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Evaluation of Historical Mosques in Sinop City Center within the Scope of Tourism for All [1]

Sinop Kent Merkezindeki Tarihi Camilerin "Herkes İçin Turizm" Kapsamında Değerlendirilmesi

Tümay GÜNEŞ [2] Osman TUTAL [3]

Öz

Türkiye'nin önemli gelir kaynaklarından birisi olan turizmin, kalkınma planları başta olmak üzere, birçok planda (bölge planları, alan yönetim planları, imar planları, stratejik planlar vb.) sıklıkla yer alarak geliştirilmesi teşvik edilmektedir. Bununla birlikte, giderek artan rekabet şartlarında etik hizmetin ve kârlılığın sürdürülebilir bir şekilde sağlanabilmesi için ziyaretçi ayırımı gözetmeden, mümkün olan çok sayıda kişinin turizm amaçlı seyahate, ürün, hizmet ve yapılaşmış çevreye herkesle eşit ve güvenli bir şekilde erişebilmesi ve turizm amaçlı faaliyetlere aktif olarak dâhil olabilmesi gerekmektedir. Bu aşamada, erişilebilir turizm ya da herkes için turizm kavramı, standart turizm hizmetlerinin ortalama katılımcıları dışında kalan potansiyel katılımcıların da dâhil olabildiği, turizm faaliyetinden güvenli ve konforlu bir şekilde yararlanabilmeyi olası kılan, sosyal sorumluluk içeren bir turizm türü olarak ön plana çıkmaktadır. Araştırmanın materyalini, en temel hak ve özgürlüklerden olan ibadet eyleminin gerçekleştiği ve inanç turizminin de bir parçası olan Sinop kent merkezindeki yedi tarihi cami oluşturmaktadır. Bu tarihi camilerin ziyaret edilebilirliğine dair mevcut durumu erişilebilirlik üzerinden irdeleyen bu çalışma, tarihi yapıların kullanımına yönelik erişilebilir düzenlemelere dikkat çekerek gelişmekte olan Sinop'un turizmine katkı sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Nitel araştırma yöntemi ve durum çalışması (alan çalışması) deseni kullanılan çalışmada araştırma verileri, öncelikli olarak literatürden, ilgili mevzuattan, gözlem, belgeleme ve mekânsal analizlerden oluşmaktadır. Bu çalışmada, Sinop kent merkezinde bulunan tarihi camiler değerlendirilerek erişilebilirlik/ziyaret edilebilirlik düzeyinin kısmen sağlandığı ortaya konmuş ve konuya ilişkin öneriler sunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Herkes İçin Turizm, Erişilebilirlik, Sinop Kent Merkezi, Tarihi Camiler, Tarihi Mekânlara Erişilebilirlik

ABSTRACT

Tourism, which represents a significant source of revenue for Türkiye, is frequently incorporated into a multitude of plans, including regional, area management, zoning, and strategic plans, particularly in the context of development. Its advancement is actively promoted. Nevertheless, in order to guarantee ethical service and profitability in an increasingly competitive environment, it is essential that as many individuals as possible have equal and secure access to travel, products, services and the built environment for tourism purposes, and that they are actively engaged in tourism-oriented activities, irrespective of any discriminatory practices directed towards visitors. At this juncture, the concept of accessible tourism, or tourism for all, emerges as a form of socially responsible tourism that enables individuals with disabilities and other potential participants to engage in tourism activities in a safe and comfortable manner, extending beyond the typical demographic of standard tourism services. The research material comprises seven historical mosques situated in the city centre of Sinop. These mosques serve as venues for the performance of one of humanity's most fundamental rights and freedoms, namely the act of worship. Furthermore, they represent an integral component of religious tourism. This study, which examines the current situation regarding the visit ability of these

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historical mosques through accessibility, aims to contribute to the development of tourism in Sinop by drawing attention to accessible arrangements for the use of historical buildings. A qualitative research method and case study (field study) design were employed in the study, with the research data comprising literature, relevant legislation, observation, documentation and spatial analyses. In this study, the historical mosques in the city centre of Sinop were evaluated, and it was revealed that the level of accessibility/visit ability was partially provided. Additionally, suggestions on the subject were presented.

Keywords: Tourism For All, Accessibility, Sinop City Center, Historical Mosques, Accessibility to Historical Places

INTRODUCTION:

Tourism represents one of the most effective instruments for the creation of an economically and socio-culturally robust society. In order to achieve this, tourism should aim to sustain the natural and cultural foundations and utilise the resources of the region in a manner that does not result in their depletion. The optimal means of achieving this is through the implementation of effective tourism planning (Avcı, 2007). In this context, it is frequently included and encouraged to be developed in many plans, particularly in regional plans, area management plans, zoning plans, and so forth. This is evidenced by its inclusion in numerous strategic documents, including the X and XI Development Plans, the Turkey Tourism Strategy 2023, and the 2020-2023 National Smart Cities Strategy and Action Plan.

According to data provided by the United Nations, the global population is 7.8 billion. As reported by the World Health Organization, the global population of individuals aged 65 and above was approximately 703 million in 2019. Projections indicate that by 2050, the elderly population will have reached 2 billion, representing 22% of the total global population. It is estimated that there are approximately one billion individuals with disabilities in this population (URL-1, 2023). The National Disability Data System indicates that the population of Turkey is 84 million, with 2.5 million individuals identified as having disabilities. As indicated by population projections, the upward trajectory of the elderly population is anticipated to persist in the forthcoming years (Disability and Elderly Statistics Bulletin, 2023). A significant number of countries worldwide have enacted legislation aimed at enhancing accessibility by removing obstacles faced by those covered by the legislation. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, first issued by the United Nations in 1948, placed significant emphasis on the importance of rights and freedoms, as well as the principle of equality for all. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adopted in 2006, is designed to guarantee that individuals with disabilities enjoy the same rights and freedoms as all other individuals. In light of the growing elderly population worldwide, including in Turkey, and the necessity to consider the needs of disabled individuals, this study focuses on accessibility and tourism for all. This is based on the premise that accessibility is a fundamental right.

In order to guarantee accessibility in accordance with the stipulations of international conventions to which Turkey is a signatory, pertinent legislation was enacted. In accordance with the stipulations set forth in Law No. 5378 on Persons with Disabilities, all existing official buildings belonging to public institutions and organizations, all existing roads, sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, open and green areas, sports fields and similar social and cultural infrastructure areas, and all kinds of structures built by real and legal persons and open to the public, private and public transportation systems and private and public transportation vehicles with nine or more seats excluding the driver's seat, information services and information and communication technology must be accessible in Türkiye. Relevant legislation was prepared to ensure accessibility within the scope of international conventions to which Türkiye is a party to. In Türkiye, within the scope of the Law No. 5378 on Persons with Disabilities, it is mandatory that all existing official buildings belonging to public institutions and organizations, all existing roads, sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, open and green areas, sports fields and similar social and cultural infrastructure areas and all kinds of structures built by real and legal persons and open to the public, private and public transportation systems and private and public transportation vehicles with nine or more seats excluding the driver's seat, information services and information and

communication technology must be accessible. Dikmen (2011), Eşkil (2011), Bekçi (2012), Alkan Meşhur (2013), True and Türel (2013), Kurşun (2014), Olgun and Yılmaz (2014), Akbaş and Atabeyoğlu (2015), Kaya (2015), Sümer (2015), Bıçkı et al. (2016), Tiyek et al. (2016), Aygün et al. (2018), Berkün (2019), Ekici (2021, Koç and Koç (2022) reveal that the regulations for the physically disabled cannot be transferred to practice and therefore disabled people have problems. As observed by Tutal (2015), insufficient progress has been made in guaranteeing accessibility throughout this process, and the current practices are inadequate. Henden Şolt (2019) emphasised the importance of ensuring that urban services are accessible to individuals from diverse age groups, genders and disability statuses in an equitable manner. Furthermore, ensuring accessibility in urban spaces is a challenging endeavor; it is, however, an even more arduous task to guarantee this in historical environments and buildings. The historic environment and historic buildings are typically designed with the needs of the average user group in mind. It is evident that accessibility is either provided in a very limited manner or entirely disregarded during the restoration and planning processes undertaken in these spaces.

In Turkey, the primary legislation on accessibility is the Zoning Law No. 3194, the Law No. 5378 on Persons with Disabilities, as well as regulations and standards. In accordance with Additional Article 1 of the Zoning Law, the physical environment must be made accessible and livable for people with disabilities. This is to be achieved by ensuring that zoning plans, urban, social, technical infrastructure areas and buildings comply with the relevant standards set out by the Turkish Standards Institute. In Annex I: Accessibility Monitoring and Audit Form for Buildings, issued by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies on 20 July 2013, there is a question (A12) regarding the registration of buildings according to the Regulation on the Identification and Registration of Immovable Cultural and Natural Assets to be Protected. This question falls under the heading of Building Features. Consequently, no action can be taken with regard to the accessibility of the aforementioned registered building. As a result of the aforementioned gaps and deficiencies in legislation, designers and relevant institutions are currently unable to proceed with accessibility studies in a manner that is conducive to their advancement. Nevertheless, this represents a significant challenge that requires urgent attention in order to facilitate the expansion of accessibility regulations. The objective of this study is to highlight and examine these issues in greater detail.

1. Literature Review

In the literature, it is seen that there is a limited number of studies on the historical environment and accessibility of historical buildings in Turkey. Tutal (2013), Koç (2013), Akın Güler and Tutal (2017), Evcil (2018), Tutal (2020) emphasized the concept of accessibility in historical buildings and environments and emphasized the continuity of this forgotten or ignored concept without interruption. Yıldız (2016) presented the accessibility problems of the historical inns in Bursa and İlkhan Söylemez (2020) presented solutions by addressing the accessibility problems of historical buildings in Konya historical city center. Bozok (2018) evaluated the re-functioning and accessibility of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, which is known as İbrahim Paşa Palace in history, Ölmez (2022) evaluated the current use of Edirne Ekmekçizade Ahmet Paşa Caravanserai, Edirne State Theater, Kaymakçı (2022) evaluated the re-functioning and accessibility of the buildings that have turned into museums among the historical buildings in Istanbul. Kejanlı et al (2023) examined the physical environmental difficulties encountered in ensuring the accessibility of historical buildings in Diyarbakır Suriçi and the accessibility of access to Suriçi, circulation in this area and accessibility of historical buildings from the perspective of disabled people. Bilgiç and Küçük (2021), with the example of Safranbolu Cinci Han, and Acar Ata and Yılmaz (2023), with examples from Turkey and the world, evaluated the reuse of historical buildings with universal design/design for all principles. Gür and Kahraman (2024) examined landscape design approaches to increase accessibility at the Göbeklitepe Archaeological Site. Kocabaş (2013) examines the accessibility status of re-functionalized historical public buildings in the Nicosia Walled City area of

Northern Cyprus. Barlow (2012) assessed the accessibility of Glamis Castle for visitors. Borowczyk (2017) evaluated the importance of making historical buildings accessible to disabled people in terms of architectural conservation, social and sustainable development. Çelimli and Oranlı (2022) investigated the accessibility of historical buildings and sites in the multi-layered city centre of Sivas, a city with a rich historical heritage. Gil-Mastalerczyk and Gardyńska-Kieliś (2023) analyzed the accessibility of historic buildings and contemporary heritage in the case of public buildings in Kielce. Tarhuni (2024) examined the accessibility issues faced by wheelchair users in historical buildings and the solutions employed to address these challenges. Çınar et al. (2015) examined different worship structures (4 mosques and 5 churches) to measure the satisfaction of wheelchair users in historical places of worship in Istanbul. Rusli and Mydin (2018) examined the accessibility of historical mosques in Malaysia. Rahmad and Syar (2023) examine the accessibility of mosques in Indonesia for groups such as the elderly and people with disabilities. Khan and Nia (2023) examine the accessibility and provision of worship space for women in mosques in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Tutal (2018) mentioned the arrangements for different disabled groups in the historical and registered Hacı Hasan Mosque in Eskişehir (Image 1). The common aspect of these studies is to draw attention to the accessibility problems of historical buildings and environments, to reveal the level of inclusiveness of these areas through different visitors, to raise awareness about the need to increase their accessibility, and to open the spatial quality to discussion by examining it from the perspective of accessibility.

Image 1. Accessible arrangements at Hacı Hasan Mosque in Eskişehir (Tutal, 2018).

The written and sign language information in the mosque.

RGB light system for adhan warning.

Tactile surface for visually impaired in the courtyard and interior space of the mosque.

	
A place of worship for wheelchair users in the mosque.	Wheelchair users in the mosque.

The Law on the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage (Law No. 2863) includes provisions pertaining to the safeguarding of edifices of historical and cultural significance, encompassing places of worship, and the implementation of requisite measures in the event of their opening to tourism. The Law on Tourism Incentives (Law No. 2634) encompasses regulations pertaining to the identification and development of touristic regions and areas. It ensures that natural, historical and cultural values, including places of worship, are considered as potential touristic attraction centres and brought to the attention of the tourism industry. The legislative provisions regulating the construction and building works in Turkey regarding mosque buildings, which are examined in the context of the stury topic, also cover mosque construction activities. The Zoning Law No. 3194, the legislation of the municipalities related to zoning, regulations and standards, the Law No. 633 on the Establishment and Duties of the Directorate of Religious Affairs, the Legislation of the Directorate of Religious Affairs (regulations, directives, circulars, instructions on the management, maintenance, repair, cleaning of mosques and their outbuildings, etc.) are at the top of this legislation.

In accordance with the Regulation on Duties and Work of the Directorate of Religious Affairs, the Directorate of Religious Affairs is responsible for "ensuring the technical control of mosques, Qur'an courses, service buildings and other religious facilities by conducting studies for their aesthetic, functional and safe construction, preparing, having prepared and controlling type projects". Recent accessibility studies conducted in our country have revealed that a number of special arrangements have been made in mosques to facilitate the participation of disadvantaged groups, including women, children and the disabled. The majority of these arrangements are observed in newly constructed mosques, including the provision of a suitable walking surface for the visually impaired, the installation of an "induction loop" system in minarets, a light warning system for the hearing impaired, ramps, a special ablution sink, disabled toilets, a baby care room, a disabled parking area, and the availability of Braille-embossed books.

While legal regulations do mandate accessibility, the lack of permission from the relevant conservation boards and the lack of awareness among mosque associations, foundations, and users have resulted in slow progress on accessibility works for historical mosques. Furthermore, the project initiated by the Directorate of Religious Affairs in 2012 with the theme "Barrier-Free Mosque, Barrier-Free Worship" is currently being carried out in numerous provinces. Furthermore, the Directorate of Religious Affairs convened a national symposium, entitled "Contemporary Design and Technologies in Mosque Architecture from Tradition to the Future" in 2012, as well as international symposia, titled "Searches in Mosque Architecture in Our Age" in 2016 and "International Mosque from Socio-cultural and Architectural Perspectives" in 2018. These events were held with the objective of providing a scientific and academic contribution to the subject matter, as well as fostering awareness. In 2017 and

2018, the Directorate of Religious Affairs conducted workshops on Mosque Planning and Design. These were followed in 2021 by the publication of the Mosque Planning and Design Guide (URL-2, 2024). The Mosque Planning and Design Guide (2021) stipulates that existing mosque buildings must be modified to ensure that the congregation can access the mosque with ease.

2. Accessibility and Tourism for All

In everyday life, everyone is entitled to enjoy the rights and freedoms associated with education, training, health, housing, social, economic, cultural, worship and travel without hindrance. In order to ensure the equal realization of the aforementioned rights and freedoms, it is imperative that accessibility is prioritized. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2011) defines accessibility as "the ability to reach, understand or approach something or someone." In the 2005 Turkish legislation, Law No. 5378 on Persons with Disabilities, accessibility is defined as "the safe and independent accessibility and usability of buildings, open spaces, transportation and information services, and information and communication technology by persons with disabilities". The Ministry of Family and Social Services' Accessibility Guide (2020) defines accessibility as "the ability of everyone to access and use any place and any service independently and safely". In this context, an examination of the literature on accessibility reveals that it is typically addressed under the following headings: accessibility in transportation, accessibility to buildings and open spaces, accessibility to information and information technologies, and accessibility to products and services. In order to define the concept of tourism for all, it is first necessary to examine the concept of accessibility.

2.1. Accessibility in Transportation

In order to ensure accessibility to historic buildings, it is essential that the travel required to reach them is also accessible. The principal elements of this travel are the roads, pavements, stops, transportation structures and vehicles, rest stops and all intercity or intra-city transfers. The choice of travel mode is influenced by a number of factors, including the type of transportation (road, railway, maritime and airline), the geographical location of the historical building, the service types and innovations available, the travel mode (individual, group, collective), seasonal and weather conditions, distance, and personal characteristics. The transportation structures that provide services to the transportation system are diverse, encompassing underpasses and overpasses, taxi, minibus and bus stops, underground or above ground light rail system stops, metro stops and stations, intercity train stations, intercity terminals, rest stops and resting places, piers, ports and airports (Akın Güler & Tutal, 2017).

Article 7 of Law No. 5378 on Persons with Disabilities stipulates that "In order to guarantee accessibility for persons with disabilities in the built environment, compliance with accessibility standards is ensured in planning, design, construction, manufacturing, licensing and inspection processes." It is a legal requirement that private and public transportation systems and vehicles with nine or more seats, excluding the driver's seat, are suitable for the accessibility of disabled individuals. In accordance with the scope of Provisional Article 3 of the same law, the monitoring and auditing of the accessibility of public transportation services provided by metropolitan municipalities and municipalities within the city or under their control is the responsibility of the relevant authorities. The compliance of these services with the relevant accessibility standards is determined through the use of Annex III of the aforementioned law, which is entitled the Accessibility Monitoring and Audit form for Public Transportation Vehicles. This form is divided into two sections: Section I, which concerns vehicles with more than eight seats in addition to the driver's seat and used for passenger transportation, and Section II, which concerns all other vehicles. Rail system vehicles and in addition, the standards that apply to ships must be taken into account.

2.2. Accessibility to Buildings and Open Spaces

It is crucial to ascertain the present circumstances and implement the requisite measures to guarantee uninterrupted access from open spaces to buildings for prospective visitors who fall outside the typical visitor demographic in historical settings and structures. The accessibility of historic environments and buildings must be considered in a manner that strikes a balance between the preservation of cultural heritage and the ability of all members of society to visit these sites. It is not uncommon for these structures to have been designed without due consideration for accessibility standards, often due to their original characteristics. In this context, accessibility practices should be conceived as inclusive and flexible designs that do not disrupt the historical and cultural context of the building. In this regard, it is pertinent to examine the accessibility practices that are currently in place in our country, as outlined in Annex I: Accessibility Monitoring and Audit Form for Buildings. The following form is to be used for the monitoring and auditing of buildings in accordance with the relevant standards and guidelines.

2.3. Accessibility to Information and Information Technologies

The utilization of information and information technologies presents a considerable opportunity for enhancing accessibility in historic environments and buildings. These technologies facilitate access to the historic environment and buildings for a broader audience, while simultaneously contributing to the preservation of the historic fabric of the building. The principal accessibility applications that may be deployed in this context include digital guidance systems, such as mobile applications and audio descriptions, virtual tours of inaccessible locations, augmented reality (AR) glasses or mobile devices to obtain supplementary information about the building or to view the historical state/history of the building, accessible websites and digital content, digital simulations showing the original state or pre-restoration state of historical buildings, and so forth. Moreover, the information process should encompass the provision of accessible kiosks, Braille boards or tactile maps, as well as verbal, visual and audio documents.

2.4. Accessibility to Products and Services

The accessibility of goods and services in historic buildings is subject to a number of regulations and technological solutions, the purpose of which is to guarantee equal access to the facilities offered by these buildings. In this context, accessibility encompasses a broad range of considerations, from the removal of physical barriers to the harmonization of digital services. Such services include those facilitating physical access, such as ramps, elevators, accessible spaces, parking lots and toilets; those providing sensory access and information, such as audio guides with materials prepared in braille; digital accessibility services, such as mobile applications, virtual tours, augmented and virtual reality; communication services, such as sign language interpreting, written, oral and visual information; special assistance and consultancy services, and so forth. These measures facilitate the accessibility of historical buildings for tourists, thereby enabling a broader audience to appreciate these sites.

From an accessibility perspective, the concept of accessible tourism, or tourism for all, represents a form of socially responsible tourism that enables individuals with disabilities or other accessibility needs to engage in tourism activities in a safe and comfortable manner. This includes potential participants who may not be able to fully utilize standard tourism services due to their specific circumstances. In this context, the concept of accessible tourism, or tourism for all, can be defined as the ability of as many people as possible to access tourism travel, products, services and the built environment equally and safely with everyone else, and to actively participate in tourism activities without the need for special adaptations or special additional arrangements, regardless of participant discrimination (Tutal, 2017).

3. Material and Method

The subject of this study is the historical mosques located in the city centre of Sinop province, a region of Turkey with the potential to become an important tourist destination in the Black Sea region, offering a rich history, natural beauty and cultural heritage (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Central district of Sinop and the study area

This study examined historical mosques in detail, from the urban scale to the building scale, with the objective of identifying potential visitor groups beyond the average visitor demographic. The accessibility of these sites was addressed from a holistic perspective. In this context, seven registered mosques were examined: namely, Alaaddin Mosque, Saray Mosque, Kefevi Mosque, Kaleyazısı Mosque, Meydankapı Mosque, Cezayirli Ali Pasha Mosque and Tersane Mosque. The objective of the research was to ascertain the current accessibility status of these historical mosques, which are used for both worship and religious tourism, and to identify measures that can be taken to ensure that these structures are accessible to all. In this study, a qualitative research method and case study (field study) design were employed to obtain research data. The data were primarily obtained through a literature review, examination of relevant legislation, observation, photographic documentation and analyses. The study employed a multidimensional methodology for the collection of research data, which were primarily obtained through a literature review, examination of relevant legislation, observation, photographic documentation and analysis. In this context, the photographs of the mosques were taken by the authors in July and August 2024. In the initial phase of the study, the literature on the concept of accessibility was evaluated in order to provide a theoretical framework for the research. In the subsequent stage of the process, the sub-headings of the concept of accessibility were examined in turn. These were: accessibility in transportation, accessibility to buildings and open spaces, accessibility to information and information technologies, and accessibility to products and services. The relationship of these sub-headings with the concept of tourism for all was also mentioned. In this framework, within the scope of the field study, an initial overview of the province of Sinop, the city centre and these historical mosques is provided. Subsequently, an analysis was conducted of the current situation of these structures in accordance with the aforementioned sub-headings on

accessibility. The current condition of these buildings was then analyzed in line with the sub-headings of accessibility. The analysis of these mosques and their open spaces is based on Annex I: Accessibility Monitoring and Audit Form for Buildings. In line with the questions within the sub-headings in this form, evaluations were made regarding these mosques. In accordance with the questions posed in the sub-headings of this forum, evaluations were conducted regarding these mosques. Furthermore, the restoration projects of Alaaddin Mosque, Saray Mosque, Kefevi Mosque, Kaleyazısı Mosque, Meydankapı Mosque and the landscaping project of Cezayirli Ali Pasha (Seyid Bilal) Mosque were obtained from the Samsun Regional Directorate of Foundations and incorporated into the analyses. The initial author has prepared schematic surveys of the Tersane Mosque and the Cezayirli Ali Pasha (Seyid Bilal) Mosque. In the final stage, a discussion, conclusion and recommendations are presented. The objective of this study is to facilitate the tourism potential and accessibility of the developing Sinop region by highlighting the available arrangements for utilizing historical buildings through the Alaaddin Mosque. In the final stage of the study, a discussion, conclusion and recommendations are presented in light of the data and analysis findings. The findings indicate that improvements should be made to enhance the accessibility and visit ability of historical mosques in the city centre of Sinop. In this context, the study focuses on the identification of accessibility solutions for Alaaddin Mosque, one of the most well-known and visited buildings in Sinop. Furthermore, it is emphasized that the suggestions for accessibility arrangements presented in the study will contribute to the development of an accessible city and an enhanced understanding of tourism for all, as well as increasing the tourism potential of Sinop.

4. Findings of the Study

In the initial phase of the research, a general overview of Sinop was presented. Subsequently, the analysis is presented in accordance with the sub-headings on accessibility. The city centre of Sinop, where the historical mosques that constitute the subject of this study are located, is a natural harbour that was established as a fortress-city in the north of Anatolia. Sinop has a long history of intense commercial and cultural activity, which continued under the Byzantine, Seljuk, Candaroğlu and Ottoman administrations. It also became a prominent military base in the region, with a castle and shipyard in the city centre (URL-3, 2024). According to data from the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK), Sinop, which has the highest proportion of elderly residents among Turkey's provinces, also has the highest prevalence of disability among individuals aged three and above (Disabled and Elderly Statistics Bulletin, 2023). Furthermore, four edifices situated within the confines of Sinop province have been designated as recipients of the accessibility emblem/certificate bestowed by the Sinop Provincial Directorate of Family and Social Services. These include the Social Security Institution, the Ayancık Vocational and Technical High School Hostel, the Boyabat Courthouse, and the Sinop Airport (URL-4, 2024).

4.1. Accessibility in Transportation

The city of Sinop is accessible via two main modes of transportation: air and road. For travel within the city limits, several options are available, including minibuses, taxis, private vehicles, and on foot. The current transportation infrastructure lacks sufficient accessible options, particularly in the public transportation sector. Furthermore, there is a dearth of accessible taxis. Furthermore, there is a dearth of suitable accessible arrangements for pedestrians on pavements, pedestrian crossings, parking lots and stops. Figure 2 illustrates the city centre of Sinop, indicating the locations of the historical mosques that are the subject of this research and the approximate distances these mosques are situated from the city centre. While the locations of the Alaaddin Mosque, Saray Mosque, Kefevi Mosque, Kaleyazısı Mosque, Meydankapı Mosque and Tersane Mosque are depicted in close proximity to one another on the map, the Cezayirli Ali Pasha Mosque is situated at a greater distance from the aforementioned mosques. From the Sinop Governorate, which is considered the city centre, distance circles were

drawn on the map at 200-metre intervals. Accordingly, the mosques situated in closest proximity to the city centre are Meydankapı Mosque and Kefevi Mosque. The distance from the city centre to the Alaaddin Mosque and Saray Mosque is approximately 400 metres. The Tersane Mosque, situated in close proximity to the seaside, is approximately 700 metres away. The Kaleyazısı Mosque is approximately 1200 metres away, while the Cezayirli Ali Pasha Mosque is located further away from the other mosques in the city and approximately 1800 metres away.

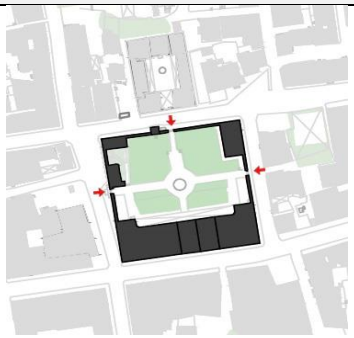
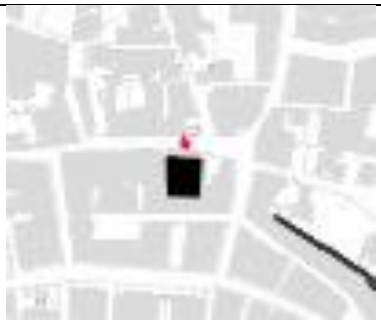
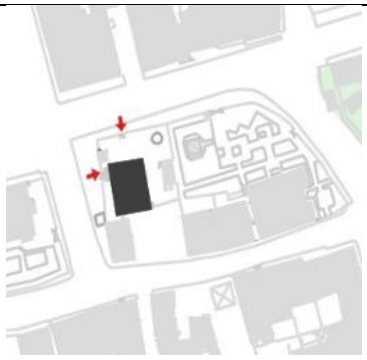
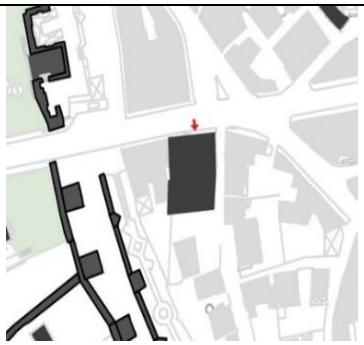
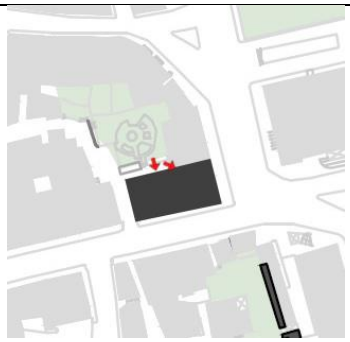
Figure 2. Location of historical mosques in Sinop city center (edited from Yandex maps, 2024)

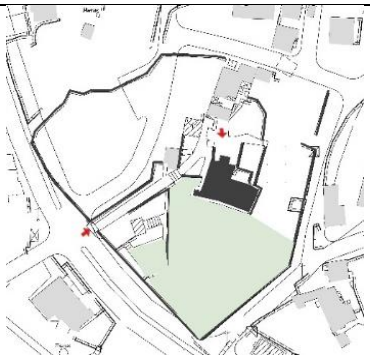
The distances between the mosques and the nearest stop are as follows: approximately 30 metres to Alaaddin Mosque, approximately 160 metres to Saray Mosque, approximately 70 metres to Kefevi Mosque, approximately 100 metres to Kaleyazısı Mosque, approximately 150 metres to Meydankapı Mosque, approximately 10 metres to Cezayirli Ali Pasha (Seyit Bilal) Mosque, and approximately 350 metres to Tersane Mosque. It should be noted that no parking facilities are provided at the mosques. The distances between the mosques and the nearest private car park are as follows: approximately 200 metres to Alaaddin Mosque, approximately 100 metres to Saray Mosque, approximately 140 metres to Kefevi Mosque, approximately 200 metres to Kaleyazısı Mosque, approximately 300 metres to Meydankapı Mosque, approximately 10-20 metres to Cezayirli Ali Pasha (Seyit Bilal) Mosque, and approximately 370 metres to Tersane Mosque. The dearth of adequate accessible public transportation vehicles and accessible taxis, coupled with the absence of accessible provisions on sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, parking lots, and stops, gives rise to a situation of partial accessibility in transportation.

4.2. Accessibility to Buildings and Open Spaces

The general characteristics, site plans and façade photographs of the historical mosques discussed in the research are presented in Image 2.

Image 2: General information about historical mosques

Name	General Features	Site Plan	Photograph
Alaaddin Mosque	**Period:** Seljuk **Year of Construction:** 13th century **Location:** Centre- Camiikebir		
Saray Mosque	**Period:** Candaroglu **Year of Construction:** 14th century (1374) **Location:** Centre- Meydankapı		
Kefevi Mosque	**Period:** Ottoman **Year of Construction:** 16th century **Location:** Centre- Kefevi		
Kaleyazısı Mosque (Mehmet Ağa)	**Period:** Ottoman **Year of Construction:** 17 th century (1651) **Location:** Centre- Kaleyazısı		
Meydankapı Mosque	**Period:** Ottoman **Year of Construction:** 18th century (1722) **Location:** Centre- Meydankapı		

Cezayirli Ali Pasha (Seyyid Bilal)	**Period:** Ottoman **Year of Construction:** 16th century **Location:** Centre- Ada		
Tersane Mosque (Iskele-Hacı Omer)	**Period:** Ottoman **Year of Construction: 1903** **Location:** Centre- Meydankapı		

In addition to the information presented, the historical mosques subject to the research are analyzed according to Annex I: Accessibility Monitoring and Audit Form for Buildings, the findings are as follows;

Building features: The mosques are designated as official buildings and their ownership is vested in the General Directorate of Foundations. The buildings are used for the purpose of worship and are duly registered. The spatial characteristics of the mosques are outlined in Table 1.

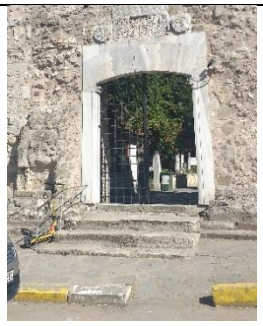
Table 1: Spatial information about historical mosques

Mosque Name	Courtyard Entrance to the Mosque	Courtyard Entrance	Building Entrance	Number of Floors	Mezzanine Floor	Man Prayer Hall	Woman Prayer Hall	Forecourt	Ablution Fountain	Man WC	Woman WC	Man Ablution Place	Woman Ablution Place
Aladdin Mosque	+	3	7	1	1	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Saray Mosque	+	1	1	1	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
Kefevi Mosque	+	2	2	1	1	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+
Kaleyazısı Mosque	-	1	1	1	1	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-
Meydankapı Mosque	-	-	2	1	1	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	+

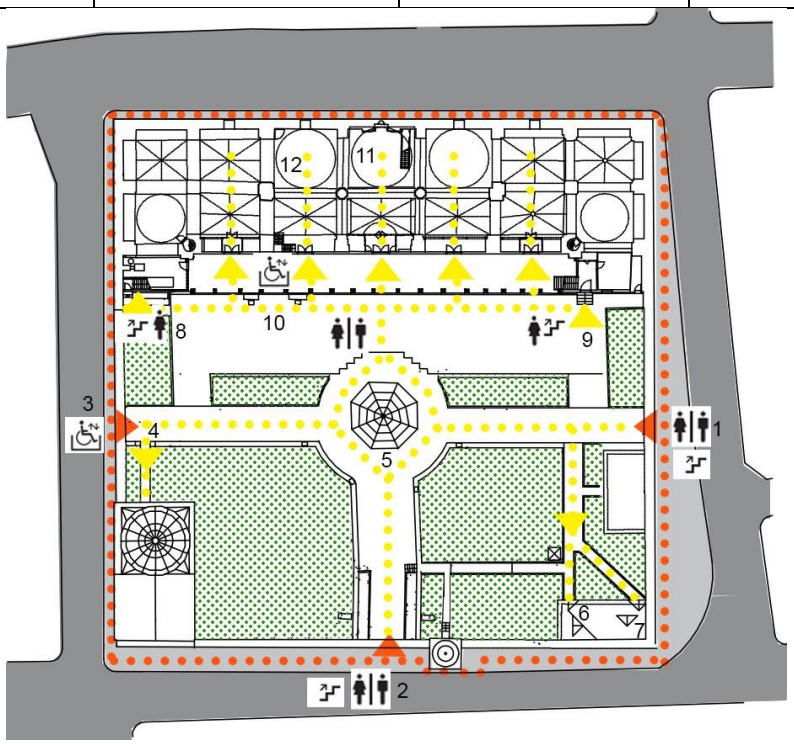
Cezayirli Ali Pasha Mosque	+	2	2	1	1	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+
Tersane Mosque	-	-	2	2	1	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	+

Alaaddin Mosque: The courtyard of the Alaaddin Mosque has three entrances, two of which are accessible by steps from the pavement, and one of which is wheelchair-accessible via a ramp. The surface of the ramp is composed of stone material. A warning surface is absent along the length of the ramp, both at the outset and at the conclusion thereof. A sign indicating that the entrance is barrier-free has been affixed to the door of the courtyard, which is accessible to wheelchair users. The stepped entrances of the mosque are constructed from stone. The stair steps have undergone partial deterioration over time. The staircase exhibits a discrepancy in height. A stimulating surface is absent from the area immediately preceding and following the step. The courtyard is illuminated by artificial lighting, both at the entrance and within the courtyard itself. There are three distinct routes that visitors may utilise within the courtyard. The width of these routes exceeds four metres. The surface of the courtyard is paved with a flat, stable and durable material. No surface treatment has been applied to the courtyard. The fountain, situated at the centre of the courtyard, is positioned at an elevation that is higher than the surrounding area. Additionally, the courtyard houses a tomb accessible to visitors, featuring a stepped entrance. Additionally, the courtyard of the mosque serves as a designated assembly area for disaster and emergency response operations. The mosque is equipped with seven entrances, which are situated in close proximity to one another. The surface of the entrance to the building is flat, stable and durable. The entrances to the mosque are equipped with illumination. The men's prayer hall is situated on the ground floor, while the women's prayer hall is located on the mezzanine floor. The entrance doors to the men's gallery are double-winged, with a single wing width of the opening door measuring less than 100 cm. Some of the door entrances are equipped with windshields. A portable wooden ramp has been installed in front of one of the entrance doors to facilitate wheelchair access. The incline of the ramp is in accordance with the prescribed standards. The mosque is equipped with staircases leading to the women's prayer hall from both the interior and exterior. The width of the steps on the indoor stairs is less than 27 cm, and the heights of the steps vary. It is not possible to apply a sensible surface to the floor or walls. A stepped entrance provides access to the men's and women's toilets and ablution place. The facility lacks an accessible toilet and sink system. The relevant plans and photographs of the mosque are presented in Image 3.

Image 3: Examination of Alaaddin Mosque in terms of accessibility

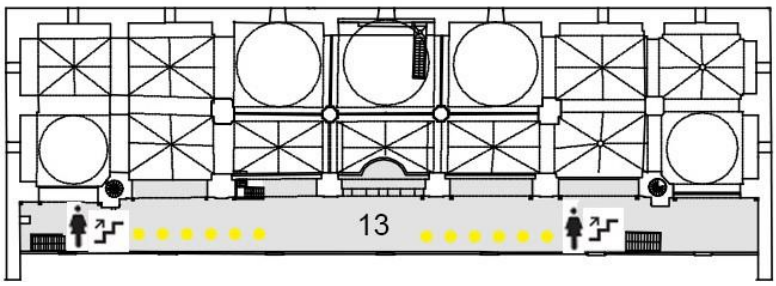
			
1- Step entrance to the courtyard	**2**- Step entrance to the courtyard	**3**- Wheelchair access to the courtyard	**4**-Stepped entrance to the tomb in the courtyard

			
5-Stepped fountain	**6**-Stepped entrance to men's toilet and ablution area	**7**-Stepped entrance to women's toilet and ablution area.	**8**- Entrance to the women's prayer hall with stairs



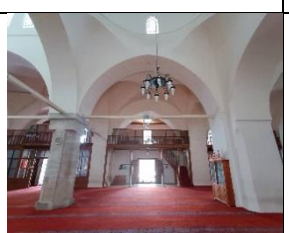
Ground Floor Plan

(The plans of the mosque are based on the restoration project obtained from Samsun Foundations Regional Directorate)



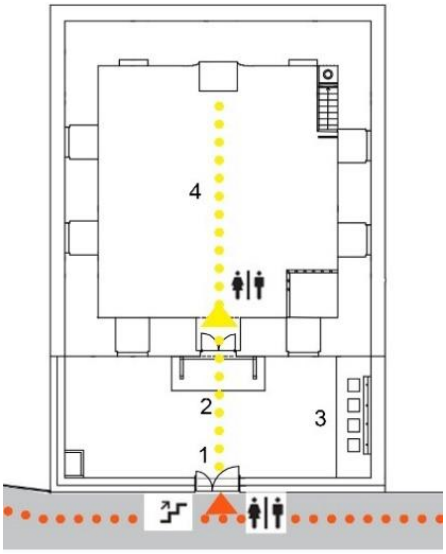
Mezzanine Floor Plan

9- Entrance to the women's prayer hall with stairs

			
10- Wheelchair access to the men's prayer hall	**11**- Men's prayer hall (Interior of the mosque)	**12**- Men's prayer hall (Interior of the mosque)	**13**-Woman's prayer hall (Interior of the mosque)

Saray Mosque: Saray Mosque garden is accessed via a single entrance, comprising three steps from the pavement. The riser heights of the steps, constructed from stone, exhibit variation. The steps are partially worn, exhibiting signs of deterioration. A fountain is located on the right side of the courtyard entrance, at the same level as the garden. However, it lacks accessible features. A suitable surface application is absent from the ground at the entrance to the garden and mosque. A lighting pole is situated on the pavement at the entrance to the garden. The mosque has a single entrance. A platform constructed from stepped stone is situated at the entrance to the mosque. A threshold is situated in front of the wooden double-winged entrance door. The width of the entrance door's wing is less than 90 cm. The entrance door is devoid of a windshield. A prayer hall for men is located on the ground floor of the mosque. There are no facilities for men and women, nor are there ablution areas. The plan and photographs of the mosque are presented in Image 4.

Image 4: Examination of Saray Mosque in terms of accessibility

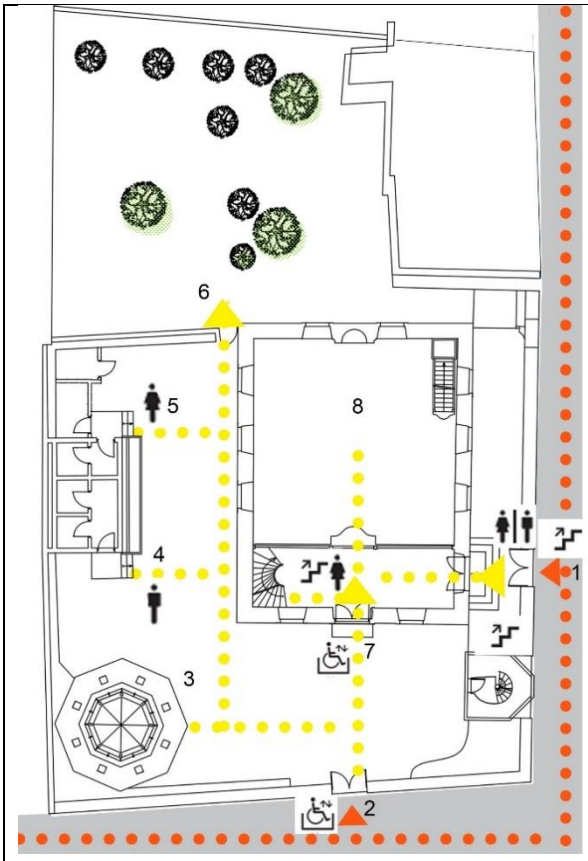
<table>
<tr>
<td rowspan="2"> 

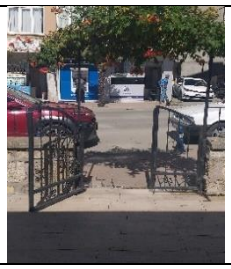
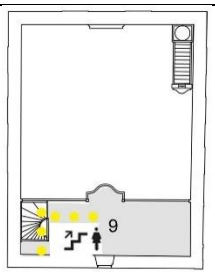
Ground Floor Plan
(The plans of the mosque are based on the restoration project obtained from Samsun Foundations Regional Directorate)</td>
<td> 
1-Stepped entrance to the courtyard</td>
<td> 
2-Stepped entrance to the mosque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td> 
3-Fountain in the courtyard</td>
<td> 
4- Prayer hall
(Interior of the mosque)</td>
</tr>
</table>

Kefevi Mosque: The Kefevi Mosque garden has two entrances: one with steps from the pavement and one with a wheelchair-accessible entrance via a ramp. The entrance door, comprising a single step covered with stone material, lacks a warning surface along the step and at the point where it meets the ground at either end. Similarly, the surface of the ramped entrance is also covered with stone material. A warning surface is absent along the length of the ramp prior to and at the conclusion of the ramp. The courtyard entrances and interior are equipped with illumination. The surface of the garden path is composed of a flat, stable, and durable material. The surface of the garden path is composed of a flat, stable, and durable material. A fountain is situated on the left-hand side of the ramped entrance within the courtyard. Toilets for men and women are provided, with stepped entrances, and a separate ablution area for women. It should be noted that the facility lacks an accessible toilet and sink system. The backyard of the mosque functions as a burial ground, or hazire, and is the final resting place of Mahmud Kefevi. The backyard, situated within a verdant setting, lacks both an accessible entrance and a designated walking path. The mosque features two stepped entrances. A portable metal ramp has been installed at one of the entrances. The incline of the ramp exceeds the prescribed standard, with a gradient in excess of 9%. The entrance doors are of the double-wing variety, with a

single-wing width of less than 100 cm. No windbreaks are provided at the entrances. The men's prayer hall is located on the ground floor, while the women's prayer hall is situated on the mezzanine floor. The women's prayer hall is accessed from within the mosque via a wooden spiral staircase. It is notable that the step heights of this staircase exhibit inconsistencies. The relevant plans and photographs of the mosque are presented in Image 5.

Image 5: Examination of Kefevi Mosque in terms of accessibility

<table>
<tr>
<td> 

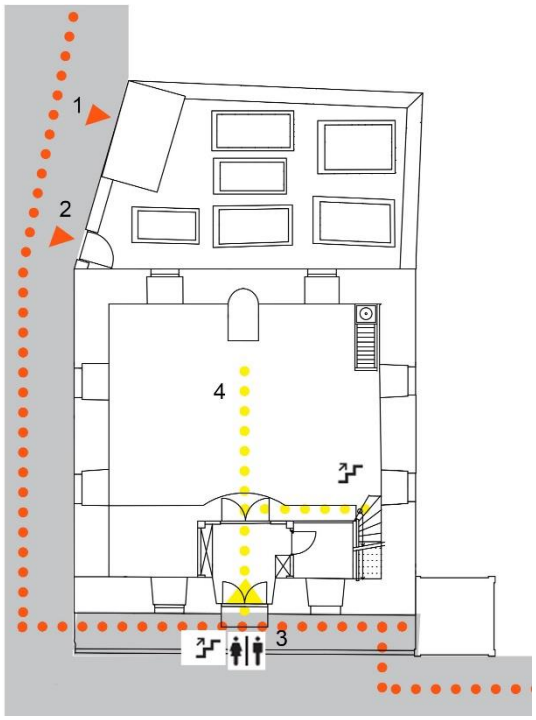
Ground Floor Plan
(The plans of the mosque are based on the restoration project obtained from Samsun Foundations Regional Directorate)</td>
<td> 
1-Stepped entrance to the courtyard</td>
<td> 
2- Wheelchair access to the courtyard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td> 
3-Fountain in the courtyard</td>
<td> 
4-Stepped entrance to the men's toilet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td> 
5-Stepped entrance to the women's toilet and ablution area</td>
<td> 
6- The tomb of Mahmut Kefevi (the burial ground of the mosque)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td> 

Mezzanine Floor Plan</td>
<td> 
7-Ramp entrance to the mosque</td>
<td> 
8- Men's prayer hall (Interior of the mosque)</td>
<td> 
9-Woman’s prayer hall (Interior of the mosque)</td>
</tr>
</table>

Kaleyazısı Mosque: The entrance to the Kaleyazısı Mosque is situated directly adjacent to the sidewalk. A single entrance door is provided, with steps leading up to it. The outer door of the mosque and the door to the inner area (men's gallery) are double-winged doors, with a single wing of the opening door measuring less than 100 cm in width. A windbreak is provided at the entrance to the building. The men's prayer hall is located on the ground floor, while the women's prayer hall is situated on the

mezzanine floor. The women's prayer hall is accessed from within the mosque via a wooden staircase. The staircase features varying step heights. At the rear of the mosque is located a fountain and a burial ground, known as a hazire. The entrance and interior of this area are devoid of illumination. The garden path is paved with stone and is of a narrow width. The fountain, situated within the garden and at ground level, lacks the requisite accessibility provisions. There are no facilities for men or women, nor any ablution places. The relevant plans and photographs of the mosque are presented in Image 6.

Image 6: Examination of Kaleyazısı Mosque in terms of accessibility



Ground Floor Plan

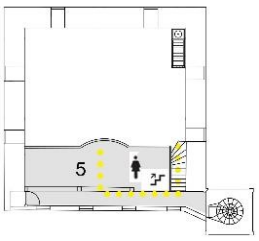
(The plans of the mosque are based on the restoration project obtained from Samsun Foundations Regional Directorate)

1-Fountain in the courtyard

2- The burial ground of the mosque

3-Stepped entrance to the courtyard

4- Men's prayer hall (Interior of the mosque)

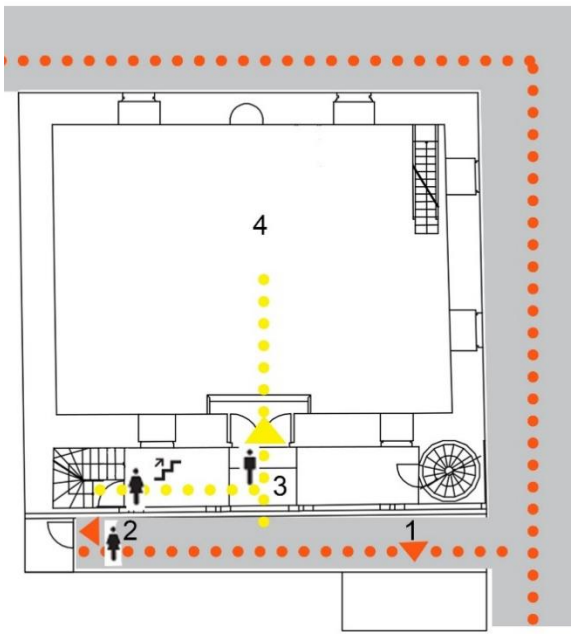


Mezzanine Floor Plan

5-Woman's prayer hall (Interior of the mosque)

Meydankapı Mosque: The entrance to the Meydankapı Mosque is situated on the side road. A fountain with stepped steps and a designated area for women to perform ablution are located on the stone-covered side road. The entrance to the women's ablution area is at a higher level, and there are no accessible arrangements in place. The mosque is equipped with two stepped entrances, one designated for male visitors and the other for female visitors. The entrance to the men's prayer hall is a double-wing door, with a single wing width of the opening door measuring less than 100 cm. The entrance door is devoid of a windshield. The entrance to the women's prayer hall is a single-wing door, with a single-wing width of less than 100 cm. The men's prayer hall is situated on the ground floor, while the women's prayer hall is located on the mezzanine floor. The women's prayer hall is accessible via a wooden staircase. The step heights of the staircase are not uniform. There are no facilities for men and women to use separately, nor are there any ablution places for men. The relevant plans and photographs of the mosque are presented in Image 7.

Image 7: Examination of Meydankapı Mosque in terms of accessibility



Ground Floor Plan

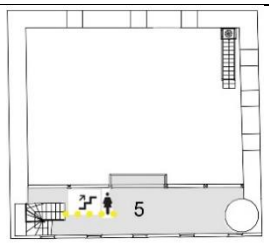
(The plans of the mosque are based on the restoration project obtained from Samsun Foundations Regional Directorate)

1-Stepped fountain

2-Women's ablution place

3-Stepped entrance to the courtyard

4- Men's prayer hall (Interior of the mosque)



Mezzanine Floor Plan

5-Woman's prayer hall (Interior of the mosque)

Cezayirli Ali Pasha (Seyyid Bilal) Mosque: The mosque is accessible from two points within the courtyard. The stairs in the garden present a challenge to visitors seeking access to the mosque and tomb. The courtyard contains separate facilities for men and women, including water-closets and an ablution area. The facility lacks an accessible toilet bowl and sink system. In close proximity to the ablution facilities designated for male visitors is a stepped Hatunlar Tomb. The garden path is constructed from stone and concrete. The stone paving of the stairs is partially worn. The courtyard lacks a suitable surface application. A section of the courtyard is designated as a burial ground, or hazire. The mosque is equipped with two entrances. The entrance to the men's prayer hall and Seyit Bilal Tomb is provided from the same door. This entrance comprises an area with a glass screen and a photocell-operated door. A warning surface is absent along the entire length of the photocell door. The other entrance is that of the women's prayer hall, which can be accessed via the stairs located on the side of the mosque. The entrance to the mosque on the ground floor is a double-winged wooden door, with a single wing width of the opening door measuring less than 100 cm. A step is positioned in front of the entrance. A passageway leads to the Seyyid Ibrahim Bilal Tomb, situated on the upper level, from the men's prayer hall via a staircase. The Seyyid İbrahim Bilal Tomb is a significant religious site in Sinop. The entrance to the tomb is marked by a narrow wooden door with a threshold and double wings. The width of the single wing of the door is less than 100 cm. In this regard, the entrance to the mausoleum is inaccessible. The plans and photographs of the mosque pertinent to this discussion are presented in Image 8.

Image 8: Examination of Cezayirli Ali Pasha (Seyyid Bilal) Mosque in terms of accessibility

1-Man and woman wc with steps and women's ablution places

2- Stepped tomb entrance (Hatunlar Tomb)

3-Man ablution places with steps

4-Stepped place of worship

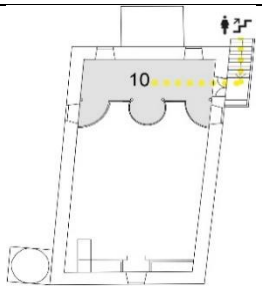
Ground Floor Plan

(The site plan of the mosque is based on the landscape project obtained from Samsun Foundations Regional Directorate. The survey plan of the mosque was prepared by the corresponding author.

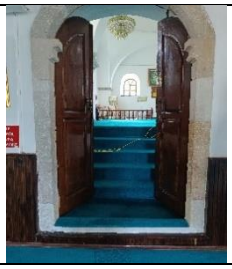
5-Stepped upper road entrance

6-Entrance to the mosque

7- Men's prayer hall (Interior of the mosque)



Mezzanine Floor Plan



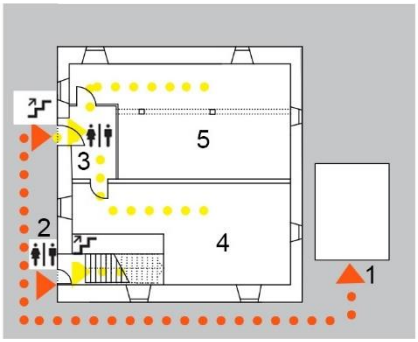
8-Stepped entrance to the tomb

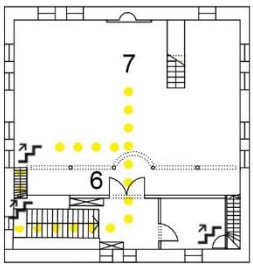
9-Tomb interior

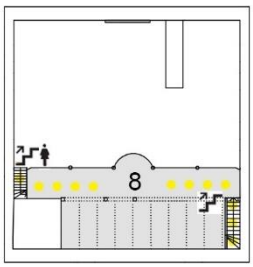
10-Woman's prayer hall (Interior of the mosque)

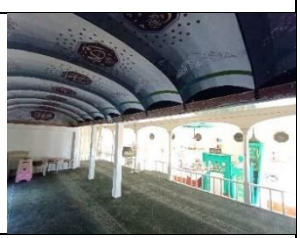
Tersane Mosque: Tersane Mosque is accessible via two entrances from the pavement. A stepped fountain is situated on the exterior of the mosque. The fountain is not equipped with any features that facilitate accessibility. The entrance to the men's and women's prayer hall on the ground floor of the mosque is marked by a threshold and comprises a double-wing wooden door. The width of the door is less than 100 cm due to its single-wing construction. The doors of the thresholded men's prayer hall and the stepped women's prayer hall on the ground floor are of a similar shape. The sinks located within the women's prayer hall on the ground floor lack the requisite accessible features for ablution. The first floor is accessed via stairs, with a step width of less than 27 cm. The men's prayer hall is situated on the first floor, while the women's prayer hall is located on the mezzanine floor. The entrance to the men's prayer hall is a double-winged wooden door, with a single wing measuring less than 100 cm in width. The women's prayer hall, located on the mezzanine floor, is accessed via a wooden staircase. The staircase features unequal step heights and widths. The mosque lacks facilities for men and women, including toilets and ablution spaces. The relevant plans and photographs of the mosque are presented in Image 9.

Image 9: Examination of Tersane Mosque in terms of accessibility

<table>
<tr><td>  </td><td>  </td><td>  </td><td>  </td></tr>
<tr><td>1-Stepped fountain</td><td>2-The Stair</td><td>3-Stepped entrance</td><td>4-Woman’s prayer hall (Interior of the mosque)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4"> 





Ground Floor Plan 1st floor Plan Mezzanine Floor Plan
The survey plans of the mosque were prepared by the corresponding author.</td></tr>
<tr><td>  </td><td>  </td><td>  </td><td>  </td></tr>
<tr><td>5- Men's prayer hall (Interior of the mosque)</td><td>6-Interior of the mosque</td><td>7- Men's prayer hall (Interior of the mosque)</td><td>8-Woman’s prayer hall (Interior of the mosque)</td></tr>
</table>

4.3. Accessibility to Information and Information Technologies

For further information on these mosques, please refer to the Türkiye Culture Portal, accessible via the internet. The website lacks an informative section regarding accessibility for individuals with disabilities. The website includes a map indicating the transportation options and the mosque's geographical location. However, the website lacks the option of a larger font and a virtual tour for the visually impaired. In the courtyard of the Alaaddin Mosque, an information sign in Turkish and English provides details about the mosque's location and history. Similarly, the Kefevi Mosque features Turkish information about Mahmut Kefevi Hz., while the Meydankapı Mosque offers historical information about the mosque. Additionally, the Cezayirli Ali Pasha Mosque displays Turkish information about Seyyid Ibrahim Bilal. Furthermore, each mosque displays a set of regulations for visitors to adhere to, as posted on the walls. No guiding or informative elements, such as tactile maps, braille writing, floor plans, and so forth, are available in the open and closed areas of the mosques. The mosques lack the requisite guiding and informative elements, including tactile maps, braille writings, and floor plans, in both indoor and outdoor areas.

4.4. Accessibility to Products and Services

Access to assistance and counselling services in mosques is typically facilitated through the imam and mosque personnel. Ramps have been constructed at the courtyard and mosque entrance of Alaaddin Mosque and Kefevi Mosque with the intention of facilitating physical access. In terms of sensory access and information services, the mosque does not provide a Braille Quran service, sign language sermons, or a screen projecting the sermon on the wall as a communication service. Additionally, there is a special light system on the minaret at the time of the call to prayer for the hearing impaired, which can be considered a technological service. Furthermore, an "induction loop system" is available for individuals with hearing loss and hearing aids.

5. Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

In terms of accessibility to historical environments and buildings in our country and abroad, Kocabaş (2013) discusses historical public buildings in the Nicosia Walled City area of Northern Cyprus, Yıldız (2016) analyses the historical region in Bursa, and İlkhan Söylemez (2020) presents a case study of the historical city centre of Konya. In the historical city centre of Konya, Bozok (2018) presents the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, formerly known as İbrahim Pasha Palace and now restored and in use. Additionally, Ölmez (2022) describes the Edirne Ekmekçizade Ahmet Paşa Caravanserai and the Edirne State Theatre. Kaymakçı (2022) evaluated the accessibility of historical buildings in Istanbul that have been converted into museums. Kejanlı et al. (2023) evaluated the accessibility of historical buildings in Diyarbakır Suriçi. Bilgiç and Küçük (2021) evaluated the accessibility of Safranbolu Cinci Han. Gür and Kahraman (2024) evaluated the accessibility of landscape design approaches to enhance accessibility at the Göbeklitepe Ruins. Barlow (2012) assessed the accessibility of Glamis Castle for visitors. Gil-Mastalerczyk and Gardyńska-Kieliś (2023) examined the accessibility of historic buildings in Kielce. The findings of these studies indicate that while accessibility is partially ensured, the current regulations on accessibility are not yet at an adequate level. In their research, Çınar et al. (2015) investigated the satisfaction of wheelchair users in historical places of worship in Istanbul. Rusli and Mydin (2018) examined the accessibility of historic mosques in Malaysia. Rahmad and Syar (2023) addressed the accessibility of mosques in Indonesia. Their findings revealed that the mobility opportunities for users in outdoor spaces are severely limited, with only a few adaptations made to interior spaces. Furthermore, the accessibility of these spaces is inadequate for worship. Khan and Nia (2023) found that the majority of mosques in Bangladesh lack a designated area for women to engage in prayer, which significantly impedes women's ability to access and utilize these religious spaces. The study revealed that only one mosque provides a dedicated space for women to worship, although the accessibility of this area is constrained. Sak et al. (2018) investigated the travel motivations of domestic and foreign tourists in their study on Seyid Bilal Mosque and Mausoleum. Their findings revealed that the visitors were predominantly women, students, and individuals with lower incomes. Additionally,

they identified the need for more focused promotional activities and suggested that combining faith tourism with third-age tourism could contribute to a greater number of visitors to the region and center. Borowczyk (2017) posits that the accessibility of historic buildings and monuments is a crucial aspect not only for the preservation of architectural heritage but also for the advancement of social and sustainable development. In light of the aforementioned findings, it can be concluded that the results of this study are in alignment with those of previous studies.

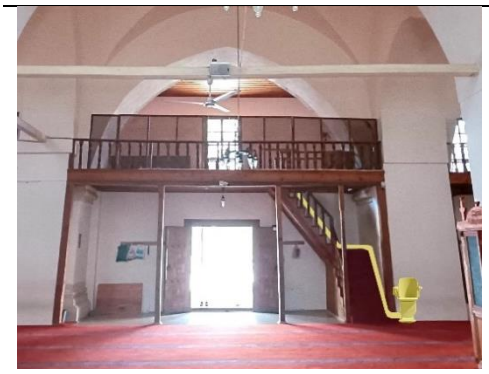
In their 2022 study, Çelimli and Oranlı emphasise the feasibility and significance of integrating universal design principles into architectural modifications without compromising the integrity of historical structures. As demonstrated by Tutal (2018), this mosque exhibits an inclusive approach, as evidenced by the accommodations made for individuals with diverse disabilities within the historical and registered Hacı Hasan Mosque in Eskişehir. This observation diverges from the findings presented in the aforementioned study.

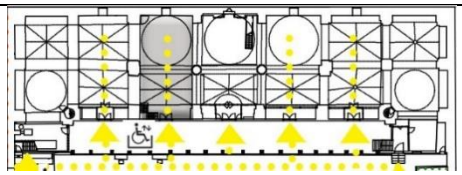
It is a fundamental human right to engage in tourism activities, to travel, to access information, and to benefit from the full range of touristic products and services. This right extends beyond the typical participants in standard tourism services to encompass a broader spectrum of individuals and groups. In this regard, the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and pertinent legislation mandate accessibility. Ensuring accessibility in urban spaces presents a significant challenge; this difficulty is compounded when considering historical environments and buildings. The question of how to ensure accessibility, particularly in the context of historic buildings, remains an unresolved issue. It is therefore essential that the state, institutions, local governments, designers and society as a whole are aware of their responsibilities and obligations in this regard. In this context, in addition to the historical and cultural richness of the province of Sinop, where the research was carried out, the fact that it has the oldest population in our country and the high rate of disabled population, the fact that only four buildings have accessibility logos and that there is no religious building among these buildings adds a special importance and sensitivity to the issue In this respect, the accessibility of seven historical mosques in Sinop city center, where the act of worship, one of the fundamental rights and freedoms, is carried out and is also a part of religious tourism, was analyzed according to Annex I: Accessibility Monitoring and Audit Form for Buildings. It has been observed that accessibility is not fully provided in urban spaces outside the mosques and within the mosques themselves. It can be concluded that accessibility in the areas of transportation, buildings and open spaces, information and information technologies, and access to services is only partially ensured in these mosques. Among the historical mosques examined in the field study, Alaaddin Mosque, which is well-known and frequently visited in Sinop according to Tripadvisor (URL-5, 2024), has been identified as the most suitable mosque in terms of physical and building accessibility arrangements (Image 10).

Image 10: Accessibility suggestions for Alaaddin Mosque

Accessibility suggestions for the courtyard of Alaaddin Mosque	
 (URL-6, edited from Orhan Özgülbaş's photograph.) **RGB light system for adhan warning.**	The installation of an RGB light system on the minaret of the mosque could assist those with hearing impairments in identifying the time of the call to prayer. The system provides a visual warning to visitors with hearing impairments by emitting light in different colors when the call to prayer is imminent. To illustrate, a green light may be activated at the commencement of the adhan, or a warning may be conveyed via the use of different colors according to the specific prayer time. In this manner, those with hearing impairments can ascertain the time for prayer, visit the mosque, or commence their prayers.

 **Walking stick with sensor**	In order to enhance accessibility without compromising the integrity of the mosque courtyard flooring, the utilization of sensorised walking stick technology represents a viable solution. Such a cane can serve as a navigational aid for visitors by memorizing the plan diagram of the mosque's interior and exterior areas. The sensor cane is capable of detecting obstacles and issuing warnings to the user via vibration or audible signals. Consequently, visually impaired individuals are able to navigate the courtyard and mosque with greater safety and explore the area without colliding with surrounding structural elements. This technology provides visitors with disabilities with an enhanced experience of the interior and exterior of the mosque, while ensuring the preservation of the mosque's historic furnishings.
 **A kiosk for information**	A kiosk situated within the courtyard of the mosque is designed to assist individuals with disabilities in acquiring knowledge about the mosque and its surrounding area, as well as providing guidance. The kiosk has been designed with ergonomic considerations for wheelchair users in mind and is accessible at an appropriate height. It offers information about the mosque and provides visitors with digital maps and audio guidance services in different languages, thus enabling them to navigate the area comfortably. Furthermore, the kiosk provides information regarding other significant locations of interest in Sinop. Audio guidance is provided for visually impaired individuals, while a touch screen allows those with hearing impairments to access information with ease.
 **Information boards**	Information boards situated within the courtyard of the mosque can be designed in such a way as to provide visitors with guidance regarding the interior and exterior of the Alaaddin Mosque, its history, and other pertinent information. The boards are constructed from materials that are resistant to the effects of the outdoor environment. They can be equipped with Braille script to provide access for visitors who are visually impaired. Furthermore, the addition of a relief map of the mosque would assist visitors in comprehending the mosque's structural layout. In this manner, the boards furnish comprehensive and accessible information to all visitors.

 **The benches**	It is possible to design benches in the courtyard of a mosque in a way that ensures disabled accessibility. It is recommended that a wide and unobstructed area be left around the benches to facilitate wheelchair access and seating. The height of the benches can be adjusted in accordance with ergonomic principles, thereby ensuring that the elderly and individuals with mobility limitations can sit and stand in a comfortable manner. Furthermore, the provision of a canopy structure to provide shade over the benches would offer a more comfortable resting area for disabled visitors and others during the summer months.
 **The portable ramp**	The portable ramp design, which provides access from the mosque courtyard to the entrance of the tomb, represents an effective solution in terms of accessibility. When constructed in accordance with the relevant standards, the ramp provides a safe and comfortable passage for disabled individuals and other visitors with mobility restrictions. It is essential that the ramp is designed with sufficient width to accommodate wheelchair users in a comfortable manner and that it is covered with a non-slip surface. Furthermore, the provision of grab handles on either side of the ramp serves to enhance the safety of users, thereby facilitating more comfortable and convenient access.
Accessibility suggestions for the interior of the Alaaddin Mosque	
 **The portable screen and projection**	The portable screen and projection, highlighted in yellow within the mosque, can be employed as an auxiliary tool for visitors with hearing impairments to facilitate their comprehension of the sermons and prayers. The screen can be utilized to display written texts, prayer translations and sign language explanations, thereby conveying sermons and other verbal content to individuals with hearing impairments. In this manner, visitors with hearing impairments are able to follow the proceedings of the worship service in a meaningful way, thus ensuring their equal access to religious rituals.
 **The stair lift with seats for woman's prayer hall**	The stair lift with seats, which is used to provide access to the upper floor of the mosque, can be designed in a way that is specifically suited to the needs of elderly women or women with mobility limitations, allowing them to reach the women's prayer hall on the upper floor. The stair lift with seats provides accessibility with minimal intervention to the original structure of the mosque and, furthermore, saves space by folding when not in use. Consequently, this solution provides an inclusive worship environment for all visitors without compromising the historical and aesthetic integrity of the mosque and enables women to access the worship areas with ease.

 **A place of worship for wheelchair users in the mosque**  **Tactile surface in the interior space of the mosque.**	Arranging this grey area and providing appropriate access for visitors in wheelchairs contributes to making the area more accessible for all. Surface coverings in the interior of the mosque can be covered with tactile surfaces to help visually impaired visitors navigate (carpet with tactile surface). These tactile surfaces can be designed as guideways that function as directions and can be arranged in such a way that visually impaired visitors can easily recognise them by touch. Such embossed guideways enable visitors to navigate the space safely, reach important areas and avoid obstacles. Thus, a safer and more accessible environment is created for both wheelchair and visually impaired visitors.

It seems reasonable to suggest that the limited number of studies on the accessibility of historical environments and buildings in Turkey, coupled with the fact that this study is addressed in conjunction with tourism in Sinop province, represent a significant contribution to the existing literature on the subject. In light of the findings, the following recommendations can be put forth for the utilization of historical mosques for both religious and tourist purposes:

- It is imperative that accessibility is addressed not at the building scale in a narrow sense, but at the urban scale from a broad perspective. This can be achieved by planning holistically.
- It is clear that accessibility arrangements in buildings should be designed in accordance with the accessibility standards that must be complied with within the balance of protection-use.
- It would be prudent to give due consideration to the stipulations set forth in the accessibility regulations in the restoration projects of mosques.
- It could be incorporated into the development of accessible tourism routes within the city.
- It is essential that all mosques provide adequate and easily accessible guidance and informative elements, such as signboards, maps, and other boards, in both indoor and outdoor areas. These elements should be available in sufficient numbers to meet the needs of visitors. Furthermore, it is crucial that mosques implement effective guidance systems for visitors with visual or hearing impairments. This may include the use of appropriate signage, braille, or auditory guidance.
- The interior design of mosques should be planned in accordance with the functional requirements of the building, beyond mere aesthetic considerations. At the scale of the building, woven carpets/surfaces with tactile surfaces for the visually impaired, informative texts in Braille, relief maps and floor plans can be designed. Portable ramps can be installed at points of access and where there are elevation differences, particularly at the main entrance of the building and in the open spaces designated for use by people with disabilities. It is recommended that a sufficient number of wheelchairs be made available, as well as a designated area within the prayer hall for individuals requiring such assistance. It is possible to integrate lifts or stair climbers into suitable staircases within the building. It is possible to

make toilets and ablution places in some mosques accessible. Ablution spaces may be equipped with accessible toilets and washbasins situated at appropriate heights for ablution, as well as an emergency help button. In order to facilitate the hearing impaired, a special light system can be installed on the minaret during the call to prayer. Furthermore, sign language can be employed during the daily prayers and Friday sermons. The sermon can be displayed on a wall-mounted screen. For individuals with hearing loss and hearing aids, the induction loop system can facilitate enhanced auditory perception within the surrounding environment.

- The Directorate of Religious Affairs may consider extending the "Barrier-Free Mosque, Barrier-Free Worship" initiative to encompass historical mosques.
- It is of the utmost importance to ensure that spaces designed for women are of an equal standard to those designed for men. By preserving the historical and aesthetic value of the mosque, physical arrangements such as stair lifts or ramps can be implemented to facilitate access to the section reserved for women on the upper floor. Such arrangements can be designed in a way that enhances accessibility without compromising the mosque's overall aesthetic appeal.
- It would be beneficial for the Directorate of Religious Affairs to engage actively in the development of religious tourism activities in historical mosques and other religious sites. This should extend to involvement in the planning, project and construction stages.
- It is recommended that mosque staff and guides receive training on how to assist disabled visitors. It is also advised that visitors be informed about the mosque's accessibility features.
- It is possible to develop virtual tours or interactive guidance applications for disabled individuals. In this manner, individuals who are unable to physically visit the mosque are also afforded the opportunity to explore it.

Compliance with Ethical Standard

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