



The Role of High School Education of Ecotourism Education: Sample Program Review*

Ekoturizm Eğitiminde Lise Eğitiminin Rolü: Örnek Program İncelemesi

ABSTRACT

Ecotourism is a type of tourism that emerged due to people's longing for naturally areas oath their understanding of holidaying in less crowded environments with the increase in destinations, the increase in the need for qualified personnel to work in ecotourism destinations have become an important problem. this situation is seen as a situation that should start from high school education. The main purpose of the study is to reveal what high school education should be like for ecotourism education to be successful. By questioning the qualities of tourism education given in high school education, their contribution to ecotourism education is tried to be determined. Of the study, literature information was collected using the qualitative research method, which is one of the qualitative research methods, and the weaknesses oath strengths in high school education were tried to be revealed. As a result of the study, it was concluded that there are not enough courses in the field of ecotourism in high school education, there is a lack of expert educators in the field of ecotourism, and there is a lack of information about the quality of ecotourism education at the high school level. As a result of the study, it is recommended that ecotourism courses be included in the curriculum at high school school level, practice should be carried out oath trainers should receive continuous training on ecotourism to provide more qualified ecotourism training.

Keywords : Tourism , Ecotourism , Education , Ecotourism Education , High School Education

ÖZET

Ekoturizm, insanların doğal alanlara olan özlemi ile daha az kalabalık ortamlarda tatil anlayışı gereği ortaya çıkan bir turizm türüdür. Destinasyonların artması ile birlikte, ekoturizm destinasyonlarında çalışacak nitelikli personel ihtiyacının da artması önemli bir sorun haline gelmiştir. Bu durum, lise eğitiminden başlaması gereken bir durum olarak görülmektedir. Çalışmanın temel amacı, ekoturizm eğitimlerinin başarılı olması için lise eğitiminin nasıl olması gerektiğinin ortaya konulmasıdır. Lise eğitimlerinde verilen turizm eğitimlerinin nitelikleri sorgulanarak, ekoturizm eğitimlerine olan katkıları tespit edilmeye çalışılmaktadır. Çalışmada nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden biri olan nitel araştırma yöntemi ile literatür bilgileri toplanmış, lise eğitimindeki zayıf ve güçlü yanlar ortaya konulmaya çalışılmıştır. Çalışma sonucunda ekoturizm alanında lise eğitimlerinde yeterli derslerin olmadığı, ekoturizm alanında uzman eğitimci eksikliğinin olduğu ve ekoturizm eğitimlerinin niteliği hakkında lise düzeyinde bilgi eksiklikleri olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Çalışma sonucunda, ekoturizm eğitimlerinin daha nitelikli olarak gerçekleştirilmesi için lise düzeyinde müfredatlara ekoturizm dersleri konulması, uygulama yapılması ve eğitimcilerin ekoturizm konusunda sürekli olarak eğitim alması önerilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Turizm, Ekoturizm, Eğitim, Ekoturizm Eğitimi, Lise Eğitimi

INTRODUCTION

Due to the economic and social development of the tourism sector, there are significant developments in the tourism investments and incentives of countries. As a result of this situation, tourism was diversified and it was aimed to establish an economically sustainable tourism structure by offering different types of tourism. In this context, people's understanding of holidaying, especially in natural environments, has developed. Situations such as epidemics spreading around the world also affected this situation. People have begun to get bored of crowded places and marine environments and have started to demand different destinations, natural beauties, observing various plant and animal species, and having a holiday in destinations with clean water, air and environment. The type of tourism that meets all these demands is ecotourism.

Although ecotourism is seen as a type of tourism that includes nature and all elements related to nature, it should not be seen as a type of tourism performed only in plateaus or remote natural areas. It is possible to do many different types of tourism in ecotourism destinations, such as paragliding, climbing, safari, rafting, trekking, angling, farm tourism, mountaineering and cycling tourism. For this reason, the importance of ecotourism can gain

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a place in people's perceptions much more quickly. The fact that ecotourism includes many different types of tourism has led to the increase in training on this subject, the development of its quality and the provision of it at different educational levels.

High school education is carried out by different departments within the scope of training in the field of tourism. However, educational demographics based on the motivation of undergraduate students to qualify as soon as possible have not been determined. Relationships between people, shaped by the understanding of permanent contribution of high school and higher education, integrated with environmental values, will enable long-term and multi-dimensional expectations to be met effectively. With the establishment of this relationship, the service provided to the individual increases in line with the contribution. In this context, it is possible to state that the relationship between ecotourism and high school education in Turkey is closely related and will be more effective with the development of education.

The main purpose of this article is to determine the role of high school education in ecotourism education and its contributions to the student. The aim of the study is to investigate the levels of contribution that high school can have and the relationships between them. In particular, the study identifies cognitive, psychomotor, and affective contributions to students. Ecotourism education is largely limited to undergraduate and graduate education and in-service certificate programs. The main goal of the training is to gain professional knowledge, develop certain talents and skills, and help them get to know themselves. When high school students become ecologically literate, they should become young people who are sensitive to nature, protect and respect universal, national, and local values and can transfer them to the future. The study aims to reveal the status of ecotourism in high school, undergraduate and graduate education and to indicate the necessity of high school education for ecotourism education.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Concept of Ecotourism

One of the main factors that show the importance of ecotourism today is that the foreign exchange income obtained from tourism reached approximately one billion US dollars last year. The importance and benefits of ecotourism include the protection of ecosystems and natural resources in various parts of the world, including developing countries. These active interventions to preserve the richness of the natural world are important to many worldviews of knowledge about the culture of many species, such as indigenous peoples. This helps keep much of the world's cultural diversity alive. The main purpose of ecotourism is to raise nature-conscious people.

Ecotourism can simply be defined as nature tourism. Based on modern understanding, this term refers to all kinds of touristic activities that attract visitors due to a specific subject (landscape, flora, fauna, geological structures, specific events or human skill) in natural landscapes and are often combined with a cultural environment (Fennell, 2020). Ecotourism is a term that has been tried to be defined in different ways with various details. Ecotourism is a type of tourism that includes the principles of nature conservation, has a small impact on the social and cultural structure of the visited region, and aims to inform visitors about the animal and plant life in the nature park. The term eco refers to ecology and the biological relationships between living things and the environment in which they live. Ecotourism has become widely recognized in the last decade. Tourism and other sectors are trying to learn the concept of ecotourism and include ecotourism in their products due to its scope, potential impacts, operating principles, target markets and opportunities (Diamantis, 1999).

The definition of ecotourism in various sources is based on three principles. These principles include (1) protection of natural and cultural resources, (2) principles of environmental responsibility in learning and understanding, and (3) direct and indirect support of eco-activities for conservation. Various definitions and concepts regarding ecotourism have been put forward. Through evolution, the definition of ecotourism put forward by the Ecotourism Association in 1993 is stated as "responsible travel to natural areas that protects the environment and sustains the well-being of local people, but also includes interpretation and education". The association defines ecotourism as a unique tourism system based on the approach that natural and cultural resources are the "product" of excursions and expeditions made by commercial travel companies or agencies. Travel and rural activities are carried out with this awareness and should be carried out in partnerships with local communities, local businesses, and public enterprises to ensure the benefits of these activities (Gyeltshen, 2019).

Ecotourism was first introduced in 1980 by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, the World Conservation Union (IUCN). According to the association, ecotourism is broadly defined as "environmentally responsible travel in relatively unspoiled areas that focuses on awareness." It is the appreciation and enjoyment of the social background, whether natural or cultural. When defining ecotourism, five basic criteria

start with minimum impact on the environment. There must be a way to protect open spaces from development and promote the financial benefits of promoting area preservation, thereby educating visitors about promoting conservation efforts. As a result, it is aimed to protect natural resources, create employment, increase income, raise awareness, and protect wildlife, alleviate problems in human-nature relations, increase communication, education and most importantly, increase the level of sustainability by increasing the dynamism of the country (Weaver, 2002).

Ecotourism is one of the fastest growing branches of tourism today. Ecotourism, which has positive aspects in many dimensions, has become an indispensable area of tourism. Ecotourism stands out with its economic and socio-cultural dimensions, such as local people benefiting from economic gains, sharing their lives with different cultures, modernizing with different relationships, incorporating their own culture into tourism products, and having a say in tourism. Ecotourism consists of not only natural but also cultural and landscape factors that increase attractiveness. Additionally, it can bring a global role to the region's smaller tourism potential. In other words, ecotourism can carry messages of education, development, and peace beyond its borders (Donohoe & Needham, 2006).

The Importance of High School Education in Tourism

The high school period cannot be considered separately in the formation process of the individual. The aim of this field, where basic knowledge and skills are transferred, is to introduce students to this field and to enable them to work within the framework of the priorities of this field. One of the main purposes of high school is to guide the candidate who will be competent in this field and to ensure that he or she goes beyond this field in an educated manner. High schools, which provide the largest share in individuals' participation in the workforce, reveal their importance in this respect. Professionally, high-quality professional knowledge and skills provide a solid foundation for doing a job on a task basis for decades, tourism education is an opportunity given the increasing number and quality of work people do (Chili, 2013).

There are various career paths that students who complete high school education in the field of tourism can follow. Some career opportunities include: customer service, operations audience, tour guide, travel agency staff, tourism authority staff, event manager, sales and marketing staff, human resources staff, accounting and finance staff, business development staff, research and development staff, policy maker, academician, entrepreneur etc. At the same time, millions of skills and knowledge are required to use the country's yachts, ski hotels and sports centers as guides to find a solution in case of any problems during the journey. Campaigns organize and accompany regional competitions, ensure sporting success, and help develop the brand of a center or city. They can work in departments such as marketing, finance, IT and personnel. The industry needs highly educated and experienced academics (McGladdery & Lubbe, 2017).

However, if the information received during high school education is qualified, it offers faster development and advancement opportunities if they continue to work in the same sector in the future. Due to the permanence of education received at an early age, it is possible that young people have much more knowledge about the subject during their university years. High school education has become even more important because the tourism sector demands both theoretical and practical training. There is no doubt that if students who received tourism education during high school go to university, they will be much more enterprising, knowledgeable about the sector and conscious of the expectations of the sector. For this reason, it is important for individuals who intend to work in the tourism sector to start their high school education and tourism education for both themselves and the tourism industry.

In general, tourism and guidance education in high schools is among the branches of vocational education that change and develop and require different skills. In addition, it is one of the building blocks of the sector that continues to grow and develop in parallel with the importance of tourism in Turkey and offers employment opportunities. The versatility of the qualifications of students who graduate from high school in the field of tourism directs them to more than one career path. At this point, the sectors that offer the most opportunities to students who graduate and choose to continue their education in the field of tourism and guidance are travel agencies, accommodation facilities, tour operators, non-governmental organizations operating in the field of tourism and public institutions. For this reason, receiving tourism education at the high school level provides convenience for students in terms of employment (Astawa et al, 2017).

High school tourism graduates who study tourism can work as entrepreneurs and employees. Graduates with the qualifications expected by the business world and industry are graduates who are ready to work as employees and graduates have the potential to become leaders of industrial productive workers. It also comes with the revival of the concept of pride, freedom, and dignity to make a person complete or perfect and to enable employees to realize

themselves in the world of work. Curriculum development at both secondary and higher education levels is inseparable from constructive thinking that emphasizes the understanding of the whole in finding the phenomenon, in this case the urgency of tourism, one of the economic sectors that is a global phenomenon, is also considered. To improve learning knowledge from the findings, it is necessary to examine the more in-depth suggestion that can be obtained by referring to previous studies, especially in the field of education. If high school education in tourism changes, the curriculum also needs to be adjusted. Opportunities and challenges in the development of high school education in the field of tourism include developments in information and communication technologies, and the demand for tourism continues to increase. The challenge, meanwhile, lies in the interior design, which must be constantly adapted in line with the demands of the tourism industry (Maggi & Padurean, 2009).

High School Education Challenges in Tourism

Lack of preparation in the field of discipline is reported to be one of the most important problems in high school education in tourism. The international dimension is also exciting as it prepares teachers for practice in the general education system, where the discipline of tourism is divided into a broader spectrum of education as an economically determined context. The problem of high school education in tourism is also related to the focus on travel and routes in the implementation of the curriculum. The role of cultural attractions today is being successfully adapted to natural and man-made attractions. The problem is that individuals who have not yet found themselves in tourism education in high school encounter different cultures and earn economic income. This situation arises during the application phase of the students, and since teachers do not have one-on-one control opportunities in the application areas, discipline problems occur among the students.

Another problem with high school education is that the development of high school education in tourism faces the problem of updating study subjects both at the professional and specialized level, as well as at the general education level. Tourism curricula in high schools should be designed to contribute to a better understanding of this economic phenomenon by members of the socio-economic field in the vocational and technical education system. It should also be able to provide pedagogical training for the management of tourism services. However, this requires appropriate curriculum development. Therefore, teachers and professional staff need to be adequately prepared for schools in terms of human potential. These are currently the requirements for high school teachers in professional disciplines, including tourism. While in the old education systems, in most cases, a person who did not have a relevant practice in the field was employed as a teacher in professional subjects, this is not the case today. Students need curricula equipped with practical knowledge to get to know the tourism sector closely (Luka & Donina, 2012).

One of the most important problems in high school education is the internship problem. Not counting internship periods among students' legal insurance periods creates a loss of rights for students in terms of future insurance operations. This situation reveals the necessity for governments to make legal regulations and to protect the rights of students who work like normal people, especially on the job. In addition, during the internship, students are made to work for excessively long hours by hotel and tourist business managers, and students do not have the right to object, and in case of objection, they face unethical threats such as cancellation of the internship. Especially during high school education, tourism students are sent en masse to some hotels or tourism businesses by school administrations, and because of this situation, pressure and long working hours may be encountered. Not every hotel management behaves this way, but this problem emerges as an important educational problem expressed by students.

Another problem in tourism high school education is the lack of materials and technical equipment in the training provided for departments such as gastronomy. In many tourism high school educational institutions, schools may have insufficient equipment, and the materials for the products that students will make in classes are supplied by the students. This situation arises as a problem for families and students who do not have sufficient financial means. In today's economic conditions, the supply of these materials for each product creates a significant economic crisis. Not every family may have enough budget for these products and disruptions occur in the student's education. Although high school administrations try to reduce this situation, not finding sufficient financial resources is an important problem. In addition, due to the change and development of technical equipment day by day, it is not possible for these schools providing tourism education to provide this equipment due to insufficient financial budget.

Ecotourism and High School Education



The concept of environmental education within the scope of ecotourism is among the subjects that students need to learn in today's tourism system. To form the natural basis of the concept, it is necessary to develop an instinct in accordance with the nature ethics already mentioned in primary education programs. In line with this goal, development, discipline, diversification, intelligence, and training programs in high school programs can increase the perception of the importance of the individual expressing high school youth, extracurricular club activities, Teog and Ygs preparations, homework, etc. Reading habits contribute to increasing ecological awareness. This is an important fact expected from students graduating from tourism high schools. The description given to the career candidate will help him/her find the answer to the question of whether he/she fulfills the expectations in the entire process until graduation. In summary, the concept of ecotourism should be present not in the content of the programs, but in the selection and implementation of the programs (Urias & Russo, 2009).

The concepts of ecotourism and environmental education have a common ideological infrastructure and contain a sustainability-oriented mindset. It is stated that environmental education is possible as a tool that will affect all activities of individuals from kindergarten to master's level and includes all activities carried out inside and outside the school. The aims of this training include "developing a sustainable relationship with nature" to obtain long-term benefits from living and non-living elements. It is understood that other activities expect the integration of ecotourism and local levels with the same mindset.

Ecotourism can be offered in the field of geography and economics, where a comprehensive foundation in ecotourism can create a much more comprehensive geographical unit. One of the best ways to highlight ecotourism in ecotourism trainings is to focus on multi-themed regional studies. Modern science presents the human organism from a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary perspective. Research into the complexity of human beings has evolved over many years through a variety of approaches. The perspective is interpreted by various humanitarian and social disciplines such as anthropology, psychology, sociology, philosophy, and there are studies supported by biology, medicine, computer science and social sciences. It focuses on the study of organic, inorganic, social foods, nutritional value, chemical composition, biotechnological modification and cultivation, international supply, value chain, geographical, natural, and economic sciences. Eco-touristic agriculture can be strengthened to the extent of these studies. Each topic provides a more in-depth examination of the issues and goals of treating the area. The main tasks of the training approach are based on specialization, as well as the content of work tasks, with reference to the actual branches of ecotourism. General education teaching will also enable the formation of all kinds of comprehensive approaches. The integration of ecotourism into various subjects that contribute to high school education is one of many methods and approaches to developing these professional skills. In practice, when an institution plans to include ecotourism in a subject, it is important that the teacher is committed to philosophy and that the didactic-educational content and strategies are consistent with philosophy. Ecotourism can form the basis of any content needed by the school curriculum committee, including science, geography, economics, mathematics, social and environmental studies, religious education, and the development of the individual and society (Odunga et al, 2013; Thapa, 2019).

One of the high school learning outcomes is that students are required to have a "physical experience" while working on a subject. Familiarity with unique forest habitats, estuaries, and coastal systems is an important part of having college-educated citizens. Another traditional consequence of ecotourism is the possibility of being influenced by guests most of the time. It is generally thought that it is more important for students to experience and visit the places where they will ultimately work. It is generally clear that most of the students who will participate in the program will ultimately work in some form of ecotourism and therefore in the relevant field of environmental science or management (Huang et al, 2023).

Field trips or excursions aim to give students relevant practical experience and provide them with experiential education. In addition to the formal education students receive from institutions, field trips or excursions provide opportunities for outdoor education and activities. Such opportunities can make students' study program more interesting and enhance the effective building of ecotourism graduation skills. Success in ecotourism management requires careful attention to implementation and guest services, and it is valuable to provide student experiences that can provide important feedback about the system. Natural places and their supporting systems provide an effective experiential outdoor learning laboratory for students. While it is beneficial to visit a place once, it is even more beneficial to visit that place several times. This gives students the chance to observe changes in nature. Students also research wildlife through trips to parks and natural areas, learn the characteristics of the species living in the area, examine their living conditions and learn to combat risks. By realizing the value of the landscape from the closed corners they visit at the end of excursions and excursions, students can develop a sense of belonging with the values they have identified as a source of inspiration to famous people throughout history. In addition,

students visually see the situation clearly, having knowledge about global ecological problems that affect first all countries and then all humanity (Tauro et al, 2021).

What can be considered as a starting point for ecotourism in this field are trips that will increase the knowledge level of students. Field trips are organized in accordance with the time allocated in the programs on many subjects taught in high school, especially ecotourism, and students could associate what they have learned in class with nature. Such experiences can have many physical, sociological, psychological, and spiritual benefits. One of the physical benefits is that the outdoor environment encourages the physical development of students. Students can experience nature's best outdoor lesson opportunities and learn first-hand in an experiential learning environment with unlimited examples. All students could examine everything independently, under the guidance of experts, whenever they want. They will realize that in nature, the theory in books, classrooms and laboratories is reality. For this reason, while ecotourism education is provided at high school levels, field trips should be made. Application is one of the most necessary elements for knowing ecotourism destinations and providing the necessary sensitivity for problems and solutions (Chung-Shing et al, 2020).

The latest approach to education emphasizes experiential learning and field trips. Understanding the importance of experiential learning, vocational schools and tourism programs continually strive to create in-class and out-of-classroom experiences for students. The main aim is to turn theory into practice and connect students with the real world. Moreover, field trips will help students face the challenges and opportunities of being a member of the ecotourism industry. It also helps students explore their talents and interests in different positions that require different skills and qualifications (Aswita et al, 2020).

Previous research points to the many benefits that field trips within the context of ecotourism offer students and educators. First, students have a positive outlook towards field trips because of their potential to facilitate better understanding. The latter has a significant amount of information that can be added and placed on theoretical foundations. Finally, it contributes to the development of a new understanding of tourism and helps students experience destination attractions. Regarding formative evaluation, field trips can provide additional knowledge, experience and understanding of the tourist appeal of various destinations. While every field trip should be about a specific topic, it seems clear that all destinations are about at least one important tourism-related topic. As a result, students can compare different approaches, get an idea about ecotourism, and see the practical side of ecotourism (Pasek & Ratkowski, 2021).

High School Education Research and Evaluation in Ecotourism

The phenomenon of evaluation of tourism education has begun to attract attention especially in the 21st century, and the concept of impact studies explains this process. The method of measuring the impact of tourism education is the use of a system of evaluating the instructional role of the teacher, which can be perceived as methodological forms of evaluation. Impact research has represented scientific intervention in the evaluation process through carefully prearranged, ethical, and reasoned investigation of enduring post-school outcomes related to education, such as orientation and job satisfaction, for example, the academic, vocational, technical, and psychological outcomes of student veterans. Educational impact research primarily refers systematically to the current dimension, which does not apply only to educational systems. The tool most often used in impact studies is a retrospective collection of studies (Chung-Shing et al, 2020).

When researching high school ecotourism education, it is necessary to focus on the following issues and questions (Aswita et al, 2020; Tauro et al, 2021):

- ✓ What evaluation methods and tools are used when it comes to high school education?
- ✓ What are the general principles in collecting research data among students?

In line with psychological evaluation, it is necessary to examine other detailed research areas, such as the quality of formation of clusters and the suitability of the criteria for various educational institutions. It is important to examine the design of tourism exams, the information classification and cognitive complexity of questions, schools' exam reports and pass rates at the highest level of tourism education. In tourism education and training offered to adults, it is also critical to introduce assessment experience in lifelong learning. Research and evaluation of high school education constitutes a very important part of tourism education. These programs require an appropriate evaluation technique. The quality and adequacy of the implemented program evaluation provides an accurate perspective on the educational process and can be used to form opinions on the impact of the program. The aim of modern assessment models is to ensure that students reach high educational standards. One of the best ways to showcase the work of an educational institution is to compare students' education levels at entry and end of study. Any training program at a major institution will include the use of national and/or state standard forms. In fact, the

content of these assessments is indicative of the curricular objectives of the programs and will provide a baseline measure of the success students should achieve (Huang et al, 2023).

Evaluation methods and tools vary according to different methods and education systems. Testing students' perceptions about ecotourism is one of the most common methods. These tests can generally vary depending on teachers' preferences, whether they are classical or test. In addition, there are evaluation systems such as oral and performance homework preparation. Due to the nature of ecotourism, adding visual methods to the evaluation of students will increase the quality of teaching. Since it is very rare for questions about ecotourism to appear in university exams in Turkey, students' evaluations at high school level should be done practically. It must be perceived by both students, teachers and those who prepare examination systems that ecotourism is much more than an evaluated learning subject. Otherwise, ecotourism will remain just a sub-topic of tourism. For this reason, it would be appropriate to make practical and visual evaluations to provide permanent information in the evaluation of ecotourism education at the high school level.

Stakeholder Collaboration in High School Ecotourism Education

Trainings become effective only with the cooperation of the public and private sectors and higher education institutions. Collaboration of high school education with other institutions and sectors not only increases the quality of students but also helps them gain an advantage in terms of employment. If this situation remains only on paper, sufficient efficiency will not be achieved. However, following the changes and progress in the sectors will also increase the quality of students' education. Cooperating with educational institutions other than higher education during high school education will be useful in obtaining different certificates and documents. In terms of continuing education, graduates can begin university tourism programs through closer arrangement with universities, thus making university programs more attractive to potential enrollees. High schools will offer dual access courses, allowing students to choose a program that will form the basis for university studies or related vocational training.

High school tourism education is a key channel for the continued growth of education in the countries' tourism sector. Partnerships can also offer a strategic way to expand existing curricula. The dual role of high school tourism is to prepare students for higher education and direct employment in both directions. Positive projection and presentation from industry partners will help provide students with information about potential careers in the tourism industry. In the field of tourism, universities can collaborate with each other and additionally with vocational schools to organize courses that appeal to the professional interests of students who do not plan to continue their tourism education at a high level. It is necessary for high school tourism education to plan education together with stakeholders in terms of the future of the sector and the provision of training more efficiently (Iakovoglou et al, 2015). Although it is wrong to see ecotourism as a new concept, it should be included in the curriculum of high school students. For this reason, joint studies should be carried out especially with higher education institutions that provide ecotourism education and tourism businesses working in ecotourism destinations.

The tourism industry has a structure that provides professional identity. He has core expertise in all aspects of the tourism industry, product development, corporate requirements, management, and leadership. The tourism sector has a role and function to educate young people so that they have the information they need to make decisions about potential candidates for employment in the sector. It would be appropriate for them to advise on changes to training packages that should be incorporated into future developments of the course curriculum. The biggest advantage of involving industry in curriculum development and education and training programs is that young people learn valuable things in real-life situations in areas that are considered relevant and important by the business world. One of the important issues of ecotourism education in high schools is the tourism industry and the cooperation of the public and private sectors with tourism organizations. According to the principles of the Australian community vocational education and training legislation, all vocational education programs should be based on partnerships of vocational training institutions, industry, entrepreneurial government, and the student community. Although requirements for professional development and methodologies vary between countries, the inclusion of industry in ecotourism education at the secondary level is a worldwide trend. This approach is accepted internationally because tourism education requires the dual commitment of industry and educational institutions. The need for partnership is based on several principles. Industry has an important role in ensuring that the educational experience of secondary school students is inclusive (Davidson et al, 2024).

Many tourism trainings are given around the world, and these trainings are given in many different fields today. Initially, tourism education in high schools was initiated by some universities collaborating with the Ministry of Education. However, after the 1970's, both tourism and vocational high school education programs became

structurally integrated programs, and graduates of programs at all levels, up to the doctorate degree, depending on the target education in the universities established by the universities, graduated as tourism teachers. The structural unification of high school, vocational school and university diplomas in the goals and objectives of pre-school and in-service education is one of the most important reasons why students cannot meet the expectations of the sector today. In-service training, which aims to train individuals with qualifications to work in the sectors, is carried out through two different main programs: short-term education in vocational schools and long-term education in universities. However, research conducted in Turkey reveals that university graduates cannot be qualified managers in the tourism sector, they are not competitive and the sector has developed similar demands. There are a limited number of tourism workers trained by universities. Also, its mobility is quite low. Because tourism education declines with the increase in university departments, tourism and hotel management education in high schools is generally effective. The tourism department education program is opened for young undergraduate graduates who have achieved significant gains in intercultural knowledge and personal and social development. After graduation, students who speak two foreign languages can be employed in five-star hotels, hostels and agencies operating at home and abroad (Chung-Shing et al, 2020).

METHOD

Qualitative research method was used as the method in the study. The qualitative research method allows in-depth and further research and questioning based on the participants' responses. One of these methods is to conduct a literature review and uncover detailed information. By examining the studies on a particular scientific subject, collecting information about the subject, problems are identified and solutions are tried to be produced. Qualitative research; It involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences. It can be used to gather in-depth information about a problem or generate new ideas for research (Hennink et al, 2020).

Case Studies

As a qualitative research method, ecotourism trainings, which are few in the world and where ecotourism training is provided at the high school level, were investigated. Additionally, examples from successful university programs are given. As a result of these researches, the following sample trainings are presented (Huang et al, 2023; Davidson et al, 2024).

- ✓ Travljunkais Gymnasiet, Vägelfors High School, Sweden. A small rural Swedish high school in the southeastern part of the country trained its students as nature guides for three years. The Forest and Park of Östergötland district, which covers the fees of teachers, schools, and students, also supported the work. travljunkais Gymnasiet started its outdoor training program from this spring 2008. Ecotours are held as part of the Masjid As- Syakur ecocamp of the year. This high school does not offer the same type of ecotourism curriculum as the high school in Tango, Japan, but serves its students with its own unique curriculum. Ecotourism training mainly consists of field trips and visits to secondary tourism at different travel fairs.
- ✓ Kogakkan High School, Tango City/ Kyotango City, Japan. Located in rural northern Kyoto, Kogakkan is a private boarding high school housing 800–900 students. There are four courses' students can choose from: Japanese culture, sportsmanship, English studies, and international studies. These all include one or two weeks of fieldwork in the local area for second-year students and a three-month full-time internship for third-year students. The Japanese culture course offers an ecotour guiding course for beginners, and the sportsmanship course now includes an adventure tour guiding course where students earn a local or national guiding license during the two-year course. The trainings are used for community-based tourism as well as the high school education process.
- ✓ Hólar University College Summer School, Iceland. The objectives of the Hólar University College Ecotourism Summer School are for participants to: Have a solid understanding and increased awareness of the principles behind sustainable forms of tourism; It is aimed at using and sustaining cultural and natural resources for all communities. It promotes a philosophy that can form the basis for students to become market service or product providers because of their education. It is intended to develop in students an understanding of the market potential for the developing world and U.S. cultural and adventure travel markets, as well as the potential for regional and national policies to promote this market, and considerations relevant only to high school students. The outcome objectives are for participants to have fun and develop a strong desire to continue exploring the topic of ecotourism. Hólar by taking an eco-tour-funded trip through the school or for further undergraduate or postgraduate study university They are encouraged to attend College. In addition, it is aimed that immediately after attending the course, students will be able to get a job in the field of ecotourism and have a good educational basis with which they can become a responsible and market-oriented ecotourism professional.

- ✓ E-Technology Program, Denver Public Schools, USA. E- Tech is an entrepreneurial, business-like program focused on the creation of a non- profit ecotourism and sustainability firm. Eco-tours are based on the concept that with ecotourism dollars one can visit fascinating places and learn a ton, and get paid to do it. Part of the lesson is given back to these indigenous communities to help them protect wildlife (tourists). Students create exciting and safe private tours for carefully selected, environmentally conscious clients. Money raised from tours is used to support their local communities. As published on the E- Tech Earth organization's website, the E- Tech vision is stated: "To create knowledge and understanding of what it takes to protect mega-bioregions and to connect people from global cultures to Earth's biodiversity through an experiential journey." Denver and The worldwide program is supported by E- Tech students to fund an Osopure Reserve and cultural center in the region of Grano de Oro, Costa Rica.

Comparison with High School Ecotourism Education in Turkey

Some examples of ecotourism education at high school level in Turkey are presented below. The nature of these trainings and their comparison with practices in other countries are also given.

- ✓ Ecotourism and Education Camp. Pazaryeri District Education Directorate, Bilecik. It is presented as a project within the scope of opening the village school in Küçük Elmalı village to education. Although the project subject was stated as ecotourism, no training or organization within the scope of ecotourism was found. It was prepared for the purpose of the Directorate of National Education to prepare an idle village school and bring it into education. No connection has been found with the subject of ecotourism, other than the fact that it is a village school. In addition, it was determined that there was a spelling mistake in the project introduction and visual as "Eco Tourism". It has no similarities with the trainings provided by other international educational institutions.
- ✓ Ecotourism Consortium Project with Erasmus+. Cappadocia University, Nevşehir. Alanya Alaaddin Keykubat University and Professional Hotel Managers Association are stated as consortium partners. The aim of the project is stated as raising awareness in the field of ecotourism in disseminating the understanding of sustainable tourism. It is expressed as the internship mobility of students of educational institutions providing tourism education and the mobility of university staff to give lectures and receive training to share experience. The project has been accepted as of the end of 2023 and is still ongoing. Since the project outputs are not clearly finalized, comparisons cannot be made with international ecotourism training examples.

It is seen that different institutions in Turkey have many projects related to education, investment, renovation, and promotion in the field of ecotourism. When the education-related projects are examined, it is seen that they are generally projects given by private institutions for the purpose of raising awareness about ecotourism. No training on ecotourism could be found at the high school education level. Above are presented examples of projects given by a university and a high school educational institution. It has been determined that it is difficult to compare the examples given with the examples given by educational institutions regarding ecotourism education internationally. This situation reveals a significant deficiency in ecotourism education, especially at the high school level.

CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS

Ecotourism education is being integrated into schools to raise individuals who are conscious and sensitive to natural life. The discussion about possible future directions and innovations in high school ecological education can be aided by examining the trends that emerge at each stage. It is possible to state that the professionalism of experts in the field of biodiversity conservation does not need to be documented with official degrees. Biodiversity conservation areas such as national parks, wildlife and nature conservation are subjects that must be learned at high school level. It is important for high school students to be knowledgeable and experienced about ecotourism not only for their business lives, but also for them to become individuals who will protect the ecological environment in the future. Ecotourism education should be seen as a course that should be taught to students not only in tourism vocational high schools but also in all secondary and high school education, with the aim of raising conscious generations in terms of protecting and improving the right to life of nature and other creatures.

This new approach to education, which is included in the curriculum in our country and especially in many countries around the world, is of great importance in terms of raising successful, respectful and conscious adults of the future. Experienced staff generally prefer to teach the necessary parts of the curriculum through nature excursions, expert interviews, workshops and presentations, providing students with an active learning process. However, we need to ensure that future students who work in tourism enterprises and zoos and who are sensitive to nature are educated with modern and up-to-date information, as secondary education is at a certain level. To ensure the success of students, it is important that educators have sufficient knowledge and experience on this subject.

Acquiring professional knowledge means helping students develop certain abilities and skills and getting to know themselves. When high school students become ecologically literate, they will become young people who are sensitive to nature, protect and respect universal, national, and local values and can transfer them to the future.

The aim of this study is to reveal the role and effects of high school education in ecotourism education. For this purpose, the necessity of receiving tourism education at the high school level has been discussed in the literature in terms of recruitment and academic gain, and it has been understood that this education is a new education system, especially for higher education at the university level. In this respect, the importance of high school has been emphasized and its direct contribution to the tourism sector has been tried to be discussed. For this purpose, the main purpose of the study is to reveal the situation of ecotourism education in high schools, especially in Turkey, and what contributions it makes. High school education fills an important gap in terms of the number of employees in the sector and contributes directly or indirectly to the field.

In line with the results obtained from this study, it would be appropriate to take the following issues regarding ecotourism education into consideration when planning high school education:

- ✓ High school education should be supported by universities and organized in coordination with universities.
- ✓ In parallel with the university curriculum, a detailed curriculum that provides the necessary academic infrastructure and the expectations of the sector for the tourism high school secondary education branch should be prepared.
- ✓ Graduates of tourism high schools meet the ecotourism industry in an interdisciplinary way and receive insufficient training on ecotourism.
- ✓ Teachers teaching at tourism high schools need to receive informative in-service training on ecotourism.
- ✓ It would be appropriate to conduct a study on the subject with content analysis. Content analysis means presenting the general content of studies conducted on a scientific subject in summary form (Ültay , Akyurt & Ültay, 2021). In this way, it will pave the way for scientists who will work on the subject in the future, on which subject and method they will work on.
- ✓ Cooperation with stakeholders in supporting ecotourism education.
- ✓ To improve students' perception of ecotourism, trips should be organized and students should be brought together with ecotourism tourism business managers in different destinations.
- ✓ By increasing the number of scientific studies, awareness about the problems of ecotourism education at university and high school levels should be created.
- ✓ It is seen as necessary for the development of ecotourism destinations to include guidance courses related to ecotourism destinations in high school and university level curricula.
- ✓ All trainers working in the field of ecotourism, especially the training of trainers, should cooperate with tourism sector managers, and training content should be created in line with the expectations of the ecotourism sector.

As a result of the study, it is revealed that high school students and teachers should be supported in terms of protecting nature and cultural values, applying guidance techniques, social responsibility awareness and use of foreign language knowledge. The necessity of primarily training teachers on ecotourism, adding ecotourism to the curriculum and establishing the necessary systems is important in terms of developing ecotourism education at the high school level. While the study draws attention to the issue of ecotourism and ecotourism education at the high school level, it also tries to express that ecotourism education is a tourism education issue that should be carefully emphasized by higher education institutions. The aim of the study is to guide scientists who aim to conduct scientific research on this subject in the future.

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