



Determining the Geotourism Potential of Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar through SOAR Analysis and Formulating Regional Development Strategies

Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar'ın Jeoturizm Potansiyelinin SOAR Analizi ile Belirlenmesi ve Bölgesel Kalkınma Stratejilerinin Oluşturulması

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Abstract

This study evaluates the geotourism potential of Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar using the SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) analysis and develops regional development strategies based on the findings. The research is based on primary data collected through interviews with local government representatives, tourism academics, residents, and field observations. Key strengths identified include the region's unique geological structure, natural beauty, historical and mythological significance, suitability for nature sports, rich ecosystem, and local hospitality. Opportunities encompass access to new tourism markets, infrastructure development, effective promotion strategies, and sustainable tourism projects. Aspirations aim to establish the area as a leading nature tourism destination, revitalize the local economy, become a center for ecotourism, and preserve natural and cultural heritage. Results indicate potential increases in tourist numbers, economic benefits, adoption of sustainable tourism practices, and improvements in tourism infrastructure. This research provides a comprehensive roadmap for leveraging the geotourism potential of Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar, benefiting both academic and practical applications.

Keywords: Geotourism, Sustainable Tourism, Dilim Kayalar, SOAR Analysis, Development Strategies

Özet

Bu çalışma, Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar'ın jeoturizm potansiyelini SOAR (Güçlü Yönler, Fırsatlar, Hedefler, Sonuçlar) analizi kullanarak değerlendirmekte ve bulgulara dayalı bölgesel kalkınma stratejileri geliştirmektedir. Araştırma, yerel yönetim temsilcileri, turizm akademisyenleri, yerel halk ve saha gözlemleriyle yapılan görüşmeler aracılığıyla toplanan birincil verilere dayanmaktadır. Belirlenen temel güçlü yönler arasında bölgenin benzersiz jeolojik yapısı, doğal güzelliği, tarihi ve mitolojik önemi, doğa sporlarına uygunluğu, zengin ekosistemi ve yerel misafirperverlik yer almaktadır. Fırsatlar, yeni turizm pazarlarına erişim, altyapı geliştirme, etkili tanıtım stratejileri ve sürdürülebilir turizm projelerini kapsamaktadır. Hedefler, bölgeyi önde gelen bir doğa turizmi destinasyonu olarak konumlandırmayı, yerel ekonomiyi canlandırmayı, ekoturizm merkezi olmayı ve doğal ve kültürel mirası korumayı amaçlamaktadır. Sonuçlar, turist sayısında potansiyel artışlar, ekonomik faydalar, sürdürülebilir turizm uygulamalarının

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benimsenmesi ve turizm altyapısındaki iyileşmeleri göstermektedir. Bu araştırma, Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar'ın jeoturizm potansiyelinden yararlanmak için akademik ve pratik uygulamalara fayda sağlayacak kapsamlı bir yol haritası sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Jeoturizm, Sürdürülebilir Turizm, Dilim Kayalar, SOAR Analizi, Kalkınma Stratejileri*

1. INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector has been a significant source of economic development and social welfare for many countries. Regions rich in natural beauty, historical wealth, and cultural diversity hold substantial advantages in terms of tourism potential. In this context, evaluating the potential of tourism destinations and developing regional development strategies is crucial for revitalising local economies and ensuring sustainable development. For example, a study using SOAR analysis examined how to strengthen digital marketing strategies in the tourism sector (Elgahwash et al., 2023). In this context, the evaluation of Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar's tourism potential through SOAR analysis not only helps in identifying strengths and opportunities but also aids in formulating strategic actions that can foster sustainable tourism development in the region.

This study aims to assess the geotourism potential of Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar, located in Turkey's Tokat province, using the SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results) analysis and to formulate regional development strategies. SOAR analysis is an effective strategic planning tool used to understand the current state of tourism destinations, identify future opportunities, and set goals. This methodology comprehensively addresses the strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results of destinations, enabling the optimal evaluation of tourism potential. Similarly, SOAR analysis has been successfully applied in enhancing digital marketing strategies in the hospitality sector, showing significant improvements in customer engagement and satisfaction (Elgahwash et al., 2023; Vardopoulos et al., 2023).

Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar boasts various features, including its geological structure, natural beauty, historical and mythological context, and suitability for outdoor sports, rich ecosystem, and the hospitality of the local population. Evaluating the tourism potential of the region requires considering factors such as environmental sustainability, cultural heritage preservation, and local community involvement. These elements ensure the sustainable management of tourism activities and the transfer of the region's natural and cultural resources to future generations. For instance, increasing the use of digital marketing tools can strengthen the promotion of local tourism destinations and reach broader audiences (Chamboko-mpotaringa & Tichaawa, 2023). In a similar vein, the digitalisation of transport and logistics, as discussed by Popkova et al. (2021), highlights the transformative impact of modern technologies in enhancing the efficiency and reach of various sectors, including tourism. Therefore, integrating modern marketing strategies with sustainable tourism practices can significantly enhance the visibility and attractiveness of Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar, ultimately contributing to the region's economic and social development.

It is thought that Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar can offer various opportunities such as opening new tourism markets, developing infrastructure, effective promotion strategies, ecotourism, sustainable tourism projects. For example, similar approaches have been successfully adopted in other regions and provide valuable information on how tourism potential can be developed (Jagwan, 2023). Highlighting a new region as a tourism destination can attract the attention of local and foreign tourists, increase cultural interaction and contribute to social development (Sandhi Prahara et al., 2020). By applying these strategies to Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar, the region can benefit from its unique characteristics and achieve sustainable growth in the tourism sector.

Enhancing the geotourism potential of Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar can create economic opportunities, such as expanding employment prospects and developing local businesses, which will improve the quality of life for the local population and contribute to social welfare. Therefore, it is crucial to consider economic, social, and environmental dimensions in a balanced manner when determining regional development strategies. The objectives of this study include making Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar one of the leading nature tourism destinations, revitalizing the local economy, establishing a center based on ecotourism principles, and preserving natural and cultural heritage. Recognizing the importance of culture is also essential, as it plays a vital role in shaping the identity and sustainability of tourism destinations (Karakaya, Ay, & Gürel, 2014). Achieving these objectives is expected to result in increased tourist numbers, economic contributions, the adoption of sustainable tourism practices, and the development of tourism infrastructure. Additionally, ensuring quality in all these processes is vital, as it guarantees sustainability and long-term success (Gündüz & Gündüz, 2023; Vardopoulos et al., 2023; Cascade Strategy, 2024).

In conclusion, this study aims to create a comprehensive roadmap that can be applied in both academic research and practical initiatives by assessing the geotourism potential and formulating regional development strategies for Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar. The findings offer valuable insights and actionable guidance for stakeholders in the tourism sector, local administrations, and academia, enabling them to effectively evaluate the region's tourism potential and develop strong, sustainable strategies for its growth.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Geotourism and sustainability

Geotourism, a form of tourism that promotes the preservation of natural and cultural heritage, encompasses eco-friendly and sustainable tourism practices. Research on the impacts of geotourism on regional development and environmental protection indicates that this type of tourism provides both economic and social benefits. Dowling and Newsome (2006) and Gündüz (2022) have noted that geotourism is considered a subset of nature-based tourism, contributing to the conservation of geological heritage and the development of local communities.

The contributions of geotourism to regional development are particularly significant in rural and less developed areas. A study by Hose (1995) highlighted that geotourism diversifies economic activities in rural areas, creates new employment opportunities, and enhances the quality of life for residents. In this context, integrating geotourism projects with sustainable development strategies is crucial for achieving long-term economic and social benefits (Farsani et al., 2011; Ólafsdóttir & Tverijonaite, 2018; Chakrabarty & Mandal, 2018).

Studies on the environmental impacts of geotourism generally emphasise the need for environmentally friendly practices. Newsome, Dowling, and Leung (2012) asserted that geotourism, grounded in the principle of environmental sustainability, ensures the preservation of natural and cultural heritage while preventing ecosystem degradation. In line with the core principles of sustainable tourism, geotourism adopts environmental sustainability to protect local ecosystems (UNWTO, 2019). Furthermore, Buckley (2012) highlighted the importance of promoting practices aimed at the long-term conservation of natural resources within sustainable tourism. Furthermore, the successful implementation of geotourism necessitates the involvement and education of local communities (Ólafsdóttir & Tverijonaite, 2018; Ernawati, Sitawati, & Muliati, 2018).

The cultural impacts of geotourism have also been a significant research topic. Promoting geological heritage through tourism strengthens the cultural identity of local communities and contributes to the preservation of region-specific values. Henriques and Brilha (2017) argued that

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geotourism is a vital tool for the promotion and preservation of local cultures, thereby supporting cultural sustainability.

Recent research continues to explore various dimensions of geotourism. A comprehensive study edited by Reynard and Brilha (2018) examined the theory and practice of geotourism, providing an in-depth analysis of the latest developments and applications in this field. Similarly, ecotourism, as a form of tourism that supports environmental and cultural sustainability, shares parallel objectives with geotourism and significantly contributes to the development of local communities (Weaver, 2001). Weaver (2001) also noted that ecotourism serves as an effective tool for preserving local cultures and promoting sustainable development. Farsani et al. (2014) emphasised the educational aspect of geotourism and its role in raising environmental awareness. Moreover, Ólafsdóttir and Tverijonaite (2018) highlighted the need for more empirical research focusing on the sustainability of geotourism, including its actual impacts on geoheritage and local ecosystems. Overall, the integration of geotourism with sustainable development strategies can significantly contribute to regional development, environmental protection, and cultural preservation, ensuring long-term benefits for both local communities and the broader ecosystem.

Looking at the application areas of geotourism, there are many significant geotourism destinations worldwide. These areas contribute to the preservation of geological and natural heritage while also supporting regional development as tourist attractions. Table 1 presents some significant geotourism sites around the world:

Table 1. Significant Geotourism Sites Worldwide

<i>Country</i>	<i>Geotourism Site</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>
<i>Chile</i>	Atacama Desert	Desert	The driest place on Earth; does not contain geothermal resources.
<i>Iceland</i>	Hot springs	Thermal features	Geysers, waterfalls, mudpots, and fumaroles.
<i>Iceland</i>	Thingvellir National Park	Geological formation	Contains the rift valley between the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates.
<i>Iceland</i>	Jökulsárlón Glacier Lagoon	Glacial lakes	A lagoon formed by glaciers calving from the Vatnajökull glacier.
<i>Italy</i>	Mount Vesuvius	Volcanic activity	Active volcano; last erupted in 1944.
<i>Italy</i>	Stromboli Volcano	Volcanic activity	Active volcano; located on Stromboli Island.
<i>Japan</i>	Beppu	Hot springs	Known as "Hell Valley" with fumaroles and hot springs.
<i>Japan</i>	Hakone	Volcanic activity	Known for its geothermal areas such as Lake Ashi and Owakudani Valley.
<i>New Zealand</i>	Rotorua	Thermal activity	Geysers, mud pools, hot springs, and Maori culture.
<i>New Zealand</i>	Taupo	Volcanic crater lakes	Known for its geothermal activity with Lake Taupo and other crater lakes.
<i>New Zealand</i>	Waitomo Glowworm Caves	Karst formations	Famous for its glowworms.
<i>Peru</i>	Machu Picchu	Inca ruins	An ancient Inca city located in a mountainous region.
<i>Turkey</i>	Cappadocia	Geological and volcanic	Famous for its fairy chimneys, underground cities, and rock-cut churches.
<i>Turkey</i>	Pamukkale	Travertine terraces	Famous for its travertine terraces fed by thermal springs over thousands of years.
<i>USA</i>	Yellowstone National Park	Geothermal features	Geysers, waterfalls, mudpots, fumaroles, and hot springs.
<i>USA</i>	Hawaii Volcanoes National Park	Volcanic activity	Contains active volcanoes such as Kilauea and Mauna Loa.
<i>USA</i>	Grand Canyon	Canyon formations	Formed over millions of years by the Colorado River's erosion.

Source: Author's own elaboration, 2024.

Geotourism sites, as highlighted in Table 1, are often distinguished by their unique natural and geological characteristics. Examples such as the Atacama Desert in Chile and Thingvellir National Park in Iceland clearly illustrate how geotourism not only attracts visitors but also plays a crucial role in preserving natural heritage. These sites demonstrate the dual benefits of geotourism contributing to the local economy while promoting the conservation of significant geological and natural features.

2.2. The impact of the tourism sector on regional development

The tourism sector plays a significant role in the economic and social development of many regions. Various studies have delved into the impacts of tourism on regional development. For instance, Dritsakis (2004) analysed the effects of tourism on economic growth and found that tourism positively influences economic growth in Greece, with this effect being sustainable in the long term. Similarly, a study by Kim, Chen, and Jang (2006) found that tourism supports economic development and improves income distribution in Asian countries, underscoring the broader applicability of these findings.

Tourism contributes to regional development not only through economic benefits but also by significantly impacting social and cultural aspects. Research highlights that tourism plays a vital role in preserving cultural heritage and strengthening local identities (Richards & Wilson, 2006). However, it is essential to acknowledge the potential negative effects of tourism. Butler (1980) argued that excessive tourism development can lead to environmental degradation and social issues, underscoring the need for sustainable tourism practices to ensure balanced regional development. Recent studies further support this, showing that over-tourism can erode cultural sites, increase social tensions, and disrupt local communities. For example, Zhuang et al. (2019) found that tourism development at World Heritage Sites in China significantly altered local social structures and moral values, sometimes leading to the loss of traditional cultural practices. These findings reinforce the importance of sustainable tourism to balance the benefits of tourism with the preservation of local culture and the well-being of residents.

Expanding on this perspective, Rodríguez-Pose and Fratesi (2004) examined the relationship between regional development and tourism, noting the potential role of tourism in reducing regional inequalities in Europe. Their study found that tourism contributes to regional development by increasing infrastructure investments, employment opportunities, and local economic diversity, providing a comprehensive view of tourism's benefits.

Recent studies further support these findings. For instance, research on the impact of rural tourism on sustainable development in Romania found that tourism positively affects economic growth, demographic stability, and socio-economic sustainability (Sustainability, 2018). Similarly, a systematic review examining the effects of heritage tourism on the health and wellbeing of local communities found that tourism helps preserve economic and cultural values, supporting the sustainable development of local communities (Plos One, 2023). The contributions of sustainable tourism to local economies and the social fabric of communities are increasingly recognized as significant. For example, Mihalič (2013) noted that sustainable tourism serves as a long-term strategy that supports both environmental conservation and economic development.

In conclusion, studies on the impacts of tourism on regional development generally indicate a positive relationship. However, for these effects to be sustainable, environmental and social dimensions must also be considered. Therefore, developing strategic plans and policies to optimize the role of tourism in regional development is considered an important outcome of research in this field.

3. PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The primary aim of this research is to assess the geotourism potential of the Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar region using the SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results) analysis and to develop regional development strategies to effectively harness this potential. Given the unique geological structure and natural beauty of Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar, geotourism, which promotes the conservation of natural and cultural heritage through eco-friendly and sustainable tourism practices, presents significant economic and social opportunities.

The significance of this study can be evaluated in several key areas. Firstly, assessing the geotourism potential of Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar can attract new tourism flows to the region, contributing to the revitalization of the local economy. Tourism activities can create new employment opportunities for the local population and enhance economic dynamism in the area, thereby supporting the growth of local businesses and the service sector. Secondly, geotourism activities conducted in accordance with environmental sustainability principles can aid in the preservation of natural and cultural heritage. These efforts will ensure the transmission of the region's unique geological structures and ecosystems to future generations, while cultural heritage preservation projects will enhance local identity by promoting the region's historical and cultural richness.

The importance of this research also extends to social participation and local development. Encouraging local communities to participate in tourism development processes can strengthen social cohesion. The active involvement of the local population in tourism activities will support sustainable development in the region, while the promotion of local crafts and agricultural products will increase economic diversity and support community welfare. Moreover, this study, by using the SOAR analysis methodology, evaluates the tourism potential of the Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar region, providing an important reference in both academic and practical fields. The findings of the research can serve as a model for geotourism projects in other similar regions and offer guiding strategies for stakeholders in the tourism sector and local administrations.

In conclusion, the aim of this study is to reveal the geotourism potential of the Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar region and to develop regional development strategies that provide economic, environmental, and social benefits through sustainable tourism practices. This research seeks to enhance the region's tourism appeal, thereby increasing its recognition at both local and national levels.

4. METHODOLOGY

In this study, the SOAR analysis was used to evaluate the geotourism potential of Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar. The SOAR analysis, frequently preferred in strategic planning and organisational development processes, consists of components: Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results. The reason for choosing this method is that it can comprehensively analyse the region's natural and cultural richness and guide the formation of regional development strategies (Stavros & Hinrichs, 2009).

4.1. Data collection methods

The data collection process of the research consists of three main stages: literature review, semi-structured interviews, and field studies. In the first stage, the existing literature on geotourism, regional development strategies, and tourism potential was reviewed. The literature review is critical for forming the theoretical framework of the research and obtaining information that will underpin the SOAR analysis. Research Methodology Framework is as seen in Figure 1.

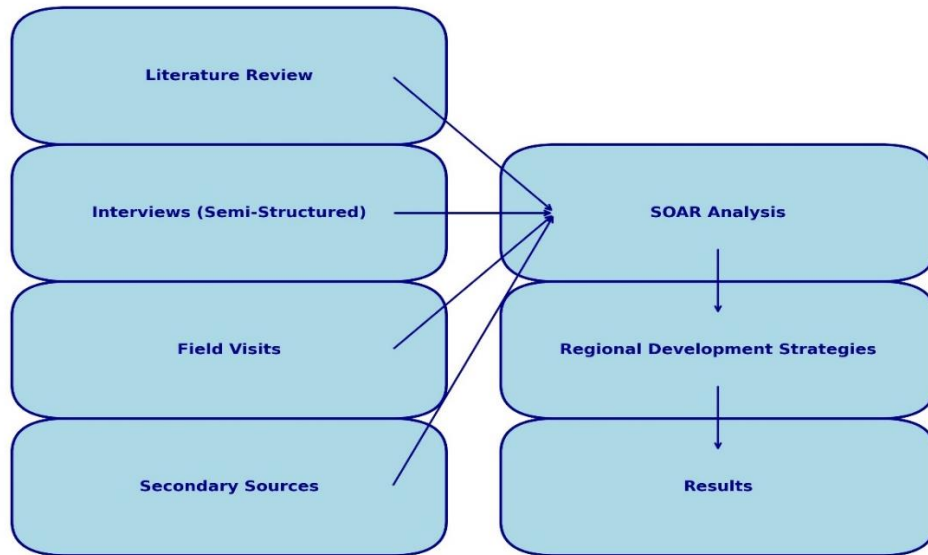


Figure 1. Research Methodology Framework

Source: Author's own elaboration, 2024.

In the second stage, a semi-structured interview form, prepared in line with the SOAR analysis, was used. The semi-structured interview method is a qualitative data collection technique that allows participants to express their in-depth thoughts (Kvale, 1996). The interview form was applied to a group of 12 people consisting of local government representatives, tourism academics, and local people. The interviews were conducted face-to-face, and in-depth questions were asked when needed. The responses received were categorized according to the SOAR model seen in Figure 2.

	Internal	External
Current	S Strengths	O Opportunities
Future	A Aspirations	R Results

Figure 2. SOAR Analysis

Source: Stavros, J. M., & Hinrichs, G. (2009)

In the final stage, field studies were carried out. The researcher visited the Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar region twice, making on-site observations and taking photographs. On-site observation allows for an accurate assessment of the physical characteristics and tourism potential of the region (Yin, 2017). Additionally, the exact location of the region was determined using GPS devices. Existing tourism statistics, geological data, and tourism reports obtained from secondary data sources were also used in the analysis. The use of secondary data sources is essential for verifying and enriching existing information (Bryman, 2012; Ağca & Gündüz, 2023). This study employed

qualitative research methods without utilizing any standardized scales. Due to its nature as field research, it falls outside the purview of studies requiring ethical approval from an institutional review board.

4.2. Data analysis methods

The collected data were examined in detail within the framework of the SOAR analysis, which consists of four main components: Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results. In line with these components, the current situation and future potential of the region were comprehensively evaluated. Understanding the strengths and opportunities is crucial for grasping the current state and potential of the region. Conversely, aspirations and results determine the strategies to be followed to achieve the region's future goals. This comprehensive analysis provides concrete and actionable recommendations for identifying the geotourism potential of Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar and developing effective regional development strategies.

5. FINDINGS

5.1. Field study of Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar region

The Dilim Kayalar Region, located in the Gökçeli town of Niksar district in Tokat, is identified as one of Turkey's notable geological areas. The area exhibits features similar to the natural beauties and geological formations of Cappadocia, drawing attention with these characteristics. The Dilim Kayalar were formed through volcanic eruptions and sedimentation processes, gradually acquiring their distinctive slice-shaped structures due to the effects of wind, rain, and other erosion factors.

This region offers significant research and examination opportunities due to its diverse geological features. Additionally, its natural and geological structures hold substantial tourism potential. The sustainable planning and management of tourism activities, while preserving the geological and natural structure of the Dilim Kayalar Region, is crucial for the long-term conservation of the area.

Field study and observation techniques are fundamental methods widely used in social sciences, enabling researchers to collect data directly in the field. Field study involves the researcher making observations and interacting with participants to gain detailed information about a specific geographic region or community (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). The observation technique systematically collects data by observing events, behaviors, and environmental factors in their natural settings and is divided into participant and non-participant observation (Patton, 2015). These methods offer the opportunity to conduct an in-depth analysis to evaluate the tourism potential of Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar.

Within the scope of the research, a field study was conducted in the Dilim Kayalar Region, located in the Balıca Neighborhood of Gökçeli Town, Niksar district of Tokat province, and various geographical measurements were taken. The Dilim Kayalar Region is situated at 40°34'29" north latitude and 36°43'33" east longitude, with an altitude of 573 meters above sea level. The lowest elevation in the region is 573 meters, and the highest point is 574 meters. These geographical features indicate the topographic diversity and dynamic nature of the natural landscape of the region. This structure of the Dilim Kayalar Region plays a role in evaluating its tourism potential, offering visitors an experience with its natural beauties and geographical features. The measurements and observations made by the researcher in the field create an opportunity for the assessment of ecotourism and nature sports in the region. As a matter of fact, Niksar Çamiçi Plateau, located in an area close to the region, has a similar potential in terms of tourism (Gündüz and Topaloğlu, 2019).

Table 2. Tokat Overall 2023 Tourism Statistics

Category	Tokat Overall
Total Number of Arrivals	204086 people
Total Overnight Stays	387162 nights
Average Length of Stay	1.65 days
Occupancy Rate (%)	31.3 %

Source: Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Tokat Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism (2023)

As shown in Table 2, Tokat attracted a total of 204,086 tourists in 2023, leading to 387,162 overnight stays with an average stay of 1.65 days. The overall occupancy rate was 31.3%, reflecting moderate utilization of available accommodations. While these figures demonstrate a strong tourist presence, there remains significant potential for growth, particularly in extending the average length of stay and enhancing occupancy rates. By improving the tourist experience, increasing promotional activities, and upgrading infrastructure, Tokat could further capitalize on its tourism potential and strengthen its local economy.

When assessing the tourism potential of the Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar region, several significant challenges must be acknowledged. Primarily, the environmental impacts of tourism activities, particularly the risks of erosion and habitat degradation, present serious concerns regarding sustainability. These issues necessitate the implementation of more robust environmental protection strategies during the development of tourism. Additionally, the region's infrastructure deficiencies pose a considerable barrier to the growth of tourism; inadequate transportation and accommodation facilities hinder visitor access and negatively impact tourist satisfaction. The involvement of local communities in tourism projects is another critical challenge; ensuring that the local population benefits economically from these initiatives and is actively engaged in the process is essential for the long-term success of tourism in the area. Despite these challenges, the Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar region offers significant potential in terms of sustainable tourism projects and the exploration of new tourism markets. The area's suitability for ecotourism presents a valuable opportunity to balance environmental conservation with economic development.

Observations made in the field study of the Dilim Kayalar Region noted the structure and morphological features of the rocks in the area. The rocks, as seen in the photograph, stand out with their high and slender structures. These formations have formed as a result of natural erosion processes and exhibit geological features. The vertical and sharp structure of the rocks might have been shaped over time by wind and water erosion. Such formations occur as a result of the erosion effects that sedimentary rocks have been exposed to over many years. The color tones and surface textures of the rocks reflect different mineral compositions and geological processes. Additionally, the vegetation between the rocks is noteworthy, suggesting that microclimatic conditions and soil accumulation between the stones may be present. Such geological formations resemble natural structures known as "hoodoos" or "fairy chimneys." Hoodoos are tall and slender rock columns formed primarily through erosion processes and are seen in many tourist areas worldwide. Studies on the formation of hoodoos indicate that these formations are shaped by a combination of processes such as water and wind erosion, freeze-thaw cycles, and chemical weathering (Bendixen & Andries, 2016).

The geological formation of the Dilim Kayalar Region is a result of volcanic eruptions and sedimentation processes that occurred millions of years ago. Following these processes, the rocks eroded into slice shapes due to the effects of wind, rain, and other erosion factors, giving the area a unique aesthetic. The tourism potential of the region is notable in terms of various recreational

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activities. Activities such as nature walks, camping, photography, rock climbing, and cave exploration offer visitors experiences, allowing them to discover the natural beauties of the area.

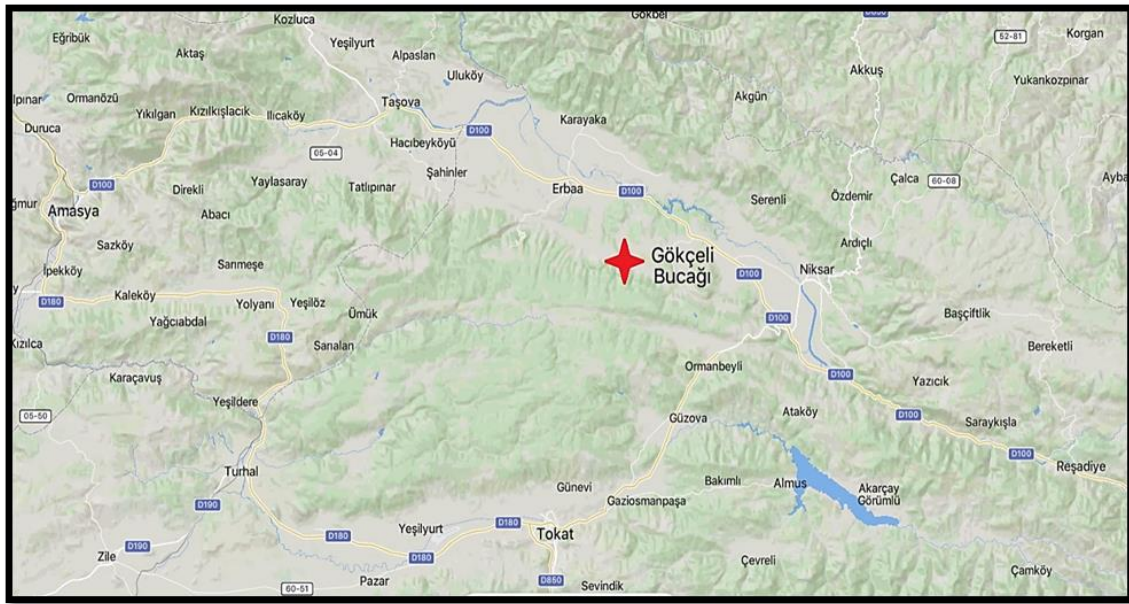


Figure 3. Dilim Kayalar Region Geographical Location

Source: <https://mapcarta.com/29734164/Map>

Direct access to the Dilim Kayalar Region marked on the map in Figure 3 is limited. Transportation to the area is generally provided by renting a vehicle from the airport or by taking public transportation to the town of Gökçeli from the Niksar district. This situation contributes to preserving the isolated nature of the area and aids in conserving the natural environment.

The distances by road to nearby centers from the Dilim Kayalar Region are as follows:

- Niksar: 27 km
- Tokat: 65 km
- Erbaa: 34 km
- Amasya: 96 km

In terms of accommodation, there are no hotels or lodging facilities in the Dilim Kayalar Region. However, camping is possible, and the campgrounds located under the rocks offer stunning views. Additionally, various accommodation options are available in the Niksar district. In addition, Niksar Çamiçi Plateau, located in an area close to the region, has a similar potential in terms of camping tourism (Gündüz and Topaloğlu, 2019).

Eating and drinking facilities are limited, with no restaurants or cafes in the area. Visitors typically bring their food or meet their dining needs in the Niksar district. The Dilim Kayalar Region in the Gökçeli town of Tokat's Niksar district is one of Turkey's geologically significant areas and has high tourism potential. The area, shaped by natural processes, bears traces of volcanic activities and sedimentary accumulations. The rocks, formed by erosion, offer a unique aesthetic. The region is surrounded by pine and oak forests, famous for its natural beauties.

The natural and geological features of the Dilim Kayalar Region, shown in Figure 4, make it attractive for tourism. However, in order to utilize this attractiveness in a sustainable way, transportation and accommodation infrastructure must be improved. These improvements will enrich the experience of visitors while preserving the natural and cultural values of the region.



Figure 4. Dilim Kayalar Region
Source: Author's field study, 2024

The Dilim Kayalar Region offers a variety of opportunities for tourism, providing an ideal environment for activities such as nature walks, camping, photography, rock climbing, and cave exploration. Additionally, historical structures from the Byzantine and Ottoman periods enhance the cultural heritage of the region, increasing its tourism potential. These historical structures offer visitors a glimpse into the past, enriching the touristic appeal of the area.

The local cuisine in the Dilim Kayalar Region includes the unique flavors of Tokat. Dishes such as Tokat kebab, bat, keşkek, walnut bread, and grape molasses are among the must-try flavors for visitors. Additionally, the grape harvest festivals held in the Gökçeli town, known for its vineyards, provide an opportunity for promoting the region. These festivals attract visitors' interest and reflect the cultural diversity and social dynamics of the region, enhancing the tourism experience.

In terms of transportation, the Dilim Kayalar Region can be reached by renting a vehicle from Tokat Airport or using public transportation from the Niksar district. While there are no hotels or lodging facilities in the area, camping is a viable option. The region is particularly impressive when visited in spring and autumn, with temperate weather conditions and natural beauties more prominently displayed during these seasons.

In conclusion, the Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar Region, with its natural landscapes, geological structure, and cultural heritage, is a notable tourism destination for nature lovers and cultural tourists.

5.2. Findings from the interview

This section presents the findings of the SOAR analysis, conducted to assess the geotourism potential of Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar. The analysis draws on data gathered from semi-structured interviews with participants and is organized into four key areas: strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results. Strengths refer to the region's current advantages and attractions, highlighting what makes it unique and appealing. Opportunities focus on the strategies and factors that can further enhance the tourism potential of the area. Aspirations capture the region's future goals and the necessary steps to achieve them. Finally, the results outline the expected benefits and developments that would come from implementing the identified strategies. The detailed findings, derived from participants' insights and the SOAR analysis, are explored in the following sections.

Table 3. Data on Strengths

<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Participants</i>
<i>Geological structure and natural beauty</i>	P1, P4, P7, P10, P12, P3
<i>Legends and historical stories</i>	P2, P6, P9, P11
<i>Suitability for nature and adventure tourism</i>	P3, P5, P8, P10
<i>Unspoiled natural ecosystem</i>	P1, P7, P8, P11, P2
<i>Hospitality of the local people</i>	P4, P9, P12
<i>Cultural and folkloric richness</i>	P3, P5, P6, P10
<i>Ideal environment for photography and nature observation</i>	P6, P9, P11
<i>Seasonal events and festivals</i>	P7, P8, P10, P12, P5
<i>Clean air and peaceful environment</i>	P2, P5, P8, P11

As seen in Table 3, one of the most prominent strengths of Dilim Kayalar is its unique geological structure and natural beauty. The majority of participants highlighted this feature, noting the region's distinct geological formation with varying colours and vegetation across different seasons. P1 expressed this view by saying, "The geological structure of the area is truly unique. It has a very different geological formation with different colours and vegetation in different seasons." P4 also noted, "The unique rock formations and canyons of Dilim Kayalar set it apart from other natural beauties. This is a major attraction for tourists." This strength supports the suitability of Dilim Kayalar for nature and adventure tourism. P3 mentioned, "The region offers an ideal environment for outdoor sports such as trekking, rock climbing, and camping," highlighting this perspective.

Seasonal events and festivals in the region are another important strength of Dilim Kayalar. P7 mentioned, "The festivals held every year bring vitality to the area. They are quite colourful and lively with the participation of both locals and tourists." P8 emphasized the attractiveness of these events to tourists, saying, "Seasonal events are a good reason for tourists to visit again. Open-air concerts in the summer and snow festivals in the winter are quite popular." Additionally, the hospitality of the local people plays a significant role in the success of these events. P4 said, "The friendly and hospitable attitude of the locals increases the interest of tourists in the area."

These strengths enhance the natural and cultural appeal of Dilim Kayalar and attract the interest of tourists. When properly promoted, these features of the region can further increase its tourism potential.

Table 4. Data on Opportunities

<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Participants</i>
<i>Discovery of new tourism markets</i>	P1, P7, P8, P10
<i>Investment and infrastructure development opportunities</i>	P4, P6, P9, P11, P12
<i>Promotion activities and marketing strategies</i>	P2, P9, P10, P12
<i>Benefiting from regional and national tourism trends</i>	P1, P7, P8, P3, P5
<i>Ecotourism and sustainable tourism projects</i>	P3, P8, P10, P11
<i>Special tour packages and experiential tourism opportunities</i>	P5, P9, P10, P12
<i>Educational tours and scientific research trips</i>	P2, P6, P8, P11
<i>Promotion and sale of local handicrafts and products</i>	P4, P7, P9, P12
<i>Nomination for UNESCO World Heritage List</i>	P5, P8, P10
<i>Promotion at international tourism fairs</i>	P3, P6, P9, P11

As seen in Table 4, participants highlighted the need for developing the tourism infrastructure in the region. P4 said, "The tourism infrastructure in the region needs to be developed. I believe the number of tourists will increase as accommodation and transportation facilities improve." P6 noted the importance of sustainable investments, stating, "With new investments, the tourism potential of the region can be better evaluated. Especially eco-friendly hotels and facilities are important for sustainable tourism." P12 also pointed out the economic benefits of such investments, saying, "As infrastructure develops, the region will attract more international tourists. This is a great opportunity for economic development."

Ecotourism and sustainable tourism projects present a significant opportunity to maintain tourism activities while preserving the natural beauty of the region. P3 highlighted the importance of these projects, saying, "Dilim Kayalar is an excellent place for ecotourism projects. It is very important to sustain tourism activities while preserving natural beauty." P8 stressed the benefits of eco-friendly tourism, stating, "Tourism projects that are sensitive to the environment should be developed without disturbing the natural structure of the region. This will protect the environment and be attractive to tourists." Additionally, opportunities to benefit from regional and national tourism trends can increase the attractiveness of the region. P1 mentioned, "We can make the region more attractive by following tourism trends."

These opportunities can be leveraged to enhance the tourism potential of Dilim Kayalar and position it as a sustainable tourism destination. With the right investments and projects, the tourism potential of the region can be further elevated.

Table 5. Data on Aspirations

<i>Aspirations</i>	<i>Participants</i>
<i>Making Dilim Kayalar one of Turkey's leading nature tourism destinations</i>	P1, P7, P10, P11, P2, P3
<i>Increasing income from the tourism sector for the local people and contributing to economic development</i>	P4, P6, P11, P12
<i>Positioning Dilim Kayalar as a tourism centre adhering to ecotourism and sustainable tourism principles</i>	P2, P8, P10
<i>Preserving and passing on the geological structure, natural beauty, legends, and historical stories of Dilim Kayalar to future generations</i>	P3, P7, P9, P12, P4
<i>Modernising, diversifying, and bringing the region's tourism infrastructure to international standards</i>	P4, P7, P11, P5, P6
<i>Providing unforgettable and unique experiences for tourists visiting Dilim Kayalar</i>	P5, P8, P10, P12
<i>Making Dilim Kayalar an important centre for scientific research and educational tourism</i>	P2, P6, P9
<i>Creating an attractive destination for nature sports and adventure tourism and diversifying activities in these areas</i>	P3, P7, P11, P1, P8
<i>Preserving local culture and handicrafts, promoting them to tourists, and supporting this sector</i>	P1, P5, P8, P12
<i>Positioning Dilim Kayalar as a safe, clean, and sustainable tourism destination</i>	P6, P9, P11

As seen in Table 5, participants believe that Dilim Kayalar has the potential to become one of Turkey's leading nature tourism destinations. P1 pointed out this potential by saying, "With its natural beauty and unique geological structure, the region can become one of Turkey's most important nature tourism destinations." P10 emphasized the importance of promotion, saying, "With the right promotion and marketing strategies, it is possible for Dilim Kayalar to become an international nature tourism centre." P11 also highlighted the region's appeal, stating, "This area offers unique experiences for nature enthusiasts and adventurers. The potential is very high."

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Positioning Dilim Kayalar as a tourism centre adhering to ecotourism and sustainable tourism principles is another aspiration highlighted by the participants. P2 stated, "It is very important to position Dilim Kayalar as a sustainable tourism centre with ecotourism projects." P8 emphasized the long-term success of sustainability, saying, "Ensuring tourism activities are sustainable by preserving the natural structure of the region will provide long-term success."

Additionally, it is an important aspiration for the local community to earn more income from the tourism sector and contribute to economic development. P4 noted, "As tourism activities increase, the economic situation of the local people will also improve."

These aspirations are important steps to enhance the future tourism potential of Dilim Kayalar. With the right strategies and projects, the region can become a sustainable and popular tourism destination.

Table 6. Data on Results

<i>Results</i>	<i>Participants</i>
<i>Ensuring a steady increase in the number of tourists visiting Dilim Kayalar</i>	P1, P4, P10, P3, P8
<i>Increasing the contribution of tourism to the regional economy and raising the welfare level of the local people</i>	P3, P9, P11, P12
<i>Ensuring the adoption of sustainable tourism practices in Dilim Kayalar and establishing an environmentally sensitive tourism approach</i>	P2, P5, P8, P10, P4, P7
<i>Implementing projects to preserve the natural and cultural heritage of Dilim Kayalar and passing this heritage on to future generations</i>	P6, P7, P9
<i>Improving the tourism infrastructure in the region to increase visitor satisfaction and the number of repeat visitors</i>	P1, P4, P7, P11
<i>Raising the national and international recognition of Dilim Kayalar and creating brand awareness in tourism</i>	P3, P8, P10, P12, P5
<i>Increasing the number of visitors coming to Dilim Kayalar for scientific research and educational purposes</i>	P2, P5, P9, P12
<i>Increasing the number and diversity of nature sports and adventure tourism activities</i>	P1, P6, P8, P10, P3, P9
<i>Ensuring that local handicrafts and products reach a wider audience through tourism, thereby contributing to the local economy</i>	P3, P5, P7, P9

As seen in Table 6, participants have noted a steady increase in the number of tourists visiting Dilim Kayalar. P1 emphasized this increase by saying, "We see a steady increase in the number of tourists. Especially natural beauties and events attract more tourists every year." P4 explained the reasons for this increase, stating, "Promotional activities and infrastructure improvements have been effective in increasing the number of visitors." This increase has been supported by promotional activities and marketing strategies. P2 stated, "Thanks to promotional activities, the recognition of the region has increased, and this has been reflected in the number of tourists."

Projects aimed at preserving the natural and cultural heritage of Dilim Kayalar are of great importance for the sustainability of the region. P6 emphasized the importance of these projects, stating, "Projects to protect the natural and cultural heritage will increase the long-term tourism potential of the region." P7 highlighted the educational benefits of these projects, saying, "These projects help raise awareness among both locals and tourists. They are very important for future generations." These projects are carried out in accordance with the principles of ecotourism and sustainable tourism. P3 noted, "We continue tourism activities while preserving the natural beauty of the region with sustainable tourism practices."

These results demonstrate that the tourism potential of Dilim Kayalar needs to be properly evaluated and supported by sustainable tourism practices. Steps taken in this direction can ensure the long-term success of the region.

Participants have noted that improving tourism infrastructure in the region is important for increasing visitor satisfaction and repeat visitor numbers. P1 emphasized the importance of infrastructure, saying, "Improving accommodation and transportation facilities increases the desire of tourists to visit again." P4 also noted, "As infrastructure develops, the comfort and satisfaction of tourists increase. This makes the interest in the area continuous." Additionally, promotional activities and marketing strategies have increased the recognition of the region. P7 stated, "Thanks to promotional activities, Dilim Kayalar reaches wider audiences, and the number of tourists increases."

Increasing the recognition of Dilim Kayalar and creating brand awareness in tourism is another important result mentioned by the participants. P3 stated, "Promotions at international tourism fairs play a major role in increasing the recognition of the region." P8 emphasized the importance of promotion for brand awareness, saying, "Promotion of the region is an important step in creating brand awareness in tourism. This increases the interest of tourists even more."

These results indicate that significant progress has been made in sustainably increasing the tourism potential of Dilim Kayalar and enhancing its international visibility. By implementing the right strategies and projects, the region's tourism potential can be further expanded, ensuring long-term success.

CONCLUSION

The Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar region, with its unique geological formations and rich cultural heritage, attracts attention and has significant potential for geotourism and regional development. This study employs a SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results) analysis to systematically evaluate this potential and formulate strategic regional development plans. Based on the findings derived from comprehensive research, eight key strategic areas have been identified: enhancing tourism infrastructure, implementing effective promotion and marketing strategies, adopting sustainable tourism practices, fostering community involvement, diversifying tourism activities, conserving natural and cultural heritage, improving visitor experience, and ensuring continuous research and monitoring. These strategies collectively aim to elevate the region's status as a premier nature tourism destination, stimulate local economic growth, and preserve its unique environmental and cultural assets for future generations. This comprehensive approach provides a robust framework for sustainable regional development, leveraging the unique strengths and opportunities inherent in the Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar region.

To enhance the tourism potential of the Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar region, a strategic approach that balances the existing challenges and opportunities is essential. Ensuring environmental sustainability should be a priority, with carefully planned tourism activities that protect natural resources. Strategic investments in infrastructure should aim to improve the tourism experience and increase visitor numbers. Simultaneously, it is crucial to encourage the active participation of local communities in tourism processes, ensuring that they reap economic benefits and are integral to the region's development. The rich cultural and historical heritage of the area should be promoted and preserved, contributing to the sustainable growth of tourism. These strategies will position Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar as a leading nature tourism destination both nationally and internationally, significantly contributing to the region's long-term development.

Infrastructure development

The necessity of improving tourism infrastructure in the region has been emphasized from various perspectives. One participant stated, "Improving tourism infrastructure is necessary. I believe that enhancing accommodation and transportation facilities will increase the number of tourists." Another participant highlighted the importance of sustainable investments, stating, "New

investments can better harness the tourism potential of the region. In particular, environmentally friendly hotels and facilities are crucial for sustainable tourism."

While enhancing tourism infrastructure is essential to increase the accessibility and attractiveness of Dilim Kayalar, it is equally important that these developments prioritize environmental sustainability. Sustainable infrastructure projects, such as eco-friendly accommodations and green transportation networks, should be prioritized to minimize environmental impact and support long-term tourism practices.

To effectively reduce the environmental footprint of tourism, infrastructure development should integrate renewable energy sources, water conservation systems, and comprehensive waste management strategies. Implementing strict environmental protection regulations and conducting regular environmental impact assessments are also critical to managing potential risks and ensuring that tourism development does not compromise the region's natural and cultural heritage. As Dodds and Butler (2009) emphasize, "Sustainable tourism development requires a long-term perspective that considers the carrying capacity of the environment and the needs of future generations."

The views of Dredge and Jenkins (2007) further support the idea that improving tourism infrastructure can significantly boost tourist interest and economic benefits in a region. However, they also caution that these improvements must be made with an environmentally responsible approach to avoid any negative consequences that could arise from unchecked development.

Promotion and marketing

The importance of effective promotional activities and marketing strategies has been emphasised by the participants. One participant mentioned, "The annual festivals bring vibrancy to the region. They are quite lively with the participation of both locals and tourists." Another participant noted, "Seasonal events are a good reason for tourists to visit again. Open-air concerts in summer and snow festivals in winter are quite popular." Effective promotional and marketing strategies are vital for enhancing the visibility and appeal of Dilim Kayalar on national and international platforms. Collaborations with tourism boards, participation in international tourism fairs, and targeted digital marketing campaigns can significantly raise the region's profile. Developing a strong brand identity that emphasises Dilim Kayalar's unique geological features, cultural heritage, and environmentally friendly tourism opportunities will attract diverse tourist demographics. This perspective aligns with the work of Kotler, Bowen, and Makens (2014), who highlight that well-planned marketing campaigns and events can enhance the attractiveness of tourism destinations.

Ecotourism and sustainable tourism projects

Participants highlighted that Dilim Kayalar is ideal for ecotourism projects. One noted, "Dilim Kayalar is excellent for ecotourism. It's crucial to sustain tourism while preserving natural beauty." Another added, "Environmentally sensitive projects should protect the region's natural structure while attracting tourists." Implementing ecotourism is vital for promoting tourism and preserving the area's natural and cultural heritage. Projects should focus on environmental conservation, biodiversity protection, and maintaining geological integrity. Initiatives like guided eco-tours, conservation education, and partnerships with environmental organisations can support sustainable tourism. Activities such as hiking, bird watching, and nature photography can attract environmentally conscious tourists. This aligns with Weaver (2006), who highlights the role of ecotourism in balancing environmental protection with local economic development.

Community involvement and local economic development

The notion that increasing tourism activities will improve the economic situation of the local population has been shared. One participant mentioned, "As tourism activities increase, the economic situation of the local population will also improve." Another participant added, "As infrastructure develops, the region will attract more international tourists. This is a great opportunity for economic development." Community involvement in tourism development is vital for the sustainability and success of tourism initiatives. Local communities should be actively involved in decision-making processes, well-informed, and directly benefit from tourism activities. As a matter of fact, in the study of Rezaei et al. (2024), the importance of sharing in food and beverage businesses was emphasized. Training programmes and workshops can enhance the skills of local artisans, guides, and hospitality workers. Introducing local crafts and agricultural products to tourists can provide additional income sources for the community, promoting economic development. Encouraging the participation of local businesses in tourism-related services such as accommodation, food, and transportation can also invigorate the local economy. This perspective is supported by Tosun (2000), who argues that community involvement in tourism development enhances economic growth and social acceptance.

Diversification of tourism activities

The region's natural beauty and unique geological structure position it to become one of Turkey's top nature tourism destinations. One participant remarked, "With its natural beauty and unique geological features, this area could be one of Turkey's most important nature tourism spots." Another added, "The region offers unique experiences for nature lovers and adventurers, with great potential." Expanding the range of tourism activities in Dilim Kayalar could attract a broader audience and boost its appeal. Adventure tourism options like rock climbing, caving, and mountain biking could draw thrill-seekers, while educational tours and scientific research trips could engage academics and students. Cultural festivals, traditional music and dance performances, and historical storytelling could enrich visitors' cultural experiences. Additionally, offering special tour packages that combine these activities could provide tourists with comprehensive and memorable experiences. This approach is supported by Buhalis and Costa (2006), who found that diversifying tourism activities can attract more tourists and increase demand for the region.

Conservation of natural and cultural heritage

The importance of projects to protect natural and cultural heritage for the long-term tourism potential of the region has been highlighted. One participant stated, "Projects to protect natural and cultural heritage will enhance the region's long-term tourism potential." Another participant added, "These projects increase awareness among both locals and tourists. They are very important for future generations."

Preserving the natural and cultural heritage of Dilim Kayalar is essential for maintaining the region's appeal as a tourism destination. Conservation projects should focus on protecting geological formations, endemic species, and historical sites. Establishing conservation areas and implementing strict regulations on tourism activities are crucial steps to prevent environmental degradation. For instance, Dodds and Butler (2010) emphasize that sustainable tourism development requires a long-term perspective that considers the carrying capacity of the environment and the needs of future generations.

Moreover, cultural heritage initiatives should aim to document, preserve, and promote local traditions, folklore, and historical narratives. Collaborating with academic institutions and cultural organizations can support these conservation efforts. Additionally, the implementation of eco-friendly tourism infrastructure, such as renewable energy systems and waste management

strategies, can further minimize environmental impact. As Timothy and Boyd (2003) highlight, conserving natural and cultural heritage is a cornerstone of sustainable tourism development, ensuring that tourism activities do not compromise the integrity of the region's resources.

Enhancing visitor experience and satisfaction

The belief that improving accommodation and transportation facilities will increase tourists' desire to revisit has been shared. One participant mentioned, "Improving accommodation and transportation facilities increases tourists' desire to revisit." Another participant added, "As infrastructure develops, tourists' comfort and satisfaction increase. This sustains interest in the region." Improving the overall visitor experience is key to encouraging repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth promotion. Providing high-quality customer service, clean and safe facilities, and informative and entertaining tours can enhance visitor satisfaction. Feedback mechanisms such as surveys and suggestion boxes can help identify areas for improvement. Regularly updating and maintaining tourism infrastructure is also important for ensuring a positive visitor experience. This perspective is supported by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) through the SERVQUAL model, which emphasises the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Research and monitoring

There is consensus that conservation projects will enhance the long-term tourism potential of the region. One participant stated, "Conservation projects will enhance the region's long-term tourism potential." Another participant added, "These projects increase awareness among both locals and tourists. They are very important for future generations." Evaluating the impact of tourism on Dilim Kayalar and ensuring the sustainability of tourism initiatives requires continuous research and monitoring. Regular studies on visitor numbers, economic benefits, and environmental impact can provide valuable data for strategic planning. Monitoring tourism trends and visitor feedback can help identify emerging opportunities and challenges. Collaborating with research institutions and involving local stakeholders in data collection and analysis can enhance the effectiveness of research efforts. Buhalis and Amaranggana (2013) emphasise the importance of data collection and analysis processes for the sustainable management of tourism destinations. These processes support strategic planning by helping to minimise the environmental and social impacts of tourism development.

Recommendations for future researchers, local governments, and tourism investors

Based on the findings of this study, various important recommendations are being proposed for future researchers, local governments, and tourism investors. Firstly, it is recommended that future researchers undertake long-term studies aimed at analysing the environmental and economic impacts of tourism projects in the Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar region. Such research is considered critical for assessing the effectiveness of implemented strategies and identifying emerging trends in geotourism. Continuous scholarly inquiry is thought to contribute to the sustainable management of tourism development.

For local governments, it is deemed important to actively involve residents and stakeholders in the decision-making processes related to development projects. This could include consulting village leaders, local shopkeepers, and community members during the planning and implementation phases of new tourism facilities, as it is believed this could make the projects more inclusive. Furthermore, it is recommended that local authorities prioritise sustainable infrastructure projects, such as eco-friendly accommodation and energy-efficient transport solutions, to balance economic development with environmental conservation.

Tourism investors are being advised to focus on eco-friendly and culturally enriching tourism experiences, which are increasingly in demand among contemporary travellers. Investment in activities such as nature walks, workshops on local crafts, and organic farming experiences is considered to provide unique and authentic tourist offerings while supporting the local economy. Additionally, adopting innovative marketing strategies, such as social media campaigns and collaborations with influencers, is thought to be an effective way of promoting the region's natural and cultural heritage on a global scale.

Adherence to these recommendations is expected to allow the Tokat Gökçeli Dilim Kayalar region to progress towards sustainable development while enhancing its visibility and reputation within the international tourism market. This approach is believed to ensure that both the environment and local communities benefit equitably from the growth of the tourism sector.

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