



From best tourism village to regional development: the power of destination image in an old Greek town Mustafapaşa

Del mejor pueblo turístico al desarrollo regional: el poder de la imagen del destino en una antigua ciudad griega Mustafapaşa

Olcay Özişik Yapıcı

PhD in Tourism Management. Associate Professor in Ondokuz Mayıs University, Samsun, Türkiye. **ORCID** <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5197-5313>.

Hatice Sari Gök

PhD in Tourism Management. Associate Professor in Tourism, Isparta Uygulamalı Bilimler University, Isparta, Türkiye. **ORCID** <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0949-2593>

Yusuf Karakuş*

PhD in Production management and marketing. Associate Professor in Tourism, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan University, Rize, Türkiye.

ORCID <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4878-3134>

Información del artículo

Recibido:
07/02/2025

Aceptado:
01/07/2025

Publicado:
12/01/2026

***Autor de correspondencia**
yusuf.karakus@erdogan.edu.tr

Páginas:
007 - 032

<http://rperiplo.uaemex.mx/>

<https://doi.org/10.36677/elperiplo.v0i50.25788>

Abstract

This study examines the role of Perceived Value Theory and its potential for regional development in the context of Mustafapaşa, Turkey, which was selected as a Best Tourism Village (BTV) by UNWTO. Using a two-stage research design, the study first conducted a content analysis of 24 documents to identify the perceived image of Mustafapaşa, followed by interviews with 13 participants to identify the key components of destination image. These components: history and culture, natural environment, social atmosphere and tourism activities were then compared with the sustainability goals of the BTV. The research highlights the partial achievement of these goals and emphasizes the need for greater local awareness and cooperation. The importance of this study lies in its contribution to Perceived Value Theory by demonstrating its application to rural tourism development. The findings suggest that increasing the perceived value of destinations such as Mustafapaşa through strategic management can stimulate tourism, promote sustainable development and protect cultural and natural resources.

Keywords:

Tourism, Destination image, Best Tourism Village, Regional development.

Resumen

Este estudio examina el papel de la Teoría del Valor Percibido y su potencial para el desarrollo regional en el contexto de Mustafapaşa (Turquía), seleccionada como Mejor Pueblo Turístico (BTV) por la OMT. Utilizando un diseño de investigación en dos fases, el estudio realizó en primer lugar un análisis de contenido de 24 documentos para identificar la imagen percibida de Mustafapaşa, seguido de entrevistas con 13 participantes para identificar los componentes clave de la imagen del destino. A continuación, estos componentes: historia y cultura, entorno natural, ambiente social y actividades turísticas se compararon con los objetivos de sostenibilidad de la BTV. La investigación pone de relieve la consecución parcial de estos objetivos y subraya la necesidad de una mayor concienciación y cooperación locales. La importancia de este estudio radica en su contribución a la Teoría del Valor Percibido al demostrar su aplicación al desarrollo del turismo rural. Los resultados sugieren que aumentar el valor percibido de destinos como Mustafapaşa mediante una gestión estratégica puede estimular el turismo, promover el desarrollo sostenible y proteger los recursos culturales y naturales.

Palabras clave:

Turismo, imagen del destino, mejor ciudad turística, desarrollo regional.

1. Introduction

Tourism destinations conduct various studies and determine new strategies to attract potential visitors. Planning decisions should consider natural historical and cultural values to increase the number of visitors. These values should be promoted and marketed to tourists. In addition, as compared to other sectors, destinations should create a good image through more comprehensive and strategic planning. Memorably marketing touristic values is related to determining the correct image and highlighting.

The concept of destination, which is difficult to define in a structural sense, can be any holiday village, town, city, or region where a tourist may wish to travel (Tatık, 2022: 27). Since destinations are unique geographies determined within an artificial framework, they must be planned, marketed, and developed using strategies. Firstly, image studies related to the destinations must be conducted among destination marketing activities. It is necessary to explain the concept of image. While the image can express the characteristics of a single individual, it also means a holistic mental visualization of a service, a good, a city, a region, a destination, or a country as a broader concept (Reilly, 1990). Image as an attitudinal structure is, a concept related to the entirety of perceptions and attitudes that include all the characteristics of places and objects (Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990). Destination image is the picture formed in an individual's mind about a place, the image that the destination reflects to the outside, and the individual's needs, preferences, and knowledge (Beerli & Martin, 2004). In order to influence tourists, the touristic opportunities of the destination must be effectively promoted and marketed. In this regard, in recent years, destinations have aimed to reach potential visitors by working on issues such as rural development, sustainability, and membership in internationally accepted networks.

The Best Tourism Villages (BTV) initiative was launched by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in 2021. The BTV initiative network aims to contribute to the use of tourism activities in destinations as a driving force to ensure prosperity in rural development. This aims to ensure rural development, which is determined by taking into account criteria such as protecting the natural and cultural resources of the destinations, ensuring economic, environmental and social sustainability in the region, and tourism development. Since 2021, more than 70 villages from approximately 40 countries have been included in this network (UNWTO, 2023). One of these villages is Mustafapaşa Village in the Ürgüp district of Nevşehir province. Mustafapaşa Village is a destination that attracts attention with its rich tourism values and innovative tourism approaches in rural areas, as well as achieving 9 of 17 sustainable development goals determined by the BTV network.

Travel agencies, tour operators, and tourist information offices are the elements of tourism. It is so easy to access information through businesses and websites. From the moment tourists decide to travel, they can instantly access positive and negative information about their destination, place of stay and the prominent tourism values of the destination. Tourists can have a certain opinion about a destination based on the information they have obtained through past experiences and research. For this reason, destination information is crucial for the future, of touristic attractions, sustainability and for the image of the destination (Kaya, 2022, pp. 19). The content of social networks, blogs,

search engines, and review sites that shape the image of the destination is also an issue that should be emphasized. Research was conducted from unofficial, semi-official and official internet sources to determine the components of Mustafapaşa's reflected image. Content analysis was made on the obtained documents. Then, interviews with people who have experience of the destination were conducted to determine the image of Mustafapaşa. As a result, it was emphasized whether the perceived destination image matched the common goals of the BTV network. The research will contribute to the image of Mustafapaşa Village, Turkey's first BTV member, as well as to local governments, tourism stakeholders such as tourism enterprises and those working in this field. The research will be a guide for other destinations that are considering or planning to become members of BTV. In this research, the contribution and potential of Mustafapaşa destination's image, which has awarded as BTV, is discussed. It is aimed to explain such information within the framework of Perceived Value Theory and to discuss its potential for regional development. There is no previous study that addresses this point of view. In this sense, our study is important in terms of contributing to the expansion of Perceived Value Theory.

2. Theoretical framework

Tourism is a dynamic sector that plays a major role in the development of local economies. The attractiveness of a destination for tourists stimulates the local economy and triggers regional development (Vrablikova, Turciakova, & Baranova, 2023). Destination image is one of the most important factors for tourists to choose a destination. The image of a tourist destination shapes tourists' general perceptions and expectations about that region and directly influences their travel decisions (Lian & Yu, 2019). Perceived Value Theory can provide an important theoretical framework in this context. According to this theory, the perceived value of a destination by tourists is shaped by its image and the experience it offers (Moon & Han, 2019). The higher the perceived value, the more likely tourists are to prefer and revisit that destination. This can be seen as a tool that can make significant contributions to regional development in the long term.

Perceived Value Theory is a theory that emphasizes the importance of the value perceived by consumers in the process of choosing a product or service. According to this theory, when consumers purchase a product or service, they evaluate the balance between the benefit they will obtain and the price they will pay (Ferreira, Avila, & De Faria, 2010). When the perceived benefit is high and the price to be paid for this benefit is reasonable, consumers tend to buy. That is, the higher the perceived value, the more likely they are to make a purchase decision.

Researches show that perceived value significantly mediates the relationship between tourists' motivations and behavioral intentions (Brochado, Cristovao Verissimo, & de Oliveira, 2022; Gan, Zheng, Li, Li, & Shen, 2023; Pandža Bajs, 2015). For example, Gan et al. (2023) emphasize that in health and wellness tourism, perceived value, encompassing both emotional and health-related benefits, plays a crucial role in guiding tourists' choices. Similarly, Prebensen et al. (2016) found that co-creation of experiences increases perceived value, which in turn affects overall satisfaction among tourists (Prebensen, Kim, & Uysal, 2016). This suggests that tourists derive more value when they actively participate in their experiences, which in turn leads to higher levels of satisfaction. From this perspective, perceived value refers to the important role it plays in a tourist's decision to visit a

destination. It is shaped by factors such as the tourist's expectations of the destination, experiences, price perception, service quality, destination amenities and cultural values (Moon & Han, 2019). Destinations with high perceived value are ranked higher in tourists' preferences and this allows the destination to grow and develop economically. Therefore, optimizing perceived value for tourism destinations is a crucial strategy for attracting tourists and contributing to regional development (Stacchini, Guizzardi, & Costa, 2022). Among the reasons why tourists prefer a destination, having a positive image of the destination, i.e. creating a strong and attractive perception in their minds, is an important factor. In other words, a positive and strong destination image can be a high value in the minds of guests. Within the perceived value theory, a strong and positive image will increase the likelihood of visiting the destination. When considered within the framework of the Perceived Value Theory, the value perceived by tourists towards a destination is a factor that directly affects the contribution of the destination to regional development (Dedeoğlu, 2019). An increase in the number of tourists contributes to the economic growth of the destination, the development of the service sector and the acceleration of regional development. Especially in small and developing regions such as Mustafapaşa, the economic cycle created by tourism revitalizes the local economy and paves the way for social and cultural development.

3. Literature Review

3.1. Destination Image and Components

To increase their competitiveness in the global market, destinations create images that present their unique features to deliver their tourism products to tourists (Camprubi, Guia & Comas, 2009). Image is a concept formed by a consumer's emotional and logical interpretation of a destination. Destination image constitutes information, impressions, prejudices and thoughts about a place (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999, pp. 870). According to Avcikurt (2010, pp. 44), Destination image is the objective information, impressions, prejudices and thoughts that individuals or groups acquire about a region. Destination image plays a role for suppliers and tourists in the tourism region. For suppliers, it informs stakeholders in the supply chain about which products will be promoted, through which channels, to whom, and how promotional products will be designed. For tourists, it contains information about what they will buy, how compatible the touristic products and services they will purchase will be with their perceptions, how they will behave in this process, and how they will consume (Ryan & Gu, 2008, pp. 399).

Destination image; It can be examined in three categories: universal image, induced (artificial) image and random images. The universal image has formed an undisputed image of some destinations and has settled in people's collective memory. The universal image is fed by images that have become clichés for the tourism industry and have a historical background. For example, "The East is mystical", "The West is modern", "The Far East is mysterious" etc. The images are known to almost everyone. The second category, induced (artificial) images, attempts to create a destination-specific image that inspires potential tourists to visit. The last category is random images. An image that is formed unconsciously and is associated with a specific activity (Galí Espelt, & Donaire Benito, 2005, pp. 777). Kırkpınar oil wrestling is a sports event which is held in Edirne traditionally. It did not start to attract tourists to the destination. However, it has become an organization that attracts national and international media and

tourists. It has become part of Edirne's image because it is an interesting sports event for foreigners. This image is as temporary as its coincidental counterpart. When oil wrestling takes place it attracts people to the destination and influences them (Ulema, 2015, pp. 233-234).

A destination image with perceptual integrity has three components: cognitive, emotional and behavioral. Cognitive image is explained by the individual's perceptual evaluations related to their knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs about the destination (Baloğlu & Brinberg, 1997). In general, the individual; can be expressed as a total of attitudes, beliefs, or information about a destination, an individual or an object, either voluntarily or with information they are exposed to from outside, toward that object (Güçlü & Yılmaz, 2020, pp. 175). Santos et al. (2013) emphasized that tourists' knowledge and beliefs about the attractiveness of a destination are effective in their visit to the destination.

Sensory/affective image expresses the individual's feelings toward the destination, attachment to it, or the emotion fostered. It includes liking or not liking the relevant place in terms of mental vision and perception. In this case, emotional image is affected by the cognitive image. In short, it is stated that cognitive elements come before sensory and emotional elements are based on cognitive elements. However, some studies have indicated that both components affect the image at different levels (Baloğlu & McCleary, 1999). The emotional component attracts the individual toward the destination and shows especially positive-negative and neutral emotions. According to Beerli and Martin (2004), cognitive images form the basis of emotional images. They explained that tourists' cognitive and affective evaluation of a destination stems from the information they acquired about it.

Gartner (1993) introduced behavioral image as a third component. This component concerns how tourists behave based on the information (cognitive) and feelings (affective) that a destination emits (Michaelidou et al., 2013). Cognitive and emotional components form the overall image of a destination, which is related to positive and negative evaluations or interpretations. The behavioral component is a person's behavior according to the results of evaluations and interpretations. According to Pike and Ryan (2004), the behavioral component (conation) can be interpreted as destination choice, brand purchasing or a tendency to visit a destination within a certain period. The behavioral component provides the individual's actual behavior or tendency to revisit and recommend a destination to others (Pike & Ryan, 2004).

Image is strategically one of the most important elements of destination marketing methods (Camprubi, Guia & Comas, 2009). Therefore, creating the desired image for destinations is extremely important. The destination should benefit from its unique features and try to reach potential visitors by highlighting these features. Defining the destination image of Mustafapaşa Village and using these elements in destination marketing activities can help attract potential tourists.

3.2. World Tourism Organization's Best Tourism Village Initiative

BTV is an initiative held by the United Nations World Tourism Organization within the scope of sustainability studies as of 2021. The BTV initiative aims to ensure that tourism is a driving force in rural development and prosperity. The BTV aims to increase the effectiveness of tourism in evaluating rural villages, with their landscapes, information systems, biological and cultural diversity

and local values. Innovative and transformative approaches are adopted in rural destinations in line with sustainable economic, social and environmental development goals (UNTWO, 2023).

There are three main objectives in the BTV initiative: people, prosperity, and planet. The sub-goals under the main purpose of people;

- i. Eliminating regional inequality in income and development,
- ii. Combating the decrease in rural population,
- iii. Equality and empowerment of women and youth,
- iv. Increasing education and skill development,

Sub-objectives under the main purpose of Prosperity;

- i. Strengthening carrying capacity by encouraging rural transformation,
- ii. Strengthening multi-level management, partnerships, and active community participation,
- iii. Improving the Internet, infrastructure, investment and financing issues,
- iv. Making progress in innovation and digitalization,
- v. Innovating product development and value chain integration,

Sub-objectives under the main purpose of Planet;

- i. Strengthening the link between sustainable, fair, and resilient food systems. Protect biodiversity, agricultural biodiversity, cultural heritage, and local cuisine,
- ii. Protect natural and cultural resources,
- iii. Support sustainable practices in using resources more efficiently and reducing emissions and waste (UNTWO, 2023).

The initiative consists of three stages: the BTV, Upgrade Program, and the BTV Network. BTV is an example of a rural tourism destination that stands out with its cultural and natural assets, protects, supports community-based values, products and lifestyle, and adopts sustainability. BTV sees tourism as an important force in rural development and the welfare of society. The Upgrade Program has a few selected villages among destinations that cannot fully meet the initiative conditions. The BTV Network consists of selected BTV villages and is included in the Upgrade Program. This is an area where good practices, examples, and experiences are shared among network members of BTV. Experts who promote tourism, which is an important driver of rural development, are open to the participation of both the public and private sectors (UNWTO, 2023).

There are criteria by UNTWO for participating in the BTV initiative. These criteria are

- i. Cultural and Natural Resources,
- ii. Promotion and Conservation of Cultural Resources,
- iii. Economic Sustainability,
- iv. Social Sustainability,
- v. Environmental Sustainability,
- vi. Tourism Development and Value Chain Integration,
- vii. Governance and Prioritization of Tourism,
- viii. Infrastructure and Connectivity,
- ix. Health, Safety, and Security.

Villages have a low population, a maximum of 15,000, where traditional activities such as agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, and fishing are carried out to a significant extent, and where social values and lifestyles are shared, can apply to the relevant UNWTO web page on the specified dates. The application is reviewed by the UNWTO secretariat and evaluated by the advisory board (UNWTO, 2023).

3.3. Research Setting: Mustafapaşa, Nevşehir, Türkiye

Mustafapaşa Village, located 25 kilometers from the city center of Nevşehir in Turkey, is named Sinasos. Sinasos means Sun City (Ardıç Yetiş, 2015). It is known that 600 Greek and 150 Turkish families lived in the village where the Orthodox Greeks lived until the twentieth century. The number of Turks living in the village increased with the population exchange in 1924 (Keskin & Contu, 2011, pp. 38). Since Turkish families coming from Greece have hosted different civilizations, it is possible to come across many examples of Greek and Seljuk architecture, such as churches, mansions, madrasahs, and mosques that can be visited in Mustafapaşa. (Ak, 2022, pp. 9).

It was declared one of the best tourism villages by the UNWTO in December 2021. Mustafapaşa has surpassed many destinations because it has developed innovative tourism approaches in rural areas and achieved nine of the 17 sustainable development goals. Culture and Tourism Ministry, Nevşehir Municipality, Nevşehir Governorship, NGO and some associations play an important role in destination marketing Mustafapaşa. Initiatives that conduct marketing activities to promote the image of the destination include mustafapasa.goturkiye.com, nevsehir.goturkiye.com, turkiyevillages.goturkiye.com, cappadocia.goturkiye.com, www.mustafapasa.net, untwo.org (Figure 1), the official social media accounts of the Nevşehir Governorship (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and Youtube, Instagram)

Figure 1. Screenshot from unwto.org



Source: <https://www.unwto.org/tourism-villages/en/villages/mustafapasa/>

4. Method

The research was planned in two stages. The first stage aimed to determine the visible and perceived image of Mustafapaşa. To determine visible images, 24 online documents in Turkish and English related to Mustafapaşa were analyzed. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 13 participants to assess the perceived destination image. The data obtained from online documents and face-to-face interviews were subjected to content analysis to determine the elements forming the destination image.

4.1. Document analysis

Document analysis is a type of qualitative analysis used in the systematic evaluation of written materials, both printed and electronic (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis requires the examination, and interpretation of data to reveal meaning, create understanding, and develop knowledge (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). The documents used in the document analysis include words and images collected without the intervention of the researcher. Documents that can be used within the scope of document analysis include advertisements, diaries, meeting minutes, recorded documents, books, brochures, letters, notes, press releases, program proposals, radio and television program scripts, survey data, application forms, institutional reports, and various public records (Bowen, 2009). This method was preferred because document analysis has been used in studies on destination images (Frochot, 2003; Okumus et al., 2013). Online documents related to Mustafapasa were analyzed between August 2023 and December 2023. The convenience sampling technique was used for online documents (Lugosi et al., 2012). Search engines such as Google, Yandex, and Bing were used (Osman et al., 2014). The keywords used were Mustafapasa, "Mustafapasa Best Tourism Village", "Mustafapasa destination", and "Mustafapasa village". As a result, 24 documents were obtained. They were grouped into three groups: official, semi-official, and unofficial (10 documents in English and 14 documents in Turkish).

Official documents are taken from official institutional websites (e.g. Nevşehir Governorship, Ürgüp Municipality, Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism). Semi-official documents include the organization's personal websites, company websites, as well as newspapers and magazines. English documents are coded E1 from to E10; Turkish documents are coded T1 from to T14 (Table 1).

Table 1. Categories of the analyzed documents

Document Type	Frequency(f)	Percentage (%)
Official	3	12,5
Semi-official	2	8,3
Unofficial	19	79,2
Total	24	100

Among qualitative research methods, interviewing is used by researchers as data collection method (Kozak, 2014). In the interview method, the interviewer creates a friendly environment with the participant, allowing the participant to respond more carefully and explain important information

(Schober, 2017). The interviewer can evaluate the participant's non-verbal expressions and conditions during the interview. It provides the opportunity to intervene in cases of discomfort or distraction. Therefore, motivating the participant to conduct a long-term interview arises (Villar & Fitzgerald, 2017).

After the document analysis and literature review researchers form the semi-structured interview questions. Two academicians reviewed the research questions. Because of the gathering of in-depth data samples were kept small. To address the research questions effectively, a purposive sampling technique (Miles & Huberman, 1994) was utilized to select participants who could provide rich, in-depth information regarding the destination image of Mustafapaşa from various perspectives. The selection of participants was guided by a clear set of inclusion criteria designed to capture a diverse range of stakeholder viewpoints. Specifically, participants were required to belong to at least one of the following groups: (1) long-term residents (over 10 years) with deep-seated knowledge of the village's culture and social fabric; (2) tourism professionals (e.g., guides, hotel managers, craftsmen) directly involved in the local tourism economy and its promotion; or (3) academics with research experience related to tourism, cultural heritage, or regional development in the Cappadocia region. This multi-stakeholder approach was chosen to ensure a holistic and balanced understanding of the perceived destination image. Potential participants were identified through local community networks, professional associations, and academic contacts. Interviews continued until thematic saturation was achieved. The interviews were conducted between January 2024 and May 2024, taking into account the principle of voluntarism. This point was determined when the 13th interview yielded no new significant themes or insights compared to the previous ones, indicating that a sufficient depth of data had been collected to address the research objectives. The interviewees were numbered from 1 to 13.

The interview form consists of two parts. The first part is perceived destination image questions, the second part includes demographic questions. Each participant was informed about the purpose of the research and was presented with a voluntary participation form. Interviews were conducted with participants who agreed to participate and signed the form. The participants' answers were recorded in an interview form (Table 2).

4.2. Analyses

Document review and analysis of interviews took the form of coding, determining categories, naming categories, and determining the characteristics of categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The authors read the text and created code diagrams according to data. Documents and interview texts were classified according to code diagrams. Researchers classified the data at different times. Then, the codes were compared. Similar and non-similar codes were determined, and main categories and subcategories were composed.

4.3. Reliability, validity,

In this paper, researchers took precautions for validity and reliability. Firstly, researchers submitted an expert opinion interview form for preliminary validity. The experts consist of academics working in the field. The academics were asked to read the interview form and evaluate the questions

regarding readability and understandability. According to the expert opinions, research questions were rearranged. Necessary explanations were made to the participants before the interviews about the research. The interviews lasted approximately 20-30 minutes. The participants’ answers are presented in the findings section as verbatim quotes. Data diversification was applied to increase internal validity.

The research model, study group, data collection tools, data collection, data analysis and the findings were described in detail for external validity. Interviews were conducted with participants who would contribute to the purpose of the study. The number of participants was limited to 13 due to the observation that the answers given to the research questions were repetitive.

The research findings were presented as direct quotes without any comment. Participants’ responses to the questions were transcribed to prevent data loss. The data were read independently by two researchers. After reading codes were created. During the creation of themes, consensus was reached among the researchers. Finally, the data was discussed appropriately in the conclusion section. Whether the findings and the conclusion were consistent was discussed among the researchers and a consensus was reached.

Table 2. Socio-demographics statue of the interviewees

Interviewee	Age	Gender	Education	Occupation	Live in Mustafapaşa (Year)
I1	38	Female	Doctorate	Academician	12
I2	36	Male	Master	Tourism professional	5
I3	55	Female	Undergraduate	Craftsman	30
I4	39	Female	Undergraduate	Guide	1
I5	34	Female	Highschool	-	34
I6	40	Female	Doctorate	Academician	16
I7	48	Male	Undergraduate	Trader	9
I8	36	Female	Master	Academician	4
I9	43	Male	Undergraduate	Trader	13
I10	36	Female	Undergraduate	Trader	9
I11	38	Male	Associate	Trader	38
I12	51	Female	Highschool	Landlady	51
I13	37	Male	Undergraduate	Pharmacist	14

Reliability must also be ensured in qualitative studies. There are several suggestions regarding the reliability of content analysis in qualitative studies (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Elo et al., 2014). Detailed information about the research and data collection processes is important. Within the scope of this study, the authors clearly explain all stages of the study process. Both to meet the reliability criteria and to prove the relationship between the data and the findings the analyzed texts were presented in the article as direct quotes (Yin, 2010). Within the scope of the study, the authors included direct quotes from the documents and interviews examined. Another method that ensures reliability in qualitative research is coding through diagrams (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). In this study, two authors do

coding using diagrams in different environments. Then, in terms of developing the diagrams related to coding, the categories were clarified by comparing them with the categories of the third researcher. During the study process regarding coding and diagrams, importance was given to discussion and consensus. Findings were presented to academicians and gotten their opinions (Walsh, 2012).

Table 3. Documents analyze results

BTV Criteria	English	Turkish	Total
Cultural and Natural Resources	9	13	22
Promotion and Conservation of Cultural Resources	6	9	15
Economic Sustainability	5	4	9
Social Sustainability	4	6	10
Environmental Sustainability	4	3	7
Tourism Development and Value Chain Integration	5	6	11
Governance and Prioritization of Tourism	5	6	11
Infrastructure and Connectivity	4	3	7
Health, Safety and Security	4	4	8
Official\semiofficial\unofficial	2\2\6	1\0\13	3\2\19

4.4. Document analysis and interview findings

According to a document analyzing web sites 9 BTV criteria which cultural and natural resources, promotion and conservation of cultural resources, economic sustainability, social sustainability, environmental sustainability, tourism development and value chain integration, governance and prioritization of tourism infrastructure and connectivity, health, safety and security achieved (Table 3). According to the results obtained from the interviews, the perceived destination image component consists of 5 main categories. History and culture, natural environment, social environment, atmosphere and tourism activity forms the components of the perceived destination image.

The main category of history and culture includes five sub-categories; cultural diversity, historic texture, handicrafts, local cuisine and exchange village. The main category of natural environment is located the scenic beauty sub-category. The social environment category locates local people, hospitality and satisfaction sub-categories. The atmosphere category includes three sub-categories; virgin destination, peaceful and quiet. The tourism activity category locates tourism and activity sub-categories (Figure 2).

History and culture main category include five sub-categories; cultural diversity, historical texture, handicrafts, local cuisine and exchange village. We can deduce cultural diversity.

Table 4. Best Tourism Village Information Statue

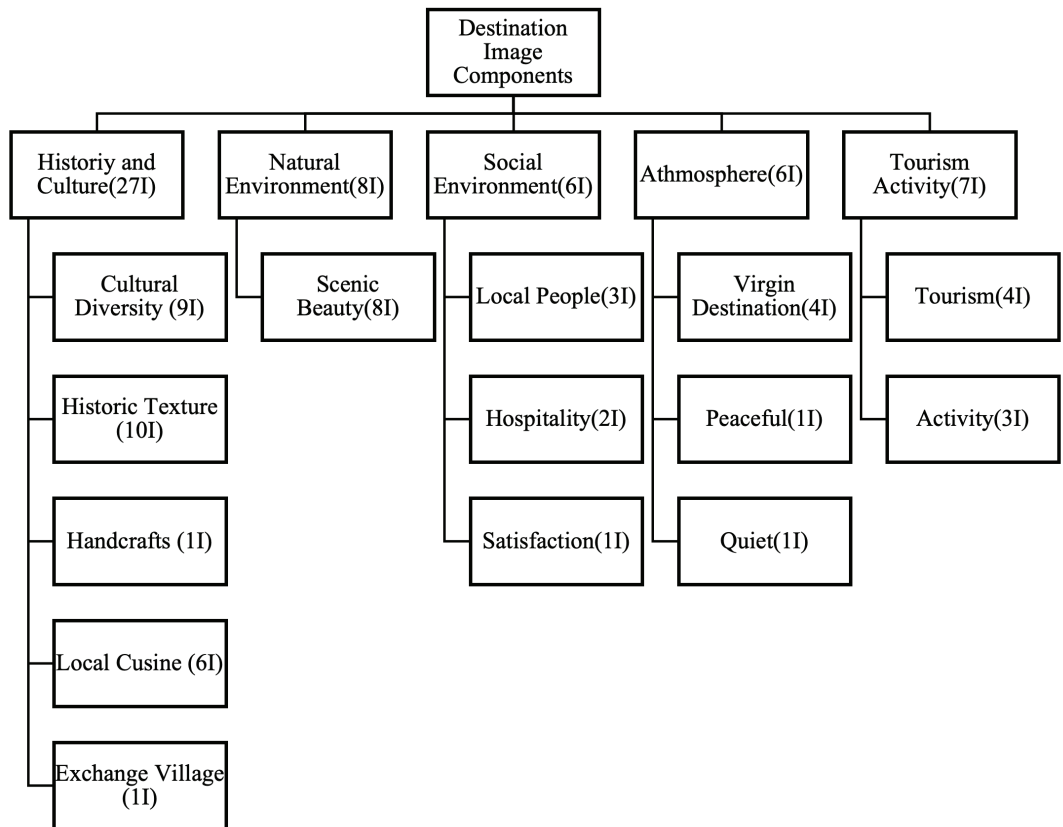
Do you have information about the best tourist village?	Yes	No	Little
	7	2	4
Percentage (%)	15,39	53,84	30,77

When participants were asked whether they had any information about the Best Tourism Village application, 7 people said they had information, 4 people said they had some information, and 2 people said they did not have any information. To give an example from the participants’ responses to this question;

“I do not have detailed information about the Best Tourism Village application. However, I have heard that such international organizations are organized to promote and support villages or towns in the tourism field. Such actions usually encourage the preservation of local culture. They offer various awards and activities to ensure tourism sustainability. However, I do not have more specific information about the Best Tourism Village application” I3.

“Yes, there is. I participated in the preparation of the application file. My colleagues and I have contributed to the promotion of the village from this aspect.” I6.

Figure 2. Mustafapaşa’s Destination Image Components



Participants identified 5 main 14 sub-categories elements that constitute the destination image of Mustafapaşa. Under the theme of history and culture; historical texture (10I), cultural diversity (9I), local cuisine (6I), handicrafts (1I), exchange village(1I). Under the theme of natural environment, the scenic beauty (8I) code was identified. Under the social environment theme local people (3I),

hospitality (21), and satisfaction (11)) codes were identified. Under the tourism theme tourism (41), activity (31)) codes were identified. Under the atmosphere theme virgin destination (41), peaceful (11), and quiet (11) codes were identified. To provide examples from the answers given by the participants to this question;

"The city's greatest attraction is its historical and cultural richness. Ancient Greek houses, churches, and stone streets can attract the attention of every tourist. However, the natural beauty of the region is another beautiful aspect. Mustafapaşa, famous for its fairy chimneys, valleys, and mountains, is a place that nature lovers will love. In Mustafapaşa, local products and flavors meet visitors' demands. This offers the opportunity to become more involved with local culture. Hotels and the services provided play an important role in visitors' satisfaction. Luxurious accommodation options and a friendly service approach provide visitors satisfaction and peace. In addition, regional events and festivals reflect social and cultural liveliness" I3 "...were deemed suitable to bear this title as a result of their distinctive natural and cultural characteristics, preserved traditional lifestyle and capacities for sustainable and inclusive rural economic activities..."T8

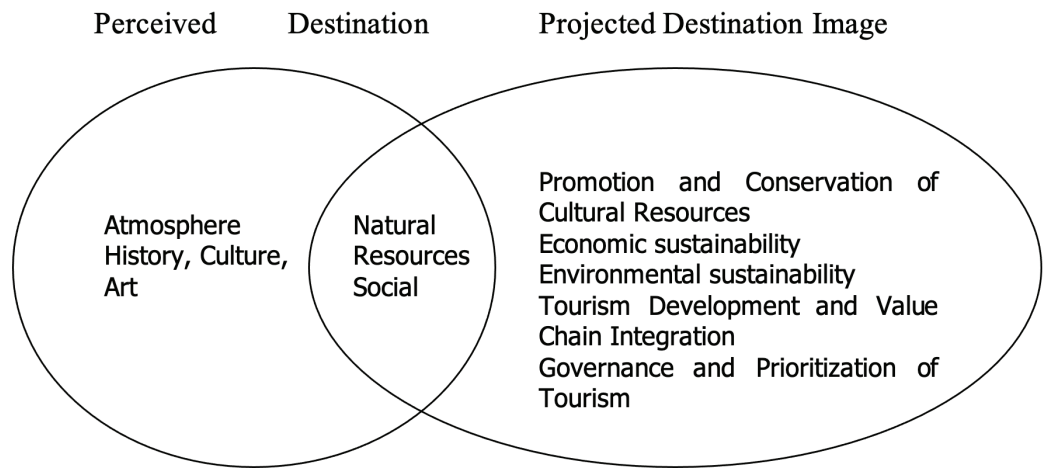
"Mustafapaşa is a site of many different cultures. Visitors have a unique experience because of this cultural diversity. Culture of the culinary is an important part of gastronomy tourism in the region" I7. "...In addition to its natural formations, it is also known for its Greek houses, which stand out with their rich stonework and wall paintings..."T14.

"The rock houses and churches from the Byzantine period make Mustafapaşa an important tourist destination. In 1923, this historical Greek village known as Sinassos was abandoned during a population exchange. Mustafapaşa, which has survived the present by preserving its historical texture, is included on the UNESCO World Heritage Temporary List. Trekking and balloon tours are in great demand in the region. The people were hospitable and very friendly. Our local food is also very delicious. Some restaurants serve food made by village women. The Sinasos Culture and Art Festival is held every year" I10.

"...An old Greek village located 25 kilometers away from Nevşehir, hosting many structures from mosques to churches, stone houses to madrassas, monasteries to mansions. The village has 1,300 residents, which preserves its naturalness and smells of history in every aspect... Tourism in Mustafapaşa contributes to rural development and balanced growth through inclusive, sustainable and innovative actions that strengthen society and businesses while preserving Cappadocia's common cultural heritage, diversity and unique lifestyle..."T1.

"Among the elements that make up the destination image of Mustafapaşa, historical richness is the most prominent. Our village attracts attention for its unique stone houses and historic churches. In addition, being home to natural beauty such as fairy chimneys and valleys specific to the Cappadocia region, it attracts the attention of visitors" I12.

Figure 3. Mustafapaşa’s Perceived and Projected Destination Image Components



BTV criteria were compared with the participants’ expressions when considered as the targeted destination image components (Figure 3). The participants’ expressions describing Mustafapaşa constitute the perceived destination image. When participants were asked about expressions that define Mustafapaşa, a total of 12 codes were identified under the theme of atmosphere (peace (4), calmness (3), unique (3), and hidden paradise (2)). A total of 26 codes were identified under the theme of history, culture, and art (historical texture (7), old Greek village (7), cultural heritage (3), local delicacies (3), Touristic (2), Handicrafts (2), UNESCO (1), and exchange (1)). A total of 3 codes were identified under the social theme of (hospitality (1), activity (1), and Asmalı konak (1)). A total of 9 codes were identified under the natural environment theme (natural beauty (7), cobblestones (1), fay chimneys (1)). Examples of the participants’ answers to this question are given below.

“One of the most beautiful villages in the region is Mustafapaşa, with its cobblestone streets, centuries-old Greek mansions, and unique fairy chimneys. It is a time machine in many ways because it is a living historical monument. For example, local cuisine is excellent and locally made specialty food is some of the best food you can try. Moreover, the people of Mustafapaşa are always hospitable and happy to help. You can take long walks in nature, explore historical sites or enjoy the peace of this city. This is a heavenly place” I3.

“You can stay at the renovated traditional stone houses, typical to Ottoman-Cappadocian architecture, and dine at the restaurants either in renovated stone houses or unrestored traditional buildings. The most striking local specialties are pastries with legumes and testi kebabi, lamb shank stew cooked in earthenware pots – it should be noted that ceramics are one of the main livelihoods of the region. This land is also home to many vineyards and consequently, apart from wine, you can find products like grape vinegar, pickled grapes, and grape molasses. Local cuisine can be accompanied by local wines made with indigenous grape varieties such as emir” E4.

"Mustafapaşa is a village rich in history and culture, located in the center of Cappadocia. It has attracted attention with its historical traces and unique architecture. Historical churches, mansions and, stone houses allow visitors to travel to the past of the village. Mustafapaşa stands out because of its cultural diversity. The traditions and customs of the local people, as well as music and handicrafts, form the identity of the village and offer visitors a realistic experience. The natural charm, valleys, fairy chimneys, and unique views of Mustafapaşa will fascinate you. The quiet streets and calm environment of Mustafapaşa provide visitors with a great place to rest and relax. This village is a perfect getaway for those who want to escape the stress of city life because it is in nature" 18.

"Cappadocia Art and History Museum, located in a 170-year-old historical mansion, is one of the museums that those who come to Cappadocia should see. This is also the first private handmade doll museum opened in Turkey. Here you see approximately 3 thousand dolls depicting 624 different subjects. There are many topics and stories in this museum, from the lifestyle in our country to important figures and professions in history. It is possible to see names such as Yunus Emre, Mevlana, Nasreddin Hodja, Âşık Veysel, Dede Korkut, Hacı Bektaş Veli, Köroğlu and Cihan Pehlivanı Koca Yusuf." T5

"Our traditional stone houses and unique architecture are among the most important terms that define Mustafapaşa. The calmness and peace in our village are well known. While walking along our streets, visitors can feel a historical texture. This is one of the things that make our streets special" 112.

The web pages evaluated within the scope of document analysis mention BTV objectives in their content and show the existence of the targeted destination image. In Appendix 3, a visual was prepared by comparing the destination image elements obtained from the answers given by the participants with the BTV objectives. The destination image elements determined within the scope of the study were compared with the objectives of the BTV initiative as in Appendix 3. It is seen that the destination image components obtained because of the interviews, which have 11 BTV objectives, are compatible with only 5 of them. It shows that the continuity of history, culture and art activities, the transfer of local dishes to future generations, the development of infrastructure and access to financing, the development of the social environment and the protection of the natural environment are the situations that emerged because of the interviews. First, training should be provided to the local people in Mustafapaşa to create awareness about BTV. In this way, they can be informed about the characteristics of the destination and attention can be drawn to its protection. The local dishes and handicrafts of the destination can be transferred to future generations through social media sharing. In addition, women, especially those who are not employed, can be provided with various training programs to gain a profession and contribute to the economy. It can be stated that gender equality is also related to the aim of supporting women and young people. In festivals organized with the support of stakeholders in rural areas, the quality of life can be increased, and tourism activity can be experienced. Special interest tours can be organized in the promotion and display of gastronomy, culture and art and similar festivals and this can positively affect the image of the destination. The protection of the history and historical structures related to the exchange that the destination has will contribute to gaining brand value. The protection of the natural environment

is related to the aim of protecting and developing natural and cultural resources. Organizing tourism-related activities, forming the destination identity and image, making promotion easy, and having historical and natural beauty will contribute to the development of the value chain.

On the other hand, when local people are made aware of the values that the destination has, the quality of life improves through the sale of local products, and the economic imbalance is reduced, leading to a decrease in the rural population. As a result of the emergence of new business opportunities with tourism and the sustainability of the business owners, it does not seem impossible to achieve the BTV goals completely. The targeted destination image can be achieved by realizing the goals with the education of the stakeholders and the local people in the destination.

5. Results

This study employed a two-stage qualitative analysis to deconstruct the destination image of Mustafapaşa. The findings presented herein first outline the projected destination image as constructed through online documents in relation to the UNWTO Best Tourism Village (BTV) initiative, followed by an in-depth exploration of the perceived destination image from the perspective of local stakeholders.

The analysis of 24 online documents reveals that the projected image of Mustafapaşa is strategically and consistently anchored in the core criteria of the BTV award. The dominant themes emerging from the content analysis are overwhelmingly focused on "Cultural and Natural Resources" (22 mentions) and their "Promotion and Conservation" (15 mentions), as detailed in Table 3. This emphasis suggests a deliberate marketing narrative that positions the village's primary value proposition around its rich heritage and pristine environment, aligning perfectly with the ethos of the BTV initiative. While themes like tourism development and governance were also present, the comparatively lower frequency of mentions for environmental sustainability and infrastructure indicates a clear prioritization of cultural assets in the village's official and semi-official online representation.

In contrast to the projected image, the perceived image derived from 13 semi-structured interviews with local stakeholders presents a more multi-faceted and complex picture. A significant preliminary finding was the mixed level of awareness regarding the BTV award itself. While a majority of participants (53.84%) had heard of the designation, a substantial portion expressed having little to no specific information (Table 4). This was articulated by one participant who stated, "I do not have detailed information about the Best Tourism Village application" (I3), while another, who was directly involved, confirmed, "Yes, there is. I participated in the preparation of the application file" (I6), highlighting a clear communication gap within the community.

The core of the perceived image, as illustrated in Figure 2, is built upon five primary components. The most dominant of these is History and Culture, a richly described theme encompassing the village's unique historical texture, its past as an exchange village, and its vibrant local cuisine. Participants consistently identified these elements as the principal attractors, with one noting, "The city's greatest attraction is its historical and cultural richness. Ancient Greek houses, churches, and stone streets can attract the attention of every tourist" (I3), and another linking this directly to

its multicultural past and UNESCO recognition (I10). The Natural Environment, defined by its scenic beauty and integration with the unique Cappadocian landscape, was the second key component, described as a place “nature lovers will love” (I3).

The human and affective dimensions of the destination were also central to the perceived image. The Social Environment, characterized by the hospitality of local people and resulting visitor satisfaction, was a recurring theme, with one participant highlighting that “The people were hospitable and very friendly” (I10). This was complemented by the village’s distinct Atmosphere, which was consistently described as peaceful, quiet, and a virgin destination—a “perfect getaway for those who want to escape the stress of city life” (I8). Finally, the component of Tourism Activities, covering both infrastructure and specific offerings like trekking and festivals, framed the tangible tourism product available to visitors (I10).

A comparative analysis, mapping these perceived components against the BTV’s strategic objectives (Appendix 3), reveals a partial yet significant alignment. The themes of History, Culture, Art, Local Food, Protection of the Natural Environment, and Improvement of the Social Environment and Infrastructure, which were strongly voiced in the interviews, directly correspond to five of the key BTV goals. However, broader development objectives of the BTV initiative, such as fighting rural depopulation, promoting gender equality, and strengthening multi-level governance, did not emerge as prominent themes in the perceived destination image held by the stakeholders. This indicates that while the core tourism product of Mustafapaşa is well-aligned with the BTV brand, the wider socio-economic ambitions of the initiative have yet to be fully integrated into the local perception and discourse.

6. Discussion

This study investigated the destination image of Mustafapaşa, a UNWTO-designated Best Tourism Village (BTV), to understand its power in fostering regional development. By juxtaposing the *projected image* derived from official and online documents with the *perceived image* held by local stakeholders, our findings reveal a partial but significant alignment, centered on the village’s rich historical, cultural, and natural assets. This section discusses the theoretical and practical implications of these findings, framed within the Perceived Value Theory and the broader context of sustainable rural tourism.

6.1. The Duality of Destination Image: Projected vs. Perceived Realities

Our research confirms that a destination’s image is a socially constructed and multifaceted phenomenon, often marked by a gap between the image projected by marketing entities and the one perceived by stakeholders (Galí Espelt & Donaire Benito, 2005; Garay & Cánoves, 2011). The projected image of Mustafapaşa, as analyzed through online documents, strongly aligns with the BTV initiative’s criteria, emphasizing themes of “Cultural and Natural Resources” and their “Promotion and Conservation.” This formal, top-down image construction is a common strategy used by Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) to create a competitive identity (Camprubí, Guia, & Comas, 2009). The online documents, functioning as modern-day promotional brochures (Frochot, 2003), successfully highlight the core assets that justify its BTV status.

However, the perceived image, gathered from stakeholder interviews, introduces a more nuanced and complex reality. While core themes like 'History and Culture' and 'Natural Environment' are dominant, the interviews also unearthed a significant lack of detailed awareness regarding the BTV initiative itself. This discrepancy underscores a critical challenge in community-based tourism: the potential disconnect between top-level accolades and grassroots-level engagement. As Mgonja et al. (2015) demonstrated in Tanzania, without clear communication and robust benefit-sharing mechanisms, such initiatives risk becoming detached from the very communities they aim to empower. The "partial achievement" of BTV goals in Mustafapaşa, therefore, is not a failure of the destination's assets but rather an indicator of a gap in stakeholder integration and communication, a common pitfall in community-based tourism (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006).

6.2. Perceived Value Theory as a Lens for Regional Development

This study's central theoretical contribution lies in demonstrating the applicability of Perceived Value Theory to rural tourism development. The findings strongly suggest that tourists' and stakeholders' positive perception of Mustafapaşa's image constitutes a high "perceived value." This value is not merely economic but is deeply rooted in the cognitive (e.g., knowledge of Greek architecture) and affective (e.g., feelings of peace and authenticity) dimensions of the destination image (Baloğlu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martín, 2004).

The research by Gan et al. (2023) establishes that perceived value acts as a crucial mediator between motivation and behavioral intention. In the context of Mustafapaşa, the "value" derived from its unique historical texture, unspoiled nature, and authentic atmosphere directly enhances its attractiveness, motivating visitation and fostering loyalty. This aligns with Nicolau's (2011) concept of "predisposition to effort," where tourists are willing to bear monetary and non-monetary costs (travel, time) because they anticipate a high-value experience. The BTV award functions as a powerful external cue (Dedeoğlu, 2019) that amplifies this perceived value, signaling quality and authenticity to potential visitors, thereby stimulating the regional economy. The partial awareness among locals, however, suggests that the "co-creation" of this value (Prebensen, Kim, & Uysal, 2016) is not yet fully realized, limiting its potential impact on regional development.

6.3. The Role of Stakeholder Collaboration and Cultural Competence in Sustainable Tourism

A recurring theme in our findings and the supporting literature is the indispensability of stakeholder collaboration. The case of Mustafapaşa reflects the evolutionary model of destination development, where a destination moves from competition to cooperation and eventually to collaboration to ensure long-term success (Camprubí, Guia, & Comas, 2009). The BTV initiative can be seen as a catalyst pushing Mustafapaşa towards a more collaborative phase. However, as findings from the Girona-Perpignan study show, the effectiveness of this collaboration depends on the structure of the local tourism network and the role of the DMO. In Mustafapaşa, the need for a more formalized and inclusive collaborative framework involving all stakeholders—from local government to individual artisans—is evident to fully leverage the BTV status.

Furthermore, the “social atmosphere” and “hospitality” components of the perceived image highlight the importance of the tourist-host encounter. This interaction is mediated by what Lin et al. (2021) term “tourists’ cultural competence.” For a destination like Mustafapaşa, whose primary appeal is its authentic cultural fabric, the quality of this interaction is paramount. The BTV status attracts tourists who are likely more culturally sensitive, but it also places a responsibility on the destination to manage these encounters to prevent cultural commodification and ensure that interactions are mutually respectful and rewarding. This reinforces the need for DMOs not only to market the destination but also to educate visitors, fostering a form of tourism that protects and values the local culture.

6.4. Managerial and Policy Implications

The findings of this study yield several important managerial and policy-oriented insights for destination management organizations (DMOs), local authorities, and stakeholders operating in Mustafapaşa and comparable rural heritage destinations. First, it is essential to convert the international recognition granted by the UNWTO’s Best Tourism Village (BTV) initiative into meaningful local awareness and engagement. To this end, DMOs should implement targeted internal communication strategies aimed at informing local residents and businesses about the significance of the BTV designation and its potential socio-economic benefits. Enhancing local ownership of this recognition is fundamental to sustaining community-based tourism efforts (Mgonja et al., 2015). Second, the marketing narrative must transcend the mere promotion of tangible attributes of the village and instead emphasize the overall experiential value, aligning with the core tenets of Perceived Value Theory. Rather than listing attractions, marketing strategies should articulate a coherent story centered on Mustafapaşa’s identity as a historic Greek town, appealing to both the cognitive and affective dimensions of tourist motivation (Gan et al., 2023). Moreover, as Kadhi (2009) has indicated, cultural background plays a crucial role in image perception; therefore, marketing messages should be tailored to resonate with culturally diverse source markets.

Furthermore, sustainable destination development necessitates the institutionalization of stakeholder collaboration through a structured platform that facilitates regular dialogue and joint decision-making. This collaborative mechanism should extend beyond information exchange to include strategic planning on issues such as product development, branding coherence, and the coordination of events, reflecting the successful network-based approaches described by Camprubí, Guia, and Comas (2009). Lastly, investment should not be limited to physical infrastructure but should also encompass “soft” infrastructure elements, such as the training of local guides, workshops on cultural hospitality (Lin et al., 2021), and the promotion of local gastronomy and handicrafts (Frochot, 2003). These initiatives enhance the perceived authenticity and quality of the visitor experience, thereby strengthening the destination’s brand and contributing to a more resilient and inclusive regional economy.

7. Conclusions

This study embarked on an analysis of Mustafapaşa's destination image, examining its role as a catalyst for regional development following its designation as a UNWTO Best Tourism Village. The findings confirm that destination image is a powerful yet complex asset, shaped by the interplay between the officially *projected* narrative and the locally *perceived* reality. While the projected image successfully leverages the village's rich historical and cultural heritage, a significant gap exists in local stakeholder awareness and engagement, resulting in only a partial fulfillment of the BTV initiative's ambitious sustainability goals.

Theoretically, this research makes a significant contribution by demonstrating the robust utility of Perceived Value Theory in the context of rural and heritage tourism. It establishes that the perceived value derived from a destination's authentic cultural, historical, and natural attributes is a critical mediator that translates into positive tourist behavior and, consequently, into potential for sustainable regional development. The BTV designation acts as a powerful heuristic cue that enhances this perceived value, but its full potential can only be unlocked through genuine community integration and collaborative value co-creation.

From a practical and managerial standpoint, this study provides a clear roadmap for Mustafapaşa and other similar heritage destinations. The path forward requires a dual focus: an external strategy that markets the destination's unique value proposition to culturally sensitive tourists, and an internal strategy aimed at bridging the awareness gap, fostering stakeholder collaboration, and empowering the local community. By moving beyond a top-down approach and embracing a holistic, community-centric model of image and value management, destinations like Mustafapaşa can transform international recognition into tangible, equitable, and sustainable regional prosperity, ensuring the preservation of the very heritage that makes them unique. Ultimately, this research underscores that the true power of destination image lies not merely in attraction, but in its capacity to inspire a shared vision for a sustainable future.

There are some limitations in this study. Two best tourism villages were located during the period the study was conducted. The findings of this study can be generalized to other villages. The second limitation is that the elements of the destination image were determined through qualitative document analysis and face-to-face interviews. Using both qualitative and quantitative methods may be for future research. Researchers can also be advised to examine other villages to understand the advantages of membership to Best Tourism Village and the contributions made by membership in detail. In addition, by examining the destination image of other villages that are members of Best Tourism Villages, we can understand whether the image elements differ between the villages.

References

- Ak, S. (2022). The importance of the local cuisine in the context of sustainable gastronomy tourism: Case of Mustafapaşa (Master's thesis, Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University, Institute of Social Sciences Tourism Management).
- Ardıç Yetiş, S. (2015). Regional cuisine of Cappadocia and example of Mustafapaşa (Sinassos). *Journal of Tourism and Gastronomy Studies*, 3(2), 12-19.
- Avcıkurt, C. (2010). *Turizmde tanıtma ve satış geliştirme* (3rd ed.). İstanbul: Değişim Yayınları.
- Baloğlu, S., & Brinberg, D. (1997). Affective images of tourism destinations. *Journal of Travel Research*, 35, 11-15.
- Baloğlu, Ş., & McCleary, K. W. (1999). A model of destination image formation. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26(4), 868-897.
- Beerli, A., & Martin, J. D. (2004). Factors influencing destination image. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 31(3), 657-681.
- Beerli, A., & Martin, J. D. (2004). Factors influencing destination image. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 31(3), 657-681.
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27-40.
- Brochado, A., Cristovao Verissimo, J. M., & de Oliveira, J. C. L. (2022). Memorable tourism experiences, perceived value dimensions and behavioral intentions: a demographic segmentation approach. *Tourism Review*, 77(6), 1472-1486.
- Camprubi, R., Guia, J., & Comas, J. (2009). Managing induced tourism image: Relational patterns and the life cycle. *Tourism - Original Scientific Paper*, 57(3), 241-258.
- Choi, H. C., & Sirakaya, E. (2006). Sustainability indicators for managing community tourism. *Tourism Management*, 27(6), 1274-1289.
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dedeoğlu, B. B. (2019). Shaping tourists' destination quality perception and loyalty through destination country image: The importance of involvement and perceived value. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 29, 105-117.
- Dobni, D., & Zinkhan, G. M. (1990). In search of brand image: A foundation analysis. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 17, 110-119.
- Elo, S., Kaariainen, M., Kanste, O., Polkki, T., Utriainen, K., & Kyngas, H. (2014). Qualitative content analysis: A focus on trustworthiness. *Sage Open*, 4(1), 1-10.

- Ferreira, D. A., Avila, M. G., & De Faria, M. D. (2010). Corporate social responsibility and consumers' perception of price. *Social Responsibility Journal*, 6(2), 208-221.
- Frochot, I. (2003). An analysis of regional positioning and its associated food images in French tourism regional brochures. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 14(3/4), 77-96.
- Galí Espelt, N., & Donaire Benito, J. A. (2005). The social construction of the image of Girona: A methodological approach. *Tourism Management*, 26(5), 777-785.
- Gan, T., Zheng, J., Li, W., Li, J., & Shen, J. (2023). Health and wellness tourists' motivation and behavior intention: The role of perceived value. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(5), 4339.
- Garay, L., & Cànoves, G. (2011). Life cycles, stages and tourism history: The Catalonia (Spain) experience. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38(2), 651-671.
- Gartner, W. C. (1993). Image formation process. In Uysal, M. & Fesenmaier, D. E. (Eds.), *Communication and channel systems in tourism marketing* (pp. 191-215). New York: Haworth Press.
- Graneheim, U. H., & Lundman, B. (2004). Qualitative content analysis in nursing research: Concepts, procedures and measures to achieve trustworthiness. *Nurse Education Today*, 24(2), 105-112.
- Güçlü, C., & Yılmaz, Y. (2020). Tatil öncesi ve sonrası destinasyon imajı karşılaştırması: Alanya örneği. *Seyahat ve Otel İşletmeciliği Dergisi*, 17(2), 173-185.
- Hsieh, H., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15(9), 1277-1288.
- Kadhi, W. E. (2009). *Cross-Cultural Destination Image Assessment: Cultural segmentation versus the global tourist: An Exploratory study of Arab-Islamic and Protestant European youths' pre-visitation image on Berlin*. Diplomica Verlag.
- Kaya, F. (2022). Algılanan otantiklik ve destinasyon imajının turistlerin davranışsal niyetlerine etkisi: Eskişehir örneği (Master's thesis, Afyon Kocatepe University, Afyon).
- Keskin, E., & Contu, M. (2011). A field study of determining Mustafapaşa (Sinassos) inhabitants' opinion on tourism. *Aksaray Üniversitesi İİBF Dergisi*, 3(2), 37-55.
- Kozak, M. (2014). *Scientific research: Design, writing and publishing techniques*. Ankara: Detay Publishing.
- Lai, M. Y., Khoo-Lattimore, C., & Wang, Y. (2017). Food and cuisine image in destination branding: Toward a conceptual model. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 19(2), 238-251.
- Lian, T., & Yu, C. (2019). Impacts of online images of a tourist destination on tourist travel decision. *Tourism Geographies*, 21(4), 635-664.
- Lin, J. H., Fan, D. X. F., Tsaur, S. H., & Tsai, Y. R. (2021). Tourists' cultural competence: A cosmopolitan perspective among Asian tourists. *Tourism Management*, 83, 104207.

- Lugosi, P., Janta, H., & Watson, P. (2012). Investigative management and consumer research on the internet. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 24(6), 838-854.
- Mgonja, J. T., Sirima, A., Backman, K. F., & Backman, S. J. (2015). Cultural community-based tourism in Tanzania: Lessons learned and way forward. *Development Southern Africa*, 32(3), 377-391.
- Michaelidou, N., Siamagka, N. T., Moraes, C., & Micevski, M. (2013). Do marketers use visual representations of destinations that tourists value? Comparing visitors' image of a destination with marketer-controlled images online. *Journal of Travel Research*, 52(6), 789-804.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Moon, H., & Han, H. (2019). Tourist experience quality and loyalty to an island destination: The moderating impact of destination image. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 36(1), 43-59.
- Nicolau, J. L. (2011). Monetary and non-monetary efforts for leisure activities. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38(3), 801-819.
- Okumus, F., Kock, G., Scantlebury, M. M. G., & Okumus, B. (2013). Using local cuisines when promoting small Caribbean island destinations. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 30(4), 410-429.
- Osman, H., Johns, N., & Lugosi, P. (2014). Commercial hospitality in destination experiences: McDonald's and tourists' consumption of space. *Tourism Management*, 42, 238-247.
- Pandža Bajs, I. (2015). Tourist perceived value, relationship to satisfaction, and behavioral intentions: The example of the Croatian tourist destination Dubrovnik. *Journal of Travel Research*, 54(1), 122-134.
- Pike, S., & Ryan, C. (2004). Destination positioning analysis through a comparison of cognitive, affective, and conative perceptions. *Journal of Travel Research*, 42(4), 333-342.
- Prebensen, N. K., Kim, H.-L., & Uysal, M. (2016). Cocreation as Moderator Between the Experience Value and Satisfaction Relationship. *Journal of Travel Research*, 55(7), 934-945. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287515583359>
- Reilly, M. D. (1990). Free elicitation of descriptive adjectives for tourism image assessment. *Journal of Travel Research*, 28(4), 21-26.
- Ryan, C., & Gu, H. (2008). Destination branding and marketing: The role of marketing organizations. In H. Oh (Ed.), *Handbook of hospitality marketing management* (pp. 383-411). Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Santos, R. M. C., González-Fernández, A. M., & Cervantes-Blanco, M. (2013). Weak cognitive image of cultural tourism destinations. *Quality and Quantity*, 47(2), 881-895.
- Schober, M. F. (2017). The future of face-to-face interviewing. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 26(2), 290-302.

- Soták-Benedeková, L., Rybárová, J., Tometzová, D., Seňová, A., & Rybár, R. (2025). Comprehensive Analysis of Rural Tourism Development: Historical Evolution, Current Trends, and Future Prospects. *Sustainability*, 17(3), 1045.
- Stacchini, A., Guizzardi, A., & Costa, M. (2022). The Value of Sustainable Tourism Destinations in the Eyes of Visitors. *Highlights of Sustainability*, 1(3), 202-223.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Sun, W., Tang, S., & Liu, F. (2021). Examining Perceived and Projected Destination Image: A Social Media Content Analysis. *Sustainability*, 13(6), 3354. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13063354>
- Tatık, E. (2022). Turistlerin seyahat motivasyonlarının ve algıladıkları destinasyon imajının davranışsal niyet üzerindeki etkisi: Muğla örneği (Master's thesis, Süleyman Demirel University, Isparta).
- Ulema, Ş. (2015). Turizm tanıtım broşürlerinde destinasyon imajı analizi: Türkiye örneği. *Bartın Üniversitesi İ.İ.B.F. Dergisi*, 6(11), 231-246.
- UNWTO. (2023). *Best tourism villages by UNWTO*. Retrieved from <https://www.unwto.org/tourism-villages/en/the-initiative/#objetivos>
- UNWTO. (2023). UNWTO opens calls for best tourism villages 2023. Retrieved from <https://www.unwto.org/news/unwto-opens-calls-for-best-tourism-villages-2023>
- Villar, A., & Fitzgerald, R. (2017). Trends in UD face-to-face household survey nonresponse and level of effort. *Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology*, 6(2), 186-211.
- Vrablikova, M., Turciakova, A. H., & Baranova, M. (2023). *Tourism as a factor of local and regional development*.
- Walsh, D. (2012). Doing ethnography. In C. Seale (Ed.), *Researching society and culture* (3rd ed., pp. 245-262). London: Sage Publications.
- Wang, Z., Udomwong, P., Fu, J., & Onpium, P. (2023). Destination image: A review from 2012 to 2023. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2023.2240569>
- Yin, R. K. (2010). *Qualitative research from start to finish*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

APPENDICES**Appendix 1**(English Documents)

- <https://www.unwto.org/tourism-villages/en/villages/mustafapasa/>
- <https://mustafapasakapadokya.org/kapadokya-universitesinin-merkezi-mustafapasa-koyu-en-iyi-turizm-koyu-oldu>
- <https://cappadocia4u.com/mustafapasa-village/>
- <https://goturkiye.com/the-best-tourism-villages:-tarakli-mustafapasa>
- <https://turkeytravelplanner.com/go/centralanatolia/cappadocia/mustafapasa/index.html>
- <https://cappadociatravelpass.com/mustafapasa-village-in-cappadocia-once-the-city-of-sun-sinasos>
- <https://gastrocappadocia.com/k/mustafapasa-44/>
- <https://www.aneews.com.tr/visit-turkey/2021/12/02/turkish-villages-mustafapasa-and-tarakli-added-to-uns-best-tourism-villages-list>
- <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/2-turkish-villages-selected-for-uns-best-tourism-villages-list/2437190>
- <https://cappadociaturkeytravel.com/detail/14/blue-tour-cappadocia>

Appendix 2 (Turkish documents)

- <https://www.indyturk.com/node/512181/k%c3%bclt%c3%bcr/d%c3%bcnyan%c4%b1n-en-iyi-turizm-k%c3%b6ylerinden-mustafapa%c5%9fa-hakk%c4%b1nda-merak-edilenler>
- <https://voyelo.com/tr/mustafapasa-gezilecek-yerler/>
- <https://www.fibhaber.com/dunyanin-en-iyi-turizm-koyu-secilen-mustafapasa-koyunu-taniyalim>
- <https://cappadocia4u.com/tr/kapadokya-mustafapasa-gezi-rehberi/>
- <https://kesfettik.com/kapadokyanin-rum-koyu-mustafapasa-gezilecek-yerler/v>
- <https://yoldaolmak.com/kapadokya-mustafapasa-koyu.html>
- <https://www.facebook.com/mustafapasakapadokya/>
- <https://www.cthaber.com/haber/8752767/urgupun-mustafapasa-koyu-odule-layik-goruldu>
- <https://mdchotel.com/blog/mustafapasada-gezilecek-yerler/>
- <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/yasam/mustafapasa-koyu-kapadokyanin-gozde-destinasyonu-olacak/2615993>
- <https://www.mustafapasa.net/>
- https://www.tripadvisor.com.tr/attractions-g635898-activities-mustafapasa_urgup_cappadocia.html
- <https://listelist.com/mustafapasa-koyu-gezilecek-yerler/>
- <https://kapadokyatanitim.com/rota/mustafapasa/>

Appendix 3. The accordance of destination image elements with the Best Tourism Village Network objectives

