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CARBON FOOTPRINT WITHIN THE SCOPE OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

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EXTENSIVE SUMMARY

The natural resources are limited and the world population is growing day by day. This fact has brought the concept of sustainability on the agenda. Sustainability could be addresses in many different topics. This study aims to analyze the carbon footprint, its environmental perspective and tourism sector's relation with the issue. A theoretical bond between the carbon footprint and sustainable tourism has been tried to be established. Detailed literature survey, analyze of numerical – up to date statistics about the subject and global applications as well as important reports are facilitated as the method of this research. Based on such information, related inferences and assumptions have been proposed along the study. The study contributes to the literature by demonstrating the seriousness of the subject with numerical data, detailing the national-international level measures primarily in the tourism framework and examining the citizens' level of awareness.

Firstly, carbon footprint is defined as “the amount of carbon dioxide posed by energy consuming activities. Then, the study also focuses on the environmental impact of motor vehicles and aircraft emissions. The calculation method of the carbon footprint has been analyzed and various projections for the future about carbon emissions and air pollution have been made. Prospective targets have been stressed by drawing attention to global regulations and agreements on the subject. It has been pointed out that, increasing the awareness of the individuals is a core step for the solution of the problem.

Studies show that carbon emissions caused by transportation, heating and waste related gases are the core reason for environmental pollution. Air pollution has been over the acceptable limits both in our country and in the world. Various sectors affect air quality negatively and contribute to global warming. However, tourism is one of the most problematic sectors with various means of transport such as airlines as well as ground transportation, energy consumption of infrastructure maintenance, operation of accommodation facilities. All of these applications of tourism sector leave the significant carbon footprint.

The most important globally accepted agreement on the issue is known as Kyoto Protocol by United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Another crucial and recent agreement which Turkey is also a party to is "Paris Climate Agreement". It was signed in December 2015 installing responsibility to all countries to reduce carbon emissions. This agreement targets to limiting global carbon dioxide emissions as yearly 26 billion tons by 2030.

In order to limit carbon footprint globally, airlines should act ethically and develop corporate social responsibility for environmental sustainability. Consumers should be informed about the products' carbon footprint in addition to transportation and accommodation related carbon emissions. International Standardization Organization (ISO) should apply and control the packaging of the products which inform buyers on carbon footprint of the related products. In the name of controlling our carbon footprint, it is important to establishing policies on an international scale and to develop awareness about the issue. Realized meetings, conferences, forums could only be functional through educating the citizens from all over the world.