

**EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVE TOURISM'S CURRENT SITUATION AND
TOURISTIC POTENTIAL IN GÜMÜŞHANE PROVINCE BY SWOT ANALYSIS¹**

***GÜMÜŞHANE İLİ AÇISINDAN ALTERNATİF TURİZMİN MEVCUT DURUMU VE
TURİSTİK POTANSİYELİNİN SWOT ANALİZ YARDIMIYLA DEĞERLENDİRİLMESİ***

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ABSTRACT

Unlike the sea-sand-sun triangle, the change in the consumer trends has begun to form the foreground of alternative tourism due to the increase in the tourism diversity. The uniformity and de-differentiation experienced in the consumer form forces societies to develop alternative tourism possibilities. Accordingly, the protection of natural and cultural values, the purchase of accommodation-eating-drinking services in areas with pristine natural beauty, the benefit to the local people, the recognition of rural cultures and the activities made in a region compatible with the environment have started to appear as alternative tourism varieties. In the concept of alternative tourism, terms such as ecotourism, rural tourism, green tourism, cultural tourism, sustainable tourism, and adventure tourism are also used. Alternative tourism is built on a system based on the use of indigenous resources and traditional architecture.

With this work, it has been tried to put forth the current situation of the alternative tourism in Gümüşhane and the touristic potential of the province. The strengths and weaknesses of alternative tourism in terms of Gümüşhane province in the study and the threats and opportunities that may be encountered in the future are determined with the help of SWOT Analysis. As the strengths of Gumushane province due to the internal factors of alternative tourism; being geographically out of the center and to have an intact natural structure; possession of spider and city forests with a flourish richness; nature and history, such as Tomara Waterfall, Çakırkaya Monastery, Santa Ruins, Karaca Cave, Satala Ancient City, Limni Lake Nature Park, Artabel Lakes Nature Park; to have a spiritual value like Ahmet Ziyaüddin-i Gümüşhanevi in terms of religious tourism; the presence of Zigana winter sports tourism centers; to be the province with the most highlands in Turkey; different plant varieties in the flora since it is located in the Black Sea and the Terrestrial climate; the existence of agricultural and livestock enterprises that can be used for alternative tourism in the region; comes into prominence. Reluctance to protect natural or historical riches; adequate infrastructure, lack of transport network; the public does not actively participate in tourism; the inadequacy of tourist guides and local travel agents; lack of promotion and marketing; disadvantages resulting from geographical structure are also seen as weaknesses. The history of the province is on the silk road; the presence of the Süleymaniye Ski Center, which has just started to work on infrastructure; Kose Airport is being built; the presence of historical and urban textures that can be adapted to restoration work; are the opportunities to be included in the scope of the attraction centers program; insufficient capital accumulation; the resistance of local power centers and the unconscious behavior of the people; to face the risk of deterioration of the natural balance of the province with alternative tourism activities to be carried out without planning; the migration of young people are among the threats.

As a result, when the strengths and weaknesses of alternative tourism in Gümüşhane province are compared, the strengths are heftier. The changes that have taken place in the tourism understanding in recent years, also offers Gümüşhane new opportunities. When features of Gümüşhane like climate, its unique nature, its flora showing endemic characteristics, its geography hosted various civilizations, being on the route of the historical Silk Road, its authentic settlement areas which are suitable for natural life such as plateau, mountain, balloon, bicycle, tent village and cave tourism, the characteristics of the environment in which citizens with different religions, languages and denominations live in peace for thousands of years are taken into consideration, it indicates that the unlimited potential of the region can be utilized.

Keywords: Cultural Tourism, Yayla Tourism, Gümüşhane, Alternative Tourism

¹ This study is an extension of the declaration of "Evaluation of ecotourism with SWOT Analysis in terms of Gümüşhane Province" presented in Turkish and verbally in the International Tourism Symposium held on 23-24 October 2017 hosted by Karadeniz Technical University.

ÖZ

Turizm çeşitliliğinin artmasına bağlı olarak tüketici eğilimlerinde yaşanan değişim, deniz-kum-güneş üçgeninden farklı olarak alternatif turizm olgusunu ön plana çıkarmaya başlamıştır. Tüketici kalıbında yaşanan tekdüzelik ve aynılığa, toplumları alternatif turizm imkânlarını geliştirmeye zorlamaktadır. Buna bağlı olarak; doğal kültürel değerleri koruma, bozulmamış doğal güzelliklere sahip alanlarda konaklama-yeme-içme hizmetlerini satın alma, yerel halka fayda sağlama, kırsal kültürleri tanıma ve çevre ile uyumlu bir bölgede yapılan faaliyetler, alternatif turizm çeşitleri olarak ortaya çıkmaya başlamıştır. Alternatif turizm kavramında ekoturizm, kırsal turizm, yeşil turizm, kültürel turizm, sürdürülebilir turizm, ve macera turizmi gibi terimler de kullanılmaktadır. Alternatif turizm yerli kaynakların kullanımını ve geleneksel mimariyi esas alan bir sitem üzerine inşa edilmiştir.

Bu çalışmayla, alternatif turizmin Gümüşhane ilindeki mevcut durumu ve turistik potansiyeli ortaya konulmaya çalışılmıştır. Çalışmada Gümüşhane ili açısından alternatif turizmin güçlü ve zayıf yönleri daha sonra gelecekte karşılaşılabilecekleri tehdit ve fırsatları SWOT Analizi yardımıyla belirlenmiştir. Gümüşhane ili açısından alternatif turizmin iç faktörlerden kaynaklan güçlü yönleri olarak; Gümüşhane'nin coğrafi açıdan merkezin dışında kalması ve doğal yapısının bozulmamış olması, floristik zenginliği bulunan Örmcek ve Kent Ormanlarına Sahip Olması, doğa ve tarih çerçevesinde; Tomara Şelalesi, Çakırkaya Manastırı, Santa Harabeleri, Karaca Mağarası, Satala Antik Kenti, Limni Gölü Tabiat Parkı, Artabel Gölleri Tabiat Parkı gibi varlıklara sahip olması, inanç turizmi açısından Ahmet Ziyaüddin-i Gümüşhanevi Gibi Manevi Bir Değere Sahip Olması, Zigana kış sporları turizm merkezlerinin varlığı, Türkiye'de en fazla yaylası olan kenti konumunda olması, Karadeniz ve Karasal iklim kuşağında bulunduğundan farklı bitki çeşitlerinin gelişimine olanak sağlaması, yörede alternatif turizme yönelik kullanılabilecek tarım ve hayvancılık işletmelerinin varlığı öne çıkmaktadır. Doğal ya da tarihi zenginliklerin korunması konusunda gözlenen isteksizlik, yeterli altyapının, ulaşım ağının geliştirilmemiş olması, halkın aktif bir şekilde turizme katılım göstermemesi, turist rehberlerinin ve yerel seyahat acentelerinin yetersizliği, tanıtım ve pazarlama eksikliği, coğrafi yapıdan kaynaklanan dezavantajlar, da zayıf yönleri olarak görülmektedir. İlin tarihi ipek yolu üzerinde olması, alt yapı çalışmalarına yeni başlanan Süleymaniye Kayak Merkezinin varlığı, Köse Havaalanı'nın yapıyor olması, restorasyon çalışmalarıyla uygun hale getirilebilecek tarihi ve kentsel dokuların varlığı, cazibe merkezleri programı kapsamında yer alması değerlendirilecek fırsatlar arasında; yetersiz sermaye birikimi, yerel güç odaklarının direnişi ve halkın bilinçsiz davranışı, planlama yapılmadan gerçekleştirilecek alternatif turizm faaliyetleri ile ilin doğal dengesinin bozulma riskiyle karşı karşıya bırakılması, genç nüfusun göç etmesi ilin tehdit unsurları arasında yer almaktadır.

Sonuç olarak; Gümüşhane ili alternatif turizminin güçlü ve zayıf yönleri oranlandığında, güçlü yönleri daha ağırlıktadır. Son yıllarda turizm anlayışında meydana gelen değişiklikler; Gümüşhane'ye de yeni fırsatlar sunmaktadır. Gümüşhane sahip olduğu iklimi, kendine özgü doğası, endemik özellikler gösteren florası, çeşitli medeniyetlere ev sahipliği yapması, tarihi ipek yolu üzerinde bulunması, yayla, dağ, balon, bisiklet, çadırkent ve mağara turizmi gibi doğal hayata uygunluk gösteren otantik yerleşim yerlerine sahip olması, farklı din, dil ve mezheplere sahip vatandaşların binlerce yıl hoşgörüsü içinde yaşadığı ortamın varlığı düşünüldüğünde, bölgenin sınırsız potansiyelinin kullanılabileceğini göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kültür Turizmi, Yayla Turizmi, Gümüşhane, Alternatif Turizm

1. INTRODUCTION

From the first half of the twentieth century, mass tourism movements have started to spread rapidly. While tourism activities were among European countries, tourism was concentrated on coastal tourism with the influence of their climate, historical values, natural and cultural riches so that the Mediterranean and the coasts are among the more preferred areas (Jenkins, 1995:269-277; Osman and Young, 2002:2). The intense demand for these areas led to more space occupation by the coastal shores. On the other hand, mass tourism movements towards coastal regions are not places where people can see or have a vacation. This is why the natural structure of the place where the coastal tourism has been intensively occupied has fulfilled its competence in the context of the sector. This negative situation has necessitated a restructuring of mass tourism.

Today, expectations and discourses about tourism activities have changed and efforts have been made to reduce the effects of sea-sand-sun triangle. At this point, it can be said that there are new destinations aiming at high natural and cultural environment consciousness, not expectancy of comfort, more sensitive and respectful to environmental resources, seeking difference and sustainability while using environment. This new formation in tourism is reflected in the tourism sector as a new type of tourist and the type of tourism that can respond to it. In the tourism sector, a new understanding has emerged in which nature tourism dominates, and the search for a specific identity, based on local resources, environment and search for active holiday is increasing.

Alp system, silt-filled plots, giving visually admire mountains, canyons, wetlands that divides them suddenly interested in sumptuous forests involved in the mist of the mountains between the arable Plains and although hundreds of plateau; Turning agriculture into its own false public investments and existing entrepreneurs, for reasons such as lack of vision, is a giant, abandoned land in Gümüşhane. However, like any potential, it is incapable and stable to produce liquidity. The vast potential in mind, requires the entrepreneurs that have knowledge to evaluate them and workforce to use communication networks.

When virgin areas are assessed, Gümüşhane may become a highly competitive manufacturing center beyond being suppliers to global networks. At this point, the labor force, which can take its place in the global competition by producing its own solutions, is the most important minus of the region. Gumushane University has facilities to develop projects for the region; but not only the businessmen of the province, but also the local government and the bureaucracy are far from using this potential. The qualified labor force trained by the university is obliged to try its luck in other regions when there is no opportunity to evaluate its knowledge within the province.

Tourism activities for the province of Gumushane should be prepared with a tourism policy and strategies that include all stakeholders. For this reason, tourism movements should be evaluated together with stakeholders including public institutions, non-governmental organizations, private sector organizations, local people and tourists. The synergy that will be formed with the participation of these stakeholders will play an important role in determining the tourism strategies and identifying the tourism potential of the province.

This study aims to reveal the potential of Gumushane province in terms of alternative tourism; to outline the sustainable investment plan that will accelerate the economic activities of the province; contribute to the development of rural areas; at the same time, it aims to be a guide to leading businessmen, non-governmental organizations, investors and researchers.

In the study, firstly, the strengths and weaknesses of the province in terms of alternative tourism and then threats and opportunities that may be encountered in the future tried to be determined. The strengths and weaknesses of alternative tourism due to internal factors, threats and opportunities originating from the external periphery have been determined with the help of SWOT analysis. In order to realize this, the SWOT matrix of the alternative tourism of Gümüşhane province was established.

2. SCANNING the LITERATURE

Although alternative tourism is actually derived from the results of scientific studies that have positive contributions to the local people and environmental areas, if not planned well, it can lead to further negative consequences such as mass tourism. In terms of forming the theoretical framework, it is useful to mention some studies on alternative tourism effects. Erdoğan and Yağcı (2002) tried to reveal the socio-economic and environmental evaluation of alternative tourism in the context of sustainability. In the study, they can contribute to profitability and conservation efforts when stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, private sector organizations, local people, governments, tourism enterprises and travel agencies fulfill the responsibilities to protect natural and cultural resources. The continuity of tourism activities depends on the protection of environmental resources. As a result, alignment between local people and visitors must be ensured in order to achieve sustainability. Therefore, integrated planning is required. İnan, İnan and Kubaş (2010) examined the effect of ecotourism on rural development in the axis of Trakya Region. In this study, the relation between ecotourism and the environment has been revealed, considering the rural development strategies in the "Trakya" region, where ecotourism has the highest potential. In the study, it is stated that a comprehensive tourism planning should be done by giving importance to education. If these plans are prepared by academicians and researchers, the chances of success will increase. As a result, it is stated that both the rural development and the development of the country will be positively affected if the proposed proposals are realized. Ulasan and Batmaz (2010) have carried out a research on alternative tourism potential in the province of Konya, which is a nature, history and culture treasure. As a result of the research, Konya province has a high potential for alternative tourism but this potential has not been utilized enough. Sungur has demonstrated social impacts of sustainable ecotourism in its work in 2012. In the study, ecotourism examples are given from the world and Turkey. Alternative tourism in Turkey, faith, tableland, rivers, arboretum, hunting, farm, caves, slopes, balloons, underwater diving adventure will be an example and tourism are among the activities. In addition to this, the Silk Road, mountain-hiking, ancient cities and historical attractions, angling, bike tours, agriculture and wildlife (fauna) and bird watching are also included. Emir (2012) examined the rural tourism, which is among the alternative tourism varieties, on the axis of Bartın province. In the study, the applicability to the rural tourism zone was discussed with SWOT analysis. By way of the data obtained from the study, it was reached that the Bartın province is rich in terms of alternative tourism types, but it can not sufficiently evaluate these resources. Külekçi and Bulut (2013) tried to reveal the ecotourism potential of Erzurum Oltu district and its surroundings by SWOT analysis. The survey method was used in the study and the evaluation was made according to the SWOT analysis. The result obtained from the study; with its forests, clean atmospheres, waters, springs and areas suitable for ecotourism are waiting to be discovered in the Oltu county. In 2013, Düzgüneş and Demirel have tried to

evaluate the Maçka region in terms of alternative tourism potential. In the study, it is emphasized that the Sümela Monastery is an important value in recognizing the Maçka Region, besides this value, there are many natural and cultural resources. As a result of the research, it is suggested that financial support should be provided and entrepreneurs should be supported in order to gain natural and cultural values. Zengin and Sancar (2014) discussed the alternative tourism potential and marketability of Şanlıurfa province with the help of SWOT analysis, taking advantage of the survey results and face to face negotiations. In the study, it was tried to put forward alternative tourism perspective of travel agencies and expectations from alternative tourism. As a result of the research, it is stated that Şanlıurfa province has alternative tourism potential but there are many incomplete sides. In the study of Apal (2015), Ardahan's socio-ecological assessment of ecotourism potential and ecotourism has been revealed. In the study, it has been determined that the tourism potential of the province is possessed. Ardahan tourism types are as follows; angling, ecological products, highland, river-rafting, lakes, mountaineering, trekking, golf, equestrian sports, winter sports, botanical, traditional handicrafts and historical tourism. Isayeva and Kasalak (2016), have tried to explain ecotourism activities within the scope of sustainable tourism, with examples from Turkey and the world. This study is based on the examples of Spain, Florida, Italy, Costa-Rica, China, Taiwan and Caribbean countries where sustainability and ecotourism are the least harmful types of tourism Merdan and Okuroğlu have studied the effects of alternative tourism varieties on Gümüşhane tourism in their work, which was realized in 2016. In the study, questionnaires were applied to domestic and foreign tourists and tourism operators. As a result of the study, it is revealed that the alternative tourism potential of the province is found but it can not benefit sufficiently from this potential. Ivanova (2016) tried to reveal new possibilities for alternative tourism on the axis of Bulgaria. Unlike other alternative tourism varieties, the study focuses on wine tourism. Melnik Town and Trakya Region are seen as important tourism centers. As a result of the study, it is stated that Bulgaria could be among the top five destinations of Central and Eastern Europe if it can carry out tourism strategies until 2030.

3. STRONG SIDES OF GÜMÜŞHANE CITY FOR ALTERNATIVE TOURISM (S)

- ***Gümüşhane is Geographically Out of the Center and its Natural Structure is Intact.***

Gümüşhane geographically outside of the center, is located between regions where the industrial pollution is among the least in Turkey. Nature has remained untouched by the fact that the province has a mountainous structure, the division of the land and the separation of small parts, and the material impossibilities preventing the use of medicines to disrupt the natural state. (Merdan, 2014: 103)

- ***Having Unique Cultural Values***

İmera Village is located in the Krom Valley, 39 km away from the city center. İmera Village, which also includes the Krom Valley, is considered to be the first and third degree site area. There are 17 churches registered in the valley. The Çayıroğlu, Soruhan, Ortayayla, Muharakaya, Zembelek, Muhara and Alikinos Churches have survived to the day. According to Atlas Magazine walking routes, the Chromium Valley is located within the first fifty (www.gumushane.edu.tr). When the necessary restorations are completed and the transportation problems are eliminated, the Krom valley can become the center of attraction of the region in terms of religious tourism. A similar kind of ritual made in the Sümela Monastery can also be performed in the Krom valley. The use and development of this potential in terms of belief tourism is an important opportunity for the presentation of Gümüşhane.

Süleymaniye neighborhood is located 5 km away from the city center and since the whole road is made asphalt, it is very easy and convenient to reach by car and walk. The old Gümüşhane is the oldest settlement of Gümüşhane in terms of history and culture due to the civilization which name is Canca, mentioned with the transition route. In terms of historical and cultural assets, the region includes, Hagios lonnes Church, Hagios Stephanos Church, Bagios lonnes Rock Church, Cami-i Sağır Neighborhood and Rock Church, Greek Male High School, Hacı Tahir Efendi Mausoleum, Bridge, Store, Camii Sağ Masjid, Streamline, Kavaklık and Pasha Baths; Güzeller Neighborhood Mosque and Fountain and Ulu Mosque Fountain and Chamber. Süleymaniye Mahallesi was declared as an urban and third grade natural protected area in 2002 by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (www.resmigazete.gov.tr).

- ***Potential of Sailing and Bicycle Tourism***

Sailing is a method of getting on the water by boat, used for tourism, sports and sightseeing. Sailing and cycling tours can be done in Torul and Kürtün Dam Lakes.

Gumushane province is surrounded by high hills, it offers bumpy routes for lovers of mountain biking. It is possible to climb Toraman and Tersun slopes and ramps with mountain bikes to reach the provinces of Kelkit and Şiran from the city center. On the other side, the flat areas of the city are in the Kelkit-Şiran-Köse basin. These regions have significant potential along the district, village and plateau routes used for cycling tourism.

- ***Having Örümcek and Kent Forests with Fluoridical Richness***

Örümcek Forests located at Kürtün districts are approximately 1.5 hours away from Gümüşhane city center. Spider forests located 55 km away from the city center, can be reached by 44 km of asphalt road and 11 km of dirt road. In this region, re the highest and the oldest of the diameter fir and spruce trees in all Europe, the Caucasus and Turkey. The area, which included 2 thousand 630 decares, was declared a sanctuary in 1998. This is proved by scientific evidence².

The forests of the city, which is 7 km away from Gümüşhane, were established in Çamlıca neighborhood Kızılköy. The pine trees are seen as a picnic and park area where the sunsets and city views can be watched with pleasure.

- ***Increase in the Number of Wild Animals Promising a Future in Terms of Hunting Tourism***

Considering the income derived from hunting tourism between European countries Spain \$ 6 billion, France \$ 90 million, South Africa \$ 500 million, Germany \$ 150 million, Hungary \$ 25 million, and Turkey is getting a revenue of \$ 10 million. In a comparison with other European countries it shows that the income earned in Turkey is very low. (Nature Tourism Master Plan, 2012: 79)

Gümüşhane province is a region where animal species such as mountain goats, wild goats, gazelles, hooked horns, roe deer, coyotes, foxes, weasels, partridges and rabbits are very common in terms of hunting tourism. However, since these species can not reach the population to be hunted, only wild boar hunting is allowed.

- ***Highlights in Nature and History: Karaca Cave, Tomara Waterfall, Santa Wrecks, Çakırkaya Monastery, Satala Ancient City, Limni Lake Nature Park, Artabel Lakes Natural Park***

The Karaca Cave is within the boundaries of Torul District and is 17 km away from the Gümüşhane city center. The cave, which opened in 1996, is visited by more than 40 thousand local and foreign tourists per year. The inside of the cave embraces formations resembling underground exhibits such as stalactites, stalagmites, columns, filquails, flag shapes, intra-cave travertine pools, cave flowers and roses. It serves to tourists every year from 15 April to 15 November. While there are many caves to be opened for tourism in the province, the only cave that serves tourism in Gumushane province is Karaca Cave. (Nature Tourism Master Plan, 2012: 79)

Tomara Waterfall is 112 km away from Gümüşhane province and is within the borders of the Seydibaba Village of the province of Şiran. Tomara Waterfall, which is located in a narrow and deep valley, has a dense water flow during the winter months, while the water flow decreases towards the summer months. The area where the waterfall is located has an architectural structure that is compatible with the rich flora and surroundings. The surrounding area of the waterfall is also used as a picnic area. The Şiran Tomara Waterfall Culture and Tourism Festival, first held in 2009, is held every year in the last week of July. In these festivals, cross and bicycle competitions, Bayraktepe march, music and entertainment programs are organized (www.gumushane.edu.tr).

The Santa Ruins are located within the borders of the Dumanlı Village bounded by the central district, 80 km away from the city center. The area where Santa Harabeleri was known to have been used as a refuge of Greek Cypriots was composed of nine neighborhood different and important in religious, commercial and cultural ways. The region used as a miner settlement in the 1500-1800 period was evacuated in 1923 with population exchange. Residents of surrounding villages settled after the exchange. In this area, which has been declared as an archaeological and natural site, there are more than 300 houses and 7 neighborhoods including Terzili, Sincanlı-Kozlu, Piştöflu, Çakallı and Binatlı (www.kulturportali.gov.tr).

The Çakırkaya Monastery is located within the boundaries of the Çakırkaya Village of the province of Şiran. It is estimated to have been made by carving rocks 65 meters high between the 13th and 15th centuries. The church, the chapel and a few small spaces left uninhabited from the monastery. There are eight columns of

² Milliyet Newspaper. "Autumn is beautiful in Örümcek Forests" headline news. 25.10.2017

support in the church, created by carving from rocks. The Çakırkaya Monastery has a qualification to be a Sümela Monastery with very small touches. (www.gumushane.gen.tr).

Satala Antique City is located at an average distance of 115 km from Gümüşhane city center and is within the boundaries of Sadak Village of Kelkit District. Satala City has been declared a 3-degree protected site, which must be protected by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Systematic and extensive archaeological excavations have not been conducted to date about Satala and its surroundings. The information given about this area is mostly obtained from observations or from superficial studies. A systematic study can be carried out to obtain a wide knowledge about Satala. (The www.gumushane.edu.tr).

Limni Lake Nature Park is located approximately 40 km from the center of Gümüşhane province, within the boundaries of Zigana village of Torul district. Lake Limni was declared as a promenade in 1999. Later, it was taken to Type A promenade area. (2004). The nature park has been transformed into a place where tourists can spend the full time together with their landscaping work and country houses. The region is visited by Arab tourists on weekdays and local tourists by weekends. Limni Lake Nature Park has features that could be the new Uzungöl of the region (Nature Tourism Master Plan, 2012: 54).

The Artabel Lakes Nature Park is located at the Torul county, 60 kilometers from the city center. Unspoiled natural beauties of Artabel Lakes are considered to be one of the most important tourism destinations of the Black Sea Region. The Artabel Lakes are located on the skirts of Abdal Musa Hill at a height of 3 thousand 331 meters. The Artabel Lakes are home to quite a few species from the wildlife standpoint. It offers habitats to a variety of animal species such as red goats, foxes, squirrels, martens, poppies, grizzlies and wild boars, as well as wild hawk, eagle, vulture, keel, geese, quail (Nature Tourism Master Plan, 2012: 41).

- ***Among the Most Reliable Cities in Turkey***

According to the TÜİK 2015 Life Index, after Artvin and Sinop province, Gümüşhane ranked third among the most reliable provinces. This situation shows that tourists will not worry about security in the point of choosing Gümüşhane region.

- ***Having a spiritual value such as Ahmet Ziyaüddin-i Gümüşhanevi in the sense of Faith Tourism***

Ahmet Ziyaüddin-İ Gümüşhanevi, is one of the leading sufi and muhaddises of the XIX. century. In 1813 he was born in Gümüşhane's Emirler District. His name is Ahmed and he is known mostly by the name of Ziyaüddin and Gümüşhanevî. Ahmed Ziyaüddin Gümüşhanevî has been involved in all aspects of society, especially religious, economic and social studies (Pirlanta, 2013: 41). Gümüşhanevi adds spiritual value to the city and has an important share in promoting faith tourism in the city.

- ***Possibility of Highly Suitable Track Areas for Paragliding***

Gümüşhane province has significant potential in terms of suitable areas for paragliding. Kadirga Plateau, Kazıkbeli Plateau, Taşköprü Plateau and its surroundings, Zigana Skiing Sports Tourism Center and Aktutan Village are among the important areas where paragliding can be done. Paragliding can not be done independently, but is done by associations in neighboring provinces.

- ***The Existence of Zigana Winter Sports Tourism Centers***

Zigana Ski Center, located 50 km from Gümüşhane city center, is within the boundaries of Zigana Village of Torul district. The Zigana Ski Resort, owned by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, was declared as a Winter Sports Tourism Center in 1991. There is also a hotel in the ski resort with a capacity of 90 beds, a cafeteria for 150 people, that began to serve to the mountain, highland and winter tourism in 2006. There are two ski slopes of 300 and 800 meters long for amateur and professional skiers, two 200 meters long byBee lifts and a 650 meters long teleski. (Nature Tourism Master Plan, 2012: 63)

- ***City That Has the Most Highland in Turkey***

Gümüşhane province has a special location in terms of highland tourism. The reason for this, is the presence of most of Turkey's highlands are located within the city borders of Gumushane. Within the boundaries of Gümüşhane there are 430 large and small highlands; Kadirga, Güvende, Kazıkbeli, Çakırgöl, Yeniköy, Erikbeli, Taşköprü, Ozanca, Camiboğazi, Güvende, Telme, Zigana and Altıntaşlar are among the important ones in the region. From the standpoint of plateau tourism, features such as the richness of unspoiled natural potential, local cultural and peaceful environment, the characteristic features of civil architecture, and the fact that it is out of the center according to other places make Gümüşhane province different from other regions (www.gumushane.edu.tr).

- ***Since it is located in the Black Sea and the Terrestrial Climate Zone, It Allows Growing Different Plant Varieties***

Since Gümüşhane province is located on the Black Sea and terrestrial transition climate, it has prepared a suitable environment for the development of different kinds of plant communities. Different climatic zones affect the distribution of forests and trees in the province. Many plant species coexist through the Harşit basin. Especially in areas close to the shore, laurel, bear grape, boxwood, forest rose and blackberry are common species. In the Kürtün and Torul regions, spruce, scotch fir, beech, oak, fir, chestnut, alder hornbeam and aspen are found as the dominant tree species. In Kelkit, Köse and Şiran, plant species are decreasing, but the scotch fir and oak species are still covering a wide place.

2725 plant taxons belonging to 131 families have been identified in studies carried out to date for Gümüşhane province. Among the plant species in Gümüşhane province borders; 259 are of minimum concern, 5 are critical, 24 are dangerous, 35 are sensitive, 10 are low risk, 25 are almost threatened and 17 are inadequate data category (Gümüşhane Provincial Master Plan, 2016: 45).

- ***Scenic Viewpoints***

Canca and Torul Castle and Kuşakkaya are seen as scenery and scenic viewpoints that local and foreign tourists can visit. Currently, 240-meter altitude glass viewing terrace's construction continues by Torul Municipality within the Torul Castle, which will be the one of Turkey's highest. Yet inside the castle, Turkey's highest flag pole and the highest flag is being placed. Construction continues in the Torul Castle on Trabzon-Gümüşhane highway. When the glass viewing terrace and restaurant are opened for service, at least 100 thousand tourists are expected to visit. Similar investments by the provincial administrators are also considered for Kuşakkaya and Canca Castle.³

- ***Wildlife (Fauna)***

The importance of wildlife (Fauna) observation in the world and Turkey is constantly increasing in recent years. Natural wildlife development areas are being watched by people, and many countries are getting significant income from it. In the province of Gümüşhane, Şiran Yukarı Kulaca wildlife development area is suitable for wild goat observing.

- ***Possibility of Agriculture and Livestock Enterprises to be Used for Alternative Tourism in the Region***

Due to the climatic characteristics of the province, fruit and vegetable production is in a position to meet the needs of the province. Apple, pear, cherry, berry, walnut and mulberry stand out in fruit production. Along with the increase in the number of pulp and walnut operations, the production of mulberry and walnut has also become widespread.

Livestock activities are concentrated in the provinces of Kelkit, Köse and Şiran. The projects implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock have increased the number of livestock enterprises.

Gümüşhane province is very rich in terms of water resources. This provides a great opportunity for the production of aquatic products. There are 4 lakes that produce trout in the province borders. In addition, trout production is also carried out in Harşit and Kelkit brooks, Torul and Kürtün dams. So, with its rich floral structure and the presence of a thousand kinds of honey plants, Gümüşhane province is also an ideal location for beekeeping activities.

- ***Suitable Areas for Photo and Jeep Safari***

Photo and Jeep Safari is an individual or group tour made by foot or using a vehicle to take pictures. The flora, fauna and natural richness of the province provide photo-safari in the high mountains of the province.

4. WEAKNESSES OF GUMUSHANE PROVINCE IN TERMS OF ALTERNATIVE TOURISM(W)

- ***Inadequacy of Tourist Guides and Local Travel Agencies***

Domestic or foreign tourists coming to a country; even if they have maps, brochures, books, etc. in their hands, they may need tourist guides who know the language, culture, traditions and customs of the countries they visit. In this context, tourist guides are preferred among qualified and knowledgeable people. Because of the limited income from tourism, qualified and knowledgeable tourist guides prefer other tourist

³ Milliyet Newspaper. The headline news entitled "The glass scenic viewpoint terrace of the Torul castle was tendered". 12.09.2017

attractions. From this point, tourist guides are inadequate in the point of meeting the need of the province. Similarly, the number of local agencies on the province is also insufficient. This situation arises from the fact that the people of the region are not aware of tourism potential or the investments made in the field of tourism are low.

- ***Lack of Promotion and Marketing***

One of the weaknesses of Gümüşhane in terms of alternative tourism is the lack of destination promotion and target market studies. At the point of eliminating this deficiency, the target market should be tried to be determined first. Once the characteristics of the target market have been identified, promotional images of the region should be prepared and regional or international publicity should be provided. Again, studies should be undertaken to take more part in the tour programs of the region.

- ***Disadvantages arising from Geographical Structure***

Gümüşhane province has a mountainous and rugged structure in terms of the forms of the earth. 71% of the province's surface area constitutes mountainous areas and 29% of them form highlands (www.cografya.gen.tr/tr).

- ***Lack of Education***

The tourist tries to get support from the local people at the point of recognizing and understanding the area or locality he is visiting. Support can be provided by educating the people living in the tourism area. What needs to be done here is to try to overcome the tourism awareness of the people living in the region, to teach professional knowledge, responsibility to take responsibility and behaviors of the personnel who will directly serve the tourists.

- ***Reluctance to Protect Natural or Historic Wealth***

The events that are similar to the fairy chimneys located in the Eskibağlar region, five hundred meters from the city center, are on the Bayburt-Trabzon highway. The waterfalls spilling over forty meters in the spring months create an extraordinary landscape as if they were falling from the sky when viewed from upwards. The entrance of which is located in Eskibağlar, Halgent Waterfall is a magnificent, yet totally secluded natural wonder. (Merdan and Okuroğlu, 2016: 966). However, this natural wonder is abandoned to its own fate and it is expected not to be noticed by the local administrators.

- ***Lack of Adequate Infrastructure and Transportation Network***

Due to the fact that the whole province is surrounded by mountains and it is based on rugged terrain, transportation problems are experienced. This situation is seen as the biggest factor when the share that can be taken from tourism is low. Since there is no airport in Gümüşhane province, the nearest airport is located in Trabzon, 100km away. There is no alternative to highways in the province. Completion of the Gümüşhane-Bayburt airport will be an alternative to the highway in transportation as well as bringing economic vitality to the region.

Gümüşhane roads are 450 km of asphalt, 10 km of stabilization, 24 km of land and 12 km of impassable roads. In order to develop adequate infrastructure and upgrade the road standard, the transportation sector should be given the necessary attention and adequate allocation should be allocated in order to reduce the ratio of soil and raw roads (www.gumushane.gov.tr).

- ***Local People Do Not Show Participation in an Active Tourism***

The people of Gümüşhane do not have sufficient knowledge about the natural and cultural riches of the province and the extent of the economic contribution that it can provide. This situation causes the people to have an unstable attitude towards participation in tourism.

- ***Lack of Trained Staff for Alternative Tourism Activities***

One of the biggest problems of the province in terms of alternative tourism is the difficulty in finding qualified intermediates. On the other hand, employers complain that they can not find qualified staff and graduates have difficulty finding jobs. The main task in this solution belongs to the Tourism Faculty of Gümüşhane University and the Tourism and Hotel Management Vocational School. The problem of finding employment opportunities in terms of alternative tourism can be solved by providing cooperation between the university and the tourism sector, taking qualified personnel in the working life, raising the awareness of the employer, adapting the changes in the technology to the working life (Merdan and Okuroğlu, 2016: 15).

5. OPPORTUNITIES (O)

- ***The Province Is Located On The Historical Silk Road***

Gümüşhane province, which connects the Eastern Black Sea to the Middle East, the Caucasus and Iran, is located on an important route on the historical Silk Road crossing roads. The fact that it is located on the route of the road has maintained its strategic importance in every era (Özkan, 2010: 63). In particular, if the economic embargo on Iran is fully up, Gümüşhane's strategic importance will increase in terms of transit transportation. Gümüşhane province is a potential favorite of foreign tourists for having all the qualities of being on the silk road, natural beauties, biodiversity, hunting tourism and nature tourism.

- ***The Presence of the Süleymaniye Ski Resort, Infrastructure Work of Which Has Just Started***

The Süleymaniye Ski Center, which is thought to be located 3 km from the city center, is at the end of the old settlement Suleymaniye Quarter. The infrastructure of the center is about to finish and it aimed to complete the Süleymaniye Ski Center for 20 million TL. The operation of the ski center is very important in terms of the socio-economic structure of Gümüşhane. The fact that the economic structure of the city is entirely student-oriented, reveals a serious gap in the city with the withdrawal of students in the winter months. One of the ways to fill this void and lack is to introduce winter tourism (www.haber29.net).

- ***Construction of Köse Airport***

The Bayburt-Gümüşhane airport is located in Salyazı, Köse District of Gümüşhane, and construction works are started taking into consideration the proximity to both provinces. A total budget of 285 million TL has been allocated for Bayburt-Gümüşhane airport, which is under construction and tender process. It is planned to open the airport in 2020, with a capacity of 2 million passengers per year⁴.

- ***Allowing Different Eco-Tourist Activities***

There are also activities with different activities such as horse trekking, angling and paragliding. Other than these, activities such as flag species, watching wildlife (walking or boating point) are also organized in Gümüşhane.

- ***The Presence of Historical and Urban Structures that can be Made Compatible with Restoration Works***

Restoration, repair and tourism facility works in Gümüşhane province are carried out in the former Gümüşhane settlement. After the restoration of Süleymaniye Mosque, Küçük Mosque and Minare I-II-III mosques, the restoration of Kadirbeyoğlu Zeki Bey Mansion was completed in 2013. Paşa Bath was projected in 2016 and restoration process started. The 2.5 km road between Gümüşhane province center and Süleymaniye district was completed within the scope of the green road. This positive result will be a significant contribution to the tourism mobility of the region in accelerating the work of other tourism infrastructure and superstructure (Düzgün and Çalık, 2017: 135).

- ***Participation in the Attraction Centers Program***

Gümüşhane is first degree among the priority developmental provinces. However, Gümüşhane province could not achieve the desired result from these priorities. In addition to these incentives, Gümüşhane was included in the scope of the attraction center program which was published in the official gazette numbered 29945 in 2017. The purpose of this program is to reduce development disparities between regions and contribute to the economic development of the regions. Within the scope of the program, it is planned to support call center investments together with the manufacturing industry. Within the scope of this program; support for interest-free investment loans, support for interest-deductible business loans, support for building construction and investment site support are provided(Mountain and dig., 2017: 776).

6. THREATS (T)

- ***Insufficient Capital Stock***

Since the income level is low in developing regions, the saving opportunities are very limited. The low savings also hamper capital accumulation. This causes the level of investment to be low.

⁴ Sözcü Newspaper. The headline is "Gümüşhane and Bayburt airport is coming.". 19.11.2017

There are not enough entrepreneurs with capital stock. There is a need for entrepreneurs who will focus on projects that are integrated with the city of Gümüşhane and who can put forth rational projects.

- ***Resistance of Local Power Centers and Unconscious Behavior of Public***

Among the elements that impede the development of Gümüşhane are; Managers of Gümüşhane province are elected from outside Gümüşhane, those who do not have emotional and economic ties with the city have a say in the management of Gümüşhane, and the administrators who take place in the administrative position of the city take as a step. So much so that the unfair income circles entering into different expectations from the city ignore the interests of Gümüşhane and pursue their own interests. On the other hand, successful people can be absorbed by ignoring the values of the administrators who spend all their time in the city for the development of Gümüşhane or by resorting to scandal campaigns. The fact that the people remain unresponsive to these kinds of actions leaves the city unattended.

- ***Facing the Risk of Deterioration of the Natural Balance of the Province with Alternative Tourism Activities to be Carried Out Without Planning***

Alternative tourism attracts attention in many parts of the world, with the desire to see new places and to gain new experiences. Every type of tourism that is related to nature can lead to destruction in nature even if not as much as mass tourism. Unplanned alternative tourism activity can damage wildlife areas, visual beauty, plant destruction, erosion, environmental stratification, natural and cultural resources. For this reason, any measures should be taken to protect or to prevent the destruction of nature.

- ***Migration of Young Population***

Factors such as the lack of geographical conditions of the province, lack of a large agricultural land, the inadequacy of input, fragmentation of agricultural lands through inheritance, mechanization in agriculture, lack of modern industrial facilities have played a role in immigration mobility. In addition, the preference of large cities, the availability of working and living conditions, the appeal of recreational experiences, the diversity of consumption and educational resources, and the provision of better opportunities for young people have been influential. (Merdan and Okuroğlu, 2016: 18).

- ***Lack of Permanent Work Sites***

Gümüşhane's greatest deficiency in terms of employment is the inability to create permanent business fields. Investments made in-house are generally short-term, which in turn affects employees negatively. The investment network should be oriented towards the resources in the Gümüşhane and the sectors that have persistence.

7. SWOT MATRIX FOR ALTERNATIVE TOURISM IN GÜMÜŞHANE

SWOT analysis or TOWS matrix is a strategic planning and method tool that is already trying to prepare for future opportunities and threats, allowing the strong and weak points of the predetermined subject to be seen. SWOT analysis should be placed in a matrix of internal and external directions to be assessed that open up threats and opportunities for the environment. Internal directions include strong and weak points, and external directions include opportunities and threats. In this case, the first line of the matrix is strong and weak, and the first column is the opportunities and threats (Ersungur and Aslan, 2014: 228).

The SWOT matrix includes internal advantages and weaknesses that can positively affect competition, and a certain number of external opportunities and threats with a high degree of importance (Ülgen and Mirze, 2004). In Table 1, SWOT matrix of Gümüşhane province was tried to be formed in terms of alternative tourism and strategies that will benefit from external opportunities are summarized; methods that maximize the strengths of the province and reduce external threats to a minimum level, methods and strategies for weaknesses to be transformed into strengths, while giving the best benefit from external opportunities, taking into account the new ways to minimize existing weaknesses and the strengths of the province.

Table 1. Alternative Tourism SWOT Matrix in Gümüşhane Province

SWOT (TOWS) MATRIX	STRONG POSITION(S)	WEAK POSITION(W)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Gümüşhane is Geographically Out of the Center and its Natural Structure is Intact. -Having Unique Cultural Values -Potential of Province for Sailing and Bicycle Tourism -Having Örümcek and Kent Forests with Floristic Richness Increase in the Number of Wild Animals Promising a Future in Terms of Hunting Tourism Outstanding values in nature and history: Karaca Cave, Tomara Waterfall, Çakırkaya Monastery, Santa ruins, Satala Ancient City, Limni Lake Nature Park, Artabel Lakes Nature Park, -Among the Most Reliable Cities in Turkey, -Having a spiritual value such as Ahmet Zîyâüddin-i Gümüşhanevi in the sense of faith tourism, -Possibility of Highly Suitable Track Areas for Paragliding, -Existence of Zigana Winter Sports Tourism Centers, -Being a City with the Most Highland in Turkey, -Since it is located in the Black Sea and the Terrestrial Climate Zone, Possibility of Different Plant Varieties, -Scenic Viewpoints, Wildlife (Fauna), -Existence of Agricultural and Livestock Enterprises That Can be Used for Alternative Tourism in the Region, -Suitable Areas for Photo and Jeep Safari
Opportunities (O)	SO Strategies	WO Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Province Is Located On the Historical Silk Road, - Presence of the Süleymaniye Ski Resort, The Infrastructure Work of Which Has Just Started, - Köse Airport is being built, -Allowing Different Eco-Tourist Activities, - Presence of Historical and Urban Structures that can be Made Compatible with Restoration Works, - Participation of the Province in the Attraction Centers Program, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Gumushane, among one of the priority regions in the country, has a young and educated human power that can promote employment by encouraging the opening of new business fields. - The climatic conditions and geographical structure of the country can encourage the establishment of facilities and businesses in alternative tourism varieties in international standards such as winter, nature, mountaineering and hunting sports.. -Considering the incentives provided by the state, new investment network can be created for alternative tourism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -If the tourism sectors intermediate and qualified employee needs will be provided by University, this will provide important contributions to the revitalization of commercial, economic and social life. -Although Gumushane Province is included in the attraction centers program, the income from alternative tourism is limited due to the inadequacy of the works done in the alternative tourism field.
THREATS (T)	ST STRATEGIES	WT STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Insufficient Capital Stock, -Resistance of Local Power Focus and Public Unconscious Behavior, - Facing the Risk of Deterioration of the Natural Balance of the Province With Alternative Tourism Activities to be Carried Out Without Planning, - Migration of Young Population, -Lack of Permanent Work Sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The work to be done for the development of alternative tourism needs to be continued in a way that does not distort the natural environment and to take necessary measures in this regard. - Increased employment in the area of alternative tourism can prevent young people from migrating. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -While the natural structure of Gümüşhane has not been destroyed, alternative tourism activities to be carried out before planning can be put at risk of deteriorating the natural structure of the province.

8. CONCLUSION AND ASSESSMENT

Gümüşhane province has a long history, its unique nature, numerous ancient cities, caves reminiscent of underground paintings, near 450 highlands, rich flora and fauna, historical silk roads and thousands of years tolerance of citizens with different religions, languages and denominations it may become one of the important centers of Turkish tourism when it is thought that it has an atmosphere that it lives in. Changing tourism concept; the city has its own unique natural beauty; it is a highland, winter and cave tourism; historical and cultural heritage, faith, cultural tourism; biodiversity, hunting tourism, paragliding and nature excursions offers new opportunities to alternative tourism.

Due to the fact that the whole province is surrounded by mountains and it is based on rugged terrain, transportation problems are experienced. This situation is seen as an impediment to the development of the socio-economic structure of the province. Since there is no airport in Gümüşhane province, the nearest airport is located in Trabzon, 100km away. There is no alternative to highways in the province. Railways

prepared before 1950, but forgotten later, should also be considered as an alternative to transportation. Another alternative is the completion of the Gümüşhane-Bayburt airport and the possibility of airplane flights in certain periods. A cheaper alternative is the arrangement of sea-going flights over the dam ponds, which are numerous in number.

By moving the city center to more convenient areas by opening access roads to the existing city; cultural values as well as destruction of agricultural land due to land rent can be prevented. Otherwise, even if tourists come to Gümüşhane land, there will be no green space, no place to stay, or it will not be worth staying, since it will be a copy of the places in the successful centers of mass tourist tourism. At this point, Gümüşhane houses, which are kept in the old age, must be restored in accordance with the historical background.

In the field study, it was seen that the possibilities for tourism diversification and development were not fully utilized. Firstly, the region should be able to take more place in tour organizations. Tourist guides who know the area well must be trained and local travel agencies should be encouraged. Besides, alternative tourism should be promoted nationally and internationally through visual or print media. On the other hand, activities should be carried out in the region, in authentic settlements, with village / highland tourism, natural and life-adapted vehicle and vehicle-free safari tours, antique cities and churches. Until now, promotional activities in Gümüşhane were limited to caves only. On the other hand, even the contribution of some of the caves opened to tourism gives an idea of the size of the present potential.

As a result; When the alternative tourism in Gümüşhane is rated as strong and weak, its strengths are more dominant. In this context, it is important that all citizens living in the city are concerned about preserving natural resources, ensuring sustainability and transferring them to future generations. In addition, project-based work, infrastructure and superstructure investments should be evaluated within a strategic plan with a participatory approach in tourism. Gümüşhane, in terms of location, is the point of transition to today's important centers. In the past, hosting several civilizations has given hope to the emergence of new areas of investment with a history of richness, virginity and endemic flora. From this point of view, Gümüşhane province is an alternative tourism center for the future.

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