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THE ROLE OF GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION PRODUCTS IN TOURISM: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF ESKİŞEHİR TOURS

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EXTENSIVE SUMMARY

Geographical indication products can transform local products into touristic products by introducing the region and the product together. The aim of the study is to examine the extent to which geographical indication products are included in the tour programs. Eskişehir province, which has gained increasing interest in city tourism, was chosen as the research area of the study. Three geographical indication products of Eskişehir, meerschaum, çibörek and met halva were included in the study.

Descriptive analysis and content analysis techniques were used to analyse the data. Firstly, the websites of travel agencies were examined between 15-19 October 2018 by using descriptive analysis technique. A total of 82 tour programs from 48 different travel agencies were included in the study. Then, these tours were examined by using content analysis technique and it was determined in how many tour programs include these geographical indication products and how these products are expressed in the programs.

The tours organized to Eskişehir are generally short-term tours and they are carried out at the weekend. Most of the tours are departed from İstanbul, İzmir and Ankara. It was revealed that the meerschaum is the product in most of the tour programs to Eskişehir. While 89% of the tours are visiting the Atlihan Handicrafts Market, 67,1% of them are visiting the Meerschaum Museum. In respect of Atlihan, it is generally seen that the opportunities of watching meerschaum production and shopping meerschaum products are emphasized in the tour programs. Concerning to "Meerschaum Museum", its "first and only meerschaum museum in the World" characteristic is emphasized in all the tour programs.

Another geographical indication product of Eskişehir, çibörek is included in 53 (64,6%) programs. Most of the travel agencies want to taste their participants the çibörek which has been the main gastronomic product of Eskişehir. In respect of çibörek, various expressions such as "famous", "well-known", "delicious", "a taste of Eskişehir", "one of the important tastes of Eskişehir", "which belongs to Eskişehir Culinary and Crimean Tatars" are used in the programs.

Met halva, which is another product identified with Eskişehir and which has a geographical indication, is not included in most of the programs. It was revealed that only 7 (8,5%) of the 82 tours involve the met halva in their programs. Here, the task of local governments is effectively promoted the met halva by giving the detailed information about its invention, recipe, cultural characteristic and by doing various activities to ensure its identification with Eskişehir like çibörek.

In geographical indication products, it is necessary not only to know what the product is but also the details of the product such as its history, importance, cultural details and what it means for society. The inclusion of these products in the tour programs by the travel agencies and the presentation of the important details of the products

in the programs on the websites will enable the agencies to create more attractive tours and ensure the maximum utilization of the contribution of the geographical indication products to the tourism and economic development.