

TR1 (Güneykent, Turkey): Rose Farming and Tourism Development

Objective

The first aim of this ad-hoc study is to analyse contributions of landscape composition on the region competitiveness and secondary effects of rose farming; and the second aim is to determine landscape value through the view of visitors' vision. Research questions of the case study are: (i) What are the impacts of landscape on rose tourism in Güneykent? (ii) How do rose oil producers approach to landscape and farming? (iii) What are landscape preferences of visitors?

Introduction

Rose oil (*Rosa damascena* mill.) which is known as Pink rose oil, Rose oil or Damascus rose beside the "Isparta rose" is one of the important agricultural products for Isparta. The Isparta rose is cultivated to obtain rose oil, which is the main raw material of perfume industry. The most important world rose oil producers are Bulgaria and Turkey. Rose oil is produced in Isparta in Turkey and Kazanlak region in Bulgaria. Both "Turkish Oil rose" and "Bulgarian Oil rose" are distilled from fresh rose oil flowers (Giray and Ormeci Kart 2012). Rose oil cultivation leads to an important commercial dynamism by covering all the agricultural activities such as the planting the gardens, harvesting and processes done for oil extraction, as well as it has a historical and cultural significance (Timur 2011). Beside its direct effects on the socio-economic of its producers, rose oil farming has secondary effects on the region's economy, particularly in rural areas. First effect is on the rose oil processing industry which has been important traditionally and developed mostly as a primary sector for exporting raw materials. Recently, economic activities associated with the rose oil production have developed in Isparta, as well, products ranged from cosmetics/perfumery to medical/aromatic and food. Second "secondary" effect of the rose oil farming is on rural tourism which relatively newer and less developed. Landscape in the rose oil production areas, especially during the harvesting session from mid-May to August attract people to visit rural areas and it effects the other sectors in public and private sectors.

Methodology

We applied descriptive analysis and choice experiment. We conducted 3 types of face to face interviews: (i) with 79 producers in Güneykent; (ii) with 4 processing companies; (iii) 200 university students in Isparta in 2013. Data collected from producers and companies were used for describing situation (descriptive analysis) and data from students interviews used for choice experiment in order to describe landscape values of visitor (university students are important sector for the region, as one quarter of the total population of the area is university students). Therefore randomly selected students were asked to assess determined attributes compositions through following scale: 0 (not important at all), 1 (weakly important), 2 (important), 3 (strongly important).

We selected natural and man-made elements of the landscape in the region through real pictures with descriptions and open questions. We used the combination of these elements as attributes in the choice experiment and following pictures. Elements are:

- Rose garden
- Mountain
- Traditional rose oil processing plant and practicing opportunity for visitors
- Lake
- Traditional village breakfast cafe
- Local rose oil products' shop
- Lavender plantation area
- Accommodation facilities

Results

22.8% of producers interviewed have planned to make an investment about rose tourism in the region. Types of investments plans of the producers were classified in three groups: (i) establishment of a hotel, souvenir shop and other tourism services; (ii) increase own rose production/increase rose production area as well as (iii) build a rose oil processing plant. Whether they plan to invest or not, all producers and stakeholders think that rose tourism is promising for the future. According to 72% of producers' opinions rose tourism contributes to the region. 36.1% of rose producers have been stated that the most important activities for achieving these contributions are advertising and promotion. 21.3% of rose producers expressed that new hotels, restaurants and cafes should be established in the region for increasing this contribution. 14.8% of the rose producers who thinks the contribution of rose tourism to the region is important expressed that public supports are needed in this regard.

Results show that producers complained that *Rosa damascene* is considered in the groups of ornamental plants and they could not receive any specific government support. If any support schemes is develop for rose farming half of the producers think to quit from rose production and this will cause loss of landscape attributes in the region (Figure 1).

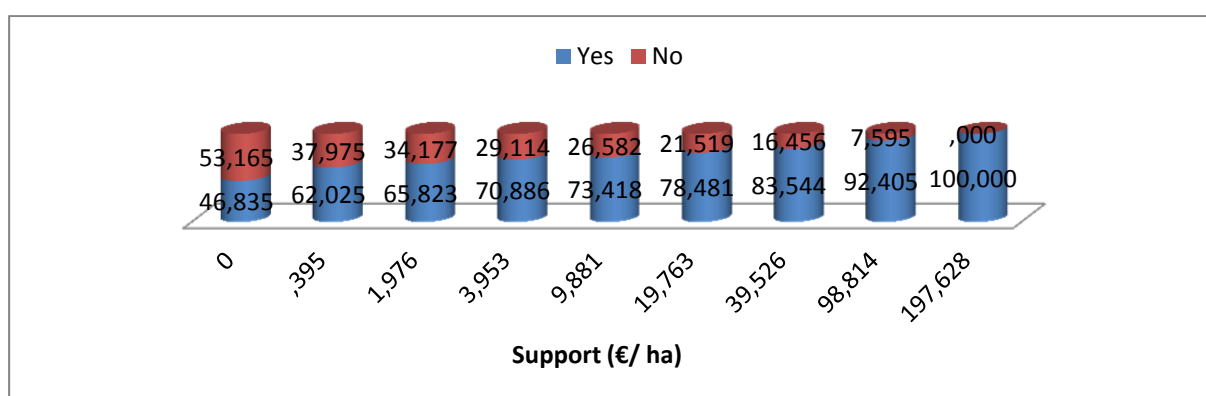


Figure 1. How much should be the support for rose farming?

72.2% of the producers think that rose farming has positive effects on landscape due to increasing tourism activities (24.6%); creating employment and income source (75.4%); obtaining exchange contribution (7.1%); utilize rain fed fields (7.1%). Almost all producers stated that rose farming has no

negative effect on landscape value. Those who states that rose farming has a negative effect on landscape (6.3%) think that rose farming decrease in diversity of landscape attributes comparing past because as it relatively easier than other agricultural activities and promising for new incomes through tourism and industry, other farming activities such as cattle breeding and F&V production reduce their importance in the region.

Although most of the producers think that rose tourism makes contribution to the region is important, apparently farmers' awareness of landscape value and its contribution to the region is not high as there is no any further intention and/or action more than continuing traditionally by farmers. Related activities at municipal level in the last years helped to attract people to join rose tours and visit Güneykent. According to surveys from processing companies, some findings can be summarized as follow:

- Half of rose companies have technology transfer and growing potential.
- There is no cooperation on innovation activities.
- Since share of local sales of rose oil is very low, companies are focus on export.
- Level of advisory services is very low.
- Communication frequency with local producers is very high.
- ¼ of companies needs financial supports from bank or development agencies.
- Half of companies have positive approaches to landscape management and rural tourism in the region.
- All of companies agree that rose farming has high contribution to region in terms of employment and income.
- Needs of human resources and knowledge transfer is obvious.
- 2 of companies' managers think that rose tourism would contribute to the region (rose museum and SPA hotels)
- New investments plans are very few.

The choice experiment results from the preferences study (Fig. 2) shows that most important attributes for the visitors are rose garden and lake. The other most preferred attributes are also mainly rose farming related attributes, such as involving in rose harvesting, traditional village breakfast, presence of traditional processing plants and practising opportunity for visitors and presence of local rose oil products' shop in Güneykent while the attributes of mountain and accommodation averages values are low. Visitors questionnaires explains this situation as follow: Their main reason of visiting to Güneykent is to see rose gardens and harvesting but they also enjoy complementary services regarding rose farming such as having breakfast/brunch close to the gardens and with rose smell; seeing how to distillate rose oil and trying how to do it themselves. However, most of them stated that they would not go to Güneykent just for breakfast or buying rose oil products out of the rose blossoming and harvesting session. The only alternative reason could be the lake to visit to the area combined with good village breakfast/brunch. As Güneykent is very close to Isparta and social life is considered very limited by most students we interviewed would not like to stay in there, this is why presence of a hotel/hostel not one of the important attributes.

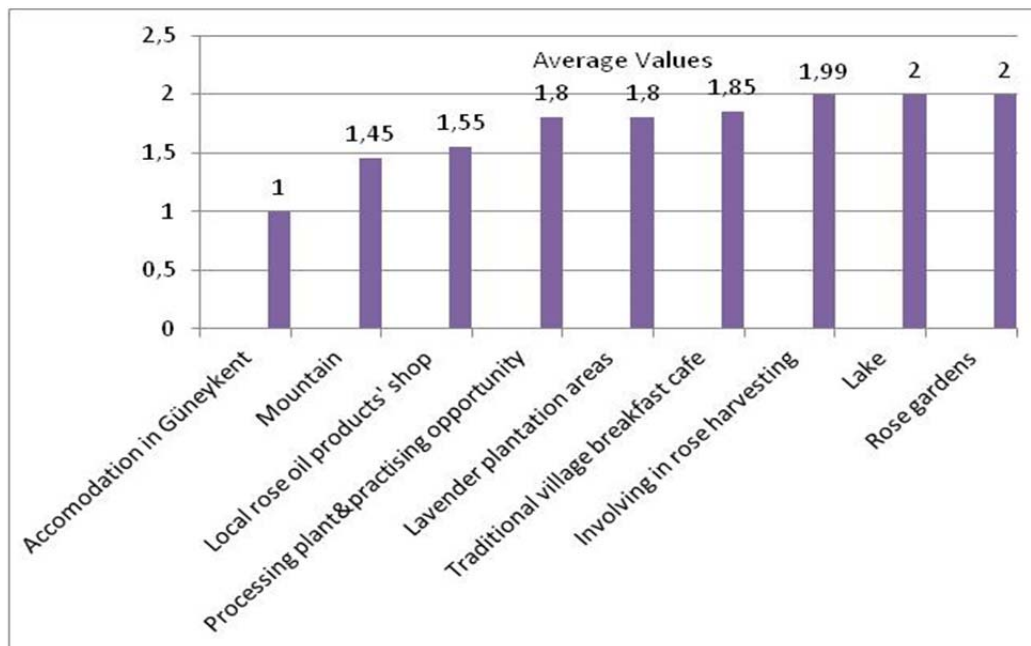


Figure 2. Landscape attributes preferences.

Lesson learned & Policy Recommendations

Rosa damascene is not considered as an ornamental plant by the Ministry of Food Agriculture and Livestock, anymore and it is in the right place (industrial crops) which means that they will benefit from the specific government support. However, there is still need to encourage (policy tools) in order to keep young farmers in rose farming.

Rose farming stimulates agro-tourism in Güneykent and the number of foreign and local tourists is increasing obviously. However, as the other services for tourism has not been improved properly yet, it develops slowly. Also, considering the current supports from the Regional Development Agency and personal efforts from the Güneykent Municipality, “sustainability” should be in mind. Extending the motivation to local level and involvement of local people is promising in terms of sustainability.

Landscape characteristics are important for young people. They are aware of value of landscape and willing to visit for both curiosity (for new comers) and sense of belonging to a land (for students from Isparta)

We also learned that lavender plantation might be an alternative/complementary attribute for Güneykent. It has not been developed and known enough yet but choice experiment results show that people considered it as a good landscape element and are interested in visiting. There are some contradictions regarding the landscape value perceptions of producers and consumers, although both of them are also users. We observed that while there was no concern about side negative side effects of tourism development on landscape thanks to landscape, some of the students were worried about it. We also observed that visitors prefer half/one day trip to Güneykent while there are some recommendations for new hotels investments by the producers. Most preferred attributes of landscape by visitors are manageable through implementing local/pilot environment policies and also increasing the quality and sustainability of the related services is necessary.

Responsible partner/person

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