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Contribution of concrete cultural constituents to the tourism potential of Safranbolu

Hüseyin Kaya[a]* and Halil Kurt[b]

[a]*Karabük University, Faculty of Arts, Geography Department, Karabük 78050, Turkey*
[b]*Marmara University, Sicence and Arts Faculty, Geography Department, İstanbul 34722 Turkey*

Abstract

Safranbolu is one of the richest towns in Turkey in terms of culture and history. It has a wide range of historical and cultural background. Safranbolu had been under the influence of Hellenistic period, Byzantium and Ottoman civilizations according to the explorations in the region. Among the properties of Safranbolu there are Safranbolu Houses, mosques, tombs, dervish lodges, inns, baths, bridges, fountains and libraries that can be considered valuable in terms of tourism potential. Safranbolu houses reflect the history, culture, economy and ways of living in the 18th and 19th centuries. Houses built in and around the valleys also reflect the geographical and environmental features of Safranbolu. Those houses and building have their own designs. Taş Minare Mosque, Köprülü Mehmet Paşa Mosque, Hidayetullah Mosque and Dağdelen Mosques are some of the historical ones that reflect the culture of their time. There are tombs which were built in the 19th century. Hacı Emin Efendi Tomb, Hasan Baba Tomb, Şeyh Mustafa Efendi Tomb are among them. It is possible to mention about two major dervish lodges one of which is Kalealtı Lodge and the other is Ali Baba Lodge. Among the baths there are two significant ones; one of them is the old bath and the other is the new bath reflecting 14th century. Bridges and fountains are other cultural constituents in which have contributions to the tourism potential.

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1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the rising values of economy in the world. So contributions and endeavors to tourism mean contributions to the economy of a country. Safranbolu has a unique tourism potential in Turkey. Different definitions have been made on tourism since the late 19th century. These definitions focus on determining the borders and content of tourism. The improvements and rapid change in tourism caused variations and led alternative ways.

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +90-370-433-8200; fax: +90-370-433-8334
E-mail address: huseyinkaya@karabuk.edu.tr

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Among the types of tourism one recent form of tourism that involves traveling to tranquil and unpolluted natural areas.It is called ecotourism. According to the definition and principles of ecotourism established by The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) in 1990, ecotourism is "Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people." Recently, with the new dimensions and concepts, tourism has had an important place in a country's economy. Tourism supply has been altering according to the new demands of tourists. Classical classification of tourism has gained new dimensions and alternative ways. It is possible to see so many varied types of tourism. One classical classification of tourism can be examined in six common categories as commonly accepted; leisure travel, cultural tourism, social tourism, sport tourism, financial tourism and political tourism.

In Turkey, there are so many touristic places attracting tourists containing almost all the touristic values. Among these places Safranbolu has a special place for tourism with a high potential. Safranbolu is mostly known with its authentic houses throughout the country. The houses are called the traditional Safranbolu houses with their historical background, cultural, architectural and touristic values. Safranbolu reflects most of the features of the traditional Turkish Living. Because UNESCO took Safranbolu to the world heritage list in 1994 regarding its cultural heritage and its success in protecting them. After this turning point presenting all these historical, cultural and natural values to the world became an important issue. Safranbolu defined in the world heritage list (no:614) as :

"Safranbolu is a city which preserves all its values: monuments, sites, groups of buildings, and an historic shopping area. There is a great homogeneity between these elements. It is a typical Ottoman city that has survived to the present day. It also displays an interesting interaction between the topography and the historic settlement (criterion ii).

The architectural forms of the buildings and the streets are illustrative of their period (criterion iv)." Safranbolu gives the opportunity to understand the general features of an Anatolian Turkish city in the 19th century with house architecture, old streets, mosques, inns, Turkish baths and settlement structure as a whole. Especially in the recent years the struggle to take the city under protection resulted in declaring Safranbolu as "urban site area". After that some of the buildings started to be restorated.

2. Study Area Study Area and Its General Geographic Features

Safranbolu is a town in Karabük in the Black Sea Region in Turkey. Its distance to Black Sea is nearly 60 km. It is surrounded by Bartın province in the North, Düzce and Bolu provinces in the West, Çankırı in the South and Kastamonu in the East. Safranbolu is in 41° - 15' North paralels and 32° - 42' east meridians. It was part of Kastamonu Province until 1923 and Zonguldak Province between 1923 and 1995.



Fig. 1-a: Location Map of Safranbolu (www.safranbolu.gov.tr)

According to the 2000 census statistics, population of the district is 47,257 of which 31,697 live in the town of Safranbolu. The district covers an area of 1,000 km^2 (386 sq mi), and the town lies at an elevation of 485 m (1,591 ft). Safranbolu is a mountainous place with hills and valleys. There are deep and long canyons

along with big caves. There are three streams called Tokatlı (Gümüş), Akçasu and Bulak streams passing over the town centre through deep canyons and meet The Araç river. 35% of the area is covered with forests.It has a transition climate between Black Sea and Central Anatolian climates ; partly hot and rainy in summers and cold and snowy in winters, in spring and and fall it is rainy and warm.

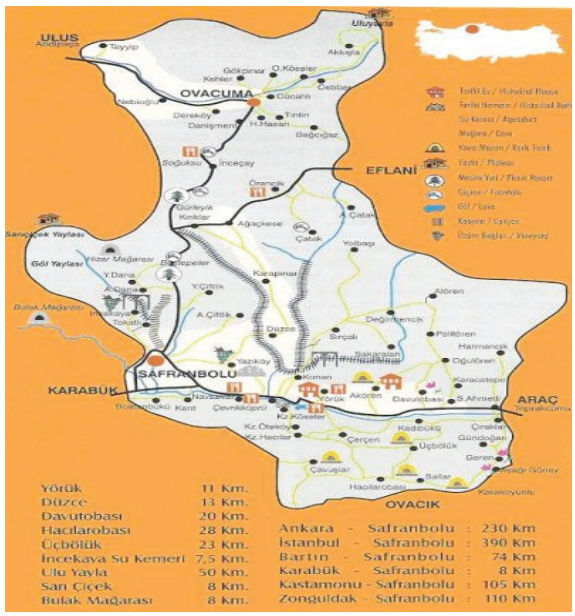


Figure 1-b: Safranbolu Map (www.safranbolu.gov.tr)

3. Method

In order to achieve aims of the study, related literature was searched and necessary researches about the research area was examined [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7]. In order to get to know the historical constituents some observations were done in the research area. Some statistics about tourism were examined to understand the development level of tourism. Some interviews were conducted with the owners of a pension to have an idea about the local people's approach towards tourism. This research can be considered as quantitive because of getting use of thesis studies, reports and other studies along with many statistics of establishments.

4. Findings

It is assumed that the history of Safranbolu goes back to 3000 B.C. It means that it was a settlement area since that time. The oldest ancient civilization in the region is known as " The Gasgas". The other civilizations reigned in this region were The hittites, Paphlagonia, Kimers, Lydians, The Persians, The Seljuq Empire and The Ottoman Empire [8]. In 1196, during the reign of The State of Seljuk this place became a Turkish Land by Muhittin Mesut Shah [9]. This short summary of Safranbolu gives a clue about the historical, cultural and tourism background.

After the establishment of Kardemir iron and steel factory, air pollution and unsuitable environmental conditions Safranbolu became a new place of settlement with cleaner air and wide area. After that time in 1970 and later tourism started to be a new sector in Safranbolu. But Safranbolu has a different tourism profile. Depending on the tourism supply, the visitors as tourists come to Safranbolu mostly for cultural reasons. The tourists coming from Japan, New Zealand, Australia and such countries have a different focus of attention than usual tourists.

Safranbolu is a cultural bridge between past and present and gives new dimensions to the future. One important thing that makes Safranbolu unique is the protection of all the touristic constituents in cooperation with the settlers of the region, tourists and all the institutions. Recent appearance of Safranbolu is like an open museum as a whole. Being in the world heritage list is also important in attracting tourists all over the world .

The tourism attractions in Safranbolu are natural beauties as canyon valleys, caves, high plateaus, rivers, lakes, rich vegetation and forests, historical works of art, the aqueducts, mounds and similar ruins and historical villages. The varied elevations both change the vegetation and make some natural sports possible. Some important canyon valleys in the area are İncekaya, Tokatlı, Kirpe and Sakaralan canyons. Mencilis (Bulak) cave in Safranbolu is a well known cave in the world Caves List and is visited by the experts.

With the archeological researches Lydian, Rome and Byzanthium ruins were found in the region. Most of the Works of art are the structures remained from the Ottoman and Candaroğulları periods [9]. Those are the tumuluses, tombs, embossments, marble pillars and some animal or human sculptures. [10]. The other Works of art are the ones remained from the rule of Turkish civilizations especially the Ottoman State.

Safranbolu houses are the most popular historical and cultural constituents of the town. They reflect not only the history but also the culture, feelings, emotions , traditions and architecture of their times. There are nearly 2000 traditional Turkish houses and 800 of them are under legal protection [6]. Among the concrete constituents ***mosques*** have an important place.

4.1. Mosques

- "Eski Cami" (The Old Mosque) is one of the examples. Even it is said that it was turned into a mosque from a church there is no proof of it [11]. It was built in 14th century. It is mostly wooden.



Photo 1:Hasan Paşa Tomb in Hıdırlık Hill



Photo 2:Hasan Paşa Tomb in Hıdırlık Hill

- Taş Minarette Mosque; It is in Taş Minarette street. It has no scripts on it. It is thouht to be remaining from Candaroğulları reign.
- Köprülü Mehmet Pasha Mosque; It was built by Grandvizier Mehmet Pasha in 1662. It is one of the biggest mosques of Safranbolu.
- Hidayetullah Mosque; It is in İzzet Mehmet Pasha Street. According to the inscriptions over the entrance door it was built in 1718/1719 by Hidayet Aga.
- Dağdelen Mosque; It is in Akçasu street. According to the inscription over the entrance door it was built by Hacı Mehmet in 1767/1768.
- Kazdağlı Mosque; it is in Çeşme street. According to the inscription over the entrance door it was built in 1778.
- İzzet Mehmet Pasha Mosque; It is in İzzet Pasha street. It was built by İzzet Mehmet Pasha in 1211.
- Kaçak (Lütfiye) Mosque; the inscriptions say that it was built in 1878/1879 by Hacı Hüseyin Hüsnü.
- Hamidiye (Zülmiye, Mescit) mosque; It is in Mescit street. It was built in 1883 by Mehmet Mahzı.

4.2. The Tombs

There are five known tombs in the town.

- Hacı Emin Efendi Tomb; It is near the Mescit street. According to the inscription it was built for Şeyh Hacı Emin Efendi.
- Ali and Hasan Baba Tombs; It is in Çavuş street. There is a date written on its walls 1871/1872 as the building date.
- Şeyh Mustafa Efendi Tomb; it was built in 1871/1872.
- Alverenli Şeyh Hacı Mustafa Efendi Tomb; He was a lider of a religious group. The tomb is near the

entrance of Safranbolu cemetary.

- Hasan Paşa Tomb:It is in Hıdırlık Hill. It belonges to Köstendil Local Governer Hasan Pasha at the time of Abdülmecit I in the Ottoman period in 1845.

4.3. Dervish Lodges (Tekke)

There were two tekkes where people perform religious activities as a group. They are in form of ruins.

- Kalealtı Tekke; It remained from Ottoman period. It is in Tekke street.
- Ali Baba Tekke; It is in Çavuş street.

4.3.1 Cinci Kervansaray (inn); it was both for accommodation and commercial centre in Çeşme street.

4.4. Turkish Baths

Turkish baths are again historical and cultural constituents in Safranbolu. There are two baths.

The old Bath; it is in Cami-i Kebir street. According to some researches it remained from the Byzanthium period.

The new Bath; It is in Çeşme stret. It is official name in some documents is Hamide Hatun Waqf.

4.5. Bridges

There are three historical bridges.

Taş (Stone) Bridge; It is over the Eflani river. There is no clues about the age of the bridge.

Tokatlı Bridge; It is in the North of the town over the gümüş river. It was turned to a bridge in 1179.

İnce Köprü (Thin bridge) ; it is in the North of Tokatlı village. It is around 110 m.

4.6. Fountains

There are over a hundred fountains of charity. According to a research the oldest fountain is Akçasu Fountain in 1682.

The old governmental Building;It is situated on a hill in the centre. It was built for the second year celebration of Abdülhamit Han's reign with the support of the local people.

The Historical Clock Tower: It was built by İzzet Mehmet Pasha at the time of Selim III in 1794 – 1798. It is of 20 m. High.Its clock is an English one with a high quality.

The Shoe Stalls (Yemeniciler Arastası): It is in the central part of Safranbolu behind the Köprülü mosque. It has a unique architecture.

Incekaya Aquaduct: It is an important architectural piece of work, stil safe today.It was built in between 1794-1798. It is passing throug a canyon valley called İncekaya. It is for carrying water of 110 m. Long and 30 or 40 m. Height.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Safranbolu is an attractive place with all its touristic constituents. It has not only natural beauties but also histrocial, cultural values as well. With the old buildings and all other cultural heritage along the natural beauties, Safranbolu has a good potential for tourism.

Safranbolu combined past with present with the concrete cultural constituents by protecting them. They reflected their past in terms of "Safranbolu houses", other historical buildings, even their ways of living altogether.

These features come together; accommodation, marketing and advertisement turned to be a serious tourism potential. Private enterprises with governmental arrangements contributed Safranbolu to be a much bigger town.

In order to get the use of all tourism potential, governmental bodies, private sector and local people

should support each other and organize conferences, symposiums, events so that more people can hear about Safranbolu.

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