooperative	Contributions to the development of rural tourism	Increase in the number of small-scale touristic businesses (Cafeteria, hostel, house rooms are reserved for the accommodation of visitors)
		Environmental arrangements (creation of photo shooting areas in lavender gardens, establishment of souvenir sales stands),
		Increasing the recognition of the region through the cooperative (Increase in the number of visitors)
		Income increase
Effects of being a part of the cooperative (before becoming a member - after being a member)		The feeling of financial and moral security
		Positive change in the position of the women in the community after participating in the workforce
Activities related to rural tourism (education-projects)		Training (Hygiene, sales, diction, product packaging)
		Project (Lavender Museum, accommodation facility)

Considering that the training given to the members for tourism within the cooperative will lead to the more effective execution of the cooperative activities in the long run and that rural tourism can develop more in the region as a result of the practical activities of the cooperative, the participants are asked, K1, K2, K3, K4, K5, K6, K7, K8, K9, K10 coded participants stated that they received training on sales, diction, product packaging, and hygiene. "I completed

the courses and got my documents. A sales and hygiene course was given, and we received a course completion certificate on how to host guests. There was a souvenir-making course in the winter, but I could not participate." The participant coded K1 shared his views that the implementation phase of the theoretical training should also be followed up. "The cooperative members are trained in every subject during the course by educators about packaging, diction, decoration, speaking, but the important thing is not to give a course, but the period after that is more important than just giving a course" Finally, the question of whether the cooperative has a road map for the development of rural tourism was asked by the researchers. Participant K1 stated that they have projects in the long term, that the lavender museum planned for the future will increase the number of visitors and have thoughts for an accommodation facility project. "There are projects we have determined. Among them, the lavender museum is significant, and we need to extend the season." However, she also emphasized that they need serious support to realize these projects.

5. Conclusion

The study, in which the multidimensional effects of the tourism activities in rural areas and the cooperative movement are evaluated from the perspective of the local people, is shaped around three main themes. First of all, under the main theme of village life, village life has been tried to be discussed with different dimensions. In addition, before the analysis is detailed under the main themes of tourism and cooperatives, a general framework has been drawn to the study, and it has been tried to determine the current problems of the village and the idle values that can create added value under the title of rural development. In line with the interviews made with both the members of the cooperative and the participants from the local people, the following question was asked to the participants in order to determine the elements that make the village life attractive, "What do you think are the good aspects of village life?" The participants stated that the village life provides them with natural living conditions away from stress, the feeling of unity and solidarity still continues in the village life, and this situation is very important for them. When the background of current discourses is subjected to a more comprehensive analysis, it will be a superficial point of view to determine that village life only offers an environment for natural life and away from stress. In the interview with the participants, the majority of the participants consisted of individuals living in different districts or cities, who left the village to find a job or for their children's education, retired, and returning to their village, especially in the summer months. Considering that the majority of the population migrating from rural to urban areas works in informal sectors and without social security, the unbreakable bond with village life provides some social and economic support to these people.

In summary, the policy of not breaking the existing ties with the village to prevent urban poverty, which is one of the

problems that arise as a result of migration and still maintains its existence as a support mechanism, serves as a buffer against the social and economic difficulties brought by urban life, and also fulfills an essential function by opening a space where people can feel safe. When the participants were asked what the main problems they encountered in village life were, the chronic problems of the countryside were generally emphasized. At the beginning of these problems is the migration phenomenon that occurs due to the lack of employment and inadequate education conditions, specifically the lack of irrigation water. At this point, the opinions of the participants and the observations made in the field show that the continuation of rural tourism activities on lavender, which is the only value-added product of the village, and the fact that it is carried out in an organized manner under the roof of a cooperative brings a short-term solution to the existing problems, even if it is seasonal. The common view is that the commitment to lavender production, which needs less water due to the lack of irrigation water, is the biggest obstacle to the spread of tourism activities throughout the season and other economic activities that can be created.

After trying to take a general picture of the current situation under the theme of village life, the effects of rural tourism activities on local people, which is one of the main subjects of the study, the presence of touristic values in order to diversify tourism activities other than lavender, the profile of tourists visiting the region and finally the opinions of the participants were consulted on whether the establishment of the cooperative led to the development of tourism in the region and an increase in the number of visitors. In order to determine the general profile of the tourists visiting the region, the opinions of the participants were consulted, and as a result, it was stated by the participants that there was a significant increase in the number of domestic tourists during the pandemic process, while visitors from Asian countries came to the region intensively before the pandemic. At this point, the local people clearly differentiated between domestic and foreign tourists regarding their level of awareness and expressed with various examples that domestic tourists seriously harm the environment. However, the perception of tourism is quite positive in all of the participants.

The income-generating effect of tourism has been frequently mentioned by the participants as the positive aspect of tourism, but the more important point to be emphasized is the destruction of some prejudices specific to closed communities as a result of the participants' communication with the visitors. It was stated by the participants that a lot of things were learned as a result of the dialogue with the tourists visiting the region. In addition, in the first years when tourism developed in the region, the clothing preferences of the visitors from Antalya on tours were initially found strange by the local people, but later this situation was considered quite natural, and the dialogue with a foreigner visiting the village is now more attentive, and in the words of the participants, it was stated that while it was quite rude before, it is now much more polite. In fact, this situation is a

sign that the local people are transforming not only economically but also socially and culturally, and points to a structural transformation in the definition of development. It is also a common opinion that lavender has been cultivated in the region for a long time, but the cooperative plays a leading role in turning this situation into a commercial and touristic activity. In short, tourism development has caused a significant increase in the number of visitors in the region, but the local people show the reason for the emergence of tourism as the establishment of a women's entrepreneurship cooperative. At this point, rural tourism and cooperatives are evaluated by the local people from an integrated perspective without being separated from each other. Similar findings are in line with the study of Iakidou (1997).

When asked about the negative situations brought about by tourism within the scope of the research, the participants emphasized two issues in particular. The first of these issues is the damage to lavender fields and environmental pollution, especially by local visitors. The second issue is that the ambition of making more profit is at the forefront rather than offering quality products to the visitors, which contradicts the understanding of cooperatives and is frequently emphasized by the villagers. Thus, local people prefer to act more individually. This situation both contradicts the understanding of cooperatives and harms the relations within the community. In other words, the participants frequently express the concern that more tourists visit the region, and over time, the members of the cooperative move away from acting under the roof of the cooperative and tend to make individual sales, keep the prices higher than they should be, and this situation will cause the tourists to move away from the region over time. When a general situation assessment is made considering the opinions under the tourism theme, the development of tourism in the region has opened an additional source of income to the local people by opening small-scale hostels and markets.

However, the lack of a larger scale accommodation facility for those who visit the region during the peak season, insufficient parking space is a problem for visitors. In addition, considering that some of the visitors are families with children, the lack of an area where children can also spend time, in short, the inadequacy of the touristic infrastructure prevents even the full use of the tourism potential created by the only field of activity, lavender.

The general opinion, obtained from the questions and answers received from the participants under the theme of the cooperative and supported by the findings, is that the cooperative plays a direct and leading role in the initiation of rural tourism activities. All of the participants stated that lavender has existed in the village for about 50 years, but the awareness of the village has increased through the women's entrepreneurship cooperative established in the village, and the village has become a touristic destination. When the effects of establishing the cooperative on the local people are evaluated, the prominent opinions bear many similarities with the effects of tourism activities. This situation results from

the fact that rural tourism activities and cooperatives have a structure that feeds each other. These two instruments of rural development, which are integrated, have a significant impact, even seasonally, as they are the factor that triggers the change of the socio-economic structure, with their feature of contributing economically to the local people, acting with a sense of unity and solidarity. Furthermore, the fact that village women provide an additional income to their families with their participation in economic life, especially through the cooperative, also positively affects the position of women in the rural community, and the participants emphasize this. However, the lack of awareness of cooperatives among the local people harms the sustainability of the cooperative movement, as the commercial concerns mentioned under the theme of tourism come into prominence and the individual movement takes the place of the collective movement over time. It is thought that the training given in this direction plays an important role in the evaluation of the impact of the cooperative movement in the context of tourism. Considering the studies in which cooperatives and rural tourism are evaluated together, it is seen that cooperatives provide an additional income opportunity to the local people in economic terms and that the financial savings obtained are used to improve basic and touristic infrastructure opportunities (Yang & Hung, 2014). It is seen that cooperatives contribute to the strengthening of their social status in the community by ensuring the participation of women in the workforce (Iakovidou, 1997), play an important role in the preservation of the ecosystem (Verma, 2006) and that the success achieved in the commercial sense revitalizes not only the individuals but also the economy of the region. (Tuğrul, 2018). As a result, it is seen that the number of studies in which rural cooperatives and rural tourism activities are evaluated together, and their effects on rural development are investigated, is not sufficient. The fact that the study was carried out in a village located in the countryside of a city that has tourism potential but hosts a low number of visitors is important in terms of investigating the reasons and effects behind the cooperative's transformation of the village into a tourist attraction during the summer period.

6. Recommendations and limitations

Due to the pandemic process, the necessity of doing the study within a limited time and without expanding its scope is among the study's limitations. In order to create a roadmap for future research, much more comprehensive stakeholder analysis can be carried out by consulting the opinions of experts from universities and public institutions on the subject of cooperatives.

Recommendations within the scope of the research can be expressed as follows;

- Under the name of the village theme, the village's main problem is the lack of irrigation water. In order to produce at least an alternative to this problem, the suitable planting for the climate and soil structure of the region, such as lavender, which does not need much water and has added

value, can be realized by conducting research projects under the leadership of the university.

- Reviving the lost values such as carpet and rug weaving will provide additional income and job opportunities to the local people in terms of diversifying economic activities apart from lavender.

- Kuyucak Village of Isparta province can be turned into a center where many cooperatives from different parts of the country come together and promote their products at their stands. In this direction, choosing the months of July and August, when the village hosts the most visitors and holding the organization in a festive atmosphere, will contribute more to the promotion of the region as well as strengthen the sense of solidarity among the cooperatives.

- In order for the effectiveness of tourism activities to continue increasing, and effective planning mechanism that brings together all stakeholders should be implemented in the long term. At this point, it is necessary to explain the cooperative consciousness to the local people more effectively.

- The lack of a data bank on the activities of cooperatives creates an obstacle to the interpretation of researches supported by official statistics and makes it difficult to make statistical predictions about the future of the activities of cooperatives. At this point, it is very important to collect statistical data in certain periods and to create a data bank in order to make the analyzes correctly.

Author contribution statements

Authors contributed equally to the design and implementation of the research, to the analysis of the results and to the writing of the manuscript.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Ethics committee approval

This research has Ethics Committee Approval from Isparta University of Applied Sciences with 21/05/2020 date and 53/1 number. All responsibility belongs to the researchers. All parties were involved in the research of their own free will.

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