

Structural Constraints and Governance Issues in Regional Tourism Development: A Stakeholder-Based Qualitative Analysis of Hopa (Artvin)*

Bölgesel Turizm Gelişiminde Yapısal Kısıtlamalar ve Yönetişim Sorunları: Hopa (Artvin) Üzerine Paydaş Odaklı Nitel Bir Analiz*

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Abstract

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This study aims to examine the views of public institutions, private sector businesses and other relevant stakeholders operating in the tourism sector in the Hopa district of Artvin province, thereby revealing the destination's current tourism situation, its potential and the areas that need to be developed. Adopting a qualitative research approach, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 16 tourism stakeholders selected through maximum diversity sampling, and thematic analysis was used to analyse the data obtained. Findings indicate that Hopa has significant tourism potential in terms of its natural, cultural and geographical features, but that this potential is not being sufficiently exploited. It was determined that tourism activities in the district economy are predominantly centred on accommodation and border trade. Lack of promotion, inadequate planning, infrastructure problems and low tourism awareness stand out as key problem areas. Consequently, it is emphasised that cooperation among stakeholders in the Hopa destination must be strengthened, a sustainable planning approach must be adopted, and alternative types of tourism must be developed. Previous studies addressing tourism development in the Eastern Black Sea and Hopa regions have generally focused on economic impacts or overall tourist satisfaction. This study, differs from existing literature by examining the development dynamics of the destination directly from the perspective of local stakeholders through an in-depth qualitative approach. The research therefore aims to reveal the inter-actor dynamics in Hopa's destination management processes, filling a significant gap in the literature.

Özet

Bu çalışma, Artvin ili Hopa ilçesinde turizm alanında faaliyet gösteren kamu kurumları, özel sektör işletmeleri ve diğer ilgili paydaşların görüşlerini inceleyerek destinasyonun mevcut turizm durumunu, potansiyelini ve geliştirilmesi gereken yönlerini ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Nitel araştırma yaklaşımının benimsendiği çalışmada, maksimum çeşitlilik örnekleme kapsamında belirlenen 16 turizm paydaşı ile yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiş, elde edilen verilerin analiz sürecinde tematik analiz yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Bulgular, Hopa'nın doğal, kültürel ve coğrafi özellikler bakımından önemli bir turizm potansiyeline sahip olduğunu, ancak bu potansiyelin yeterince değerlendirilemediğini göstermektedir. İlçe ekonomisinde turizm faaliyetlerinin ağırlıklı olarak konaklama ve sınır ticareti ekseninde kaldığı belirlenmiştir. Tanıtım eksikliği, planlama yetersizliği, altyapı sorunları ve turizm bilincinin düşük olması temel sorun alanları olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, Hopa destinasyonunda paydaşlar arası iş birliğinin güçlendirilmesi, sürdürülebilir planlama anlayışının benimsenmesi ve alternatif turizm türlerinin geliştirilmesi gerektiği vurgulanmaktadır. Alan yazında Doğu Karadeniz ve Hopa bölgesindeki turizm gelişimini ele alan çalışmalar genel olarak ekonomik etkiler veya genel turist memnuniyeti üzerine odaklanmıştır. Bu çalışma, mevcut literatürden farklı olarak, destinasyonun gelişim dinamiklerini doğrudan yerel paydaşların gözünden ve derinlemesine bir nitel yaklaşımla ele almaktadır. Böylece araştırma, Hopa'nın destinasyon yönetimi süreçlerindeki aktörler arası dinamikleri yapısal olarak ortaya koyarak literatürdeki önemli bir boşluğu doldurmayı hedeflemektedir.

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Introduction

The tourism industry has undergone rapid development since the Second World War. The end of the war, people's increased participation in tourism activities, the desire to make more effective use of leisure time, and the desire to escape stressful crowds have been considered important factors in this development. In particular, its foreign exchange-generating effect demonstrates the positive contributions of the tourism industry to national economies. According to research conducted by the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), 1.5 billion people participated in tourism activities in 2019, but this figure fell to 407 million in 2020 due to the impact of the pandemic, rising to 456 million in 2021. In 2022, with the pandemic's impact waning, tourism movements rose again, reaching 963 million people. Tourism revenues were \$1.8 trillion in 2019, \$0.7 trillion in 2020, \$0.8 trillion in 2021, and \$1.3 trillion in 2022. By 2024, the global industry had returned to pre-pandemic levels. 1.4 billion people worldwide participated in international travel. This represents an 11% increase compared to 2023. The number of tourists visiting Türkiye also increased by 14% compared to 2019 (UNWTO, 2020).

Türkiye has rich potential in the field of tourism with its natural and cultural resources. According to 2022 data from the World Tourism Organisation, the number of visitors to Türkiye reached 50 million. According to statistics released by the Turkish Statistical Institute, the number of foreign visitors to our country in 2024 increased by 9 per cent compared to 2023, reaching 62.2 million (TUİK, 2025). It is predicted that this number will increase day by day, especially with the planned use of alternative tourism resources in recent years. The Eastern Black Sea Region also stands out as an alternative tourism destination with its resources. The region is frequently visited by domestic and foreign visitors in recent years due to its traditional culture, highlands, and clean air away from industry. As a result of the increasing interest and potential in the number of tourists, the region's economy continues to grow day by day.

Hopa, the research area, is the district of Artvin in the Eastern Black Sea Region that receives the most visitors (Cengiz, Tüfekçioğlu and İskender, 2005: 7). The presence of the Sarp Border Gate, Türkiye's gateway to the Caucasus, plays an important role in shaping the district's tourism activities. In the ranking of provinces with the highest number of foreign visitors entering Türkiye through border gates between January and August 2023, Artvin ranks fifth with 1,233,644 visitors (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2023).

The tourism industry has become one of the important tools of regional development, along with the acceleration of international mobility after World War II, increasing prosperity levels, and the spread of leisure time. However, current literature reveals that the economic contribution of tourism does not occur spontaneously; it depends on structural elements such as planning, governance, and stakeholder participation. The fundamental issue highlighted in the literature at this point is that tourism in small and medium-sized destinations with high potential, particularly in terms of environmental and cultural resources, is often limited to transit, accommodation, or ancillary activities. In such destinations, tourism tends to be

shaped as an activity that generates fragmented and short-term economic returns rather than serving as a comprehensive tool supporting local development.

The district of Hopa faces a similar structural problem. Although the district has intense human mobility thanks to the presence of the Sarp Border Gate, it struggles to transform this mobility into destination-based tourism experiences. A review of existing studies (Oğan, Akyol and Bulut, 2022: 1249; Aytuğ and Mikaeili, 2017: 234) reveals that tourism potential in Hopa is mostly addressed at the inventory level, but stakeholder-based analyses explaining why this potential has not translated into sustainable tourism development remain limited. In this context, the problem situation of the research can be defined as follows: Although there is tourism potential in the district of Hopa, it remains unclear why this potential is not sufficiently reflected in local economic and social development and how this situation can be explained in terms of stakeholder perceptions.

The aim of the study is not only to describe stakeholder views but also to reveal the structural limitations, governance issues, and development dynamics of tourism in the Hopa destination within an analytical framework based on these views. In this respect, the study aims to fill the descriptive gap in the existing literature and contribute to stakeholder-based qualitative analyses. Within the scope of the study, the views of tourism stakeholders operating and providing services in Hopa were gathered with the aim of identifying the shortcomings of regional tourism and creating a resource for future investments. The lack of previous studies on stakeholder views in the region increases the importance of this study.

1. Conceptual Background and Literature Review

1.1. Hopa District

Located in the easternmost part of the Black Sea, the province of Artvin was historically known as Çoroksi, Çorok, Kollahis and Klaceti, and as Livane during the Ottoman period. Established as a sanjak in 1921, Artvin became a province in 1924. The district of Hopa has a population of 27,806 within the province, which has a total population of 169,280 (Artvin Provincial Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry, 2024). The district is located approximately 20 km from the Sarp Border Gate (Figure 1). In line with its climate, tea, hazelnut, kiwi, aronia, corn, and citrus cultivation are important sources of trade for the district. The presence of assets such as Hopa Port, the Sarp Border Gate, and tea factories contributes to the commercial development of the region.

According to data from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Hopa district is the richest destination in Artvin province in terms of quantity, with 5 establishments holding tourism operation licences, 20 establishments holding simple accommodation licences, a total of 884 rooms and 1,647 beds. In addition to camping and picnicking activities, the district is home to Çamburnu Nature Park, 18 cultural immovable assets (mosques, churches, bridges, residences, monumental trees, minarets), and hosts national and international festivals (Akyol, 2020: 54).



Figure 1. Location Map of Hopa District (Yakut & Koday, 2025: 219)

1.2. Regional Tourism and Development

The concept of stakeholders first emerged in an international memorandum organised by the Stanford Research Institute in 1963. Freeman (1984: 2) defines the concept of stakeholders as *"all individuals or institutions affected by and affecting the activities of the organisation"*. Carroll, on the other hand, defines the stakeholder concept as *"groups affected by the business's decisions, policies, and practices and, similarly, groups that influence the business's decisions, policies, and practices."* In another definition, stakeholders are individuals and organisations that actively participate in a project and may be positively or negatively affected by the project's implementation or successful completion (Ünal and Ünal, 2015: 95).

Stakeholder theory is used as a powerful plan or management approach that considers the organisation within its environment, maximising shareholder profits while also considering the benefits and desires of other non-shareholder groups (Ertuğrul, 2008: 205). Stakeholder theory is intertwined with the concept of social responsibility. In this context, stakeholders can be defined as groups that act with an effective organisational strategy, taking into account their needs and expectations in order for businesses to achieve success. Greenwood and Mir (2018: 25) define stakeholders as *"individuals or groups affected by or affecting the success of any institution or organisation."*

1.3. Tourism Stakeholders and Their Roles

Tourism is an industry that achieves a stronger structure through the convergence of various sectors. Stakeholder cooperation is crucial for tourism destinations to be successful and gain a competitive advantage (Buhalis, 2000: 109; Ritchie and Crouch, 2003: 228). Lack of communication with stakeholders or failure to properly organise those involved in tourism activities can have negative consequences for regional tourism (Akhtar, Bukhari and Najjar, 2022: 392).

The concept of stakeholders is of central importance, particularly in the tourism industry, in terms of destination planning, management, and sustainability. According to Goeldner and Ritchie (2011: 327), there are many stakeholders involved in the development of tourism. These include:

- Local residents,
- Local authorities,
- Environmental groups,
- Visitors,
- Operators,
- Destination management organisations.

Each of these stakeholders is critical to the success of regional tourism. Tourism is a social, cultural and economic issue that involves people travelling outside their usual environment for personal, commercial or professional purposes. Entrepreneurs view tourism as *"an opportunity to make a profit by providing goods and services that tourists are interested in"*. Host community tourism involves local people who see it as *"a cultural tool and a means of employment."* Local government involves politicians who see tourism as *"a factor of wealth in the economy within their jurisdiction."* They formulate and implement policies to ensure it serves this purpose.

Peter Burns, on the other hand, classifies tourism stakeholders as primary, secondary, and external stakeholders based on their interactions (Stainton, 2022).

Table 1. Peter Burns' Stakeholder Classification

Primary Stakeholders	Secondary Stakeholders	External Stakeholders
Tourist	Local Airports	International Organisations
Investors	National Authorities	International Airlines
Local Population	Local Authorities	Banks and Insurance Companies
Developers	Local Governments	International Tourism Companies
Tourism Businesses and Managers	Scientists	International Organisations (UNDP, etc.)
	Civil Society Organisations	

Source: Stainton, 2022.

Menayang and Marta (2020: 425) and Waligo, Clarke and Hawkins (2013: 345) have outlined tourism stakeholders and their roles under 8 headings. These are: (1) government agencies and regulatory bodies, (2) destination management organisations, (3) tourism businesses, (4) local communities, (5) environmental and cultural organisations, (6) education and research centres, (7) non-profit civil society organisations, and (8) tourists. Tourism businesses are the most visible stakeholders. Hotels, restaurants, tour operators and travel agencies are examples of tourism businesses. These businesses create employment by shaping the visitor experience and contribute to the sustainability of the local economy. Another prominent stakeholder is the local community with its culture, traditions, and hospitality. Tourism stakeholders generally cannot operate alone. The success of the tourism industry and related sectors depends on the cooperation and harmony of all stakeholders. Akyol (2020: 105) lists the tourism stakeholders in a destination as follows: (1) local government authorities, (2) local administrations, (3) tourism businesses, (4) non-governmental organisations, (5) professional associations and chambers, (6) educational institutions, (7) tourism workers, (8) local residents, and (9) domestic and foreign visitors.

1.4. Related Research

Sautter and Leisen (1999: 313), who emphasise the necessity of multiple stakeholders acting jointly in tourism development and planning processes, state that stakeholder theory was developed as a tourism planning tool to determine how it could be used to encourage cooperation among stakeholders involved in the planning process. In the study, they presented a map by adapting Freeman's previously created tourism stakeholder map. The study was conducted to enable tourism stakeholders to operate more intelligently, emphasising that cooperation between stakeholders is a fundamental component of sustainable development efforts.

Byrd (2007: 6) conducted a study combining sustainable tourism and stakeholder theory. This study emphasised the need for stakeholders to be correctly identified and included in decision-making processes. For the successful development of sustainable tourism, it is necessary to involve relevant stakeholders in the process, as well as planners and developers involved in tourism development. The study concluded that joint efforts by all tourism stakeholders are essential for sustainable tourism.

In the case study of Taman Negara Pahang National Park in Malaysia by Chew, Zainol and Goh (2024: 1), it was found that state support at the regional and national levels, the active role of civil society organisations, and the participation of local communities are important in tourism management. The study concluded that stakeholder collaboration can contribute to a sustainable tourism management approach, build trust among stakeholders, and foster a sense of ownership and pride. It also emphasised the need for greater active involvement of local communities in decision-making processes to ensure the continuity of sustainability.

Suparjo et al. (2024: 3669) evaluated the impact of stakeholder collaboration on the implementation of sustainable tourism principles, supportive policies, and regulations on increasing tourist visits. Data was collected from government agencies, local community groups, the private sector, educational institutions, and non-governmental organisations. The study highlighted the idea that increased cooperation among stakeholders would have a positive and significant impact on increasing tourist arrivals. The study concluded that promotional activities, infrastructure improvements, compliance with quality criteria, and financial incentives could attract more tourists to the destination.

In the study conducted by Belkayali and Kesimoğlu (2015: 1092) on Küre Mountains National Park, it was emphasised that stakeholder opinions must be taken into account in the planning, implementation, and monitoring processes to determine the negative effects of recreational and tourism activities in protected natural areas. The study concluded that all stakeholders (managers, local residents, experts, and visitors) agreed that air and water quality would negatively affect tourism activities.

2. Method

The aim of the research conducted in the Hopa destination, which has an important place in the economic perspective of Artvin province, is to determine the opinions of the relevant institutions and organisation officials within the framework of the contribution of tourism activities to the district and to make findings and recommendations in line with these opinions. This research was designed as a qualitative case study aiming to examine in depth the structural problems of tourism development in the Hopa destination and the stakeholders' perceptions of these problems. The consistency between the title of the study and its methodological approach was achieved by focusing on stakeholder experiences and interpretation processes in a specific location (Hopa).

The universe of the study, in which qualitative research methods were applied with the idea that more contributions could be obtained in terms of evaluating participants' thoughts and reaching a conclusion, consisted of officials from tourism-related institutions and organisations. The study was limited to the district of Hopa, the main reason being the destination's important position in the tourism of the Eastern Black Sea Region and the researchers' interest in the district. The sample for the study consisted of representatives of institutions and organisations providing tourism services in the district and managers of businesses operating in the district. The most important point considered in determining the sample was to identify individuals who play a decisive role in the district's tourism activities, are actively working, and can contribute to the subject.

2.1. Research Design and Sample

Maximum diversity sampling, one of the purposive sampling methods, was used in the research. This choice enables a comparative analysis of the perspectives of stakeholders with different institutional positions, experiences, and interests that affect tourism development. This contributes to the development of the subject in the direction desired by the researcher. Accordingly, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 16 tourism stakeholders selected to form a rich and diverse sample reflecting the different perspectives and experiences of tourism stakeholders in the Hopa destination. The sample size was interpreted as sufficient for a qualitative study, referencing the work of Corbin and Strauss (2015: 152). The sample size was not predetermined in terms of numbers; instead, interviews continued until thematic saturation was reached and no new significant codes or themes emerged. After the thirteenth interview, recurring patterns became dominant, and the final three interviews served to confirm existing themes rather than generate new conceptual categories (Sim et al., 2018: 4).

2.2. Data Collection Tool

In the research, the data collection method utilised the interview technique with the help of a semi-structured interview form. The question forms used in the face-to-face interviews consisted of demographic and interview questions. Similar studies on the subject (Oğan,

Akyol and Bulut, 2022: 1256; Akyol, Zengin, Akkaşoğlu and Ulama, 2020: 752) were used in the creation of the interview questions. The interview questions were finalised based on the suggestions and controls of two academics (Department of Tourism Management, Department of Travel Management) and two administrators (General Manager of Operations, Human Resources Manager of a Non-Governmental Organisation [NGO]) who are experts in the fields of tourism management, destination management, and local government.

The interview questions prepared in this context were designed to be exploratory and probing rather than merely descriptive. The questions were structured to encourage stakeholders not only to describe the current situation but also to establish cause-and-effect relationships, structure problems, and substantiate their proposed solutions:

- 1) What are the key factors influencing the development process of tourism in the Hopa destination?
- 2) Do you think the current structure of tourism in Hopa adequately reflects the potential of the destination?
- 3) In your opinion, in which areas does the cooperation or lack thereof among tourism stakeholders operating/providing services in Hopa yield concrete results?
- 4) What management issues have you identified regarding tourism in Hopa?

Interviews were conducted with participants working on a voluntary basis at the Hopa Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The main reason for conducting the research at the Hopa Chamber of Commerce and Industry is that this institution plays a leading role in the processes and decision-making mechanisms related to tourism activities in the district, and the participants were invited to this institution so that they could better understand the importance of the study. The face-to-face interviews, which lasted an average of 20-25 minutes, were recorded from time to time with the knowledge and consent of the participants.

Approval for the methods and data collection tools used in this research was obtained from the Artvin Çoruh University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee (Document date and number: 10.11.2023-E-18457941-050.99.113041).

2.3. Data Analysis

The collected qualitative data were analysed using MAXQDA 2020 software. Thematic analysis was adopted for the evaluation of the data obtained in the study. In this context, the interviews were first transcribed by the researcher, then the accuracy of the transcripts was checked, and they were prepared for the analysis process.

This study followed the analysis process developed in line with Braun and Clarke's (2019: 590) thematic analysis approach. The researchers performed the coding manually and cross-checked it collaboratively to ensure analytical consistency. Two expert researchers then reviewed the transcripts independently and compared their thematic interpretations. Initial explicit coding was used to create descriptive units from participant statements. Similar codes were then grouped together into conceptual categories, which were subsequently expanded into broader themes.

2.4. Validity and Reliability

Interaction with participants and participant confirmations are internal validity factors that increase the credibility of the study, while detailed introduction factors of the environment and participants are elements that strengthen external validity. Literature review on the subject, specification of the research method, examination of similar studies on the subject, and quotations from participant views are among the elements that constitute the reliability factors of the study (Arslan, 2022: 401; Arastaman, Öztürk Fidan and Fidan, 2018: 49).

3. Findings

The participant information addressed in the study was evaluated under the headings of gender, age, educational status, field of education, institution, position, sector duration, position duration, and service duration at the destination to obtain demographic findings. The interview data obtained as a result of face-to-face interviews with the participants were analysed with thematic findings.

3.1. Demographics Findings

The demographic findings regarding the participants are presented in Table 2. According to the data in the table, there were more male participants (68.75%), and the age range of the participants was predominantly 31-40 (50%).

Table 2. Participants' Demographic Information

		n	%
Gender	Female	5	31.25
	Male	11	68.75
Age	21-30	1	6.25
	31-40	8	50
	41-50	4	25
	51 and above	3	18.75
	Associate Degree	5	31.25
Education	Bachelor's Degree	7	43.75
	Master's Degree	1	6.25
	Doctorate	3	18.75
	Tourism	6	37.5
Field of Study	Business	3	18.75
	International Relations	2	12.5
	Other	5	31.25
	1-5 years	7	43.75
Sector Duration	6-10 years	1	6.25
	11-20 years	4	25
	Over 20 years	4	25
	1-5 years	2	12.5
At the Destination Length of Stay	6-10 years	1	6.25
	11-20 years	3	18.75
	Over 20 years	10	62.5

The educational levels of the participants were mostly bachelor's degree (43.75%), and tourism (37.5%) was the most prominent field of education (Table 2). The participants' length

of service in tourism and related sectors is predominantly between 1-5 years (43.75%), while their length of service in the Hopa destination is predominantly over 20 years (62.5%).

The role information of the participants consulted for their opinions within the scope of the research regarding tourism at the destination is presented in Table 2. Based on this information, it is seen that the participants mainly work in a tourism business (43.75%) and mostly hold positions as managers and assistant managers (31.25%). Participants also indicated that they have been working at their current establishments for 1-5 years (%43.75).

Table 3. Participants' Code, Institution, Title, and Length of Service Information

Code	Organisation	Title	Length of Service (Years)
P1	Public	Deputy Director	2
P2	Public	Department Head	14
P3	Tourism Business	Owner	20
P4	Tourism Business	Manager	9
P5	Public	Branch Manager	22
P6	NGO	Unit Manager	1
P7	Public	Deputy Director	1
P8	NGO	Chair	30
P9	NGO	Chair	4
P10	NGO	Secretary General	10
P11	Tourism Business	Manager	4
P12	Tourism Business	Employee	2
P13	Tourism Business	Manager	23
P14	Public	Coordinator	12
P15	Tourism Business	Guide	10
P16	Tourism Business	Department Manager	2

3.2. Findings of Thematic Analysis

In this section, the findings were addressed through coding, theme creation and interpretation stages in line with the basic principles of qualitative data analysis. During the analysis stage of the study interviews, participants were ranked as P1, P2,, P16 (Table 3). As a result of the thematic analysis, two main themes and six sub-themes were identified regarding the development of tourism activities in the Hopa destination. The main themes were determined as "Structural Limitations of Tourism" and "Stakeholder Perceptions and Governance Issues". The themes were created based on data obtained from participant views and systematically structured by considering their conceptual similarities and relative importance levels in the context of the research objective.

3.2.1. Structural limitations of tourism

"Structural limitations of tourism" refers to permanent and structural constraints arising from the intrinsic characteristics and organisational form of the tourism industry, which limit the sector's development capacity and sustainability to a certain extent. This concept focuses on restrictive factors related to the structure of tourism that have a long-term impact, rather than cyclical or temporary problems (Hussain, Sun, Ramzan, Mahmood and Saeed, 2024: 5).

Based on the participants' views, the fundamental structural problems limiting the development of tourism in Hopa have been grouped under three sub-themes: (1) The perception of tourism as being focused on transit and accommodation, (2) Lack of institutional coordination, (3) Inadequate strategic planning. Participants' statements indicate that tourism is mostly associated with short-term stays originating from the Sarp Border Gate, and that this situation weakens the production of destination experiences. This finding reveals that Hopa is positioned as a "stopover" rather than a "destination".

3.2.2. The perception of tourism as transit and accommodation-focused

The transit and accommodation-focused perception of tourism refers to the reduction of the multidimensional and holistic nature of tourism; its separation from experience production, local interaction, and value-added creation processes; and its conceptualisation primarily around transportation (transit) and lodging (accommodation) services. This approach distances tourism from being a destination-based integrated development dynamic, positioning it as a limited spatial activity area based on visitor mobility; within this framework, it weakens the structural and transformative effects of tourism on the local economy, cultural sustainability, and social interaction (Richards, 2011; Sharpley, 2002).

Participants believe that tourism activities in the Hopa destination are mainly centred on transit and accommodation themes. In this regard, P14 only drew attention to the accommodation option: "*The district's proximity to the border increases trade, but this situation only creates an accommodation option.*" P9 also expressed the view that the district attracts more interest in terms of accommodation options, stating, "*The abundance of accommodation options directs tourism movements in the province to this area.*" Similarly, P2's view is that "*Tourism activities are limited to accommodation only,*" and P11 shares a similar view: "*Domestic and foreign visitors come but cannot spend enough time here, they only stay overnight.*" These findings reveal that the district is predominantly perceived as a transit point in the minds of participants, with tourism activities being perceived as primarily accommodation-focused.

3.2.3. Lack of institutional coordination

In tourism, lack of institutional coordination refers to a structural governance problem arising from the failure to achieve sufficient cooperation, coordination, and integration among public institutions, local governments, private sector actors, NGOs, and local stakeholders in the tourism system in relation to planning, decision-making, implementation, and monitoring processes (Baran & Sat, 2019). Participants believe that the lack of coordination also contributes to the failure to fully utilise the tourism values offered by the Hopa destination.

Regarding the subject, P15 stated: "*It is an important tourist city in the province, but its potential is not being sufficiently exploited. I believe this is due to a lack of coordination among local stakeholders.*" P4 also expressed the view that *there is* a lack of coordination, stating: "*Geographical conditions, lack of promotion, and coordination issues are negatively*

affecting development in terms of tourism." P7 expressed the following opinion on the subject: *"Although incentives and support are important options in terms of investment considerations, I believe that coordinated efforts among local stakeholders are insufficient."* These findings show that participants consider the lack of institutional coordination to be a significant factor in the underutilisation of tourism values.

3.2.4. Insufficient strategic planning

Insufficient strategic planning in tourism is a structural problem area defined by the failure to develop long-term objectives, policy frameworks, and action plans that will determine the development orientation of the tourism industry based on scientific foundations, with a holistic and sustainable perspective, or the failure of existing plans to gain effectiveness in the implementation and monitoring processes. This inadequacy is associated with elements such as the short-term, fragmented and reactive nature of tourism policies, the failure to ensure coherence in terms of objectives, priorities and implementation levels between plans prepared at national, regional and local levels, and the insufficient integration of data-based analyses, stakeholder participation mechanisms and monitoring-evaluation processes into planning practices. In this context, the lack of strategic planning in tourism is considered a critical structural deficiency in terms of tourism management and governance, limiting the competitiveness of destinations, the efficiency of resource use, and the contribution of tourism to sustainable development (Phillips & Moutinho, 2014).

Participants agreed that tourism policies are shaped by short-term needs and crises rather than a long-term vision. In this context, P16 shared the following view: *"I think plans are generally prepared according to seasonal expectations and short-term goals. Medium and long-term goals, i.e. five or ten-year goals, do not seem to be reflected in the field. Furthermore, I believe that industry representatives are invited to planning meetings only symbolically, and that they are not truly involved in the decision-making process."* Similarly, P3 expressed his opinion on the lack of strategic planning as follows: *"It seems that action is only taken when a problem arises in relation to tourism activities. As operators, we do not see a specific preventive or forward-looking approach towards the relevant sectors."* P8 expressed a similar view: *"Each institution makes its own plan, and stakeholders are unable to implement a common roadmap. Furthermore, I do not believe that the reports prepared are compatible with local dynamics."* The findings show that, from the participants' perspective, the relevant institutions experience problems of coordination and coherence in planning. The limited participation of stakeholders is also an issue highlighted by the participants.

3.2.5. Stakeholder perceptions and governance issues

In tourism, stakeholder perceptions and governance issues refer to a conceptual framework that describes the weakening of the functionality and effectiveness of governance mechanisms as a result of the differing perceptions and expectations of stakeholders in the multi-actor structure that constitutes the tourism system regarding the objectives, priorities,

impacts, and management processes of tourism (Ağbay & Karakılçık, 2020; Bornhorst et al., 2010).

Based on the participants' views, stakeholder perceptions and governance issues limiting tourism development in Hopa have been grouped under three sub-themes: (1) Planning, (2) Communication, (3) Belonging. Participant statements indicate that there are differences in perceptions regarding objectives and priorities among stakeholders operating or working in the tourism sector, and that this situation has led to a problem of trust and communication among stakeholders. These findings reveal that stakeholder perceptions and governance issues related to the Hopa destination are associated with the three sub-themes.

3.2.6. Planning

Planning in tourism refers to a fundamental management and guidance process that involves making decisions regarding the protection, development, and use of tourism resources within a systematic and long-term approach based on scientific principles, while maintaining a balance between economic, socio-cultural, and environmental dimensions (Angelevska-Najdeska & Rakicevik, 2012).

Participants emphasise that decisions regarding planning are primarily made around the economic return dimension. It is noted that decisions regarding social and cultural aspects of tourism tend to take a back seat. In this context, P13 expressed the following view: *"Sustainability is mentioned in planning, but in practice, priority is given to investment and increasing bed capacity."* Similarly, P12 stated: *"Politicians and decision-makers focus more on increasing visitor numbers. Transport capacity is not being taken into account."* Similarly, P6 expressed the following opinion: *"Businesses' revenue growth targets and expectations can take precedence over local quality of life, negatively affecting the lives of local people."* These findings raise concerns about the potential imbalance between economic rationality and social and environmental sensitivities.

3.2.7. Communication

Communication in tourism refers to an interactive process based on the production and sharing of information, meaning and feelings among all stakeholders involved in the planning, implementation and experience of tourist activities. This process has a multi-layered and holistic functional scope, ranging from the promotion and marketing activities of the destination to the quality of service delivery, from the formation of tourist satisfaction to the construction of corporate and destination image (Buhalis, 2000).

Participants indicate that they are aware of the existence of communication but that there are issues regarding its quality. Particular attention is drawn to the lack of communication between institutions, and it is noted that there can sometimes be inconsistencies between promotion and reality. In this context, P10 expressed the following opinion: *"All stakeholders are located in the same destination, but sometimes they are unaware of each other's activities. On the other hand, I believe there is no regular and*

systematic information sharing between the public and private sectors." P5 expressed the following opinion on the same subject: *"Meetings are held from time to time, but unfortunately, participation is not at the desired level. It is also evident that there is no effective communication network, particularly at the private sector level."* P1 expressed a similar view: *"It is observed that almost every stakeholder has promotional activities specific to their own field, but what is described does not match the actual function in the field. Furthermore, a strong image is projected, particularly on social media, but there is weak feedback regarding service quality."* These findings highlight the idea that communication channels, particularly within the local stakeholder network, have not yet been fully institutionalised.

3.2.8. Belonging

In tourism, belonging is defined as a multidimensional concept encompassing the emotional, cognitive, and symbolic bonds that individuals develop towards a tourist destination, tourism business, or tourism-related social structures (Kyle et al., 2004). In this context, belonging refers to tourists perceiving the destination not only as a temporary and functional consumption area, but also as a social and spatial context to which they attribute meaning, feel close to, and can develop identification (Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001).

Participants emphasise that the detail in this regard lies not only in visiting a destination but also in internalising it. Participants emphasise that the detail in this regard lies not only in visiting a destination but also in internalising it. In this regard, P11 expresses the following opinion: *"Visitors come to take photos and share them rather than to experience the destination. We see that visits are short-lived and superficial. I think visitors are unable to form a genuine connection with Hopa."* Similarly, P15 states: *"Visitors leave the establishment without interacting with the local people or shopkeepers. They only make spatial visits without participating in any cultural activities."* These findings show that participants perceive visitors as visiting the destination with more transient thoughts. Participants also emphasise that limited social contact and cultural sharing may prevent visitors from forming a sense of belonging.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study reveals why tourism activities in the Hopa destination have followed a limited development trajectory despite their existing potential, through a stakeholder-based analytical framework. The findings reveal that tourism development cannot be reduced to tangible elements such as physical infrastructure and natural and cultural resources; rather, it is directly related to governance capacity, the level of cooperation between stakeholders, and the quality of strategic planning processes. In this context, tourism development performance appears to be explained more by institutional coordination and the effectiveness of decision-making mechanisms than by resource wealth.

The main finding of this study is that the insufficient exploitation of Hopa's tourism potential for economic and social development is not solely due to deficiencies in physical infrastructure. Stakeholder opinions reveal that the root of the problem lies in the perception of Hopa as a transit point, a lack of coordination among institutional actors and an inadequate understanding of long-term planning. In other words, the presence of tourism resources alone cannot guarantee the development of a destination. Without effective management of these resources, holistic planning and stakeholder cooperation, tourism potential cannot be converted into economic value.

The contribution of this study to the field can be assessed on three levels. (1) Theoretically, it fills a relatively limited gap in the literature by providing empirical evidence on how stakeholder theory manifests itself in small-scale and border destinations. It provides conceptual insights into how stakeholder perceptions and governance practices shape tourism development, particularly in transitional destinations. (2) In terms of application, it highlights the structural and managerial issues that constrain tourism development from the perspective of local administrators and policymakers, creating an analytical basis for restructuring decision-making processes. (3) Methodologically, it goes beyond descriptive assessments to reveal the exploratory and in-depth analytical capacity of qualitative data analysis; it demonstrates the functionality of thematic analysis in understanding multi-actor destination structures.

Upon evaluating the research findings, it becomes apparent that the issues have both structural and managerial dimensions. The structural issues stem from the destination's existing characteristics, such as Hopa's focus on the border crossing as a mobility centre, and the fact that tourism activities are centred around accommodation and transit functions. There is also insufficient development of alternative tourism products. The managerial dimension stems from a lack of communication among stakeholders, an inability to create a shared vision, coordination issues and inadequate strategic planning processes. The findings show that managerial issues exacerbate structural constraints and hinder tourism development.

In terms of application, it is recommended that a comprehensive destination management organisation be established in Hopa; that institutionalised, regular and mutual information flow-based communication mechanisms be established among stakeholders; and that tourism be repositioned as an independent and sustainable development tool, rather than a secondary activity dependent on border trade. This transformation requires an administrative and strategic restructuring that would enable the destination to evolve from a "transit point" to an "experience and interaction-oriented" structure.

When compared with national and international studies examining the perceptions and assessments of tourism stakeholders located in or operating in destinations, the research findings reveal significant similarities and differences. Firstly, one of the key findings of the study, namely the insufficient evaluation of tourism potential, is a situation frequently emphasised in the relevant literature in studies addressing the role and contribution of stakeholders in the development of tourism activities.

Sautter and Leisen (1999) state that destinations will remain uncompetitive unless effective cooperation and coordination among stakeholders is achieved. Similarly, in this study conducted specifically on the Hopa destination, stakeholders stated that tourism activities could not fully develop due to deficiencies in planning, promotion, management, and infrastructure. This finding supports Sautter and Leisen's findings on the importance of stakeholder alignment.

In Byrd's (2007) study, which addresses the relationship between sustainable tourism and stakeholder theory, it is emphasised that the active participation of stakeholders in decision-making processes is essential for sustainability. The stakeholder views in the Hopa destination, where participants mainly attributed the limited development of tourism in the region to insufficient stakeholder participation, lack of planning, and support mechanisms that were not used effectively enough, are consistent with the findings obtained from Byrd's study. The need for greater involvement of participants in the formulation and development of tourism policies at the local and national levels is considered a common conclusion.

Research conducted by Chew et al. (2024) in Taman Negara Pahang National Park in Malaysia identified the need for government support, local community participation, and the strengthening of the roles of civil society organisations in order to achieve success in tourism activities. In the research conducted in the Hopa destination, participants also assessed incentives and support as "*limited*," "*difficult to access*," or "*insufficiently promoted*," pointing to the need for more state and local government support in the region. On the other hand, participants' statements indicating that tourism awareness is low among the local community in the district of Hopa show that the lack of local participation highlighted in the study is also valid here.

Research conducted by Suparjo et al. (2024) revealed that stakeholder collaboration has a positive impact on tourist numbers, infrastructure quality and promotional activities. In the study conducted on the district of Hopa, participants also highlighted issues such as lack of promotion, infrastructure problems, and inadequate planning. Therefore, the findings of the current study are consistent with those obtained in the research conducted by Suparjo et al. (2024).

In the study conducted by Belkayali and Kesimoğlu (2015) on Küre Mountains National Park, attention was drawn to the importance of stakeholder opinions for the effective and efficient management of tourist and recreational activities. Similarly, this study confirms that the natural areas of the Hopa destination (Kopmuş Beach, Cankurtaran, Balıklı Waterfall, etc.) are important assets in terms of tourism, but it is observed that these assets are not sufficiently addressed as tourist products due to a lack of professional planning and infrastructure. In this regard, the findings of the study on the Hopa destination are similar to the outputs obtained from studies conducted on protected natural areas.

In general, the findings obtained from the study conducted specifically on the Hopa destination are largely consistent with similar studies in the relevant literature. As frequently stated in the relevant literature, in order for destinations to effectively utilise their tourism

potential, it is necessary to: (1) increase communication and cooperation between stakeholders, (2) implement planned and sustainable tourism policies, (3) strengthen the tourism awareness of the local population, (4) professionalise promotion strategies, (5) addressing infrastructure and superstructure deficiencies, (6) making support and incentive mechanisms effective, accessible, and comprehensive. This study also reached similar findings and conclusions specific to Hopa, which are considered consistent with the general trend in the literature.

One of the key findings of the research is that the identified issues are not specific to Hopa. While Hopa does have some unique characteristics due to the presence of the Sarp Border Crossing, the findings largely coincide with the structural and managerial problems observed in many other small-scale destinations in Turkey and reported in the international literature. Issues such as a lack of stakeholder coordination, insufficient strategic planning, promotional problems and limited local population participation in tourism processes are similarly reported in different destinations. This means that the Hopa example can be considered not only as a local case, but also as a highly representative example that illustrates the general problems faced by destinations with tourism potential but limited governance capacity.

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings obtained from participants operating and providing services in the Hopa district of Artvin province, the study concludes that the following measures should be taken to develop the destination's tourism activities and potential: (1) Destination Management and Planning, (2) Promotion and Marketing, (3) Infrastructure and Superstructure, (4) Diversification of Tourist Products, (5) Incentive and Support Mechanisms, and (6) Sarp Border Gate.

5.1. Destination Management and Planning

- A "*Destination Management Organisation*" (DMO) model should be developed for the development of tourism activities specifically for the Hopa destination. This model can be established within or as a unit of the relevant authorities or organisations.
- A strategic plan focused on tourism covering the entire destination should be prepared, and all stakeholders should be involved in this preparation process.
- Tourism education programmes should be organised to raise awareness among all stakeholders operating and providing services in the tourism industry, as well as among the local population. In this regard, the relevant departments and programmes of Artvin Çoruh University, among other necessary stakeholders, should collaborate in a coordinated manner.

5.2. Promotion and Marketing

- An effective and efficient professional promotion campaign should be organised and implemented for the natural, historical, cultural and tourist values of Hopa district.

- Promotional materials should be prepared in areas where the visibility of the Hopa destination can be increased, particularly in digital media, and social media content, virtual tour applications, and multilingual promotional options should be created.

- Thematic steps should be taken specifically for the district to move away from the perception of the destination as merely a "stopover". Applications such as nature tours, historical routes, coastal walking routes, and cultural events are options that can be developed to make the district a tourist attraction.

5.3. Infrastructure and Superstructure

- The destination's tourism infrastructure should be improved. In this regard, road access, directional signs, parking areas, and walking paths should be established in the district of Hopa.

- Visitor access to natural and historical areas throughout the district should be controlled. Steps should be taken to facilitate visitor access to these areas, and environmentally friendly practices should be established.

- Arrangements should be made in the recreational areas located in the district of Hopa. Attractions such as coastal areas, viewing terraces, and waterfall surroundings are points that may be of interest to local and foreign visitors.

5.4. Diversification of Tourist Products

- Considering the strengths of the Hopa destination, namely its nature and geography, many alternative types of tourism should be developed. Options such as ecotourism, highland tourism, nature walks, camping and caravan tourism, and photography tours should be offered to local and foreign visitors.

- The cultural and historical heritage values in the district should be revitalised through restoration work and incorporated into the destination as tourist attractions.

- Local delicacies should be evaluated as tourist attractions. Branding efforts should be supported with local products, and infrastructure work should be carried out for gastronomic tourism.

5.5. Incentive and Support Mechanisms

- There is a need to restructure the incentives and accepted support provided specifically for Hopa in a manner appropriate to the needs of the region and the area.

- The incentives and accepted support provided throughout the district should be distributed not only for investment purposes but also for promotion, product diversification, capacity development, and training.

- Information events should be organised on incentives and support for all stakeholders operating and providing services in the tourism industry, and stakeholders' knowledge and awareness levels on these issues should be increased.

5.6. Sarp Border Gate

- Tourism opportunities focused on the Sarp Border Gate should be created.
- Package tours should be developed, shopping routes should be created, and products such as gastronomic stops should be offered to extend the length of stay of visitors using the Sarp Border Gate.
- Projects that include and support tourism activities and can be integrated with border trade should be developed and supported. International events such as cultural festivals and joint promotion programmes can be organised with neighbouring countries and destinations (Georgia, Russia, Azerbaijan).

All these findings and recommendations are aimed at utilising the tourism potential of Hopa district in a more effective and efficient manner. Encouraging cooperation among all stakeholders and ensuring harmony between them will play a critical role in developing tourism activities in the destination. On the other hand, promoting the district's natural, cultural and historical riches and diversifying alternative types of tourism will be steps that support local and regional development. Finally, infrastructure improvements and efforts to strengthen promotional strategies will increase the competitiveness of the Hopa destination.

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Structural Constraints and Governance Issues in Regional Tourism Development: A Stakeholder-Based Qualitative Analysis of Hopa (Artvin)

Genişletilmiş Özet

Sorun ve Amaç – Bu çalışmanın amacı, paydaş görüşlerini tanımlamanın yanı sıra, bu görüşlere dayalı analitik bir çerçeve içinde Hopa bölgesindeki turizmin yapısal sınırlamalarını, yönetim sorunlarını ve gelişim dinamiklerini ortaya çıkarmaktır. Bu bağlamda, çalışma mevcut literatürdeki tanımlayıcı boşluğu doldurmayı ve paydaş temelli nitel analizlere katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Yöntem – Artvin ilinin ekonomik perspektifinde önemli bir yere sahip olan Hopa bölgesinde yürütülen araştırmanın amacı, turizm faaliyetlerinin bölgeye katkısı çerçevesinde ilgili kurum ve kuruluş yetkililerinin görüşlerini belirlemek ve bu görüşler doğrultusunda bulgular ve öneriler sunmaktır. Bu araştırma, Hopa bölgesindeki turizm gelişiminin yapısal sorunlarını ve paydaşların bu sorunlara ilişkin algılarını derinlemesine incelemeyi amaçlayan nitel bir vaka çalışması olarak tasarlanmıştır. Çalışmanın başlığı ile metodolojik yaklaşımı arasındaki tutarlılık, belirli bir lokasyondaki (Hopa) paydaş deneyimlerine ve yorumlama süreçlerine odaklanılarak sağlanmıştır.

Nitel araştırma yöntemlerinin uygulandığı ve katılımcıların düşüncelerini değerlendirme ve bir sonuca ulaşma açısından daha fazla katkı elde edilebileceği düşüncesiyle yapılan bu çalışmanın evreni, turizmle ilgili kurum ve kuruluşların yetkililerinden oluşmuştur. Çalışma, esas olarak Doğu Karadeniz Bölgesi turizminde önemli bir yere sahip olması ve araştırmacıların bölgeye olan ilgisi nedeniyle Hopa ilçesiyle sınırlı tutulmuştur. Çalışmanın örnekleme, ilçede turizm hizmeti veren kurum ve kuruluşların temsilcilerinden ve ilçede faaliyet gösteren işletmelerin yöneticilerinden oluşmuştur. Örneklemin belirlenmesinde dikkate alınan en önemli nokta, ilçenin turizm faaliyetlerinde belirleyici rol oynayan, aktif olarak çalışan ve konuya katkıda bulunabilecek kişileri tespit etmektir.

Bulgular - Katılımcıların görüşlerine dayanarak, Hopa'da turizmin gelişimini sınırlayan temel yapısal sorunlar üç alt tema altında gruplandırılmıştır: (1) Turizmin transit ve konaklamaya odaklı olarak algılanması, (2) Kurumsal koordinasyon eksikliği, (3) Yetersiz stratejik planlama. Katılımcıların ifadeleri, turizmin çoğunlukla Sarp Sınır Kapısı'ndan kaynaklanan kısa süreli konaklamalarla ilişkilendirildiğini ve bu durumun destinasyon deneyimlerinin üretimini zayıflattığını göstermektedir. Bu bulgu, Hopa'nın bir "destinasyon"dan ziyade bir "ara durak" olarak konumlandırıldığını ortaya koymaktadır.

Katılımcılar, Hopa bölgesindeki turizm faaliyetlerinin ağırlıklı olarak geçiş ve konaklama temaları üzerine kurulu olduğuna inanmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, K14 yalnızca konaklama seçeneğine dikkat çekmiştir: "Bölgenin sınıra yakınlığı ticareti artırıyor, ancak bu durum sadece bir konaklama seçeneği yaratıyor." K9 da bölgenin konaklama seçenekleri açısından daha fazla ilgi çektiği görüşünü dile getirerek, "Konaklama seçeneklerinin bolluğu, ildeki turizm hareketlerini bu bölgeye yönlendiriyor" demiştir. Benzer şekilde, K2'nin görüşü "Turizm faaliyetleri sadece konaklama ile sınırlı" şeklindedir ve K11 de benzer bir görüşü paylaşmaktadır: "Yerli ve yabancı ziyaretçiler geliyor ancak burada yeterince zaman

geçiremiyorlar, sadece bir gece konaklıyorlar." Bu bulgular, bölgenin katılımcıların zihninde ağırlıklı olarak bir geçiş noktası olarak algılandığını ve turizm faaliyetlerinin öncelikle konaklama odaklı olarak algılandığını ortaya koymaktadır.

Konuyla ilgili olarak, K15 şunları belirtmektedir: "İl genelinde önemli bir turizm şehri olmasına rağmen, potansiyeli yeterince değerlendirilmiyor. Bunun yerel paydaşlar arasındaki koordinasyon eksikliğinden kaynaklandığına inanıyorum." K4 de koordinasyon eksikliğine ilişkin görüşünü dile getirerek şunları söylemektedir: "Coğrafi koşullar, tanıtım eksikliği ve koordinasyon sorunları turizm açısından gelişmeyi olumsuz etkiliyor." K7 ise konuyla ilgili şu görüşü ifade etmektedir: "Yatırım değerlendirmeleri açısından teşvikler ve destekler önemli seçenekler olsa da, yerel paydaşlar arasındaki koordineli çabaların yetersiz olduğuna inanıyorum." Bu bulgular, katılımcıların kurumsal koordinasyon eksikliğini turizm değerlerinin yeterince kullanılmamasında önemli bir faktör olarak gördüklerini göstermektedir.

Katılımcılar, turizm politikalarının uzun vadeli bir vizyondan ziyade kısa vadeli ihtiyaçlar ve krizler tarafından şekillendirildiği konusunda hemfikir olmuştur. Bu bağlamda, K16 şu görüşü paylaşmıştır: "Bence planlar genellikle mevsimsel beklentilere ve kısa vadeli hedeflere göre hazırlanıyor. Orta ve uzun vadeli hedefler, yani beş veya on yıllık hedefler, sahada yansıtılmıyor gibi görünüyor. Ayrıca, sektör temsilcilerinin planlama toplantılarına sadece sembolik olarak davet edildiğine ve karar alma sürecine gerçekten dahil edilmediklerine inanıyorum." Benzer şekilde, K3 stratejik planlama eksikliğine ilişkin görüşünü şu şekilde ifade etmiştir: "Turizm faaliyetleriyle ilgili bir sorun ortaya çıktığında harekete geçiliyor gibi görünüyor. İşletmeciler olarak, ilgili sektörlerle yönelik belirli bir önleyici veya ileriye dönük yaklaşım görmüyoruz." K8 de benzer bir görüş dile getirmektedir: "Her kurum kendi planını yapıyor ve paydaşlar ortak bir yol haritası uygulayamıyor. Ayrıca, hazırlanan raporların yerel dinamiklerle uyumlu olduğuna inanmıyorum." Bulgular, katılımcıların bakış açısından, ilgili kurumların planlamada koordinasyon ve tutarlılık sorunları yaşadığını göstermektedir. Katılımcılar tarafından vurgulanan bir diğer sorun da paydaşların sınırlı katılımıdır.

Katılımcıların görüşlerine dayanarak, Hopa'da turizm gelişimini sınırlayan paydaş algıları ve yönetim sorunları üç alt tema altında gruplandırılmıştır: (1) Planlama, (2) İletişim, (3) Aidiyet. Katılımcı ifadeleri, turizm sektöründe faaliyet gösteren veya çalışan paydaşlar arasında amaç ve önceliklere ilişkin algılarda farklılıklar olduğunu ve bu durumun paydaşlar arasında güven ve iletişim sorununa yol açtığını göstermektedir. Bu bulgular, Hopa destinasyonu ile ilgili paydaş algıları ve yönetim sorunlarının üç alt temayla ilişkili olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

Katılımcılar, planlamaya ilişkin kararların öncelikle ekonomik getiri boyutu etrafında alındığını vurgulamaktadır. Turizmin sosyal ve kültürel yönlerine ilişkin kararların genellikle ikinci plana atıldığı belirtilmektedir. Bu bağlamda, K13 şu görüşü dile getirmektedir: "Sürdürülebilirlik planlamada dile getiriliyor, ancak pratikte öncelik yatırıma ve yatak kapasitesinin artırılmasına veriliyor." Benzer şekilde, K12 şunları belirtmektedir: "Siyasiler ve

karar vericiler daha çok ziyaretçi sayısını artırmaya odaklanıyor. Ulaşım kapasitesi dikkate alınmıyor." Benzer şekilde, K6 şu görüşü dile getirmiştir: "İşletmelerin gelir artışı hedefleri ve beklentileri, yerel yaşam kalitesinin önüne geçerek yerel halkın yaşamını olumsuz etkileyebiliyor." Bu bulgular, ekonomik rasyonellik ile sosyal ve çevresel duyarlılıklar arasındaki potansiyel dengesizlik konusunda endişeleri artırmaktadır.

Katılımcılar, iletişimin varlığının farkında olduklarını ancak kalitesiyle ilgili sorunlar olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Özellikle kurumlar arası iletişim eksikliğine dikkat çekilmiş ve tanıtım ile gerçeklik arasında bazen tutarsızlıklar olabileceği kaydedilmiştir. Bu bağlamda, K10 şu görüşü dile getirmiştir: "Tüm paydaşlar aynı yerde bulunuyor, ancak bazen birbirlerinin faaliyetlerinden haberdar değiller. Öte yandan, kamu ve özel sektör arasında düzenli ve sistematik bir bilgi paylaşımı olmadığına inanıyorum." K5 aynı konuda şu görüşü ifade etmiştir: "Zaman zaman toplantılar düzenleniyor, ancak maalesef katılım istenen düzeyde değil. Özellikle özel sektör düzeyinde etkili bir iletişim ağının olmadığı da açıktır." K1 de benzer bir görüş dile getirmiştir: "Hemen hemen her paydaşın kendi alanına özgü tanıtım faaliyetleri olduğu gözlemleniyor, ancak açıklananlar alandaki gerçek işlemlerle örtüşmüyor. Ayrıca, özellikle sosyal medyada güçlü bir imaj yansıtılıyor, ancak hizmet kalitesiyle ilgili geri bildirim zayıf." Bu bulgular, özellikle yerel paydaş ağı içindeki iletişim kanallarının henüz tam olarak kurumsallaşmadığı fikrini vurgulamaktadır.

Katılımcılar, bu konudaki ayrıntıların sadece bir yeri ziyaret etmekle kalmayıp, onu içselleştirmekle de ilgili olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, K11 şu görüşü dile getirmiştir: "Ziyaretçiler, yeri deneyimlemekten ziyade fotoğraf çekmek ve paylaşmak için geliyorlar. Ziyaretlerin kısa süreli ve yüzeysel olduğunu görüyoruz. Bence ziyaretçiler Hopa ile gerçek bir bağ kuramıyorlar." Benzer şekilde, K15 şunları belirtmektedir: "Ziyaretçiler, yerel halkla veya esnafla etkileşime girmeden işletmeden ayrılıyorlar. Herhangi bir kültürel etkinliğe katılmadan sadece mekânsal ziyaretler yapıyorlar." Bu bulgular, katılımcıların ziyaretçileri yeri daha geçici düşüncelerle ziyaret eden kişiler olarak algıladığını göstermektedir. Katılımcılar ayrıca, sınırlı sosyal temas ve kültürel paylaşımın ziyaretçilerin aidiyet duygusu oluşturmalarını engelleyebileceğini vurgulamaktadır.

Sonuç – Bu çalışma, paydaş temelli bir analitik çerçeve aracılığıyla, Hopa bölgesindeki turizm faaliyetlerinin mevcut potansiyeline rağmen neden sınırlı bir gelişim yörüngesi izlediğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bulgular, turizm gelişiminin fiziksel altyapı ve doğal ve kültürel kaynaklar gibi somut unsurlara indirgenemeyeceğini; bunun yerine, doğrudan yönetim kapasitesi, paydaşlar arasındaki işbirliği düzeyi ve stratejik planlama süreçlerinin kalitesiyle ilgili olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu bağlamda, turizm geliştirme performansının, kaynak zenginliğinden ziyade kurumsal koordinasyon ve karar alma mekanizmalarının etkinliğiyle daha fazla açıklanabileceği görülmektedir.

Bu çalışmanın alana katkısı üç düzeyde değerlendirilebilir: (1) Teorik olarak, paydaş teorisinin küçük ölçekli ve sınır bölgelerindeki destinasyonlarda nasıl tezahür ettiğine dair ampirik kanıtlar sunarak literatürdeki nispeten sınırlı bir boşluğu doldurmaktadır. Özellikle geçiş destinasyonlarında paydaş algılarının ve yönetim uygulamalarının turizm gelişimini

nasıl şekillendirdiğine dair kavramsal bilgiler sağlamaktadır. (2) Uygulama açısından, yerel yöneticiler ve politika yapıcıların bakış açısından turizm gelişimini kısıtlayan yapısal ve yönetsel sorunları vurgulayarak, karar alma süreçlerinin yeniden yapılandırılması için analitik bir temel oluşturmaktadır. (3) Metodolojik olarak, nitel veri analizinin keşifsel ve derinlemesine analitik kapasitesini ortaya koyarak betimleyici değerlendirmelerin ötesine geçmekte; çok aktörlü destinasyon yapılarının anlaşılmasında tematik analizin işlevselliğini göstermektedir.

Hopa'da kapsamlı bir destinasyon yönetim örgütünün kurulması; paydaşlar arasında kurumsallaşmış, düzenli ve karşılıklı bilgi akışına dayalı iletişim mekanizmalarının oluşturulması; ve turizmin sınır ticaretine bağlı ikincil bir faaliyet olmaktan ziyade bağımsız ve sürdürülebilir bir kalkınma aracı olarak yeniden konumlandırılması önerilmektedir. Bu dönüşüm, destinasyonun "geçiş noktası" olmaktan "deneyim ve etkileşim odaklı" bir yapıya evrilmesini sağlayacak idari ve stratejik bir yeniden yapılanmayı gerektirmektedir.

Turizm paydaşlarının destinasyonlarda yerleşik veya faaliyet gösteren kesimlerinin algılarını ve değerlendirmelerini inceleyen ulusal ve uluslararası çalışmalarla karşılaştırıldığında, araştırma bulguları önemli benzerlikler ve farklılıklar ortaya koymaktadır. Öncelikle, çalışmanın temel bulgularından biri olan turizm potansiyelinin yetersiz değerlendirilmesi, paydaşların turizm faaliyetlerinin geliştirilmesindeki rolü ve katkısını ele alan ilgili literatürdeki çalışmalarda sıklıkla vurgulanan bir durumdur.

Genel olarak, özellikle Hopa destinasyonu üzerine yapılan çalışmadan elde edilen bulgular, ilgili literatürdeki benzer çalışmalarla büyük ölçüde tutarlıdır. İlgili literatürde sıklıkla belirtildiği gibi, destinasyonların turizm potansiyellerini etkin bir şekilde kullanabilmeleri için şunlar gereklidir: (1) paydaşlar arasında iletişimi ve iş birliğini artırmak, (2) planlı ve sürdürülebilir turizm politikaları uygulamak, (3) yerel halkın turizm bilincini güçlendirmek, (4) tanıtım stratejilerini profesyonelleştirmek, (5) altyapı ve üstyapı eksikliklerini gidermek, (6) destek ve teşvik mekanizmalarını etkili, erişilebilir ve kapsamlı hâle getirmek. Bu çalışma da Hopa'ya özgü benzer bulgulara ve sonuçlara ulaşmıştır ve bunlar literatürdeki genel eğilimle tutarlı kabul edilmektedir.

Öneriler – Artvin ilinin Hopa bölgesinde faaliyet gösteren ve hizmet sunan katılımcılardan elde edilen bulgulara dayanarak, çalışma, destinasyonun turizm faaliyetlerini ve potansiyelini geliştirmek için aşağıdaki başlıklardaki önlemlerin alınması gerektiği sonucuna varmıştır: (1) Destinasyon Yönetimi ve Planlaması, (2) Tanıtım ve Pazarlama, (3) Altyapı ve Üstyapı, (4) Turistik Ürünlerin Çeşitlendirilmesi, (5) Teşvik ve Destek Mekanizmaları ve (6) Sarp Sınır Kapısı.

Tüm bu bulgular ve öneriler, Hopa bölgesinin turizm potansiyelini daha etkili ve verimli bir şekilde kullanmayı amaçlamaktadır. Tüm paydaşlar arasında iş birliğini teşvik etmek ve aralarında uyum sağlamak, destinasyondaki turizm faaliyetlerinin geliştirilmesinde kritik bir rol oynayacaktır. Öte yandan, bölgenin doğal, kültürel ve tarihi zenginliklerini tanıtmak ve alternatif turizm türlerini çeşitlendirmek, yerel ve bölgesel kalkınmayı destekleyecek adımlar

olacaktır. Son olarak, altyapı iyileştirmeleri ve tanıtım stratejilerini güçlendirme çabaları, Hopa destinasyonunun rekabet gücünü artıracaktır.

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