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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Geosite Assessment for Geotourism Purposes: Case Study of Ida Madra Geopark, Türkiye

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Abstract
This study was conducted to evaluate some of the geosites in the Ida Madra Geopark for geotourism purposes. The Kubalikova (2013) method was used to assess the geosites for geotourism purposes. Using this method, 20 geosites were scored in five main categories and subcategories: scientific and ethical values, educational value, economic value, conservation value, and aesthetic value. Scores ranged from 9.00 to 18.25. The Kaz Mountain received the highest score, while the Taştepe basalt columns received the lowest. According to these results, geosites with higher scores attract more visitors. They also contribute more economically to the local community through geotourism. Efforts should also be made to address the shortcomings of low-scoring geosites, increase their geotourism capabilities, and ensure that the Geopark provides greater financial support to local communities through geotourism.

Keywords Geotourism · Geosite · Assessment · Ida madra geopark

Introduction

Tourism activities continue to expand and diversify, and one of the emerging concepts within this process is geotourism. Derived from the Greek word geo (earth), geotourism refers to the presentation of a geographical location—including its natural and cultural features—for tourism purposes. It is broadly defined as "tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place, its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents" (Travel Industry Association of America & National Geographic 2003; Hose 2000). Geotourism is widely recognized as a significant component of sustainable tourism (Akıncı and Kasalak 2016l & Gül 2016; Doldur 2016).

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Since the 1990s, numerous methodologies have been developed to assess geosites in terms of their scientific, educational, aesthetic, economic, and conservation values. Early approaches include Panizza (2001), later refined by Coratza and Giusti (2005). Bruschi and Cendrero (2005) emphasized intrinsic scientific quality, economic potential, and conservation needs, while Serrano and Gonzalez-Trueba (2005) proposed criteria based on scientific, incremental, and management values. Pralong (2005) introduced a detailed method focusing on economic and cultural parameters, and Pereira et al. (2007) developed a comprehensive framework later expanded by Pereira and Pereira (2010). Reynard et al. (2007) highlighted the importance of detailed inventories and field studies, while Zouros (2005, 2007) incorporated geodiversity, ecological, cultural, and aesthetic values. Kubalíková (2013) synthesized these approaches into a widely adopted valuation table.

Over the past two decades, geosite assessment has become a prominent research field, with more than 440 studies indexed in the Web of Science. Case studies have been reported from Germany (Röhling and Schmidt-Thomé 2004), Greece (Fassoulas et al. 2012) China (Wang et al. 2015), Serbia (Tomić and Božić 2014; Tomić et al. 2020), Poland (Górska-Zabielska and Kamieńska 2017), Poland and Italy (Zwolinski et al. 2018), Indonesia (Suilo et al. 2020), Albania (Braholli and Menkshi 2021), the Andes

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