

## VISITORS' PERCEPTION OF A TOURISM DESTINATION: THE CASE OF PAMUKKALE

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*This study's goal is to examine perceptions of tourists visiting the destination Pamukkale (Denizli-Turkey). For this purpose, a field survey has been undertaken in Pamukkale as a thermal tourism center. Surveys were received from 515 participants, but 207 of them were not filled out as required for this survey; thus, the analysis was made of 308 survey forms. Following the analysis of demographic variables of tourists, an assessment was made about perceptions of visitors in the area. One way in which variance analysis was used was to research the effects of age, education, and income status on the visitor attitude regarding Pamukkale as a tourist destination. Research findings reveal that there are significant levels of differences regarding certain visitor attitudes in terms of age, education level, and income level.*

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JEL Classification: *L83, M1, O1*

### INTRODUCTION

Pamukkale plays an important role in tourism in Turkey and has placed in the top rankings among thermal bath tourism centers especially in recent years. This study was conducted in order to uncover perceptions of tourists visiting Pamukkale destination. Efforts to determine perceptions towards Pamukkale and to make these perceptions positive will increase the number of tourists visiting the region. This study aims primarily to determine visitors' perceptions towards Pamukkale

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destination and to reveal which measures should be taken to increase the number of visitors by taking these perceptions into account.

The perceptions of visitors coming to any tourist attraction may be quite different depending on their demographic situations (Chi et al., 2009; Rittichainuwat et al., 2001; Beerli and Martin, 2003; Baloğlu and McCleary, 1999; Chen and Kerstetter, 1999). In this study, the goal was to reveal the effects of education, age and income levels of domestic tourists visiting Pamukkale on their perceptions towards this natural site and also to form concrete suggestions for local administrations, regional inhabitants and tourism facilities of the region regarding necessary steps to increase the number of tourists visiting the area.

One way variance analysis was applied to research this effect on perceptions towards Pamukkale destination. In the variance analysis the Scheffe test was made in case the result turned out meaningful. In this study, brief information was actually given about Pamukkale destination and the destination perceptions. In the field research, the application of the survey form used as the data collection method was mentioned, and in the findings section the data obtained with the survey method was evaluated. Demographic findings were primarily revealed and the data was evaluated by making one way variance analysis. In the results and suggestions section, findings were interpreted and concrete suggestions were formed.

## LITERATURE SCAN

The Tourism Strategy of Turkey aims to extend the tourism season throughout the whole year. This idea was based on a variety of tourist attractions, and in this context particularly health tourism and thermal tourism were handled. The Southern Aegean region (Aydın, Denizli, Manisa, İzmir) was also accepted as a thermal tourism center (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2007). “Aphrodisia Culture and Thermal Tourism Development Region”, composed of over 20 geothermal sources including Pamukkale, has formed among regions which will be developed primarily within the “Thermal Tourism Cities Project”: this project will start taking geothermal potential in Turkey into account to develop thermal tourism (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2007).

Pamukkale, which plays a key role among thermal tourism centers, hasn't reached its desired tourism potential yet although it has unique travertine terraces, historic relics and thermal water sources. In 2009, a total of 1,323,961 people visited Pamukkale: 141,165 free of charge,

134,968 with museum card, 15,224 domestic tourists and 1,032,604 foreign tourists. (Denizli Special Provincial Administration, 2010).

To know how a region is perceived is especially important to be able to attract visitors to that region. Image perception is not solely a result of media tools since it develops out of a combination of several personal experiences (Horrigan, 2009). For example, events such as winter games play a significant role in improving the image of a location (Monge and Brandimarte, 2011). The image perception of tourists is considered a crucial dimension of general country image (Abd El Jalil, 2010). Studies in the 1990s suggest that image is an important element of destination choice for tourists (Kamenidou et al., 2009). Perceived images of hospitality and travel enterprises create a basis for tourism development of a given area (Meliou and Maroudas, 2010). In the image creation process, brochures, tour operators, and travel agencies also play significant roles (Abd El Jalil, 2010).

In the 1990s, the number of various research concerning the destination image increased (Taşçı et al., 2007) and image has clearly emerged as an important factor in selecting a tourist destination (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999). Because the analysis and evaluation of the destination image is a conspicuous topic in the literature, it has had a positive effect in understanding tourist behaviour (Beerli and Martin, 2004). In tourism research, the visitor's perception of the destination name rather than visibility of the destination has been focused upon (MacKay and Fesenmaier, 2000). Destination image can be defined as environmental characteristics having an impact on consumer behaviors and choices (Kamenidou et al., 2009). In tourism, destination image is important at all times if branding strategies and brand development is set as a goal (Horrigan, 2009). Numerous research has been recorded about destination images of tourists (Kamenidou et al., 2009), and a continuous interest can be observed to this topic among tourism scholars (Shin, 2009).

When the literature about factors affecting the destination image has been examined, main factors have been revealed as previous experiences, tourism motivation, socio-demographic characteristics and various information sources (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999). Because of rapid change in demographic structures in tourism, the importance of research based on demographic structure has increased. In most of the studies, the effect of demographic situations has been researched in the destination selection and image perception, and in some research meaningful differences have been found between image perceptions of visitors and their demographic structures like age, marital status and education (Chi et

al., 2009:1; Rittichainuwat et al., 2001; Beerli and Martin, 2003; Baloğlu and McCleary, 1999; Chen and Kerstetter, 1999). However, in other research, meaningful differences haven't been found between image perceptions of visitors and demographic factors (Chi et al., 2009).

In most research, the relation between perceived image and demographic factors such as gender, age, education, occupation, income and marital status has been examined (Chi et al., 2009) and the relation between image components and tourists' socio-demographic characteristics has emerged as a meaningful factor in terms of social class, education, age and gender (Beerli and Martin, 2003). Although many variables such as age, education, income, occupation and marital status have been stated as elements affecting image and perceptions, it is important to note that specifically age and education have been shown to be the most important factors affecting image among demographic variables (Baloğlu and McCleary, 1999). It is accepted that the importance of research concerning age being one of demographic factors has increased in travel literature, and there isn't any meaningful difference among under and over 50 year old tourists in terms of the destination image (Chi et al., 2009). It is seen that visitors without a four year education have perceived the destination image more positively than those having undergraduate and postgraduate education and that visitors have got different income situations has created a significant difference in evaluating the destination image (Chi et al., 2009). There isn't a significant difference among ages in perceiving pictorial memory performance (Smith and Mackay, 2001). Differences have been found between image perception and genders and education (Chen and Kerstetter, 1999).

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

In this study, the demographic situations of visitors visiting Pamukkale were examined and the effect of education, age and income levels of domestic tourists visiting Pamukkale destination on their perception towards the Pamukkale site was researched. Primarily the survey study was conducted in the Pamukkale region as a part of thermal tourism and demographic situations of tourists coming to Pamukkale were inspected. Later, these aforementioned factors were considered and the visitors' attitudes were revealed. The research was implemented in two steps. In the first step secondary data was examined, and in the second step the data was collected through field research. In the field research, the survey method was used as the data collection method. After the aim

of the study was briefly explained in the front page of the survey form, it was specifically stated that the study would only be made for scientific aim and results would certainly be kept private.

The survey form is composed of two basic sections. In forming the first section of the survey form, research handling the topic scientifically was primarily examined and there were questions concerning perceptions towards Pamukkale destination; in the second section there were demographic questions aimed at local people taking the survey. Demographic questions were placed at the end of the survey form. In this study, in order to evaluate opinions of people included in the sample, the Likert attitude scale--extensively used in research based on quantitative data--was used. Likert type scale items are used as 3, 5 or 7 options. In this study, a Likert five-point scale (Tezbaşaran, 1997) was preferred in its original form. In determining perceptions towards the destination, survey takers were asked to assign each attitude statement according to agreement level by giving statements "absolutely agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, never agree".

The pre-application was primarily conducted to come up with valid results in the survey study forming the key point of the research. The pre-application of the study was realized by interviewing tourists. In reciprocal interviews, tourists' reaction to questions was observed. Notes were made if the person hesitated, or if there were inarticulate questions being asked. In addition, the tourists' ability to perceive questions easily was taken into account. After the pre-application, the final draft of the survey form was created, and this survey was used on tourists coming to Pamukkale by interviewing them face-to-face.

In this study--with the aim of revealing visitors' perceptions towards Pamukkale as a tourist destination--a total of 308 surveys taken by tourists visiting Pamukkale were analyzed according to various demographic variables. The data collected through the survey was analyzed with the SPSS statistical program developed for social sciences. First of all, surveys were checked to see if they had been filled out completely and if answers continued in a certain way were primarily examined. Frequency distributions of demographic data were handled and extrapolated. Finally, one-way variance analysis was applied in order to research the effect of education, age and income situations on visitors' perception criteria towards Pamukkale. When the result came out as meaningful in variance analysis, the Scheffe test was done.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic findings being in descriptive, statistical base are stated in Table 1.

**Table 1** Demographic Findings

Demographic Factors	Number	Percent (%)	Demographic Factors	Number	Percent (%)
Gender			Age		
Woman	134	44	25 and below	82	27
Man	174	56	26-30	65	22
Education			31-35	39	13
Primary Education	48	16	36-40	29	10
High School	72	24	41-45	43	14
Two-year degree	53	18	46 and above	42	14
Graduate	103	34	Income		
Postgraduate	24	9	500 and below	64	22
			501-999	83	28
			1.000-1499	64	21
			1500-1999	41	14
			2.000 and above	47	16

44% of the survey attendants are women and 56% are men. In this situation, 134 of attendants are women and 174 are men. When the educational background of the survey pool are examined, it is understood that 48 of these have primary education, 72 high school, 53 two-year degree, 103 graduate and 24 postgraduate diploma. Based on this data, 16% of attendants are primary education graduate, 24% high school, 18% two-year degree, 34% 4-year degree and 9% postgraduate. When ages of attendants are taken into account, it is seen that 65 people are between 26-30 years old, 39 people between 31-35 years old, 29 people between 36-40 years old, 43 people between 41-45 years old, and the remaining 42 people over 46 years old. When attendants are evaluated as percentage, 27% of them are 25 and below years old, 22% 26-30 years old, 13% 31-35 years old, 10% 36-40 years old, 14% 41-45 years old and 14% 46 and above years old. When incomes of survey takers are taken into account, 64 of them have income less than 500 TL, 83 have between 500-999 TL, 64 have between 1,000-1,499, 41 have between 1,500-1,999 and 47 have income more than 2,000 TL. Monthly income of attendants in percentage:

22% of them have 500 and below, 28% between 501-999, 21% between 1000-1499, 14% between 1500-1999 TL and 16% 2,000 TL and above.

One-way variance analysis was applied to research the effect of the education of attendants visiting Pamukkale on their perception of this destination. Results of this analysis are shown in the table below.

**Table 2** Education of Attendants and Statements

	F	p	Scheffe
Local transportation service is comfortable.	2.849	.024	3-5, 4-5
Traveling through the tour is possible.	4.279	.002	1-2,1-3
Service quality of accommodation facilities is high.	3.504	.008	1-3,1-5
Cost of holiday is higher than that of alternative regions.	2.586	.037	2-4
Pool entry fees are high.	2.865	.024	1-5

The difference between those having postgraduate education and those with 4-year and two-year degrees was determined to be meaningful regarding the comfort of the local transportation service ( $F= 2,849$ ,  $p<.024$ ). People with two-year and 4-year degrees are more likely to think local transportation service is comfortable than those with postgraduate education. In comments concerning the availability of the opportunity of traveling with the tour, the difference between those with primary education and those having high school and two-year degree education is significant ( $F= 4,279$ ,  $p<.002$ ). Questionees with only primary education regard the availability of the opportunity of traveling with the tour more positively than those with high school and 2-year degree education. Also in the statement “service quality of accommodation facilities is high”, those with primary education exhibit different attitudes than those with two-year degrees and postgraduate education ( $F= 3,504$ ,  $p<.008$ ). While those people with primary education think view the service quality of accommodation facilities in Pamukkale region as high, attendants possessing two-year degrees and postgraduate education perceive service quality as inadequate. In the statement “the cost of holiday is higher than that of alternative regions”, there is also a difference according to the education of attendants ( $F= 2,586$ ,  $p<.037$ ). Those with a high school education are more likely to regard the cost of holiday in Pamukkale as high as compared to those with 4-year degrees. Further, there is a difference observed between the agreement levels

regarding the statement “the pool entry fees are high” based upon education background. ( $F=2.865$ ,  $p<.024$ ). While attendants with a primary education regard the pool fees as very high, those with postgraduate education do not regard the pool fees as high.

One-way variance analysis was applied to research the effect of ages of attendants visiting Pamukkale destination on their perceptions towards this site. Findings are given in the table below.

**Table 3** Ages of Attendants and Statements

	F	p	Scheffe
It has a unique?? atmosphere.	2.429	.035	2-4
It is a safe place.	2.849	.016	1-6
There is a large variety of foods and drinks in accommodation facilities.	3.428	.005	2-6
In accommodation facilities I feel at home.	2.898	.014	1-6,2-6
Health service is adequate.	2.526	.029	1-5
The cost of holiday in Pamukkale is generally higher than that of alternative regions.	2.285	.046	1-5
Accommodation prices are high.	2.700	.021	1-5, 2-5
Gift prices are high.	3.620	.003	1-5, 2-5
Prices of entertainment services are high.	5.173	.000	1-3,1-5
Museum entry fee is high.	2.561	.027	1-6

A significant difference is seen between ages of attendants and their attitudes toward the statement that Pamukkale has a unique?? atmosphere ( $F=2.429$ ,  $p<.035$ ). It is clear that attendants in the 26-30 age group regard Pamukkale as a unique?? atmosphere more than those in the 36-40 age group. The attitude sentence “Pamukkale is a safe place” shows a significant difference when it is examined according to ages of people surveyed ( $F=2.849$ ,  $p<.016$ ). Those visitors 25 and under years more highly perceive Pamukkale as a safe place than 46 years and over age group. When examining the opinion statement that there is a large variety of foods and drinks in accommodation facilities, a difference among age groups has also been detected ( $F=3.428$ ,  $p<.005$ ). Indeed, attendants between 26-30 years old regard the variety of foods and drinks in the Pamukkale accommodation facilities as adequate more than 46 and over



years old attendants. Attendants in 25 years old and under, and those between 26-30 years old give more points to the attitude sentence "In accommodation facilities I feel at home" than the 46 years and over age group ( $F=2.898$ ,  $p<.014$ ). When it is taken into account that people become more attached to their own houses as they become older, it is no surprise that younger attendants were more apt to feel at home during a trip. In the statement "Health service is adequate", 25 and under years old attendants also exhibit a different attitude than those between 41-45 years old ( $F=2.526$ ,  $p<.029$ ). While 25 and under years old attendants think health service is adequate in Pamukkale destination, those between 41-45 years old do not agree that this is the case. This result can be interpreted as showing that the importance of health services gains as one ages.

In terms of expense, significant differences can also be found among different age groups. For example, age was an important factor among attendants and their corresponding attitudes to the statement "The cost of holiday is generally higher than that of alternative regions," ( $F=2.285$ ,  $p<.046$ ). Those participants 25 and under more often regard the cost of holiday as high compared to those between 41-45 years old. A significant difference has also been detected between attendants' attitudes to the statement "Accommodation fees are high" and their ages ( $F=2.700$ ,  $p<.021$ ). 25 and under years old participants and participants between 26-30 years old regard accommodation prices as high more than those between 41-45 years old. The difference between attendants' attitudes to the statement "gift prices are high" and their ages has also been found to be meaningful ( $F=3.620$ ,  $p<.003$ ). It can be argued that 25 and under year old participants and participants between 26-30 years old regard gift prices in Pamukkale as high more than those between 41-45 years old. Further, the difference between attendants' attitudes to the statement "Prices of entertainment services are high" and their ages is meaningful ( $F=5.173$ ,  $p<.000$ ). 25 and under year old participants more often regard the prices of entertainment services in the Pamukkale region as high than those between 31-35 and 41-45 years old. Finally, not surprisingly, in the statement "museum entry fee is high", 25 and under years old participants exhibit a different attitude from 46 and over years old participants ( $F=2.561$ ,  $p<.027$ ). 25 and under years old participants think the museum entry fees are high more than 46 and over years old participants.

One-way variance analysis was applied to research the effect of income situations of attendants visiting Pamukkale towards this tourist destination. Findings are given in the table below.

**Table 4** Income of participants and statements

	F	p	Scheffe
It is a safe place.	3.854	.004	1-4,1-5
There is quality service in accommodation facilities.	4.269	.002	1-4
Accommodation facilities are clean.	3.510	.008	1-2,2-3
Health service is adequate.	5082	.001	1-2,1-3,1-4,1-5
Prices of foods and drinks are high.	3.126	.015	1-3
Gift prices are high.	4.817	.001	1-2,1-3,1-4,1-5
Prices of entertainment services are high.	4.255	.002	1-4,1-5

The difference between incomes of attendants and their attitudes towards the statement that Pamukkale is a safe place has been found to be meaningful ( $F=3.854$ ,  $p<.004$ ). Attendants earning 500 TL and under regard Pamukkale as a safe place more than those having a 1500-1999 TL income and those having 2000 TL and over income. In the statement “There is quality service in accommodation facilities.”, attendants also exhibit a different attitude according to their income levels ( $F=5.173$ ,  $p<.000$ ). While attendants with a 500 TL and under income regard service in accommodation facilities as higher quality, those having income between 1500-1999 TL state that the quality of service in accommodation facilities is low. This result can be interpreted to mean that service quality in accommodation facilities in Pamukkale region is not at a satisfactory level to please visitors of a higher income group. In addition, a difference according to income levels of participants has been detected in the statement “accommodation facilities are clean” ( $F=3.510$ ,  $p<.008$ ). While attendants with a 500 TL and under income see accommodation facilities as clean more than those with an income between 501-999 TL, attendants having income between 501-999 TL think accommodation facilities are clean more than those having 1000-1499 TL. The difference between the approval of the statement “Health service is adequate” and income situations has also proven meaningful ( $F=5.082$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Attendants with a 500 TL and under income regard health service as adequate more than attendants in all other income groups, and attendants of other income groups state that they don’t regard health service as adequate. Incomes of participants and their attitudes to the statement “prices of foods and drinks are high” show a difference ( $F=3.126$ ,  $p<.015$ ). While attendants having

500 TL and under income regard prices of foods and drinks as high, those having income between 1000-1499 TL regard prices of foods and drinks as normal. The difference between the approval of the attitude statement “gift prices are high” and income situations is meaningful ( $F=4.817$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Attendants having 500 TL and under income regard gift prices as high more than those in all other income groups. In the statement “prices of entertainment services are high”, attendants exhibit a different attitude depending on their income situations ( $F=4.255$ ,  $p<.002$ ). Attendants from the 500 TL and under income group regard prices of entertainment services as high more than those having income between 1500-1999 TL and those having 2000 TL and over income. When looked at prices of foods and drinks, gifts and entertainment services, it can be said that attendants having 500 TL and under income generally regard prices in these three groups as high.

## **RESULTS AND SUGGESTIONS**

In this study, the destination perceptions of domestic tourists visiting Pamukkale destination were examined. In this study, one-way variance analysis was applied to research the effect of education, age and income situations of domestic tourists visiting Pamukkale destination on their perception criteria. When visitors’ perception towards the destination were examined according to their education, age and income situations, significant differences have come out.

The data collected through the survey was analyzed by the SPSS statistical package program developed for social sciences. Frequency distributions of demographic data were primarily handled and evaluated. One-way variance analysis was applied to research the effect of visitors’ education, age and income situations on their attitude criteria towards the destination perception. In the variance analysis, the Scheffe test was conducted in case the result was proven meaningful.

The difference between those having postgraduate education and those having 4-year and two-year degrees education was determined to be meaningful when it came to the comfort of local transportation service. Attendants possessing 2-year and 4-year degrees education view local transportation service as comfortable more often than those with postgraduate education. Therefore, it can be assumed that the comfort level of local transportation service is not adequate for visitors with a high level of education and should be improved. In this context, it should be noted specifically that firms providing the transportation service should do so using more comfortable vehicles. In comments concerning the

availability of opportunities to travel with a tour, the difference between visitors with a primary education and those with high school and two-year degree education is significant. Those with a primary education regard the availability of opportunities to travel with a tour more positively than those with high school and two-year degree education. However the arrangement of enough high-quality tours to satisfy tourists in Pamukkale will certainly make this destination more interesting and increase the number of tourists. It should also be taken into consideration that the role of the tour vehicles is important: they should be uniquely designed to be suitable for visitors' photographing and filming. They could also be decorated with local eye-catching motifs, which visitors would likely respond to positively.

In the statement of the service quality of accommodation facilities, those participants with a primary education exhibit different attitudes than those with two-year (and four-year??) degrees and postgraduate education. While attendants possessing only a primary education perceive the service quality of accommodation facilities in Pamukkale region as high, attendants with two-year (and four-year??) degrees and postgraduate education perceive the service quality as low. This result indicates that the service quality of accommodation facilities is yet at the desired level. In terms of the accommodation facilities, tourists expecting higher quality service should not be ignored: here, a great deal of responsibility falls directly to managers of these accommodation facilities.

In order to increase the service quality, it is particularly important to focus on in-service education of employees and to place emphasis on details in the design of, rooms, service areas and facilities. Also in the statement "the cost of holiday is higher than that of alternative regions", there are differences depending on education levels of attendants. Those with a high school education regard holiday costs in Pamukkale as high more than those having a four-year degree education. For this reason, we can conclude that the expected holiday cost should be brought to the average level according to alternative regions. The difference between attendants' approval for the statement "pool entry fees are high" and their education situations has also been found to be significant. While attendants taking primary education regard the pool fees as very high, in contrast, those with a postgraduate education do not view the pool fees as high.

Attendants' ages and their attitudes to the statement that "Pamukkale has a unique?? Atmosphere" show a significant difference. It is clear that attendants between 26-30 years old regard Pamukkale as a unique atmosphere more than those in the 36-40 age group. When examined

according to ages of attendants, a significant difference has been found in the attitude sentence "Pamukkale is a safe place". 25 and under years old participants think Pamukkale is a safe place more than 46 years and over participants. Pamukkale's image as "a safe place" can be considered a key factor being used to perceive the destination positively. A significant difference between the attitude sentence "there is a great variety of food and drinks in accommodation facilities" and ages of participants has been detected. It can be said that participants between 26-30 years old regard the variety of foods and drinks in accommodation facilities as adequate more often those in the 46 and over age group. This result can be interpreted to mean that 46 years and over old participants have a greater expectation of various food and drink options, perhaps due to varied health problems. Moreover, for visitors, local foods and drinks of the destination where they take place may be different. For this reason, in the accommodation facilities the presentation of foods and drinks specific to that region can be made. Therefore both the diversity will have been provided for visitors who have become bored at the sameness and also the introduction of local tastes will have been made.

Attendants in 25 and under years old and between 26-30 years old give more points to the attitude sentence "In accommodation facilities I feel at home" than 46 and over years old participants. Given that people become attached to their own houses as they become older, it can be said that the result that in the accommodation facilities younger participants feel at home is an expected result. 25 and under years old participants also exhibit different attitude towards the statement "health service is adequate" than those between 41-45 years old. While 25 and under years old participants think health service in Pamukkale region is adequate, those between 41-45 years old don't agree with that statement. This result can be interpreted that the importance of adequate health service carries more weight as a person ages. Moreover, to mention Pamukkale especially in health tourism causes expectations to increase. The difference between attendants' ages and their attitudes to the statement "the cost of holiday in Pamukkale is higher than that of alternative regions" has been found to be meaningful. Participants who are 25 years and under regard the cost of holiday in Pamukkale as high more often than those between 41-45 years old. Younger tourists look for more different alternatives in Pamukkale and regard the holiday costs, which are sourced from less touristic activities than other regions, as high. The diversifying of touristic activities is a subject that should be focused upon. Increasing the current limited offering of activities such as paragliding and horse riding and diversifying the recreation activities will especially

attract the interest of young visitors. The attendants' attitudes to the statement "accommodation prices are high" and their ages has been found to be significantly different. 25 and under year old participants and participants between 26-30 years old regard accommodation prices as high more than those between 41-45 years old. It can be presumed that the reason that accommodation prices are regarded as high is due to the unavailability of transportation options?? or various animations in the accommodation facilities. Creative activities offered by the accommodation facilities will both prevent visitors from regarding prices as high and also increase the commitment to the destination.

Continuing the same trend, the difference between attitudes regarding the statement "gift prices are high" and ages of participants has been proven noteworthy. It is clear that tourists in the 25 and under age group as well as those in the 26-30 year old age group perceive gift prices in Pamukkale as high more than those guests between 41-45 years old. Some ideas to overcome this problem would be to open up more shops or locations where tourists can purchase gifts, prices should overall be reduced, and there should be gifts unique to the region available. Regarding the issue of local items, the local Pamukkale government and business community should work together to support area inhabitants--especially women--to produce and sell their own local handicrafts. The could sell from their own stands or from common stands organized by the municipality. In addition to handicrafts, local foods could also be sold. Another related issue are visitors' attitudes regarding the statement "prices of entertainment services are high." Clearly here, age is also a considerable factor. 25 and under year old attendants regard prices of entertainment services in Pamukkale region as high more than attendants between 41-45 years old. Those in the 25 and under age group are seeking more entertainment opportunities at a more affordable price. Also when examining the statement "museum entry fee is high", 25 and under year old participants exhibit a different attitude from 46 and over year old attendants. Againh, those participants 25 years and under view the museum entry fees as being high more than those 46 years and over.

Moving now to the impact of income levels on attitudes, it has been proven that indeed income plays a role when it comes to the perception of Pamukkale as a safe place. Guests earning 500 TL and less see Pamukkale as a safe place more than often than those guests with an income between 1500-1999 TL 2000 TL and over. Further, when looking at the statement "There is quality service in the accommodation facilities", attendants also exhibit different attitudes according to their income situations. While visitors at the 500 TL and less income level

regard the service in the accommodation facilities as high, in contrast, visitors with an income between 1500-1999 TL state that the quality of the service in the accommodation facilities is low. This result can be interpreted to mean that the service quality in the accommodation facilities in the Pamukkale region is not adequate for those guests at a higher income levels. Not surprisingly, differences were also apparent when reacting to the statement “the accommodation facilities are clean”, depending on income levels. It is clear that the higher one’s income level is, the less they perceive the accommodation facilities as clean. Tourists in the 500 TL and less income group regard the accommodation facilities as clean more than those having income between 501-999 TL. As expected, visitors with an income between 501-999 TL think the accommodation facilities are clean more than those having income between 1000-1499 TL. In a similar pattern, the difference between their approval of the statement “health service is adequate” and their income situations was also found to be important. Attendants with a 500 TL and less income regard health service as adequate more than attendants in all other income groups. Notably, attendants in all other income groups do not believe that health service in the area is adequate.

Examining now the impact of income level on perceptions of price, it is worthy to note that attitudes vary when it comes to the statement “prices of foods and drinks are high” depending upon income level. While visitors in the 500 TL and less income group regard prices of foods and drinks as high, in contrast, those with an income between 1000-1499 TL regard prices of foods and drinks as normal. The difference between the approval of the attitude statement “gift prices are high” and income situations is also meaningful. Attendants with a 500 TL and less income regard gift prices as high more often than those in all other income groups. Certainly it is a fact that one’s income level affects the purchase of gifts and souvenirs. Opening various giftware stands suitable for every budget would be a useful step. In a related topic, visitors also view the statement “entertainment prices are high”, differently according to their income situations. Guests with a 500 TL and less income regard entertainment prices as high more than those with incomes between 1500-1999 TL and 2000 TL and above. When looking at prices of foods and drinks, gifts, and entertainment, it can be concluded that attendants at the 500 TL and less income level generally regard prices in these three areas as high.

The research results indicate that great value should be placed on the perceptions of visitors in order to increase the number of visitors coming to the Pamukkale region. In evaluating these results, it is clear how

important it is to train the local people and employees of the tourism facilities to help assist tourists in having an enjoyable and memorable time during their stay. This in turn will increase the visitors' perceptions in a positive way and will lead to important developments and the growth of the tourism industry in the region.

Since this research was done in a limited region, some problems were faced in obtaining sufficient, completely-filled out surveys. In addition, the research couldn't be conducted over a very wide sample. Regarding this issue, it is assumed that if this study is made over a wider sample, the generalization level of the research results may increase and give better results. One of the subjects which should be focused on in later research concerning Pamukkale are the factors which determine the destination image. The scope of research in the future can be widened in this direction, and key components forming Pamukkale's image as a tourist destination vis- à-vis independent variables can be examined.

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