



## **Contribution of Ecotourism Activities to Tourism Destinations; Assessment of Associate Degree Students**

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### **EXTENSIVE SUMMARY**

Within the scope of changes in consumer behavior and diversification of tourism activities, the necessity of differentiation in markets and products has emerged, especially in recent years, nature-based activities and organizations that are at the forefront of the environment and green have begun to be preferred instead of the usual holiday understanding. Especially the increasing environmental awareness and the decrease in the interest and attitude towards mass tourism have made it possible to know more about alternative tourism types, to show interest, and to prefer ecotourism activities more.

In this study, it is aimed to determine the thoughts of associate degree students about the contribution of ecotourism activities to the destination within the scope of alternative tourism, which is one of the sub-topics of the General Tourism course. In line with the research questions, it was tried to determine the positive and negative perception that the concept of ecotourism evokes in students, and its contributions to the destination in general and ecotourism in particular were determined.

Considering that the students who take the General Tourism course may have more detailed information about the types of tourism, all student opinions were evaluated within the scope of the study. In this direction, it was tried to communicate with 19 students who attended and continued the I. Semester General Tourism course, and as a result of some students stating reasons such as space and time, the study group consisted of 12 students.

In the study, in which the descriptive analysis technique used in qualitative research was applied, the answers obtained from the questions asked to the participants during the interviews were evaluated. In the analyzes, the opinions of the interviewees on the subject were included through quotations.

Findings on the subject were obtained by evaluating the data obtained as a result of the interviews with the students participating in the research. Artvin Çoruh University Artvin Vocational School Cookery Program, a total of four questions were asked in order to get an idea about the opinions of the associate degree students who are continuing their education in the first grade about the contribution of ecotourism activities to the destination. Direct quotations were also included in the analysis of the answers received as a result of the interviews. Participants (students) AŞÇ. 1 and respectively, and are indicated by these codes in the continuation of the text.

Ecotourism is among the alternative tourism types covered within the scope of the General Tourism course included in the Artvin Çoruh University Artvin Vocational School Cookery Program I. Semester curriculum. The results obtained as a result of the research show that; It has been determined that the students obtain information about the concept of ecotourism mostly after taking the General Tourism course. The common view of the participants is that the weekly assignments given after the lesson increase the knowledge of the subject.

The opinions of the participants on the contribution of ecotourism activities to the destination are among the possible considerations that can be taken into account in a planning and program study related to any destination, and may be of interest to the authorities of local, regional or national institutions or organizations interested in the subject. As a result, the student segment who has received or is taking tourism education is a potential stakeholder group that can be addressed or consulted in an effective, efficient and sustainable tourism plan or program.