



## The perception of local people about the tourism potential in Ulubey canyon (Uzak province)

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### Abstract

“U” shaped valleys which has steep slope to the edges and wide on the bed that formed because of gully erosion in karstic field is called as canyon (canyons are quite distinctive areas in terms of the touristic aspect both formation and the ecosystem in the valley).

Ulubey canyons located on Ulubey district in Uzak province is one of them. Ulubey canyon and its surrounding are extremely rich in terms of natural and cultural aspects. However, has not yet been introduced with tourism in an effective way. There is not much more study related to the Ulubey canyon and its periphery with the geographical approach.

This study focused on the awareness of local people to the tourism potential of Ulubey and its surroundings. Study has carried out with the implementation 5-point Likert scales that include 26 questions within 2 sections. Results have been evaluated with using the SPSS 15.0 program and are expressed in the table and graphs in the related sections. The study contributes valuable information in terms of sustainable tourism planning by giving opinions of local people who are one of the key interest groups in the tourism sector.

**Keywords:** Tourism; local people perception; tourism potential; Ulubey canyon; Uzak; Turkey

### 1. Introduction

The perception of local people is a very important issue for the development of tourism in a region. There are many research have been studied on this issue in literature. For example, according to Murphy 1983, there is a high probability that regional tourism schemes, where public participation is not provided and not included in practice, are unsuccessful (Bilim & Ozer, 2013). Local people are the direct users of the natural and cultural heritage in that area. For that reason, the perception of the local people is of great importance for the sustainability of these heritage (Okuyucu & Somuncu, 2012).

Protected areas were perceived as areas where only human activity was prohibited or limited in the past. And nowadays, it is perceived as areas protected by scientific, aesthetic values and allowing different uses with resource values. They are also seen as areas that contribute to the physiological, psychological, economic and social development of the society (Surat et al., 2014). For example, tourism gives rise to easy marketing of agricultural products and the development of souvenirs and handicrafts. The economic recovery provided by at local and regional level in these areas will also contribute to the country’s economy (Ertuzun & Fisekcioglu, 2013). But, after a certain period of

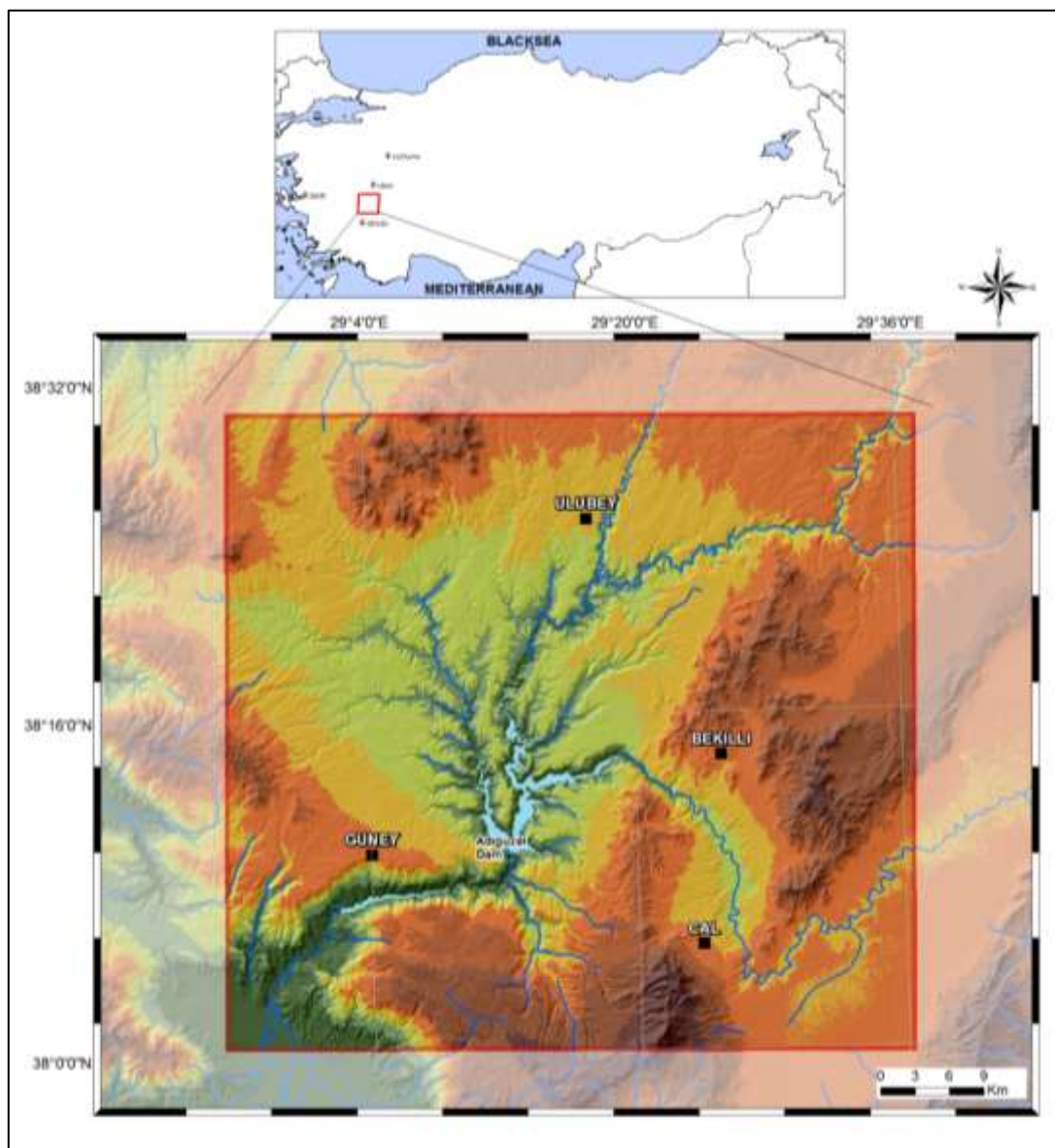
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tourism, reaching a density above the carrying capacity can cause both environmental and social problems in unplanned tourism development areas (Ozdemir & Kervankiran, 2011). For that reason, studies that focus on the local people's perception on tourism is very important for the success of tourism planning.

In fact, intensive business environment, transportation and environmental problems in urban areas are affecting human life negatively. For this reason, people want to go areas that are rich in naturally and historically and relaxing like Ulubey.

Ulubey town and Ulubey canyon which are surrounded by Avgan in the east, Koselli, Bekikoy and Haskoy in the southeast, İnay and Gedikler in the west, İsaklı and Kazaklar in the southwest, Guney and Cal in the south in the southeastern part of the province of Usak in the Aegean Region (Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Location map of Ulubey Canyon and its surroundings (Usak, Turkey)**

Ulubey canyon which has been formed on the Usak-Banaz Plateau composed of lacustrine clay, sandstone and lime stone layers alternately presents a distinctive environment in terms of geologic,

topographic, and geomorphologic properties and flora and fauna (Atalay et al., 2004). There can be seen different attractions such as karstic coniform features and cultural values along the valley.

Ulubey settlement history dates back to BC 4000 years. It was remained under the rule of the Hittite, Phrygian, Lydian, Persians, Alexander the Great, Byzantine, Seljuk Empire, the principalities of the Anatolia and the Ottoman Empire. Evliya Celebi who is prominent travelogue is mentioned that Ulubey as the “Ulu Gobek” which was a village belonging to the Kutahya province between the years 1517-1545. The name of Ulubey was called “Kici Gobek” in the Ottoman historical sources. In the Republican Period, it was called as “Gobek” due to being located at a central point. It became a district in the province of Usak in 1953 (Semerci, 2013).

The different civilisations living in this region provided to form of a rich cultural property during the long historical period. *This study is intended to find out the perception of local people about tourism potential in Ulubey.*

The determination of the local people’s perception to the tourism potential of the region is also very important in terms of tourism activities and tourism revenue as well. Because if local people take part in touristic activities in this region, tourism investments can be more successful and natural, cultural, and historical values can be protected more carefully. For that reason, taken into consideration the perception of the local people is important for the determination of the right tourism attraction and evaluation of these values with tourism applications can provide to the further development of Ulubey canyon in terms of socio-economic and cultural aspects.

## 2. Material and Method

The study is intended to measure of perception of the local people about tourism potential in Ulubey. For this purpose, a questionnaire that consists of 26 questions was applied to the local people in Ulubey. The questionnaire is formed by authors related to the characteristics of research area. This questionnaire composed of two sections. Demographic section consists of “gender, age, education level, occupation, affordable services in tourism”. Second section consists of 19 questions that evaluate local people's perception on the tourism potential of Ulubey.

The type of survey is the 5-point Likert scale application. A preliminary study made for the reliability analysis which applied on a group that consists of 20 people that live in the district in the center of Ulubey and near by Ulubey canyon (Asagi , Camikebir, Dilaver, Golbasi, Uyukbasi). “Simple random sampling” method was used for the application. The main application consists of 114 people that inhabit in the same location. The reliability of the questionnaire was found 90%. To obtain information about the sample group benefited from some descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, mean and standard deviation, and cross tables. The results were analyzed by using SPSS 15.0 program. The findings converted into tables according to the above-mentioned criteria and have been interpreted the corresponding sections.

When the related bibliography about Ulubey is examined, it can be seen almost all works are produced from body of literature and field works (Yalcinlar, 1955; Atalay, et al., 2004; Usak Il Kultur ve Turizm Envanteri, 2005; Kocan, 2011; Turkyilmaz, 2011; Zafer Kalkinma Ajansi, 2012; Marti, 2013; Semerci, 2013).

The tendency, which is attributed to the personality and constitutes of the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of the personality in relation to a psychological object in a regular fashion, is expressed as perception. The direction, intensity and density of the subject can be measured. This is achieved with some scales. In various studies, the attitudes of local people towards tourism; socio-demographic characteristics, economic ties to tourism, physical proximity to heritage attractions, and commitment to traditional cultural sites have been studied (Gurbuz, 2009; Cetin, 2010; Okuyucu & Somuncu, 2012; Ozaltin & Turker, 2014; Deniz, 2016; Ates, 2016). Some literature focus on how to integrate local people into tourism planning (Duran & Ozkul 2012; Maleka &

Costaa, 2014). And some others, focus on how tourism affects the environment and what local people think on this issue (Baysan, 2005; Dal & Baysan, 2007; Ozdemir & Kervankiran, 2011). Some other researches are related to the awareness of local people about tourism (Uslu & Kiper, 2006; Cakicioglu Oban, 2009; Duran & Ozkul, 2012; Cakicioglu Oban, 2014).

In this study, the perception of local people were especially evaluated related to the tourism potential in Ulubey according to some demographic variables such as “gender, age, education level, occupation, occupation in tourism”. In literature there is any research about the evaluation of local people’s perception by using survey. For that reason, this study is different from others in terms of methodology. Another indicator is the questionnaire that was applied in this area produced by the authors after the examination some literature (Uslu & Kiper, 2006; Cakicioglu Oban, 2009; Cakicioglu Oban, 2014) and a preliminary interview with local people and some fieldwork in Ulubey. For the preliminary study, a scientific field trip to Usak and Ulubey was organized in the fall semester of 2013-2014 academic year. In the observations of Ulubey and its vicinity, was recognized the potential for tourism. After the land study, it has evolved to measure whether the local people are aware of this potential. For this reason, preliminary work is made up of simple questions. This questionnaire was applied to the local people in the spring of the same year. So, it was determined from which questions the actual questionnaire should be formed. Later, another survey was carried out and the actual survey was carried out. For that reason, this study has the difference in terms of the methodology from the studies that related to Ulubey. And it can support the literature from these aspects.

### 3. Findings

#### 3.1. The Perception of the Local People About the Tourism Potential of Ulubey Canyon

The survey questions related to the perception of the local people relating to the tourism potential of Ulubey were evaluated according to some descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation (Table 1), and it is understood that local people who attended the survey are unstable on following subjects:

1. Tourism activities in Ulubey has increased in period of last 5 years
2. Cultural resources are adequate for tourism activities in Ulubey and its surroundings
3. Natural resources is not enough in Ulubey and its surroundings
6. Parking space is enough in Ulubey and its surroundings
8. Eating and drinking facilities to meet the needs of tourists are adequate in Ulubey and its surroundings
9. Bazaars and shops is enough for the touristic shopping in Ulubey and its surroundings
11. The local products range is enough for the touristic shopping in Ulubey and its surroundings

However, local people agree on the following issues;

4. Ulubey and its surroundings are good place for the tourism investments
5. Transportation condition is sufficient in Ulubey and its surroundings
7. Accommodations facilities are sufficient in Ulubey and its surroundings
10. Entertainment venues are enough in Ulubey and its surroundings
12. Local food products are available for touristic shopping in Ulubey and its surroundings
13. Regional home cooking is enough for tourist marketing in Ulubey and its surroundings

14. The plant products range is sufficient for local marketing in Ulubey and its surroundings
15. Local agricultural crops are sufficient for tourist marketing in Ulubey and its surroundings
16. Animal products range are sufficient for tourist marketing in Ulubey and its surroundings
17. Local handcrafts are sufficient for tourist marketing in Ulubey and its surroundings
18. Traditional handcrafted products are sufficient in Ulubey and its surroundings
19. Activities that will improve the touristic attraction in Ulubey and its surroundings are sufficient

**Table 1: The Perceptions of the Local People about the Tourism Potential of Ulubey**

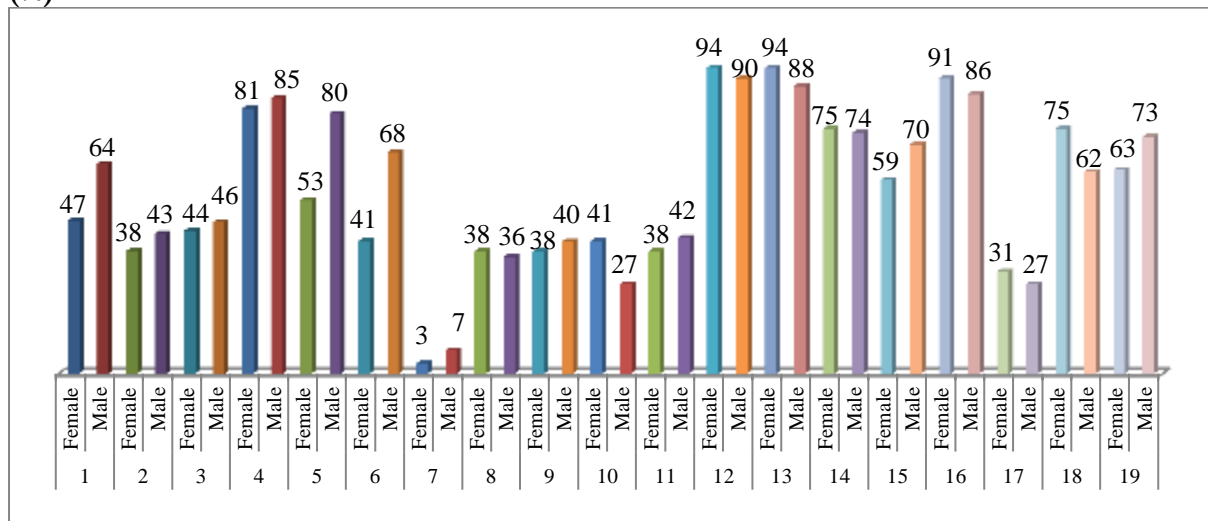
The Perception of the local people about the tourism potential in Ulubey	Mean	St. Deviation
1. Tourism activities in Ulubey has increased in period of last 5 years	2,72	1,316
2. Cultural researches are adequate for tourism activities in Ulubey	3,05	1,331
3. Natural resources are not enough in Ulubey	2,98	1,451
4. Ulubey is a good place for tourism investments	1,82	1,084
5. Transportation condition is sufficient in Ulubey	2,23	1,254
6. Parking space is enough in Ulubey	2,64	1,373
7. Accommodations facilities are sufficient in Ulubey	4,39	,886
8. Eating and drinking facilities to meet the needs of tourists are adequate in Ulubey	3,33	1,388
9. Bazaars and shops are enough for the touristic shopping in Ulubey	3,25	1,357
10. Entertainment venues are enough in Ulubey (casino, cafe etc..)	3,28	1,401
11. The local products range is enough for the touristic shopping in Ulubey (Traditional clothes, folk dances, etc ...)	3,03	1,341
12. Local foods and products are sufficient for touristic shopping in Ulubey (Tarhana, soup, noodles, jams, honey, etc.)	1,68	,851
13. Regional home cooking is sufficient for tourist marketing in Ulubey	1,76	,929
14. The plant products range is sufficient for local marketing in Ulubey (Thyme, sage, etc ...)	2,16	1,186
15. Local farm products are sufficient for touristic market in Ulubey	2,28	1,331
16. Animal Products range are sufficient for touristic market in Ulubey (milk, cheese, yogurt, butter, cream, etc.)	1,67	,940
17. Local handcrafts are sufficient for touristic market in Ulubey (carpet, rugs, saddlebags, etc.)	3,48	1261
18. Traditional handcrafted products are sufficient in Ulubey (Lace, embroidery and so on.)	2,45	1240
19. Activities that will improve the tourist attraction in Ulubey are sufficient (Festivity etc...)	2,34	1,351

In general, it can be specified that the perception of local people regarding the tourism potential of the region is positive in terms of touristic products; but transportation, entertainment venues and the accommodation is not very healthy. However, perceptions of the local people regarding to the tourism potential of Ulubey may differ in terms of some variables such as gender, age, education, occupation, and tourism services.

### 3.1.1. The Perceptions of the Local People about the Tourism Potential by Gender

When evaluated the perception of the local people about the tourism potential by gender, it is seen that men who attended the survey agree on the following issues compared to women's perceptions (Figure 2);

**Figure 2: The Perception of the Local People about the Tourism Potential of Ulubey by Gender (%)**



1. Tourism activities in Ulubey has increased in the period of last 5 years
2. Cultural resources are adequate for tourism activities in Ulubey and its surroundings
3. Natural resources is not enough in Ulubey and its surroundings
4. Ulubey is a good place for tourism investments
5. Transportation condition is available in Ulubey and its surroundings
6. Parking space is enough in Ulubey and its surroundings
7. Accommodations facilities are enough in Ulubey and its surroundings
9. Bazaars and shops is enough for the touristic shopping in Ulubey and its surroundings
11. The local products range is enough for the touristic shopping in Ulubey and its surroundings
15. Local farm products are sufficient for tourist marketing in Ulubey and its surroundings
19. Activities that will improve the tourist attraction in Ulubey are sufficient

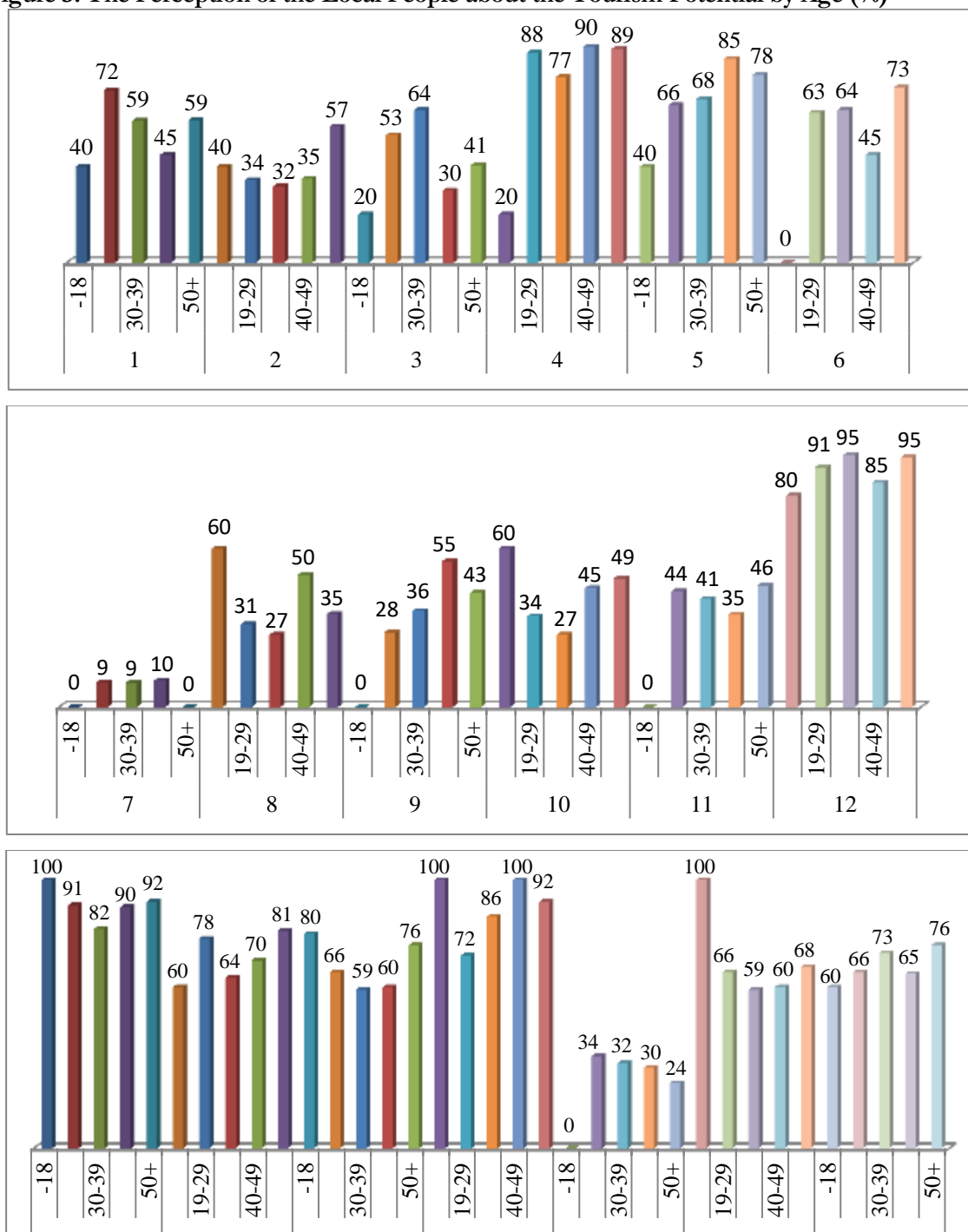
And women agree on the following issues:

8. Eating and drinking facilities to meet the needs of tourists are adequate in Ulubey and its surroundings
12. Local food products is sufficient for touristic shopping in Ulubey and its surroundings
13. Regional home cooking is sufficient for tourist marketing in Ulubey and its surroundings
14. The plant products range is sufficient for local marketing in Ulubey and its surroundings
16. Animal product range is sufficient for tourist marketing in Ulubey and its surroundings
17. Local handcrafts are sufficient for tourist marketing in Ulubey and its surroundings
18. Traditional handcrafted products are sufficient in Ulubey and its surroundings

### 3.1.2. The Perception of the Local People about the Tourism Potential of Ulubey by Age

When examined that the perception of the local people regarding tourism potential of Ulubey according to the age; although there is some differences whole age groups, it is understood that the age group in 18-29 are in a more positive approach to the following issues. (Figure 3):

**Figure 3: The Perception of the Local People about the Tourism Potential by Age (%)**



13. Regional home cooking is sufficient for tourist marketing in Ulubey and its surroundings

15. Local farm products are sufficient for tourist marketing in Ulubey and its surroundings

19. Activities that will improve the tourist attraction in Ulubey are sufficient.

However, the age group in 18-29 thought the tourism potential of Ulubey inadequate. This should be related to the expectations of young people from tourism. These results should be considered usual or normal. The study is not only a study that measures the perception of tourism by age groups. For that reason, explanations are given over the generalizations. If we want to make a clear statement, it is better to do a deeper study on age groups only.

### 3.1.3. The Perception of the Local People about the Tourism Potential by Education Level

When education level is analyzed, it can be said that people who are almost every education level think the tourism potential at an adequate level in Ulubey. Particularly more than 50% local people who's at the primary and elementary level believes the sufficiency of the tourism potential in Ulubey (Table 2). However high school and college graduates think that something more needs to be done about tourism development in this site.

**Table 2: The Perception of the Local People about the Tourism Potential by Education Level**

The Perception of the Local People about the Tourism Potential by Education Level							
Education level		Totally Agree	Agree	Neutral or Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Literate	Person	1	0	0	0	0	1
	%	100,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	100,00
Primary School	Person	6	12	3	5	3	29
	%	21,05	41,05	10,15	17,70	10,00	100,00
Elementary Education	Person	7	6	1	4	3	21
	%	34,60	27,55	4,05	18,55	15,30	100,00
High schools and their equivalents	Person	9	10	3	7	6	35
	%	26,15	28,80	8,60	20,00	16,40	100,00
Graduate school and University	Person	5	8	2	4	5	24
	%	20,60	34,40	9,85	16,20	18,85	100,00
Master	Person	1	1	0	1	1	4
	%	25,00	25,00	0,00	25,00	25,00	100,00
Total	Person	29	37	9	21	18	114
	%	25,45	32,45	7,90	18,40	18,80	100,00

### 3.1.4. The Perception of the Local People about the Tourism Potential by Occupation

When the occupation level is examined, it is understood that almost every occupational group think the tourism potential of Ulubey is sufficient. Almost all occupational groups are particularly agreed on the following topics:

8. Eating and drinking facilities to meet the needs of tourists are adequate in Ulubey and its surroundings

12. Local food products is sufficient for touristic shopping in Ulubey and its surroundings

13. Regional home cooking is sufficient for tourist marketing in Ulubey and its surroundings

14. The plant products range is sufficient for local marketing in Ulubey and its surroundings

16. Animal products range is sufficient for tourist marketing in Ulubey and its surroundings

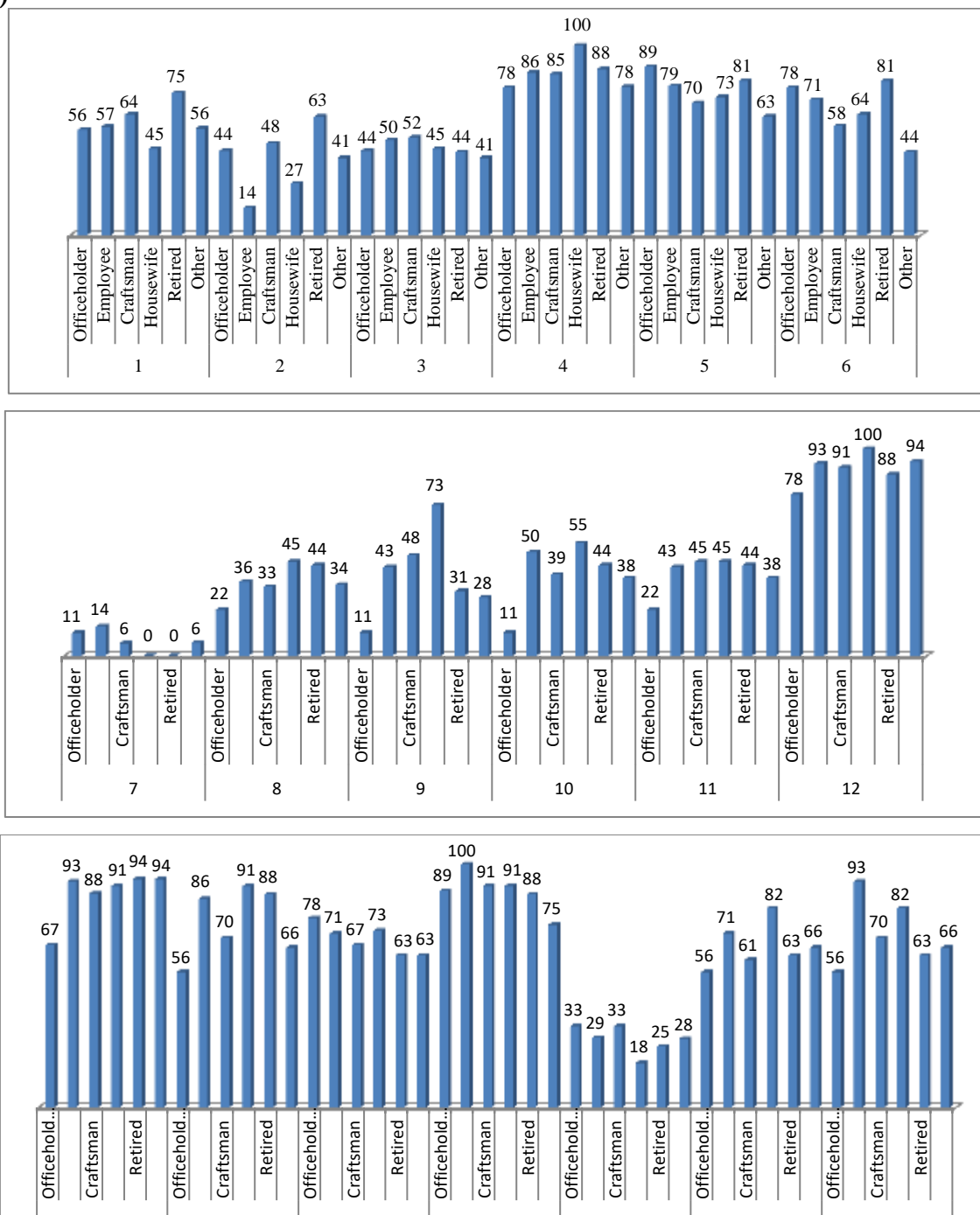
17. Local handcrafts are sufficient for tourist marketing in Ulubey and its surroundings

18. Traditional handcrafted products are sufficient in Ulubey and its surroundings

19. Activities that will improve the tourist attraction in Ulubey are sufficient



**Figure 4: The Perception of the Local People regarding the Tourism Potential of by Occupation (%)**



Tradesmen, employee, retirees, and housewives consider that the tourism potential in Ulubey at an adequate level in all fields (Figure 4).

**3.1.5. The Perception of the Local People who are engaged in a bussiness related to Tourism**

When assessed the perception of the tourism potential of employees who work on tourism sector in Ulubey; guesthouses, restaurants and eating-house owners stated that there is enough potential in terms of tourism in Ulubey but investments and promotion are not enough (Table 3).

**Table 3: The Perception of the Local People who are engaged in a bussiness related to Tourism The Perception of the Local People regarding the Tourism Potential of by Occupation related to Tourism**

Occupation related to Tourism		Totally Agree	Agree	Neutral or Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Totally
Pension, Restaurant, Diner	Person	1	2	1	1	0	5
	%	20,00	40,00	20,00	20,00	0,00	100,00
Other	Person	5	2	1	1	2	11
	%	44,05	16,75	12,45	10,50	16,75	100,00
Total	Person	6	4	2	2	2	16*
	%	37,50	25,00	12,50	12,50	12,50	100,00

\*According to the character of the problem in the study area, only 16 respondents dealing with a business related to tourism were evaluated

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusions

Ulubey and its environment have an important potential in terms of tourism with a unique natural and cultural landscape. However, the local people awareness is required to be evaluated successfully. Efforts should be made to increase tourism awareness and awareness of the local people in the tourism development process in the region. Indeed, many research findings on tourism support this opinion (Uslu & Kiper, 2006; Duran & Ozkul, 2012; Ablak; Dikmenli & Cetin, 2014). It is recommended that local people should be trained in areas where tourist and cultural tourism values are deserved to be worthy of tourism.

The following conclusions were reached from the survey that was applied in Ulubey.

When analyzed by gender, men and women who attended the survey is stated that Ulubey and its environment have enough potential in terms of tourism related to some topics associated with the business that they deal with in daily life (Figure 2). Gender generally has used for the perception of people in many studies. For example, one of them found that the gender variable had no significant effect on awareness (Ablak, Dikmenli & Cetin, 2014). This is also consistent with the findings of our study. Gender variation can therefore be overlooked in subsequent studies. But this opinion can be changed by the characteristics of studies.

According to the variable age, it can be said that 18-29 age group saw the tourism potential of Ulubey inferior than in the 30-50 age group (Figure 3). This situation can be associated with the lack of touristic fields and services that can meet the expectations of young people in Ulubey. But it can be stated after the deep research about this topic.

It is understood that particularly more than 50% of local communities in the primary and elementary level believe that the adequacy of tourism potential in Ulubey according to the education level (Table 2). The senior high school and high school graduates' think that there is a potential for tourism in Ulubey but it is not sufficient.

When examined the distribution of occupational variables, it is understood that especially tradesmen, employee, retirees, and housewives and almost all occupation groups consider that tourism potential is in adequate level in Ulubey (Figure 4). Also, people engaged in tourism believes that there is adequate tourism potential in Ulubey but the promotion and investment insufficient (Table 3).

In brief, according to the local people opinion there is an enough potential for tourism applications in Ulubey. This also indicates that tourism is an important sector for the development

of local economy. Local government, local people, tourism investors, various private and public institutions and academics should be directed to collaborate on this issue. The common point in almost all the researches already cited in the study focuses on the joint action of many disciplines in tourism planning and investment. It is understood that the potential will be an opportunity or a threat for Ulubey after making a new survey about the effects of tourism potential (Dal & Baysan, 2007). This research can be a contribute to the similar studies that will be made about tourism in different regions.

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