

SUSTAINABILITY OF TOURISTIC SOUVENIRS IN DESTINATION MARKETING: SINOP CASE

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Received May 2025; Accepted June 2025; Published July 2025;

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31407/ijeess15.320>

ABSTRACT

In destination marketing, souvenirs are known as tourism-related products because they are commercially produced and sold, as well as reflecting the cultural and traditional elements of the destination region and representing the brand image of the region. In addition to being a memory carrier of the destination region, tourist souvenirs are also known as indicators of people's tastes. Therefore, this study aims to examine tourist souvenirs and their sellers and reveal their impact and importance on destination marketing. Since Sinop has become an important tourism center for the Western Black Sea, it is a province with significant tourism potential with its remarkable nature and rich historical past. Survey technique, one of the quantitative research methods, was used in the study. In this study, the souvenir shops of Sinop province were determined and a questionnaire was applied to the tradesmen who sell souvenirs and design souvenirs. In this way, original product suggestions have been developed that include the impact of the products offered as touristic souvenirs on destination marketing, the impact and importance of the sustainability of the cultural and traditional values of the region. In this way, in this field in our country souvenir and souvenir preferences, which is a subject that has not been emphasized, are discussed. It is aimed to make a contribution to filling the gap. In addition, with this study, local managers and local people have knowledge about the preferences of tourists visiting the region and it is hoped that it will guide them in their future studies. Endemic animals and plants, cultural heritage, geographical signs, important people and events, local handicrafts, historical events and people, local beliefs, local folk songs, etc. should be utilized for diversification and sustainability of touristic souvenirs in Sinop province. Utilizing touristic souvenirs is one of the easiest and most accurate methods for promoting the region with traditional and cultural products bearing its own identity. It is seen that touristic souvenirs in the region are generally produced by the artisans themselves, and some of them buy ready-made products from intermediary companies. It is seen that they represent the region where they meet the expectations of tourists at a high rate. Because one of the touristic products that local or foreign tourists coming to our country definitely buy such as rest, food, shelter is touristic souvenirs, even if the size, quality and material are different. For this reason, the issue of touristic souvenirs is very important in terms of country promotion, association method in destination marketing and sustainability of all values that carry the regional identity of the region. This research is important since there is a limited number of similar studies on the subject of touristic souvenirs and a similar research has not been conducted in the region before.

Keywords: Sustainability, Sinop, touristic souvenirs, destination marketing, local development.

INTRODUCTION

The sale of tourist souvenirs and their purchase by tourists has traditionally been one of the most important activities in tourism destination marketing. Although gift-giving and the buying of souvenirs that are unique to the local area and reflect its culture are among the rituals of every culture, most of the research has been carried out on the production and sale of souvenirs in the field of tourism, because today they are an important contribution to regional economies around the world (Cohen, 2001). The first examples of studies in the field of tourism are handmade products, ethnic art becoming consumer goods and local crafts transformed in this way (Graburn, 1976). After the first comprehensive academic research was conducted by Beverly Gordon in 1986, studies have been conducted on its consumer (Anderson & Littrell, 1995), authenticity (Blundell, 1993; Littrell, Anderson & Brown, 1993); Asplet & Cooper, 2000), tourist and store perceptions (Kim & Littrell, 1999; Yu & Littrell, 2003), and purchasing tendencies (Swanson & Horridge, 2002; Swanson & Horridge, 2004; Swanson & Horridge, 2006). The subject has been analyzed from aesthetic, economic, functional and philosophical perspectives, together with shopping, handicrafts, gift culture, consumption and material culture (Swanson & Timothy, 2012).

When tourists visit a destination region, they buy products that carry the geographical signs of the region or country they visit, for use (radio, bag, etc.), souvenirs or souvenirs (decorative objects, glass trinkets, jewelry, etc.) and products that are a mixture of these (products that can serve functional and memory purposes reflecting the characteristics of a certain region; special production pocketknife, natural stone bracelet, trinket, cotra, keychain, magnet), Sinop Dumpling, Sinop Nokulu, etc. (Öter, 2010: 180). Handicraft products cover all of these types of souvenir touristic goods. When touristic products and touristic souvenirs purchased in Turkey are examined, it is seen that a wide variety of handicraft products are produced from key rings to boxes, from evil eye beads to musical instruments, from carpets to jewelry, from watches to rosaries. In addition to these, foreign products also have a wide place in the market and are marketed cheaper due to their cheaper cost compared to local products, and sometimes Turkish companies have their products produced in factories in China and India. It is understood that these products are cheap, sloppy, poor quality, without traditional traces and non-functional (Yanar, 2012). In line with these findings, it is important to make the existing touristic souvenirs unique to the region, destination or country where they are produced and marketed.

Research on the meaning and effects of touristic souvenirs has spread to many different disciplines such as history, philosophy, sociology, sociology, anthropology, marketing as well as tourism, but it has been observed that the subject has not yet been examined in the field of design. For this reason, in order to make souvenirs, which are part of the promotion of the destination region, sustainable in the process of destination marketing, we have focused on the people who make and sell touristic gifts. As a result of these examinations, it is predicted that touristic souvenirs should gain value with the cooperation of local producers and designers in order to become sustainable in the process of destination promotion and destination marketing. In this study, it is seen that touristic souvenirs specific to Sinop province play a great role in destination marketing in order to become sustainable and the interest of tourists is high. In addition, it is thought that the movable and immovable cultural assets in the region should be symbolized and used in new product design in order to increase the variety of touristic souvenirs.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Methodology

The appropriate research method was determined in accordance with the purpose and scope of the research. Questionnaire form, one of the quantitative research methods, was used. In the first stage of the research, a literature review was conducted and the research was supported by secondary data.

The main reason for using the survey technique is to measure the impact of touristic souvenir sellers on the types of souvenirs and the demands of tourists in the process of sustainable destination marketing. In addition, information on the purchasing behavior of tourists was also obtained in the questionnaire applied to touristic souvenir shops. The research was limited by being conducted in Sinop province. Within the scope of the research, a 5-point Liker-type scale was used.

RESULTS

Table 1. Demographic Information of Touristic Souvenir Sellers

Code	Gender	Age	Education Status	Work Experience
K1	Male	29	High School	5
K2	Male	40	Postgraduate	17
K3	Male	34	License	8
K4	Male	24	License	3
K5	Male	45	High School	20
K6	Woman	38	License	15
K7	Woman	32	License	5
K8	Male	29	Graduate	7
K9	Woman	32	License	11
K10	Woman	23	License	2
K11	Male	28	High School	9
K12	Woman	42	High School	3
K13	Male	41	License	6
K14	Male	43	High School	10
K15	Woman	53	Ortaokul	17
K16	Male	62	High School	32
K17	Male	39	License	2
K18	Woman	36	License	6
K19	Male	41	License	11
K20	Woman	44	License	3
K21	Woman	45	Associate's Degree	19
K22	Woman	27	Associate's Degree	2
K23	Male	38	High School	17
K24	Woman	47	High School	14
K25	Woman	21	High School	3
K26	Male	43	High School	5
K27	Male	40	Associate's Degree	8

According to the demographic information of the participants, 15 of them are male and 12 are female. When their ages are analyzed, it is seen that the participants are in the middle age range, while there are 7 people between the ages of 20-30, 7 people between the ages of 30-40, and 11 people between the ages of 40-50. It is determined that one person is 53 years old and the other is 62 years old. Regarding their educational backgrounds, it is seen that 10 of them are high school graduates, 10 are undergraduate, 3 are associate degree, 2 are postgraduate and 1 is a secondary school graduate. Regarding work experience, it is seen that there are 16 people with 1-10 years of work experience, 10 people with 10-20 years of work experience and 1 person with 32 years of work experience.

Table 2. Information on the Current Situation of Touristic Souvenirs.

Code	Origin of Goods	Place of Origin of Raw Material	From Whom Sourced
K1	Local	Zonguldak	I produce myself
K2	Local	Erzurum	I buy from the broker
K3	Local	İstanbul	I produce myself
K4	Local	Sinop	I buy from the pordur

K5	Local	Sinop	I produce myself
K6	Local	Sinop	I buy from the producer
K7	Local	Sinop	I produce myself
K8	Local	Samsun	I produce myself
K9	Local	Sinop	I buy from the producer
K10	Local	Ankara	I produce myself
K11	Local	Samsun	Üreticiden alıyorum
K12	Local	İstanbul	I buy from the broker
K13	Local	İstanbul	I buy from the broker
K14	Local	İstanbul	I produce myself
K15	Local	Erzurum	I buy from the broker
K16	Local	Sinop	I produce myself
K17	Local	İstanbul	I buy from the broker
K18	Local	Sinop	I buy from the broker
K19	Foreigner	Hindistan	I buy from the producer
K20	Local	İstanbul	I buy from the producer
K21	Foreigner	Çin	I buy from the broker
K22	Local	Sinop	I buy from the producer
K23	Local	İstanbul	I buy from the broker
K24	Local	Sinop	I buy from the producer
K25	Local	Sinop	I buy from the producer
K26	Local	Samsun	I buy from the broker
K27	Local	Samsun	I buy from the broker

When the information on the current situation of touristic souvenirs is examined, it is determined that the majority of the goods (25) are domestic and 2 of them are foreign. When asked where the raw material comes from, Sinop province (10) comes to the fore, followed by Istanbul (7), Samsun (4), Erzurum (2), Ankara (1), Zonguldak (1). The countries where foreign raw materials come from are China and India. Regarding the question of from whom they procure the touristic product, 8 of the participants stated that they produce it themselves, 9 stated that they procure it from the producer and 10 stated that they buy it from the intermediary.

Table 3. Information on Problems Experienced in Touristic Souvenirs Trade.

Code	Is there a raw material problem?	Is your workplace suitable for sale?	If there is a problem, what is it?	Top selling product?	What would be the product you would like to sell?	Can you meet the product demand?	Which product stands out as a representative of the province you live in?
K1	No	Yes	-	Rosary	Jewelry	Yes	Kotra
K2	No	Yes	-	Rosary	Oltu Stone	No	Linen Products
K3	Evet	Yes	-	Turkish Motif	3 Dimensional Table	Yes	Tables
K4	No	Yes	-	Manti/Nokul	Magnet	No	Food Products
K5	No	Yes	-	Kotra	Sculpture	No	Kotra
K6	No	Yes	-	Kotra	Fishing Rod	No	Kotra
K7	No	Yes	-	Confectionery	Glass	No	Kotra
K8	No	Yes	-	Kotra	Diogenes Statue	No	Kotra
K9	No	Yes	-	Kotra	Magnet	No	Kotra
K10	No	Yes	-	Dreamcatcher	Kotra	No	Kotra
K11	No	Yes	-	Magnet	Kotra	No	Magnet
K12	No	Yes	-	Wristband	Sculpture	No	Magnet
K13	No	Yes	-	Biblo	-	No	Kotra
K14	No	Yes	-	Jewelry	Natural Stone	No	Kotra
K15	No	Yes	-	Natural Stone	Magnet	No	Food Products
K16	No	Yes	-	Kotra	Magnet	No	Diogenes Statue

K17	No	Yes	-	Jewelry	-	No	Kotra
K18	No	Yes	-	Jewelry	Natural Stone	Yes	Kotra
K19	Evet	Yes	-	Natural Stone	Jewelry	Yes	Kotra
K20	No	Yes	-	Steel	All of them	No	Kotra
K21	No	Yes	-	Jewelry	-	No	-
K22	Evet	Yes	-	Motifs	Linen Products	No	Kotra
K23	No	Yes	-	Jewelry	Magnet	No	Kotra
K24	No	Yes	-	Keychain	Jewelry	No	Keychains
K25	No	Yes	-	Masa Örtüsü	Gold Items	Yes	Linen Products
K26	No	Yes	-	Keychain	-	No	Magnet
K27	No	Yes	-	Dumplings	Fish Figures	No	Kotra

When we asked the participants if there is a problem with raw materials, 24 responded no, while 3 said yes. When asked whether the workplaces were suitable for sale, all of the participants answered that they were. When asked about the most sold products, the answers of cotra and jewelry were given many times, while the answers of candy, trinket, dreamcatcher, natural stone, tablecloth were given once. When asked what products they would like to sell, magnet, cotra, sculpture were given as answers. When asked if they would meet the product demand, 22 people answered no.

When asked which product should represent the province you live in, cotra came to the forefront.

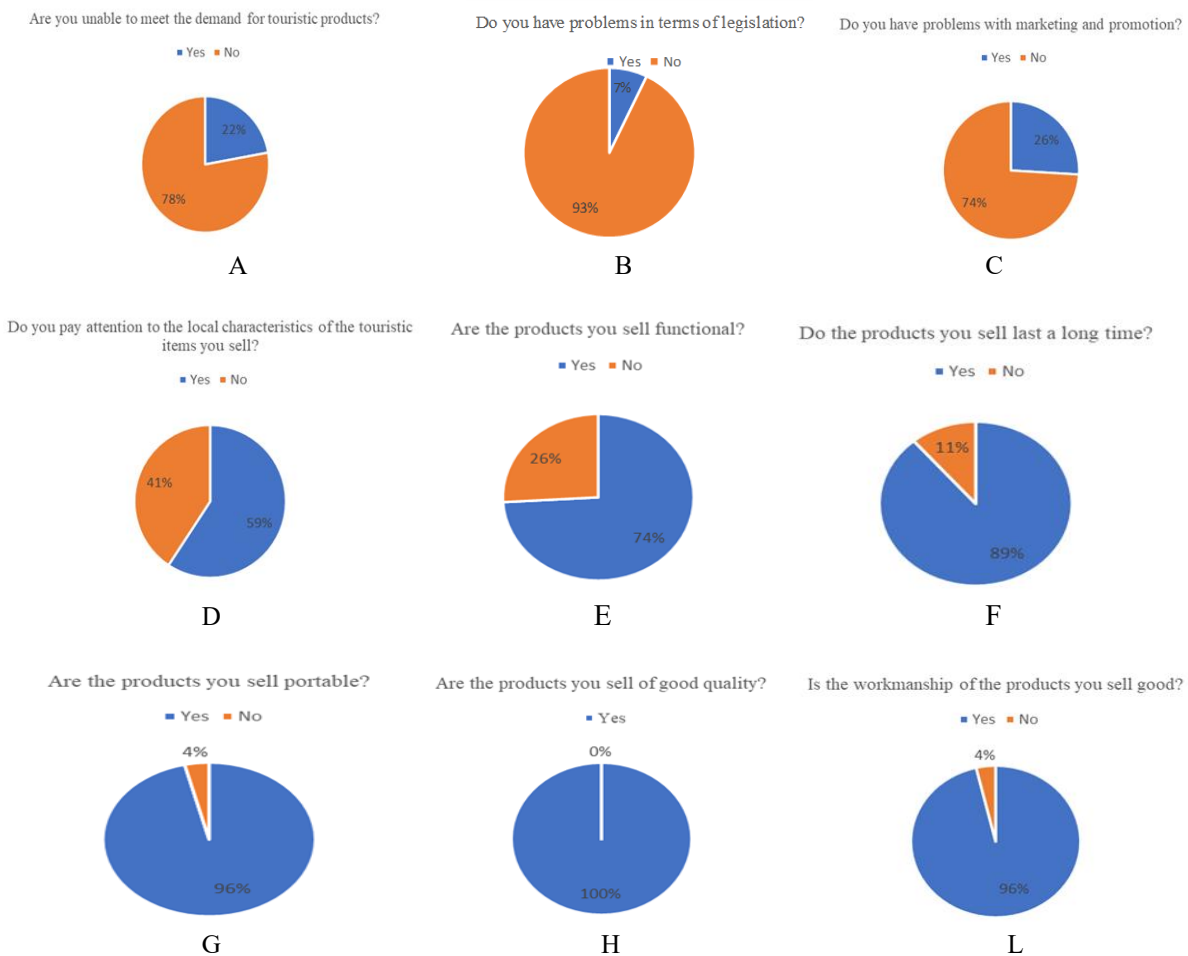


Figure 1. When asked which product should represent the province you live.

CONCLUSIONS

- As a result, tangible souvenirs have become a part of the travel experience of destinations in many forms and are embedded in every stage of the travel experience. In destination marketing, these pieces, which describe places, create identity, provide business, and become travel memories, have existed for thousands of years, and as long as people continue to travel, the sustainability of destinations will exist. These products, which have negative connotations in their widespread applications, will be able to gain a new identity by combining the accumulation from the past with contemporary design practices. This identity can be realized by creating awareness and adopting contemporary design practices in the formation of the destination image and brand identity of the region. In this way, local and traditional cultural values can be transformed into original production and local people can proudly be a part of this production or presentation.
- In order to increase the diversity of touristic souvenir products specific to Sinop province, it is also important to use local values, to use the motifs of traditional culture and to ensure the continuity of handicrafts. The number of handicrafts and touristic souvenirs, which are gradually decreasing, should be revived through various courses and the use of local handicrafts in the production of touristic souvenirs should be encouraged. Universities' carrying out projects together with the local administration and public education centers will contribute to raising awareness of the local people on this issue. In addition, it should not be forgotten that handicrafts are one of the attractive elements for tourist consumers.

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