

Determining the Perception of Tourism Academicians on Ecotourism Education: The Case of Necmettin Erbakan University

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ABSTRACT

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Ekoturizm, son yıllarda insanların tatil anlayışlarının değişimi ile birlikte hızla gelişen bir turizm çeşididir. Ekoturizmin gelişimi ekoturizm ile ilgili eğitimlerinde artmasına yol açmış, özellikle lisansüstü alanda ekoturizm rehberliği alanı ortaya çıkmıştır. Ekoturizm konusundaki eğitimlerin artması, bu konuda çalışma yapan ya da ders veren öğretim elemanlarının ekoturizm algısının ölçülmesini zorunlu hale getirmiştir. Türkiye’de ekoturizm alanında doktora seviyesinde bir eğitim olmadığından, farklı turizm alanlarında uzmanlaşmış eğitimcilerin ekoturizm algısının ölçülmesi, ekoturizm eğitimlerinin kalitesi ve niteliği açısından önem taşımaktadır. Çalışmanın temel amacı, ekoturizm konusunda turizm akademisyenlerin algılarının ortaya konarak, ekoturizm eğitimlerinin kalitesini ve dolayısıyla yetiştirilecek olan öğrencilerin ekoturizm konusunda niteliğinin artırılmasını sağlamaktır. Bu kapsamda, araştırma evrenini Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesinde görevli olan ve alanında en az doktora derecesine sahip 28 öğretim elemanı oluşturmaktadır. Çalışmada, çok kriterli karar verme yöntemlerinden Analitik Hiyerarşi Süreci (AHS) kullanılmıştır. Çalışma örneklemini 10 öğretim elemanı oluşturmaktadır. Ahs yöntemi ile yapılan analizler sonucunda elde edilen bulgularda ekoturizm eğitiminde en önemli kriterin öğretim kalitesi olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Bununla birlikte, sırası ile öğretim elemanı kalitesi, uygulamalı dersler, müfredat, öğrenci iletişimi, öğretim ortamı, yönetsel hizmetler, destek eğitim hizmetleri ve teknoloji kullanımı kriterleri önemli olarak görülmüştür.

Turizm Akademisyenlerinin Ekoturizm Eğitimi Algısının Belirlenmesi: Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi Örneği

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Ecotourism is a type of tourism that has developed rapidly with the change in people’s holiday perceptions in recent years. The development of ecotourism has led to an increase in ecotourism-related education, and the field of ecotourism guidance has emerged, especially in the postgraduate field. The increase in training on ecotourism has made it necessary to measure the ecotourism perception of faculty members who work or give lectures on this subject. Since there is no doctoral level education in the field of ecotourism in Turkey, measuring the ecotourism perception of instructors specialized in different tourism fields is important in terms of the quality and quality of ecotourism training. The main purpose of the study is to reveal the perceptions of tourism academics about ecotourism, thus increasing the quality of ecotourism education and therefore the quality of students to be trained in ecotourism. In this context, the research population consists of 28 faculty members who work at Necmettin Erbakan University and have at least a doctoral degree in their field. In the study, Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHS), one of the multi-criteria decision-making methods, was used. The study sample consists of 10 faculty members. In the findings obtained as a result of the analyzes made with the Ahs method, it was concluded that the most important criterion in ecotourism education is the quality of teaching. In addition, the criteria of instructor quality, applied courses, curriculum, student communication, teaching environment, administrative services, support education services and technology use were seen as important, respectively.

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Introduction

The tourism sector has started to operate in many different areas due to the aggravation of competitive conditions. In particular, the developments in tourist demands due to the increase in transportation and technology opportunities have necessitated the diversification of tourism by the country's administrations. Due to the increase in varieties in the tourism sector, problems have arisen in the employment of qualified personnel, and it has become mandatory to have different understandings in tourism education. The fact that tourism trainings differ according to destinations and tourism activities is important for the training of specialized personnel needed by the sector. For this reason, it is observed that tourism education has also been diversified in accordance with the types of tourism demanded in recent years. While training the personnel needed by the sector ensures the existence of qualified personnel who are knowledgeable in the subject, knowledgeable personnel will contribute to increasing tourist demand and achieving a positive image of tourism awareness.

Due to the increase in the share of ecotourism in the tourism sector in recent years, it is observed that ecotourism has started to develop in their education on this subject. It is known that master's programs with and without thesis, especially in the field of ecotourism guidance, have been implemented by some universities and have increased in their scientific studies on ecotourism. The increasing number of ecotourism trainings makes it necessary to question its academic quality. As a type of tourism, in addition to the fact that academics have knowledge about this issue, it is necessary to investigate the quality and competence status.

The term ecotourism; is expressed as a type of tourism made for the purpose of elements such as highland tourism, natural habitats, conservation zones, wildlife observation and escape from city crowds. It is known that there are many activities carried out in tourism within ecotourism and people experience these activities only in the destinations they are traveling to. Therefore, expressing ecotourism only as a kind of nature-inclusive tourism reveals shortcomings in the perception of ecotourism. The degree to which these shortcomings are perceived, especially by academics who provide ecotourism education, is an important issue. It is thought that the "Ecotourism Guidance" graduate trainings that have been put forward in Turkey in recent years should also be examined in this context and it is important to determine the perceptions of tourism academics within the scope of education.

In the study, literature review was conducted on the subjects of ecotourism and ecotourism education, and the ranking of academicians who are experts in the field of tourism according to the degree of importance of educational criteria in their perceptions within the scope of ecotourism education was made. It is aimed that the study will be a source of guiding data for tourism education managers for future ecotourism education programs to determine the perceptions of tourism academics about ecotourism education, the nature and quality of these trainings. In addition, it will also be possible to increase the thoughts and opinions of tourism academics on ecotourism guidance education and the quality of their education.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The Conceptual Content of Ecotourism

The increase in competitive conditions in the field of tourism has resulted in the orientation of the country's tourism administrations to different areas. Especially in Turkey, ecotourism has become an important tourism due to the existence and characteristics of natural areas. With the development of ecotourism, the interest in natural areas has increased, and as a result, undergraduate and graduate trainings have emerged within the scope of ecotourism. With the increasing value of ecotourism, there is also a need for a better understanding of this concept. For this reason, it was thought that it would be appropriate to include the concept and characteristics of ecotourism in order to better understand the subject of the study.

The concept of ecotourism is stated as "responsible travel to natural areas involving environmental protection, improving the well-being of local people, realization of tourism

activities and tourism education" with its most general and short definition (Acott & La Trobe, 1998). Ecotourism was expressed by Ceballos-Lascurain in 1983 as "trips to pristine and unpolluted natural areas with goals such as studying cultural values, nature, wildlife and plants found in the past and found today, enjoying nature" (Erdoğan, 2015). Although ecotourism has been put forward with many different definitions in general, it is generally centered around the integration of nature with tourism activities carried out in natural areas. As can be seen from the definitions, the concept of ecotourism is not a new concept, but has become increasingly important in recent years due to the necessity of diversifying tourism along with the developments in today's tourism market. For this reason, it has been seen that researchers specializing in ecotourism have clearly revealed what characteristics ecotourism has.

The researchers, who have defined different characteristics about ecotourism, generally state that ecotourism is within the scope of nature-based and nature-specific tourism activities. Although there are different definitions related to ecotourism, it is said that it consists of a number of basic features. These basic properties can be explained as following (Kuter & Ünal, 2009):

- The activities carried out in ecotourism are based on nature,
- Tourism activities also include environmental education because tourists can make observations,
- Ecotourism activities are preferred by nature-loving visitors,
- In addition to the environmental effectiveness of ecotourism, there are also economic goals,
- It is not possible to realize ecotourism without giving local people a place in the activities.

It is possible to summarize the characteristics of ecotourism as following Rahemtulla & Wellstead, 2001):

- It requires a special and accessible natural environment.
- It promotes positive environmental ethics.
- It does not disrupt the resource and does not contain the depleting erosion of the natural environment.
- It ensures the long-term safety of the land.
- Facilities and services can facilitate the tourist's encounter with internal resources and do not reduce the resource.
- It is made for the environment, not for people.
- It benefits wildlife and the environment.
- It provides a first-hand encounter with all kinds of cultural elements found in the natural environment and undeveloped areas.
- It actively involves local communities in tourism.
- The level of satisfaction is measured in terms of education and appreciation, not according to thrill-seeking or physical achievement.
- It requires significant preparation and in-depth knowledge from the point of view of tourists.
- It requires the training of tour operators, field guides and other operators.
- It provides business and entrepreneurial opportunities to local people.

The main feature of ecotourism is the presence of tourists who are aware of nature and the environment. Therefore, all elements related to the environment are considered important within the scope of ecotourism. Ecotourism focuses on the protection and development of the

environment and natural elements rather than people performing tourist activities. The difference of ecotourism from other types of tourism is that if the natural areas, wildlife and environmental elements are not protected and degraded, the probability of ecotourism activities ending is very strong. Environmental elements are the most basic feature of ecotourism and there is no passage to the deterioration caused by tourism activities with the construction for tourism purposes.

One of the most important problems related to the environment caused by ecotourism and tourism activities is plastic and waste pollution. The breakdown of plastics into small pieces and transformation into microplastics over time after their use leads to problems in terms of human, soil, plant and animal health (Yolasiğmazoğlu, 2022). Problems arise in ecotourism destinations due to excessive concentration and urbanization. It is known that the mixing of the wastes of these facilities into rivers, streams and lakes leads to pollution of spring waters and degradation of wildlife (Yolasiğmazoğlu, 2023). Minimizing the environmental impacts of tourism is important for ecotourism destinations to be sustainable. The most basic way to ensure this situation is to provide information about ecotourism to tourists, local administrators and local people. Education is one of the indispensable elements for ecotourism. It is not enough that only local people and managers are aware, tourists and tourism employees should also be educated about ecotourism. For a sustainable ecotourism, ecotourism trainings should be taught to students through trainings from high school to university level.

Ecotourism Education

Education refers to the learning process that has been continuing from ancient times until today (Akyay, 2022 p.41). It is accepted as a whole of studies carried out for the purpose of educating people and increasing their knowledge and qualifications on different subjects. Although the environment and heredity have a great influence on the development of the individual, it is necessary to mention the whole of the social environment in which the person grows up, the culture of the society he is in, biological factors, physiological structure and the psychological developmental processes he experiences. In this context, each individual is unique; their life experiences, social environments, family and kinship structures, personality types and characteristics, and the norms they have developed will differ from each other. (Guney & Yalçın 2020, p.218)

Education; It is an interactive process consisting of learning, teaching and measurement-evaluation elements. Effective education is based on mutual dialogue, not linear or one-way. (Özalp and Kaymakçı, 2022, p.468). Educational studies in almost all fields have continued to increase throughout history. It is seen that ecotourism education has increased worldwide in the last fifty years, especially in our country, it is known that ecotourism education has been considered as undergraduate courses in the last ten years. However, it is observed that in the last ten years, programs in the form of ecotourism and ecotourism guidance have been opened in graduate programs. These trainings are important in terms of throwing tourism personnel into the sector as knowledgeable and educated in our country, where ecotourism destinations are more numerous. Ecotourism trainings should include curricula that should be presented together with general tourism trainings, but should also have differences according to the characteristics of the destinations. The most important reason for this situation is that although the tourism activities to be carried out in ecotourism destinations are similar in nature, the ecotourism characteristics of the destinations are different.

Education refers to the learning process that has been going on since the old years until today. It is accepted as a whole of the studies carried out for the purpose of educating people and increasing their qualifications with knowledge on different subjects. Tourism trainings, on the other hand, represent the characteristics that include the trainings of different tourism branches according to their areas of expertise. Due to the fact that the structural features of the tourism sector are different from many sectors, tourism education should mainly consist of courses that should be given in a practical way. These trainings should be in such a way that they include the characteristics of tourism activities performed in destinations and accommodation and other

tourism enterprises, rather than the characteristics of tourism activities (Dias Daniel et al., 2017).

Tourism education is one of the areas of education that has been developing, especially in the last twenty years. Associate, bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees are given at universities and at the high school level in different fields of education. With the expansion of tourism education, departments have been made according to different areas of expertise in tourism education, and trainings have been diversified according to the wishes and expectations of the tourism sector. Different tourism trainings have started to be offered in areas such as gastronomy and culinary arts, recreation, ecotourism, guidance, travel services and tourism management.

Tourism education mainly includes trainings within the framework of common understanding and efforts. In general, expectations from tourism education are expressed in the following articles (Hacıoğlu et al., 2008):

- Preparing students for the tourism sector in a self-confident and qualified manner,
- To provide social people who are knowledgeable about tourism professional laws, have communication skills, develop solutions to problems to be encountered quickly and gain social people,
- The curricula of the subjects realized in the tourism sector are given as a whole with theory and practical courses,
- Providing trainings in which the qualification is acquired to respond to tourist requests and expectations that change with current situations,
- The education of people with knowledge and skills that will create a positive image against tourism in the perceptions of local people,
- Giving courses that constantly renew themselves about the difficulties of the sector and working conditions, in which every feature of the tourism profession is taught clearly and clearly,
- Creation of curricula that explain that tourism is useful not only for people working in the sector, but also for many different sectors,
- By teaching the awareness of how important each staff member is in service quality and tourist product presentation, providing courses that explain how the image of a business can affect the tourism image of the entire country.

Ecotourism trainings are given as elective courses especially at undergraduate level. There is no undergraduate program related to ecotourism in Turkey yet, only some universities have graduate programs with the names of ecotourism or ecotourism guidance. Especially in recent years, ecotourism villages, ecotourism destinations and ecotourism-related businesses have been opened within the scope of tourism diversification. As a result of this situation, the need for qualified personnel to work in this field has arisen and master's programs with and without thesis in the field of ecotourism have started to train students for the need for personnel specialized in ecotourism.

Graduate trainings given in relation to ecotourism throughout the world emerge in a multidisciplinary manner and are considered together with different fields of science (Gulomjon & Caminjon, 2022). The increase in the economic and social share of ecotourism in the tourism sector has progressed to the country's governments giving incentives for ecotourism and declaring some destinations as ecotourism destinations. Ecotourism, which is an effective type of tourism in spreading the revenues to be obtained from tourism throughout the country, also contributes to increasing the tourism awareness and welfare level of the local population. Therefore, there is an obligation to support such an effective ecotourism structure with qualified trainings (Arı, 2023). In this context, the provision of ecotourism education through graduate programs makes it necessary for academics working in tourism and other disciplines to develop themselves in the field of ecotourism. Since it will be possible to train qualified personnel to ecotourism destinations and enterprises only with qualified personnel, the quality of ecotourism trainings should also be improved.

Postgraduate trainings in the field of ecotourism guidance are given at Giresun University, Katip Çelebi University, Şırnak university and Necmettin Erbakan university. The content of the courses is similar in nature, biological diversity, tourism management, economics, gastronomy, flora and fauna, environmental protection, tourism activities, foreign language, cultural and historical issues, scientific research methods, academic writing techniques, current approaches to ecotourism and general tourism (Akyurt & Ültay, 2022). When evaluated from the point of view of the tourism sector, graduate trainings were not considered very important in Decadent years, but nowadays these trainings have a serious place among the employment conditions. Graduate education has started to be considered as a separate qualification in the employment system, which is considered labor-intensive in the tourism sector, and has become an effective factor in people's recruitment (Ramirez & Santana, 2019).

METHOD

The Purpose and Importance of the Research

Along with the development of tourism, the emergence of different types of tourism is a necessary situation due to the intense competitive conditions. Due to the fact that tourism is shaped according to different tourism characteristics within the sector, a shortage of personnel of different nature and knowledge level has also manifested itself. The tourism sector, which makes an important contribution economically, is one of the leading sectors in increasing the income level of local residents and increasing the prosperity of destinations. For this reason, the quality of the personnel to be employed according to different types of tourism has become mandatory for a sustainable tourism approach. With the development of ecotourism, it has become a question of carrying out different tourism activities in different destinations, as well as revenues obtained not only from marine and cultural tourism types. Ecotourism has become a factor in spreading the revenues obtained from tourism throughout the country and gaining new tourism destinations in today's tourism Sunday.

This rapid rise of ecotourism in tourism has revealed the problem of employment in this regard and in ecotourism destinations. In this context, trainings on ecotourism have emerged and research has started on their qualifications. The study aims to reveal the perceptions of expert academics working in the field of tourism on ecotourism about ecotourism education. This situation is important in terms of determining how ecotourism trainings are managed, course contents and what students learn about ecotourism trainings. It is thought that the study results of ecotourism trainings will be important in terms of revealing what is missing or what needs to be done as a result of the thoughts and perceptions of tourism academics. With this study, it is aimed to evaluate ecotourism trainings with the opinions of tourism academics and to provide students with new ideas in their education.

The Universe and Sample of the Research

The research universe consists of 33 faculty members and lecturers working at the faculty of tourism at Necmettin Erbakan University (Necmettin Erbakan University, 2024). Since 5 of the teaching staff are not yet experts in the field of science, these teaching staff have been excluded from the scope of study. Therefore, a total of 28 teaching staff make up the working universe. The study sample also consists of 10 faculty members. In the research, the Ahs method, which is one of the multi-criteria decision-making techniques, is used differently from other methods. In this method used, even a person who is an expert in his field is considered sufficient to support the universe. It is stated that expert ideas can represent the number determined as the universe (Erdal & Korucuk, 2018).

The Ahs method is not a frequently used method in tourism studies. In general, in the field of tourism science, where there are spss-based studies, it is expected that the number of samples will be large. However, the Ahs method gives results only by taking into account the opinions of an expert. Since the entire universe or the number of samples is expected to be large in studies in the field of tourism science, the results of the samples conducted using the Ahs method cannot be clearly understood. It should be known that the studies conducted with Ahs, whether it is the field

of tourism science or different fields of science, a single expert is sufficient for the study to represent the universe. In multi-criteria decision-making methods, expert-oriented methods indicate that even a single expert will be sufficient for the representation of the universe in revealing the results of the study (Akyurt, 2019). Therefore, the sample number of 10 people expressed in the study has the quality to represent the universe of the study.

Limitations of the Research

Of the 33 academicians who make up the universe of the research, 5 lecturers who have not yet completed their specializations constitute the limitation of the research. Another limitation can be shown as the fact that some of the faculty members refused the participation request at the time of the study.

Validity and Reliability of the Research

The criteria included in the study topic and given in Table 1 were obtained from studies whose validity and reliability were confirmed. For this reason, there is no validity problem of the study performed. The criteria of the study were obtained from the interdisciplinary training scale conducted by Terzioğlu et al. (2019) and the studies conducted by Temizkan and Ergün (2020) on determining the perception of quality of tourist guidance education. In the study on the validity and reliability of the interdisciplinary trainings conducted by Terzioğlu and his colleagues, the KMO value was found to be 0.882 and the Cronbach Alpha coefficient was found to be 0.886, and it was confirmed by statistical information that there were no problems with the validity and reliability of their studies. In the study conducted by Temizkan and Ergun regarding the quality of tourist guidance education, the KMO value was stated as 0.911. The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient was found to be 0.937.

It is stated that the Kaiser value found is excellent at 0.90 ratios, very good at 0.80 ratios, mediocre at 0.70 and 0.60 ratios, and bad at 0.50 ratios (Tavşancıl, 2006). For this reason, it is possible to state that the validity and reliability of the studies from which the study criteria are taken are defined, so the validity and reliability of the current study criteria are not problematic due to previous studies. In addition, the CR value was determined as 0.0434 in relation to the validity of the study in the analyses. The Cr value is expressed as the consistency ratio in the analytical hierarchy process method and shows that the questionnaire and the answers are consistent (Karaatlı & Davras, 2014).

Table 1. Table of Basic Criteria of the AHS Scale

Criteria	Basic Criteria
1	Use of Technology
2	Administrative Services
3	Student Communication
4	Curriculum
5	Practical Courses
6	Teaching Environment
7	Quality of Teaching
8	Support Training Services
9	Quality of the Teaching Staff

Data Collection Method

The research started with the preparation of the questionnaire form and its transmission to the academicians. 9 Criteria that are effective in the fields of ecotourism education were determined and included in the study. These criteria were analyzed by AHS method by making bilateral comparisons among themselves and their importance deficiency was determined.

Analysis of the Data

The Analytical Hierarchy Process has a multi-criteria structure, Thomas L. in the 1970s. It is a method developed by Saaty and used in solving complex problems. Analytical Hierarchy Process is a method that allows step-by-step modeling that Decodes complex problems, the purpose of these problems, criteria, sub-criteria and the connection between the options. The Analytical Hierarchy Process is a method in which knowledge, experience, thought and common sense come together within the framework of logic. Dec. It is a technique that has a wide range of applications and is actively used in decision problems. It is a method that enables the use of qualitative and quantitative criteria in the evaluation and formulation of decision alternatives (Saaty, 1990). The stages of the Ahs method used in the study are given below (Vaidya & Kumar, 2006; Saaty, 2008).

Step 1: Determination of the Eigenvector: In order to determine the percentage significance distributions of the determined criteria, the column vectors that make up the binary comparison matrix are used in the calculation of the column vector B with "n" numbers and "n" components, equation-1 given below is used.

$$\text{Equation-1} \quad b_{ij} = \frac{a_{ij}}{\sum_{i=1}^n a_{ij}}$$

the vector B of the number n is combined in the form of a matrix to form a matrix C.

$$C = \begin{bmatrix} C_{11} & C_{12} & \dots & C_{1n} \\ C_{21} & C_{22} & \dots & C_{2n} \\ \vdots & & & \vdots \\ C_{n1} & C_{n2} & \dots & C_{nn} \end{bmatrix}$$

With the C matrix obtained, percentage importance distributions are formed, which constitute the importance values of the criteria determined. In order to arrive at this conclusion, the arithmetic average of the rows forming the matrix C is taken. This is also shown in equation-2. The W vector, which is the Priority Vector, occurs.

$$\text{Equation-2} \quad w_i = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^n C_{ij}}{n}$$

Step 2: Calculating the Consistency Ratio: The Consistency Ratio (CR), the eigenvalue vector and the maximum eigenvalue are calculated for each matrix. Then the CI, which is the consistency indicator, is calculated. The basis of calculating the consistency ratio (CR) is to compare the number of criteria and the coefficient known by the name of the Basic Value (FM). In order for the Basic Value to be calculated, it is first necessary to obtain the column vector D from the matrix product of the priority vector W with the comparison matrix A.

$$D = \begin{bmatrix} a_{11} & a_{12} & \dots & a_{1n} \\ a_{21} & a_{22} & \dots & a_{2n} \\ \vdots & & & \vdots \\ a_{n1} & a_{n2} & \dots & a_{nn} \end{bmatrix} \times \begin{bmatrix} w_1 \\ w_2 \\ \vdots \\ w_n \end{bmatrix}$$

There is a basic value (E) for each evaluation criterion shown in equation-3, obtained by dividing the reciprocal elements of the column vector D and column vector W. The arithmetic mean of this value obtained (Equation-4) reveals the basic value (AD) related to the comparison (Erdal & Korucuk, 2018).

$$\text{Equation-3} \quad E = \frac{d_i}{w_i} \quad i = 1, 2, \dots, n$$

$$\text{Equation-4} \quad \lambda = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n E_i}{n}$$

As a result of calculating the value of "C", the Consistency Indicator (CI) is also calculated with Equation-5 given below.

$$\text{Equation-5} \quad CI = \frac{\lambda - n}{n - 1}$$

In the last part, CI is divided by the Random Indicator (RI), the specified standard correction value. In this way, the CR value is given by Equation-6.

$$\text{Equation-6 } CR = \frac{CI}{RI}$$

The CR value resulting from the calculations made must be less than 0.10. If it is small, it is understood that the responses given by the participants are consistent. the fact that it is greater than 0.10 indicates that there is an error in the calculations made during the Analytical Hierarchy Process or that the participants have given inconsistent answers. Thus, AHS calculations may need to be performed again (Saaty, 1980; Karaatlı & Davras, 2014; Erdal & Korucuk, 2018; Akyurt, 2019).

Findings and Discussion

Bilateral comparisons were made in determining the criteria for agency managers' perceptions of ecotourism in accordance with the existing data in the survey conducted using the Ahs method. The geometric averages of the collected data were taken and the binary comparisons matrix given in Table 2 was formed.

Table 2. Matrix of Binary Comparisons

	Usage Tech.	Admin Service	Std. Com.	Curric.	Pract. Less.	Teaching Env.	Quality Teac.	S. T. S.	Quality Teaching staff
Usage Tech.	1,00	1,60	0,67	0,66	0,63	1,09	0,21	0,93	0,49
Admin Service	0,62	1,00	0,64	1,04	0,59	1,09	0,64	1,08	0,70
Std. Com.	1,50	1,55	1,00	1,51	0,67	0,98	0,20	0,71	0,64
Curriculum	1,51	0,97	0,66	1,00	0,92	1,29	0,14	2,43	0,64
Pract. Less.	1,58	1,69	1,49	1,09	1,00	1,03	0,44	1,55	0,67
Teaching Env.	0,92	0,92	1,03	0,78	0,97	1,00	0,59	0,69	0,61
Quality Teac.	4,82	1,01	5,03	7,24	2,27	1,69	1,00	3,21	3,91
S. T. S.	1,07	0,93	1,40	0,41	0,64	1,44	0,31	1,00	0,77
Quality Teaching staff	2,04	1,43	1,55	1,55	1,50	1,63	0,26	1,30	1,00

The binary comparisons matrix is used to reveal the weighting of the study criteria. After the creation of this matrix, it is obtained by dividing each criterion by column sums in its own cell areas for the weighting of the criteria. Table-3 presents data on the weights of the criteria and information about the consistency ratio.

Table 3. Determination of Criterion Weights

	Usage Tech.	Admin Service	Std. Com.	Curric.	Pract. Less.	Teaching Env.	Quality Teac.	S. T. S.	Quality Teaching staff	Usage Tech.
Usage Tech.	0,0664	0,1447	0,0495	0,0432	0,0688	0,0969	0,0548	0,0724	0,0521	0,0721
Admin Service	0,0414	0,0901	0,0478	0,0678	0,0643	0,0970	0,1689	0,0835	0,0743	0,0817
Std. Com.	0,0996	0,1399	0,0742	0,0991	0,0730	0,0869	0,0526	0,0552	0,0683	0,0832
Curriculum	0,1005	0,0871	0,0491	0,0655	0,0999	0,1148	0,0365	0,1881	0,0683	0,0900
Pract. Less.	0,1048	0,1523	0,1104	0,0712	0,1086	0,0914	0,1164	0,1202	0,0706	0,1051
Teaching Env.	0,0610	0,0828	0,0761	0,0508	0,1058	0,0891	0,1565	0,0538	0,0649	0,0823
Quality Teac.	0,3201	0,0909	0,3734	0,4738	0,2466	0,1505	0,2644	0,2489	0,4140	0,2870

S. T. S.	0,0710	0,0836	0,1042	0,0270	0,0700	0,1282	0,0822	0,0774	0,0815	0,0806
Quality Teaching staff	0,1352	0,1286	0,1152	0,1016	0,1630	0,1454	0,0677	0,1006	0,1060	0,1181

Not. $CI=0,0629$ $CR=0,0434$

In the table where the criteria weights are determined (Table 4), the importance level column is formed by taking the average of the criteria given. The CR value was found to be 0.0434 and is less than 0.10. Therefore, it is possible to state that the values in Table 4 are consistent.

Table 4. Sorting the Criteria According to the Level of Importance

Criteria	Degree of Importance Ranking	Level of Importance
1	Use of Technology	0,2870
2	Administrative Services	0,1181
3	Student Communication	0,1051
4	Curriculum	0,0900
5	Practical Courses	0,8320
6	Teaching Environment	0,8230
7	Quality of Teaching	0,8170
8	Support Training Services	0,8060
9	Quality of the Teaching Staff	0,7210

As can be seen in Table 4 and in the importance level column, it is seen that the teaching quality criterion (0.2870) is the most important criterion compared to the other criteria. The criteria after this criterion are followed by the quality of teaching staff (0.1181), applied courses (0.1051), curriculum criterion (0.0900), student communication criterion (0.0832), teaching environment criterion (0.0823), administrative services criterion (0.0817), support educational services criterion (0.0806), technology use criterion (0.0721).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Ecotourism trainings have also started to find a place in today's education systems, where tourism education is handled in different ways. The spread of ecotourism both regionally and nationwide and internationally has revealed the fact that there is a need for conscious, knowledgeable and qualified personnel in ecotourism. In this context, ecotourism trainings given in Turkey are important both for the integration of ecotourism with the public, for increasing income levels from an economic point of view and for contributing to employment. The quality and quality of ecotourism trainings are also among the issues that need to be researched and developed. For this reason, the situation of how ecotourism education is perceived, especially by academics who are providing these trainings or working in the field of tourism, is an important issue.

In the study, it was tried to determine the perceptions of academics who are experts in the field of tourism at Necmettin Erbakan University about ecotourism education by Ahs method. In the studies on the quality of education conducted by researchers in previous years, the criteria whose validity and reliability have been accepted have been taken into consideration and the perceptions of tourism academics about ecotourism have been revealed. As a result of the findings obtained from the study analyses, it has been revealed that the most important ecotourism education criterion is the teaching quality. It is stated as the most important issue expressed by tourism academics that it will be possible to raise students better in ecotourism education by increasing the quality of teaching. However, the quality of the teaching staff, the intensity of the applied courses, the suitability of the curricula for today's conditions, the communication between students and academics, the teaching environment, the services provided by the administrations, other support educational services provided to ecotourism trainings and finally the criteria for the use of technology are listed according to the degree of importance.

As a result of the findings obtained, it is possible to express the conclusion that the quality of teaching in the perceptions of tourism academics should be considered together with the quality of teaching staff, the multiplicity of practical courses and the appropriate arrangement of curricula. There is the fact that ecotourism trainings are more than just tourism trainings, it is important for students to be trained in ecotourism both to close the qualified employment gap in ecotourism destinations and to positively change the perspective of local people on ecotourism. In this context, it is possible to offer the following suggestions as a result of the study.

- Ecotourism trainings should be planned according to current situations and conditions,
- The training of qualified teaching staff on ecotourism will support the development of the vision of ecotourism in the future,
- Providing ecotourism trainings to tourism business managers and local people in addition to graduate trainings is necessary for the understanding of sustainable ecotourism,
- The introduction of ecotourism trainings with joint planning with tourism educators working in other educational institutions will be useful in increasing the quality of the trainings,
- Ecotourism education should be more involved at high school and university level,
- In order for ecotourism to create more tourist demand, joint working areas should be created together with local residents, tourism managers, public administrators and educators, ecotourism projects should be put forward in cooperation.

For academicians who want to conduct research on this subject in the future, there is a need for screening of this study topic with descriptive content analysis. Descriptive content analysis means that the scientific issues studied in certain subjects are considered in detail in terms of methods, content, destinations and concepts (Ultay, Akyurt & Ultay, 2021). Scientific studies related to the educational aspect of ecotourism will be able to be collected together with descriptive content analyses. Dec. Thus, the way will be opened for academicians who will work on this issue in the future (Ultay, Balaban & Ultay, 2021).

Increasing scientific studies on the subject will allow increasing the quality of ecotourism trainings, keeping them constantly on the agenda and reducing the shortage of qualified personnel in ecotourism destinations. In order for a sustainable ecotourism understanding to be established, educated, conscious and visionary individuals are needed in the field of ecotourism. It will be possible to achieve this situation only by increasing the quality and quantity of ecotourism trainings.

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