

POMAK KÜLTÜRÜNÜN VE PAVLİ PANAYIRININ SÜRDÜRÜLEBİLİR VE KÜLTÜREL TURİZMDE DEĞERLENDİRİLMESİ VE TANITIMI¹

ASSESSING AND PROMOTING POMAK CULTURE AND PAVLİ FAIR IN SUSTAINABLE AND CULTURAL TOURİSM

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Öz

Sürdürülebilirlik kavramı, günümüzün en tartışmalı ve düşündürücü konularından biri olarak kabul edilmektedir. Ayrıca bu fikir turizm sektöründe daha da önem kazanmaya başlamıştır. Yürütülen faaliyetlerin sürdürülebilirliđi ve aynı zamanda bunların ortasında yer alan toplulukların sürdürülebilirliđi, kültür turizminin önemi artmaya devam ettikçe ve turizmin tanımı gelişmeye devam ettikçe daha fazla dikkat çekmektedir. Turizm sektöründeki ilgili festival ve fuarların araştırılmasının son derece önemli olduđu açıkça ortaya çıkmıştır. Bunun nedeni, farklı medeniyetlerin gelenekleri, görenekleri, yaşam tarzları ve ritüelleri gibi büyüleyici konuların çođalmasıdır. Bu çalışma ile Pavli Panayırı ve Pomak kültürünü bu özel durum çerçevesinde değerlendirmek ve tanıtmak amacıyla literatüre katkı yapılması amaçlanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sürdürülebilir turizm, Kültürel turizm, Etkinlik turizmi, Festival turizmi, Pomak kültürü, Pavli panayırı

JEL Sınıflaması: L82, L83, M14, O18, Q01, Q56, R11, Z10, Z32.

Abstract

The concept of sustainability is widely considered to be one of the most contentious and thought-provoking issues of the present day. Additionally, this idea has started to become more significant in the tourism industry. The sustainability of the activities that are carried out and, concurrently, the sustainability of the communities that are located in the midst of them are attracting a greater amount of attention as the relevance of cultural tourism continues to expand and as the definition of tourism continues to evolve. It has become abundantly clear that it is of utmost importance to investigate the relevant festivals and fairs in the tourism industry. This is because of the proliferation of fascinating topics such as the customs, traditions, lifestyles, and rituals of different civilizations. There were contributions made to the body of literature with the intention of assessing and promoting Pavli Fair and Pomak culture within the context of this specific situation.

Keywords: Sustainable tourism, Cultural tourism, Event tourism, Festival tourism, Pomak culture, Pavli fair.

JEL Classification: L82, L83, M14, O18, Q01, Q56, R11, Z10, Z32.

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1. Introduction

Although tourism is a growing industry, its open structure might cause lasting damage to natural and cultural assets (Er & Bardakoğlu, 2016: 96). Authorities are prioritizing sustainability to maintain natural and cultural assets, which are vital to tourism. Individuals engage in tourism for various reasons (Ünlüöner, Tayfun & Kılıçlar, 2011: 21). Alternative tourism kinds have been established to make sustainability easier and to meet changing tourism expectations. Many activities fall under alternative tourism, which includes faith, gastronomy, culture, health, and caverns. Because people have always been interested in diverse cultures and use cultural attractions as a travel motivator, distinctive tourist activities have developed (Diker, 2019: 673). Cultural tourism has grown in importance due to people's desire to experience diverse cultures, especially with the diversification of touristic products and technology advances (Gül & Gül, 2019: 1237-1238). Protecting and preserving the historical and cultural heritage of civilizations is crucial for their continuity (Açııcı, Ertaş & Sönmez, 2017: 53-54). According to Atak, Tatar & Tunaseli (2017: 1396), folk culture aspects including art, culture, folklore, and festivals have a crucial role in forming cultural legacy and passing on values to future generations through rituals, lifestyles, and traditions. In societies whose cultural heritage cannot be passed on and new generations are continuously seeking to relearn earlier discoveries, civilizations die (Akay, 2006). To prevent this, festivals are crucial for ethnic communities to share and transfer values while developing social structures (Small, Edwards, Sheridan, 2005: 66; Gül, Erdem & Gül, 2013: 213). According to Yürük, Akyol & Şimşek (2017: 367), community-based festivals can have major economic and sociocultural impacts, leading to increased popularity within countries. The literature on sustainability, sustainable tourism, cultural heritage, cultural tourism, Pomak culture, and Pavli Fair was evaluated in order. With the literature analysed, Pavli Fair sustainability and promotion were stressed.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Sustainability and Sustainable Tourism

The concept of sustainability is defined as "the use of natural products and energy in a manner that does not harm nature" and "the capacity to persist" (Oxford University Press, n.d.). This concept can be viewed as a bridge between the growing society and economic factors, as it can be used as a broad framework (Rosato et al., 2021: 1). According to Perez et al. (2013: 316), it can be influenced by environmental, socio-cultural, and economic frameworks. The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) defined sustainable development as "developments that meet the needs of the time without compromising the resources necessary to meet the needs of future generations" based on two primary concepts: prioritizing needs and establishing appropriate limitations (World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), 1987). Sustainability is a concept that has been widely adopted in numerous fields, including engineering, biology, and physics, particularly since the 1960s, when it gained popularity and WCED brought it to the forefront (Steer & Wade-Gery, 1993: 23).

In addition to economic benefits, decision makers have disclosed that environmental and social impacts should be taken into account in business processes with the integration of sustainable developments into industries and the comprehension of sustainability (Wichaisri & Sopadang, 2017: 1-2). Studies on the negative aspects of industries are examined within the framework of sustainability, as a result of the development of the concept of sustainability. It has been asserted that tourism, which has experienced significant growth and has become a developed industry, can have significant negative consequences when sustainability is taken into account (Çelik & Bahar, 2014: 369). Sustainability has also begun to be perceived as a moral and ethical issue as a result of the adverse consequences that have been observed as a result of the intensive use of resources in the tourism industry (He, He & Xu, 2018: 4-5). In addition to the adverse effects observed in the physical environment, the concept of sustainability also asserts that the failure to guarantee social justice results in a social decline (Bahaire & White, 1999). In this context, it has been observed that the preservation of environmental and cultural values is essential for the future of humanity (Piner & Paradis, 2004: 81). Tourism, an industry that is centered on people and society and is based on human relations, should be viewed as a whole with sustainable developments in order to prevent the resulting deteriorations (Duran, 2011: 292). This is why regions should be assessed rather than impoverished, to ensure that sustainable developments that are to be incorporated into tourism do not disrupt social, cultural, and environmental balances and resources (McKercher, 1993: 6). In destinations where tourism is conducted, individuals are exposed to a diverse array of tourism activities and develop opinions regarding the industry (Sharpley, 2014: 37). A love-hate relationship between local residents and tourism can be observed as a consequence of these formations (McKercher, 1993: 6). While destructive effects on local communities, cultures, and nature are evident, economic, cultural, and social developments and their implications for welfare are also discussed (Kim, Uysal & Sirgy, 2013; Hanrahan & McLoughlin, 2016; Biagi et al., 2020). The appropriate development strategies should be implemented within the tourism industry to generate positive effects and benefits, rather than negative ones (Slabbert, Plessis & Digun-Aweto, 2021: 4). In this context, it can be asserted that sustainable developments are rendered more beneficial by tourism activities, and studies can be conducted under the auspices of sustainable

tourism (Nicholas, Thapa, & Ko, 2009: 394). United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (2005) define sustainable tourism as "tourism that meets the needs of visitors, industry, the environment, and host communities, taking into account all current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts" within the framework of the created vision.

2.2. Cultural Heritage and Cultural Tourism

Throughout the centuries, humanity has been accompanied by a multitude of tangible and intangible heritages that have been transmitted to the present day. Kiper (2004: 14) investigated the resources that, within the context of cultural heritage, can assist in the establishment of a connection between the past and the future, foster a sense of commitment, and address identity inquiries, but are not renewable. Korođlu et al. (2018: 99) defined the same concept as the expression of the existence of peoples who lived in history. Monuments, building groups, and sites are all included in the definition of cultural heritage as outlined in the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Türkiye, 1983).

Sustainable development can be ensured by the cultural heritages that are present. In this context, the Convention for the Protection of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was adopted in 2003, which categorized cultural heritages into tangible and intangible, recognizing that certain heritages are in greater danger. The Convention defines tangible cultural heritage as structures that can be physically observed and are considered to be part of the heritage, such as statues, monuments, and buildings. Intangible cultural heritage is defined as products such as objects, signs, and information that are part of the cultures of people (Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Türkiye, 2003).

It is imperative to safeguard cultural heritage in order to prevent its degradation and ensure its preservation. In order to guarantee the sustainability of heritage under the protection of the term, it is necessary to transmit, develop, revive its various aspects, and increase awareness (Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Türkiye, 2003). In reality, the safeguarding and advancement of cultural heritage in accordance with the principles of sustainable development can be interpreted as safeguarding human history (Akay, 2006: 39; Gül & Gül, 2019: 1238). In terms of individuals and societies that embrace protected heritage, tourism can generate positive socio-cultural effects (Avcıkurt, 2017: 57). Additionally, the World Tourism Organization (2018) has reported that the rate of travels undertaken within the context of traditional cultural outputs for cultural heritage is higher than that of travels decided with cultural motivations. As a result, the cultural and historical heritages of destinations are regarded as crucial for the advancement of tourism, and as a result, the destination and its culture (Ismagilova, Safiullin & Bagautdinova, 2014: 363-364).

Cultural tourism is a tourism activity that is multifaceted and is undergoing rapid development. It is conducted by individuals in order to satisfy their cultural requirements and acquire knowledge and experience (Bachleitner & Zins, 1999: 199). Reisinger (1994: 24) also proposed a similar definition, describing it as a form of tourism that involves the pursuit of profound and novel intellectual, aesthetic, emotive, or psychological cultural experiences. Cultural tourism is generally defined as a form of tourism in which the motivation is entirely or partially derived from artistic, historical, cultural, or scientific heritage (Silberberg, 1995: 361).

The significance of conserving resources and utilizing them sustainably is underscored by the potential for cultural tourism products to become obsolete and unrecognizable over time, as well as the unbalanced expansion of tourism (Chhabra, 2009: 310). In order to safeguard against the potential adverse consequences of tourism, stakeholders should implement sustainability principles (Loulanski & Loulanski, 2011: 851).

2.3. Event Tourism

Getz (1989) was able to establish a framework for event tourism, which can be attributed to its conceptual development in the late 1980s, despite the fact that it was not extensively employed in the literature at the time. Currently, it can be asserted that this concept encompasses all activities that can be planned using an integrated approach that involves development and marketing (Getz, 2008). It can offer substantial advantages to both developed cities and local communities when the area it encompasses and its advantages are taken into account (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2011: 189). Opportunities to extend the peak season can be identified when events are taken into account. Destinations and the industry are significantly impacted by events due to the advantages they offer in terms of the duration of stay, expenditures, and promotional activities (Getz, 2008). The tourism movement has the potential to enhance the destinations' image and facilitate the implementation of constructive initiatives (Tayfun & Arslan, 2013: 192). In this context, event tourism is on the rise in the global tourism market and is a viable topic for research, as Getz (2008) noted.

It is possible to assert that events are becoming increasingly significant in the perspectives of individuals as a means of evaluating their leisure time and acquiring new experiences. Yavuz and Altınay (2015: 156) have asserted that activities that are conducted in accordance with cultural values may be required to include entertainment.

Intergenerational connections can be established through events that are organized around cultural heritage. Information can be transmitted through these connections, and awareness can be raised regarding the sustainability of information (Erdem & Gülcan, 2021: 198).

Indeed, it would be accurate to assert that events, including festivals, celebrations, and fairs, have become a significant component of production and consumption within cultures (Yolal, 2017: 36). The attraction of visitors and investors can be enhanced by the development of the destination's image and the creation of originality within the destination, which can be achieved by continuing existing events or establishing new ones (Quinn, 2005: 8).

Event tourism can be defined as the planning, development, and marketing of events as attractions to maximize the number of visitors in tourism movements, as viewed within the context of the explanations (Getz, 1997: 16). Consequently, it will be feasible to secure an advantage in the tourism industry's fiercely competitive environment by offering events that differentiate oneself (Özdemir, 2014: 44). The differentiation that is established will simultaneously enhance the originality of the events and facilitate the dissemination of tourism to other regions by disseminating tourism movements across multiple regions rather than a single region (Bowdin et al., 2006: 74).

2.4. Festival Tourism

Festivals can have many meanings for communities. For some communities, they play major roles in the formation of religion and culture (Vahed, 2002), while for others, ceremonies and ideological, educational and cultural values are used in the formation and transmission of ethnic identity (Bres & Davis, 2001: 333; Nguyen, 2021: 435). Festivals can be seen as official or unofficial periods of fun activities, events that have an entertainment or festive character or celebrate an event, fact or concept (Janiskee, 1980: 97). In another study, they can be defined as regular seasonal celebrations that are usually held at predetermined times each year, include traditional rituals, performances, ceremonies and mass games, are usually held in line with the beliefs of the local people of the festival and can be seen as worship to the gods believed in by some (Nguyen, 2021: 436).

While O'Sullivan and Jackson (2002: 325) define festival tourism as the visits of people outside the region during the period when the festival takes place; Ritchie (1984) defines it as events developed for a certain period of time and increasing the awareness and attractiveness of the destination. When viewed from a general perspective, it can be seen that the concept includes many activities that people can perform (Shaw & Williams, 2002: 266).

Although it can be seen as important with the economic contributions they provide (Quinn, 2005: 328-329), Bres and Davis (2001: 329) state that the ethnic groups that form the values of festivals see the festival as a reflection of the culture and history of the community, rather than just a money-making tourist attraction, as fun and community-based activities. In this way, it can be said that both the identity of the groups and the destination develops. It has been seen that festivals cause increases in the level of welfare of the community along with social solidarity and community capacity (Yolal, Gürsoy, Uysal, Kim & Karacaoğlu, 2016: 3).

Festivals introduce people to different cultures around the world and stimulate people's curiosity for new lives (Çulha, 2008). In this way, festivals encourage people to participate in tourism activities and provide benefits to the regions they are in (Tayfun & Arslan, 2013). It can be said that festivals attract attention in terms of destination marketing, urban development and social changes with their many features. So much so that festivals and local celebrations have become a new political economy area and can provide welfare to the community (Prasetyo et al., 2021). It has also been stated that they contribute to the service sector by supporting the local (O'Sullivan & Jackson, 2002: 326).

Festival tourism, which is a tool that can enable different communities to communicate with each other (Kaplan et al., 2004: 120), helps ethnic identities to share and sustain their values (Tao, Huang, & Brown, 2020: 529). The performances exhibited during the events can reflect the conflicts and sociocultural policy changes within ethnic groups and create emotional intelligence within the community (Deagon, 2008: 276). Of course, with all the positive effects, we can also talk about the negative effects that tourism can bring. Cudny (2013: 111) stated that unplanned use and ignoring carrying capacities can cause problems on the environment, culture and infrastructure.

Conversely, fairs are among the oldest forms of trade in history. They facilitate the preservation of traditional ceremonies, products, production methods, and events, as well as the exchange of products, live animals, and services. Consequently, fairs satisfy the economic, social, cultural, and entertainment needs of society (Çalışkan, 2016: 21). Fairs are distinct from professional business fairs in that the former are typically very large and professional organizations that serve as exhibition and marketing venues. These events introduce a wide range of industrial products, new technology products, and brands, and they facilitate the establishment of business connections within a specific business sector and area of interest. Conversely, certain fairs exhibit functional similarities to festivals or highland festivals. "Festival" is a term that has been derived from the Latin word "festivitas" and denotes a gathering that is organized to express gratitude or celebrate an event. Although they are not frequent, these gatherings are sustainable and are rooted in mythological, religious, and ethnic traditions.

Unlike fairs, which are events such as the "Pavli Fair of Pomaks," which may have centuries-old origins in outdoor areas, professional business fairs can be held in either indoor or outdoor locations and can be held once or multiple times.

2.5. Pomak Culture and Pavli Fair

Pomaks can be readily distinguished from other Muslim groups as a result of the democratic transformations they have undergone throughout history (Valtchinova, 2004: 8). Ethnologists, sociologists, and political scientists have since begun to investigate the identity of Pomaks, as Valtchinova (2004: 14) also noted. So much so that they are referred to as "Islamic Bulgarians" or "Bulgarian Muslims" by Bulgarians, "Islamized Macedonians" by Macedonians, and "Muslim Turks who speak Bulgarian" by Turks (Turan, 1999: 69).

Pomaks, who were Christian Slavs who resided in the Rhodopes and Pirins and converted to Islam during Ottoman rule, are linguistically and ethnically similar to Christian Bulgarians (El-Guindi & Simic, 1999: 829). The term "Pomak" is derived from the Slavic word "Pomakos," which translates to "Helpers" (Turan, 1999: 70). It is feasible to assert that Turks and Muslim nomads share numerous similarities with Pomaks. In addition to all ethnic and linguistic similarities, El-Guindi and Simic (1999: 829-830) discussed similarities in folklore and religious rituals.

Religion is perceived as the primary component of the Pomak identity, and it is designed within the context of Islam. It is possible to assert that there is a nationalism that is rooted in religion, as their national identity is founded on religion. It has been observed that they respond to inquiries regarding their identity and religion as "Pomak," and it has been asserted that the concepts of Pomak and Islam currently hold equivalent significance in their consciousness (Turan, 1999: 70).

From the Turks' perspective, the Pomaks are perceived as communities known as the "Kuman" or "Kipchak Turks" who migrated from Northern China in 916 (Memiřođlu, 1991: 11-12). It is possible to assert that the Pomaks have been influenced by Slavic languages as a consequence of their extended residence in numerous regions, including Romania and Ukraine. In this context, it is evident that their language has been significantly influenced by the Chagatai Turkish dialect, Ukrainian Slavic, Oghuz Turkish, and Arabic words (Turan, 1999: 72).

It is possible to assert that the Pomaks, who established themselves in the Pehlivanıoy district and its environs in the present-day province of Kırklareli in Thrace, contributed to the district's popularity by embodying their unique identity. In the context of tourism, the district's most significant attraction is the 'Pavli Fair', which has a history of over a century and is conducted at specific intervals each year (Uđurlu et al., 2012: 8). Since 1910, the Pavli Fair has been a customary event that takes place between September 15 and September 20 (Kırklareli Governorship, n.d.).

The fair, which is named after the fact that Pehlivanıoy is referred to as Pavli by the local populace, guarantees that the district attracts substantial audiences in September. Thrace hosts comparable markets, which were advertised as commodity and animal fairs. Pavli Fair is also referred to as the Pehlivanıoy Autumn Animal and Commodity Fair for this reason (Alabařođlu, 2009). The Pehlivanıoy Autumn Fair is the largest fair in Thrace that has survived to the present day, as Alabařođlu (2009) also asserted in his article.

Although it is acknowledged that animals were once displayed and accompanied on excursions during the fair, it is now possible to assert that the fair commenced with the symbolic sale of animals. The Pomaks, who are the focal point of the fair's lively ambiance, are afforded the opportunity to showcase and engage with their unique local flavours and entertainment concepts to a variety of attendees (BizEvdeYokuz, n.d.). The fair, which offers ethnic identity-specific foods, music, and dances, establishes an appropriate environment for the transmission and preservation of social memory. Additionally, it draws photographers who are seeking authentic images.

3. Methodology

A qualitative research approach is employed in this study. It is appropriate to conduct study as qualitative research if the objective is to research and evaluate a value that holds significant importance in the lives of individuals who identify with a specific segment (Merriam, 2018: 1). Consequently, this study also incorporated the interpretative and meaningful characteristics of qualitative research, which enabled the development of representations and the formulation of comments regarding the subject matter (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011: 3). In order to ascertain the causes and effects of qualitative research, it is necessary to interpret human experiences within the scope of the study. Consequently, a qualitative pattern is required (Merriam, 2018: 5-6). In this regard, comments that are derived from the researcher's personal experience and observations are valuable (Patton, 2002:113). A case study was selected as the research design due to the nature of the subject matter. In this context, it is advisable to employ a case study to research the processes of activity, or event (Creswell, 2014: 329). The case study enables the in-depth examination of a single situation to provide an explanation for multiple situations (Gerring, 2017: 27).

The exhaustive observation technique with participation was also employed in this study, as the researcher observes the event and the event by experiencing it in person (Aziz, 2022: 76). In this method, the researcher is immersed in the event in which they are participating. Despite the fact that it has a negative aspect, such as the researcher's emotional response, the researcher may need to evaluate the event from a distance in order to mitigate this disadvantage.

The data acquired is more reliable due to the interview with the Mayor of the Pehlivankoy district, where the event was held, and the expert opinion of the public institution organizing the Pavli Fair, in addition to the simple observation technique. The semi-structured interview was the method used to acquire the data necessary to determine the results of the research. It was believed that a semi-structured interview would enable the transition to pertinent topics during the interview, thereby generating new ideas and generating new results (Merriam, 2018: 88).

4. Findings

Within the scope of the study, it was found that the Pavli Fair, also known as the Pehlivankoy Autumn Animal and Commodity Fair, was organized entirely by the Pehlivankoy Municipality. As Kozak (2018: 103) also stated, the sample size may vary depending on the preferred qualitative method. In this context, it was thought that the interview with Mayor Hüseyin Açıkel would reveal the desired data when blended with secondary data. It can be said that the most authorized person who can be reached in a limited time and receive information about the fair is the mayor himself.

The primary data to be analysed in the study was reached with the interview. The questions asked to the participant during the interview were prepared based on previous studies and the deficiencies felt in the literature using secondary data.

Both secondary data sources and primary data sources obtained from the interview were reached on the subject of the evaluation of the Pavli Fair in cultural heritage tourism and its impact on sustainability. The data obtained from the interview are as follows:

Mr. Hüseyin AÇIKEL, Mayor of Pehlivankoy, participated in an interview.

1. Mayor, could you briefly introduce yourself?

I was born in Pehlivankoy on April 30, 1963. Educated in Pehlivankoy, I earned my high school degree from Çorlu Industrial Vocational High School. I graduated from Anadolu University's Vocational School of Business Administration. I started my civil service career in 1985 at the Ministry of Internal Affairs' General Directorate of Population and Citizenship Affairs. Later, I worked at Luleburgaz and Pehlivankoy districts of Tekirdag province's Population Directorate. After resigning from the Population Directorate on December 30, 2003, I ran for Pehlivankoy mayor for the Justice and Development Party. In the March 28, 2004 local elections, I became mayor. I was a member of the Union of Turkish Municipalities Assembly, the Marmara Municipalities Union Audit and Budget Commission, and the Union of Eastern-Western Thrace Municipalities Executive Board. Reelected to the Board of Directors this year. I also served on the Board of Directors for Kırklareli Local Government Solid Waste Facility Construction and Operation Union (KIRKAB-2). I belonged to the Trakya Development Union (TRAKAB). The Justice and Development Party won the Local Elections on March 29, 2009, March 30, 2014, and March 31, 2019 to re-elect me as Pehlivankoy Mayor. I currently play this role. I am married and have two children.

2. What is the population of Pehlivankoy?

The district center has a population of 1661 individuals. 3445 individuals, including those residing in the villages.

3. What is the foundation of Pehlivankoy's economy and source of income?

The economy of our district is primarily comprised of agriculture and animal husbandry.

4. What is the social structure of Pehlivankoy? Who resides there?

We are a district in which retired individuals and individuals involved in agriculture and animal husbandry reside.

5. Who are the Pomaks? What was the date of the Pomaks' arrival in Pehlivankoy? At what percentage of the Pehlivankoy population are Pomaks residing?

They are a Muslim Slavic people who reside in the Balkans' Rhodope Mountains, Northern Bulgaria, Lower Thrace, and Macedonia regions. Also, it is the appellation given to Bulgarians who converted to Islam. During Ottoman attacks on the Balkans, they became a community that converted to Islam. The Pomaks initially relocated from the Lovech center and Teteven districts of the Lovech province of Bulgaria, İzvor, during the 93rd War (1877-1878) and settled in this location. This process persisted in subsequent years, as population exchanges occurred. Pomaks comprise 98% of the Pehlivankoy district center.

6. What are the prominent elements underlying the relationship between Pomaks and Pehlivankoy?

Pehlivankoy has become synonymous with Pomaks because it is one of the places where they live most densely in Thrace.

7. What are the prominent problems of Pehlivankoy and Pomaks? What has been done or is planned to be done to solve it?

Pehlivankoy's most significant issue is migration. Our constant migration to other provinces and districts is due to the absence of an industry in our district that can generate sufficient employment. The industrial sector in our district is being developed to the best of our ability as a municipality; however, our opportunities are severely restricted. We are committed to the construction of a Small Industrial Site in our District. We have allocated the requisite land for this purpose; however, as previously mentioned, our budgetary resources are restricted. Therefore, it is imperative that we receive project support on a budgetary basis in order to construct the Small Industrial Site on the land we have granted.

8. Who organizes the Pavli Fair held in Pehlivankoy? What is its annual budget?

The Pavli Fair is organized by our Municipality, and the Expense Budget is approximately 350,000.00 TL, (approx. 11,000 Euro) and the Income Budget is around 700,000.00 TL. (approx. 22,000 Euro).

9. When is the Pavli Fair organized and how long does it last?

It is generally organized in the second week of September and lasts for 4 days.

10. Where exactly is the Pavli Fair held and is it held in the same place every year? How big is the venue?

Every year, the Pavli Fair is held in the same location in Pehlivankoy, on a 100,000 m² area located in the southern region of the district, beneath the railway line.

11. Which means of transportation do visitors prefer for the Pavli Fair?

Sea and air transportation are not feasible or advantageous due to the fact that Pehlivankoy is not situated on the sea coast and the nearest airport is located 2.5 hours from Istanbul. Çorlu airport is situated an hour's drive distant; however, it is not utilized on a regular basis. Already, the establishment of this transportation infrastructure is beyond the capacity of our municipality. So, highway and Railway transportation are preferred.

12. How are the accommodation, transportation and security of the Pavli Fair participants and staff provided?

There is no accommodation facility in our district, accommodation is provided in vehicles or camping tents in the surrounding districts and the fairground. Transportation is provided by the participants' own means. Security is provided by the District Police Department.

13. How many visitors does the Pavli Fair have annually?

An average of 350,000 people

14. What are the activities at the Pavli Fair?

Street food and beverage, shopping (local foods, dress and handicrafts) cultural and artistic activities and entertainments (such as bands, music, dance, clowns with long wooden legs, puppet play, amusement park). Despite the limited number of bakeries, restaurants, markets, and shops in the district, visitors can still satisfy their requirements. However, the fairground experience provides an additional benefit to individuals.

15. What are the satisfaction and complaints of those who attend the Pavli Fair? Is data obtained and evaluated for this?

Those who visit the Pavli Fair are generally satisfied, there are complaints about accommodation from time to time, but we try to provide the best convenience we can within the possibilities. We have wish, request, desire and complaint boxes and a fair memory book, and data is obtained from these.

16. When and with whom is the Pavli Fair planned?

It is made with the joint participation of the municipality's management and decision-making bodies and employees.

17. Where and from whom are the products and services in the Pavli Fair supplied?

The products that come to the fair are supplied by tradesmen. The services provided in the fair area are provided/supplied by the municipality.

18. What are the traditions, entertainment, art, music, folklore, cuisine, drinks, clothing, and other aspects of Pomaks in Pehlivankoy that are distinctive, and which of these are particularly showcased or practiced at the Pavli Fair?

Local dishes, products and folk dances.

19. How many people are assigned to the Pavli Fair? Where are the employees supplied from?

All municipality employees are on duty at the fairground, the total number of employees varies between 15-20.

20. Is there insurance for possible emergencies, accidents etc. at the Pavli Fair?

No.

21. How much is it, and who is responsible for what in terms of public health, procurement, security, etc. at the Pavli Fair?

Health services are provided by the District Community Health Center during the fair; Security is provided by the District Police Department. The relevant boards plan the personnel and materials on duty every year in accordance with their own data.

22. What are the new technologies used at the Pavli Fair?

Drone technology is being employed to capture aerial images of the fair. Additionally, mobile base stations are being implemented to guarantee that communication is uninterrupted in the region.

23. Are statistical data regarding the Pavli Fair kept? If so, how and for what purpose are they used?

The budget and the number of participants are kept. They are used in the studies to be carried out in the following year.

24. What are your thoughts on the reasons why the Pavli Fair is not typically well-known, does not have the anticipated impact, or fails to achieve international recognition? What actions are feasible? Do you have any undertakings in this area?

The entire populace of the region is acquainted with the fair, which has a century-old tradition. It has a national character and has been incorporated into the Intangible Cultural Heritage List. We were able to achieve this level by utilizing our current budgetary resources, and we are currently working to guarantee its sustainability. With adequate financial backing and advertising, it is feasible to expand its reach internationally. I have personally made every effort to ensure that our fair is included on the Cultural Heritage List, as well as to increase its visibility and development. I will continue to do so. We occasionally visit the appropriate ministries and institutions to communicate our requests, demands, and desires, as well as to consult on the matter.

25. What is the method of financing the Pavli Fair? What are the items of revenue and expense that you have? Do you have sponsors? What is the sponsorship's contribution to the Pavli Fair's financing?

The Fair Budget is typically funded by the municipality, despite the Ministry of Culture and Tourism's occasional contributions. Regrettably, sponsors are not available.

26. What is the reason for individuals to travel to Pehlivankoy? What are the current attractions in the district? For instance, the acorn tree featured in the television series "Yaprak dökümü" (The Falling Leaves) is situated in your district. What do you believe will be the most enjoyable experience for travelers or visitors in Pehlivankoy?

Pehlivankoy is a small, intimate district that allows us to connect with nature; however, it lacks a formal structure and is devoid of numerous historical sites. Pehlivankoy is an ideal destination for individuals seeking peace, tranquility, and a sense of connection with nature. Ergene Bridge, Bloody Creek Bridge, and Acorn Tree are among the historical sites that are worth visiting for tourists. Despite the fact that the structure is not particularly substantial, they have received recognition as a result of a series of The Falling Leaves. Additionally, the area is replete with natural beauty. Certainly, the centuries-old Pavli Fair is a distinct cause to visit.

27. Do you believe that the cultural values of Pehlivankoy are being fully utilized? If not, what is the reason? What actions do you believe should be taken or are you currently taking to safeguard these values?

We are endeavouring to preserve and perpetuate our cultural heritage within the confines of our capacity as a municipality. Pavli Fair serves as an illustration of this.

28. In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of Pehlivankoy in terms of tourism?

The district's advantages include its modest size and charming appearance, which suggest that it is closely connected to the natural world. Its disadvantage is that it lacks sufficient historical structures.

29. In your opinion, is the Pavli festival being effectively promoted and organized? If not, what are the reasons and your proposed solutions or strategies?

To begin with, Pavli is not a festival; rather, it is a carnival. In other terms, we are coordinating a fair, not a festival. We can utilize the resources of our municipality to promote it to the local populace; however, this is insufficient. This cultural heritage can be further promoted and advertised on a national and international scale.

30. In your opinion, what are the potential avenues for tourism development in Pehlivankoy? What strategies can be employed to draw individuals to the district and the Pavli Fair?

The Pavli Fair can be significantly more appealing with adequate financing, advertising, and promotion.

The author's observations of the Pavli Fair are as follows:

1. How was the fair's opening ceremony? What was the level of interest in the fair among the public, visitors, local government, and central governance?

This year marks the 114th anniversary of the Pehlivankoy Fair, which is also referred to as "Pavli" in the Thrace Region of Türkiye. This fair was also attended by author as an observer in previous years. The opening ceremony is currently conducted in a manner that is both classical and standardized. There are no issues or complaints regarding this matter.

If the observations of the ceremony that took place this year are transmitted:

The fair commenced with a ceremony at Zübeyde Hanım Square, as it does each year. The mehter team and marching band teams then performed after a moment of silence and the reading of the National Anthem.

In his address, Governor Birol Ekici of Kırklareli emphasized the importance of maintaining fairs. Ekici asserted that the Pavli Fair is as thrilling to the local populace as the "Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling", and he also mentioned that the fair is also referred to as the "Pomak Feast" in the region. Ekici stated that they will endeavor to expand the fair, which has been conducted for over a century, to an international scale. Additionally, they suggested that other Balkan countries should be included in the fair.

The fair is crucial for the incorporation of the local community and for the sale of the products they produce throughout the year, according to Ahmet Gökhan Sarıçam, a member of parliament from the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Kırklareli.

The fair's participants were also acknowledged by the Mayor of Pehlivankoy, Gündüz Hořgör.

Following the addresses, the folk-dance teams executed a performance. Ekici and his companions subsequently cut the opening ribbon of the fair and surveyed the stands.

Local individuals exhibit and sell locally produced apparel and food items that they prepare throughout the year at the organization, which includes an amusement park, open-air restaurants, and stalls. It has been noted that local inhabitants reside in tractor trailers, while Roman citizens maintain the fair's entertainment segment through their own entertainment concepts. The Pavli fair is held in high regard as an international fair, as it is intended to provide services to Pehlivankoy, and the dominant party of the Government of the Republic of Türkiye is the same political party as Pehlivankoy Municipality. Conversely, the absence of opposition party representatives from the fair's opening was greeted with disappointment.

2. Does Pavli fair's infrastructure and superstructure satisfy visitors?

The fair was held in a flat countryside on the Ergene river, walking distance from the district center and on the Asia-Europe train line. Pehlivankoy does not offer accommodations for visitors. Babaeski, Havsa, Luleburgaz, Kırklareli, and Edirne, which are situated in a close distance to Pehlivankoy, are settlements that offer accommodation opportunities approximately 30 kilometers from the district. Accommodation requirements can be fulfilled exclusively from these locations. Transportation to these locations may be facilitated through taxis, minibuses, or personal vehicles. Given the district center's diminutive size, there are bakeries, patisseries, and artisan restaurants that can accommodate a limited number of patrons. Additionally, there are coffee shops that exclusively serve cold and hot beverages and are nearly the sole location where individuals can converse and socialize together. The district has been equipped with electricity, water, natural gas, and roads, and there is an abundance of internet connectivity. The fairground offers a variety of food and beverages that are accessible to all attendees. These items are prepared by artisans in pavilions that are naturally arranged and are priced at a level that is both reasonable and in accordance with local preferences. Environmental cleanliness, toilets (suitable for disabled individuals), and water (for drinking, cleansing, and washing) are all natural, clean, and sufficient for the fair). The fair is capable of accommodating the requirements of local residents and environmental advocates; however, it appears to be a long way from becoming a national fair at this time. The local administrators' aspiration to elevate the fair to a level of national and international recognition is encouraging.

3. Is the Pavli Fair a festival?

Pavli Fair is not a festival; it is a fair, as the Mayor of Pehlivankoy stated. "Pavli Fair" was established in 1910 by Sultan Abdulhamid II in the Pehlivankoy district of Kırklareli to promote unity and unity among the local population. It is also known as the "Pehlivankoy Autumn Animal and Commodity Fair," "Autumn Fair," and "Pomak Feast." It is accurate to refer to this traditional and historical event in Pehlivankoy as a fair, as it possesses the characteristics of large-scale commodity or animal markets that were established at specific periods in districts and villages. These markets have a variety of traditional and exhibition features. On the other hand, festivals are national or international artistic events that offer a greater number of planned and thematic performances than fairs. At the conclusion of the event, awards are typically disseminated. Film, music, fashion, art, culture, sports, and products are all examples of festival topics.

4. Is Pavli Fair a significant factor in the preservation of Pomak culture? In other words, are the visitors to the fair during the festival adequately informed and experienced in the Pomak culture?

The Municipality of Pehlivankoy organizes the fair, which is maintained by the residents of Pehlivankoy. Although 98% of the population and elected Municipality members are Pomaks, the sales stalls that are set up on the streets of the fair are primarily operated by shopkeepers from outside Pehlivankoy. Roman citizens from Kırklareli and surrounding provinces and districts maintain the entertainment component of the fair by implementing their own entertainment concepts. The watermelon vendor from Çanakale is visible at certain stalls, as are the shopkeepers who travel from Istanbul to the fair for four days to sell doner bread. The fair is a location and time where the residents of the area can engage in recreational activities, socialize, and sell their harvested goods. The fair's attendees observe a century-old event by visiting the displays that sell a variety of products and participating in a variety of entertainments. Pavli Fair, which has been in existence for 113 years, contributes to the vibrancy of Thrace through its entertainment and music. Its purpose is to guarantee the solidarity and unity of the local populace in the Pehlivankoy district of Kırklareli. At the fair, it is feasible to observe the convergence of Balkan, Thracian, Rumelia, Roman, and Pomak cultures. Visitors to the fair are provided with an opportunity to experience

Balkan life through the consumption of Balkan street delicacies, music, dances, instruments, handicrafts, and mementos, albeit in limited quantities. If the inquiry is directed to whether the fair features products from the Pomak culture, such as cuisine and clothing, it is regrettably insufficient. It was asserted in interviews with artisans and local residents that everything is preserved in ancient periods and memories. However, old dishes are no longer prepared in homes, and only a handful of elderly grandmothers possess the knowledge of their recipes. There was no information bureau, written, oral, audio and visual documents and equipment that might be necessary for informing visitors both at Pehlivanıoy and at Pavli Fair. Due to the lack of foreign tourists and the fact that local visitors feel themselves in a neighbourhood market, the Municipality may not have needed any promotional and advertising efforts about Pehlivanıoy, Pomak culture and Pavli Fair.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

The branding of nations that are most complementary to one another is primarily influenced by sustainable and cultural tourism. Nations seek to safeguard their historical and cultural heritage and guarantee its continuity under the umbrella of cultural tourism. This can be accomplished through numerous marketing and promotional strategies. Nevertheless, traditional fairs, which unite societies, countries, sectors, and various segments, satisfy individuals' curiosity and the desire to explore by allowing them to do so simultaneously in a single location, are events that are at least as valuable and memorable as festivals and fairs, which are a significant strategy for tourism and marketing in the region. In contrast, the ongoing festivals guarantee the transfer of local cultures and traditions, while simultaneously providing a means for the development of the social structure. In this context, Pavli Fair, which has been striving to preserve Pomak culture for 114 years, is gradually increasing its recognition both domestically and internationally. During the periods in which it is organized, it can be asserted that this heritage, which is maintained and endeavoured to be safeguarded, makes positive economic and social contributions to the local population. Nevertheless, stakeholders must establish strategies that align with the appropriate values, despite the potential for the festival's values to become ingrained in society. It was deemed crucial to introduce Pomaks, who gained popularity in the district where they were introduced, to field researchers in order to maintain the Pavli Fair, which they revealed by reflecting their own ethnic identities, with the appropriate planning.

The environment of Pavli Fair, which is officially known as Pehlivanıoy Autumn, Animal and Commodity Fair, and the region's name, was observed in this study. The relationship between Pomak culture and Pavli Fair was determined and examined through an evaluation within the framework of sustainable tourism and cultural tourism. It is intended to contribute to the sustainability of the cultural structure of the fair by being analysed, documented, and transmitted to future generations. The cultural identity of the fair was established through the cultural material that was acquired as a result of the meeting with the President of Pehlivanıoy Municipality, who is the organizer and responsible individual for the Pavli Fair, and the observations of participation in the fair site.

In terms of the organization of Pavli Fair, the Pehlivanıoy, Musellimli, and Sazlımalkoçlu Pomaks continue to participate in the fair with their distribution of duties and settlement plans. Local and traveling fairgoers who engage in commodity, fruit, and vegetable sales as a profession continue to participate in the fair with changes and transformations from the past to the present. Upon assessing the support and controls of Pehlivanıoy Municipality, it is evident that the ethnic group establishes areas that are appropriate for the installation of trailers in settlements. Furthermore, the establishment of showers, basins, dishwashing stations, fountains, mosques, and security points in the vicinity is a supportive measure that facilitates settlement, given that Çerkezmusellim Pomaks remained in the region for four days. In addition to facilitating the fairground's accessibility, it also draws participants to the area and establishes a dynamic that facilitates the fair's continuity and participation. Simultaneously, the living space is improved, and the demand for fair participation is elevated as a result of the fact that artisan fairgoers also reside in the fairgrounds near their exhibits.

Pavli Fair has been determined to address numerous functional questions by meeting numerous characteristics, including the preservation of traditions, the transmission and maintenance of them to future generations, the refreshing of beliefs, the creation of solidarity and sharing environments, the liberation of individuals from pressures, the preparation of individuals for public life, and sustaining of its existence, albeit with a transformation over a 114-year period. The fair's existence is sustained by a variety of factors, including the regional gastronomy, the diversity of trade and commodities, the entertainment, the social environment, the cultural texture formed around the fair, and the fact that its participants continue to be in Pehlivanıoy in September of each year. The scarcity of events has a detrimental effect on the promotion of the region and the fair, and this is true for music, dance, theatre, and activities. This is evidenced by the fact that there are a limited number of participants from remote provinces of Türkiye and from abroad. A variety of initiatives and grants can be utilized to enhance the organization's activities, with support from the Provincial Municipality, the Governor's Office, Universities, researchers, Non-Governmental Organizations, and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. It is important to bear in mind that an event will struggle to sustain its cultural significance if visitors fail to demonstrate interest and the potential to persist.

The preservation of the cultural texture and the sustainability of the protected structure are not solely achieved through the active engagement of its participants. The review and transformation of the Pavli Fair, which has been in existence for 114 years but has not been internationalized, should be conducted in comparison to festivals, fairs, and fairs held in other neighboring countries. The local, national, and international short-medium-long-term requirements should be discussed. The state and the municipality are responsible for taking the necessary steps. Furthermore, it is imperative to provide support and raise awareness among the residents of Pehlivanıoy, merchants, and fair attendees. The preservation of the cultural fabric of Pavli Fair, Roman entertainment culture, and Pomak culture will be advantageous to these endeavors. The Pavli Fair has undergone significant changes over the years, and the elements that it can safeguard within its structure, as well as the existence of an organizational structure within the Ministry that is responsible for identifying the points that are beginning to deteriorate and their significance, where all fairs are supervised, can be taken into account. This corporate structure will facilitate the recognition of local events, thereby establishing a brand and, as a result, country branding.

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