

## POSSIBILITIES FOR IMPROVING SUSTAINABLE RURAL TOURISM IN KAYSERI PROVINCE

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**Abstract:** Located in inner Anatolia, the research area is well-known for its winter tourism, cultural (history) tourism, and health tourism facilities. Unfortunately, sustainable rural tourism is not as well developed as these types of tourism. The current study aims at improving sustainable rural tourism in the Kayseri Province by offering strategic suggestions and developing practice. In addition, the study refers to the benefits of rural tourism for the natives, seen as a contribution to local economy. The article presents not only the current basis for future research, it also gives opportunity to competitiveness for rural tourism in inner Anatolia.

**Key words:** rural tourism, sustainable, farm tourism

### INTRODUCTION

Rural tourism refers to leisure activities carried out in rural areas, including different types of tourism events such as agri-tourism, backpacking, cultural tourism, ecotourism, riding, and winter tourism. Businessmen in particular visit rural settlement in order to relax in natural environments, contact different cultures and stay there [1,9,10,14].

Kayseri has the greatest potential for sustainable rural tourism. Its geographical position are longitudes 34° 56" and 36° 59" east and 37° 45" and 38° 18" north located between its latitudes. This city has streams (Kizilirmak, Sarimsakli, Zamanti), plains (Kayseri and Develi), lakes (Sultan sazligi, Sari gol, Tuzla golu), mountains (Erciyes, Ali, Yilanli, Koc). The steppe vegetation dominates the territory of Kayseri. The most common tree species are fir, larch, oak, red pine, and spruce. Kayseri is very popular among camping, nature, photography, and sports lovers [3,13,15,17].

Rural areas located far from city centres do not have many opportunities for economic development. Therefore, rural areas are forced to use their local resources to enhance their economies. The fact that tourism is more adapt than other sectors in creating income and employment opportunities, it has become an important option to increase the value of rural life and to bring about positive changes in the income distribution in regions with limited opportunities [1,8,11].

For rural areas in Kayseri to be opened to tourism and for the implementation of rural tourism, state support, support of local governments and some policies to be implemented and some projects by private institutions are required. Kayseri is an area with a great rural tourism potential and with very important advantages in terms of cultural, geographical, historical, and natural heritage [2,4,12].

In this study, the authors examine rural tourism concepts, definitions, features, and opportunities, the effects of rural tourism, the advantages and disadvantages of rural tourism, the rural tourism destinations of Kayseri, and the rural tourism and rural development policies implemented in this area. The study also makes suggestions for the improvement of sustainable rural tourism [5,6,7].

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The reasons for the growing interest in sustainable rural tourism are multiple, due to the evolution of more extensive programs of activities, which provide opportunities for tourists in understanding sustainable development of communities with traditional resources and local economies. In this scientific approach, the authors used as an analysis and interpretation of data, methodology statistical research, observation, information obtained from various bibliographic sources and from National Institute of statistics, in order to develop new tourism products for the researched area and stimulate the development of this form of tourism.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

Within the concept of rural tourism, there are many sub-specific tourisms, including agricultural tourism. concepts such as farm tourism, nature tourism, highland tourism, ecological tourism. It is a type of tourism. Farm tourism is a sub-type of rural tourism. Thus, Saray Ciftligi is a well-known farm where they produce a lot of agricultural produce from herbs, livestock, or milk. There are important common points between rural tourism and farm tourism. Rural tourism is for those who are bored with the extremely stressful city life, longing for nature and village life. People can get rid of all their troubles by being in closer relationship with nature in the village. They are the holiday destinations they prefer to get rid of. Same at the same time, rural tourism, mostly for farms and nature, is the tourism of tourists. Ranching, fishing, horseback riding, long hiking, etc. tourism activities also referred to as a type.



Farm tourism in Kayseri [16]

Kayseri, close to the Erciyes Mountain, is one of the most popular winter sports resorts in Turkey and not only. It is also one of the most important tourism centres in Turkey, which has made significant progress recently due to investments and promotions. Kayseri's winter tourism potential can only be found in Kayseri and other provinces of the country. In recent years, its name is mentioned more with the tourists coming from abroad, not with the visitors managed to get it.



Erciyes Mountain [16]

The first natural wonder that comes to mind when Kayseri is mentioned is Mount Erciyes, which reaches up to the clouds with its white peak every season. Erciyes, one of the most preferred mountains by professional athletes for mountaineering and glacier

climbing in Turkey, stands out as a ski resort with its feature of being one of the few places in the world with high snow quality. Erciyes, the symbol of Kayseri, is one of the winter sports centres of Turkey that has gained importance in recent years. In addition to winter sports, there are mountaineering and hiking tourism opportunities on Mount Erciyes. In addition, trekking tours that increase summer activity are organized.

Bogaz Bridge, Cifte Madrasa, Çokgöz Bridge, Döner Vault, Karatay Inn, Keykubadiye Palaces, Kiosk Madrasa, Melik Gazi Tomb, Sultan Han, and Tekgöz Bridge in Kayseri are historical buildings that can create value for rural tourism together with Develi Castle, Develi Ulu Mosque, Fatih Sultan Mehmed Mosque, Hunad Hatun Complex, Kayseri Castle, Kurşunlu Mosque, Lalapaşa Mosque, Sâhibiye Madrasa, Şahmelik Castle, and Yeşilhisar Castle.



**Historical tourism in Kayseri [17]**

As shown above, Kayseri has many valuable assets in terms of aesthetic, cultural, historical, man-made, and natural. These assets are very important in terms of tourism as tourist attractions to the region. Important events are organized that can draw the attention of tourists to rural tourism. It has important geographical features and natural assets for rural tourism. It is a suitable destination for rural tourism in other regions as well, especially in Kapuzbaşı, Soğanlı, Sultan reeds (Bird Paradise), Tekir, and Zamantı. In addition, proximity to Cappadocia is an important advantage for Kayseri. In addition to the natural beauties of the rural areas of Kayseri, crop culture and animal husbandry in those regions is an important advantage as rural tourism activities.

The advantages of rural tourism are economic development, diversification and stability, creating new employment opportunities in existing and newly opened business areas, reviving handicrafts, traditions and cultural identity, increasing social communication and interaction opportunities, and socio-cultural development. It consists of benefits such as ensuring the preservation and development of the natural environment, traditional architectural structures, positively affecting employment, personal income, living standards, rural migration and public revenues.

Initially, rural tourism includes many disadvantages such as causing disruption of agricultural activities in rural areas, increasing the workload of individuals, incurring additional costs, opening private property to visitors, and limiting social life due to working on weekends.

A SWOT analysis of rural tourism in Kayseri was made and previous studies based on primary data on the subject were used, statistical data were collected and these data were used in the analysis of the subjects. Thanks to the SWOT analysis, the strengths and weaknesses of the tourism potential of the region or region as internal factors, opportunities and threats as external factors can be revealed. Thus, it is possible to select strategies suitable for the region and the objectives for the region.



Kayseri Province [13]

Table 1.

**SWOT Analysis on Rural Tourism Potential of Kayseri Province**

	<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
<b>Internal Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The fame of mount Erciyes;</li> <li>- Geographical position;</li> <li>- Natural and Artificial attractions;</li> <li>- Historical and Cultural attractions;</li> <li>- Sufficient means of transportation;</li> <li>- Hospitality;</li> <li>- The environment is undisturbed;</li> <li>- The richness of the regional cuisine;</li> <li>- Agricultural resources that can be used in rural tourism;</li> <li>- Absence of foreign capital in the region.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of publicity;</li> <li>- Insufficient infrastructure;</li> <li>- Lack of superstructure;</li> <li>- Weakness of tourism awareness of the people in the region;</li> <li>- Lack of educated people who can guide tourists;</li> <li>- Lack of tourism facilities in areas with rural tourism potential;</li> <li>- Lack of municipal social facilities;</li> <li>- Lack of agriculture and rural development support institution in Kayseri.</li> </ul>
<b>External Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability of infrastructure and superstructure;</li> <li>- The fact that Kayseri province has many industrialists and businessmen (entrepreneur);</li> <li>-Increasing awareness of environmental protection;</li> <li>- Proximity to Cappadocia;</li> <li>- Protected natural places;</li> <li>- Development in the health sector (Health tourism);</li> <li>- Strategic location.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Climate changes;</li> <li>- The public is not sensitive enough to the environmental;</li> <li>- Pollution of environment with industrialization;</li> <li>- Risk of destruction of natural resources and environment;</li> <li>- Rural to urban migrations;</li> <li>- Global and national economic problems;</li> <li>- High investment costs;</li> <li>- Inadequate protection of cultural values;</li> <li>- Service infrastructure problems due to the conversion of villages into neighbourhoods.</li> </ul>

Social opportunities such as camping, horseback riding, hiking, golf and mountain biking in suitable areas international competition in this field with the effective use of rural destinations will be the driving force. Opening the settlements of families living in rural areas to accommodation, it can also be used as a touristic place and by providing security and control at the same time, it is possible for the people to participate in the tourism activities themselves. Encouraging and disseminating farm tourism, increasing campsites and holiday cottages Rural tourism should be supported by the environmentally friendly use of areas.

The most important of the rural tourism destination activities are the local traditions, folklore, clothes and life it is the introduction of their style in each destination. In this way, both cultural tourism and rural tourism will be supported it will be strengthened. Studies that tourism agencies will do on the subject and the state thanks to its support, rural tourism destinations will strengthen the most in this regard and their competitive ability will be increased [10,11,12].

Among the activities carried out are the promotion of mountain tourism, which is listed Decisively, thereby increasing non-agricultural incomes and it is aimed to increase the welfare level of the local people. The most important point to mention here is, rail, sea, road and air transportation facilities of the destinations where rural tourism will be made it will be in the direction of improvement. As can be understood from the examples in the world, rural tourism destinations in addition to its existence, the elimination of transportation problems to destinations, the issue is addressed from the perspective of competitive strategy it will be right to take it.

### CONCLUSIONS

According to the research in this study, there are many advantages and opportunities to create rural tourism in Kayseri. It also has many weaknesses and threats. However, with a number of studies, their weaknesses can be reduced and threats can be exploited by turning them to their advantage. By creating infrastructure, superstructure, facilities for rural tourism in potential regions of Kayseri, educating the people of the region, increasing activities and promoting the region, the formation and development of rural tourism in Kayseri can be ensured. Especially in terms of publicity, filming in the region can promote the region. That is why the promotion of these potential areas is carried out by local governments, development agencies, higher education institutions (faculty of communication, faculty of tourism, etc.), can be made with a film or documentary that will be shot in the region with the support of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and many private or official institutions and organizations. Marketing; With the opportunity provided by the proximity of the Cappadocia region, potential rural tourism areas can be offered in a package tour with Cappadocia. The fact that Kayseri has a large number of entrepreneurs and politicians may be an opportunity to receive state and private support in the formation of rural tourism in the region.

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