

## PAZARLAMA PERSPEKTİFİNDEN MEZOPOTAMYA DESTİNASYONUNUN TURİZM ARZI VE ALT YAPISI

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### ÖZ

Destinasyonlar bileşik bir turistik ürün niteliğinde olup, yeni hizmete açılacak yerlerin pazarlanma başarısı, o bölgedeki arz yapısı ve turizm endüstrisi kaynaklarının belirlenmesi ile doğrudan ilişkilidir. Mevcut kaynakların belirlenmesi ve bölgenin bir destinasyon olarak nasıl pazarlamaya sunulacağı konusunda turizm paydaşlarının düşünceleri sürecin tüm aşamalarını belirlemek açısından büyük önem arz etmektedir. Bu araştırmanın amacı, Mezopotamya destinasyonunun turizm endüstrisi arz kaynakları ve alt yapı yeterlilikleri ile ilgili mevcut durumunu tespit etmek olarak belirlenmiştir. Araştırma yerel yöneticilere, turizm ve konaklama işletmecilerine Mezopotamya Destinasyonu turizm endüstrisi arz kaynakları ve alt yapı yeterlilikleri ile ilgili kapsamlı bilgi sunması açısından fark yaratıcı nitelik taşımaktadır. Çalışmada kolayda örneklem yöntemi seçilmiş ve Eylül ve Kasım 2019 tarihleri arasında 306 kişiye çevrimiçi anket uygulanmıştır. Araştırma kapsamında ölçek 13 boyuttan oluşmaktadır. Bu boyutların, gastronomi turizmi boyutu, konaklama işletmeleri boyutu, inanç turizmi boyutu, mezopotamya markası boyutu, işletme hijyeni boyutu, seyahat acenteleri boyutu, yiyecek-içecek işletmeleri boyutu, taksi şoförleri boyutu, turist rehberleri donanımı boyutu, işletme sahipleri boyutu, tarihi mekânlar boyutu, kamu yöneticileri boyutu, turist rehberleri donanım tavsiyesi boyutu olarak belirlenmiştir. Elde edilen bu boyutlar değerlendirildiğinde özdeğeri en yüksek açıklanan boyutun “Gastronomi Turizmi”, özdeğeri en düşük olan boyutun ise “Turist Rehberleri Donanım Tavsiyesi” boyutu olduğu ortaya konmuştur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Turizm endüstrisi, Destinasyon pazarlaması, Destinasyon markalaşması, Paydaşlar, Mezopotamya destinasyonu

**Jel Kodları:** L83, Z32, Z39

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## **TOURISM SUPPLY AND INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE MESOPOTAMIA DESTINATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF MARKETING**

### **ABSTRACT**

Destinations, as a complex touristic product, are directly connected with the success of new enterprises in their marketization, the supply structure in that region and also determining the resources of the tourism industry. Determining available resources and the opinions of stakeholders on how to market a region as a destination holds great importance to plan all the stages of the process. This study aims to determine the current state of the Mesopotamia destination regarding its tourism industry supply resources and infrastructural competence. The study is distinctive since it presents comprehensive information for local administrators, tourism and accommodation entrepreneurs about Mesopotamia destination tourism industry supply resources and infrastructural competence. In the study, a convenience sampling method has been used and 306 people were surveyed online between September-November 2019. The scale used in the study consists of 13 dimensions. These dimensions are gastronomy tourism dimension, accommodation establishments dimension, faith tourism dimension, Mesopotamia destination brand dimension, enterprise hygiene dimension, travel agencies dimension, food and beverage enterprises dimension, taxi drivers dimension, tourist guides' competence dimension, business owners dimension, historical places dimension, public administrators dimension and suggestions for tourist guides' competence dimension. When these dimensions are evaluated, it has been concluded that the dimension with the highest eigenvalue is 'Gastronomy tourism' while the one with the lowest eigenvalue is 'Suggestions for Tourist Guides' Competence'.

**Keywords:** Tourism industry, Destination marketing, Destination branding, Stakeholders, Mesopotamia destination

**JEL Codes:** L83, Z32, Z39

## INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector still keeps its unique position of being a profitable and attractive sector that has been drawing heavy attention for developed and developing countries from past to present. The main reason is that it is still one of the fastest-growing sectors in the world (Yıldız, 2011). One of the most important components of the tourism industry is destinations. The word destination has French origin and according to the Dictionary of Turkish Language Association, it is defined as a place to arrive ([www.tdk.gov.tr](http://www.tdk.gov.tr)). The term destination means attractive place, tourism region and touristic place in the literature (Davras & Uslu, 2019). The marketing of destinations and producing some strategies for this purpose are crucial to gain success. In what steps these strategic purposes that are determined for each destination that will be marketed, will be applied and the details of the process depend on the relation among tourism stakeholders. Although tourism stakeholders are defined differently by various researchers, in the simplest form, it is accepted that they are local community, tourists, entrepreneurs investing in tourism industry and SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises), public institutions serving for tourism and tour operators. At this point, each stakeholder needs to do its best while serving for the purposes that have been commonly set (Karabıyık & Sümer İnci, 2012).

Nowadays, some tourism destinations want to become distinct through a powerful destination brand and in this way, to hold a competitive advantage by focusing on branding due to intensive competition. Powerful brands are expected to make the region more attractive and they have many benefits for stakeholders. For tourists, preferring a brand destination means a warranty for a more different experience than other destinations, less risk and more trust (Çevik, 2017).

Mesopotamia region is the geography, where civilizations such as Sumer, Akkad and Assyria rooted and grew on the fertile land between Euphrates and Tigris rivers (Yılmaz, 2014). The scope of the study is 'Mesopotamia', which is a regional tourism destination brand created within the framework of the GAP Region Tourism-Oriented Promotion and Branding Project that is run by GAP Regional Development Administration. Mesopotamia region includes 9 cities that are Adıyaman, Batman, Diyarbakir, Gaziantep, Kilis, Mardin, Siirt, Sanliurfa and Sirnak (GAP Bölge İdaresi, 2018). These 9 cities, which will be marketed under this brand, are among the important destinations of the region with their unique characteristics. However; 'Mesopotamia Destination' that has been reconsidered with a new perspective in marketization, should be evaluated comprehensively in terms of both marketing strategies and its position in the tourism industry, and after that, marketing activities should be initiated. In destination marketing, certain strategical purposes such as contributing to the welfare of the local community in the long term, maximizing visitors' sense of satisfaction, increasing the profit rates of entrepreneurs investing in the region and also reaching an optimum social, environmental and economic balance, should be emphasized (Buhalis, 2000).

The aim of this study is to determine the current state of Mesopotamia destination regarding its tourism industry supply resources and infrastructure competence. The study is distinctive since it presents comprehensive information for local administrators, tourism and accommodation entrepreneurs about Mesopotamia destination tourism industry supply resources and infrastructural competence.

## **1. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1.1. The Concept of Tourism Industry**

The tourism industry can be defined as economic activities that create services, products and means of consumption demanded by tourists. The tourism industry is said to include those who have common interests in economic activities in the tourism sector. Tourism has become an industry because investments are made in touristic products and tourism has factors that form production like in other industries. Moreover, it includes cooperation among production bodies, which is already necessary, and also products in tourism are intangible (Bilgiçli & Altınkaynak, 2016). Because tourism influences many business lines, it has an industry-centered characteristic. Therefore, it is in close relation with many different scientific fields such as tourism sociology in sociology science, tourism geography in geography science, management tourism in business administration science, tourism motivation in psychology (Kozak, Akoğlan Kozak, & Kozak, 2014).

The tourism industry requires high investments and it serves during the whole year. Moreover, it is service-intensive and has quality control problems. The tourism industry is known to have a heterogeneous structure due to constant changes in consumer preferences and products that are produced in fields other than the kitchen are intangible, thereby causing simultaneous production and consumption. Furthermore, it can be said that tourism supply constantly changes and this demand can't be increased in a short period. Therefore, tourism products are marketed more differently than other physical products. In conclusion, the tourism industry is a field that is mostly based on manpower, and tourism supply can be affected by many happenings (Yeşiltaş, ve diğerleri, 2018).

### **1.2. Marketing**

Together with the transformation and change in every part and field of the world, a competitive environment has been created wherever people are. Since activities that people want to do, their demand for the things they want to buy and how they want to spend their time, generally saying their demands and tastes, constantly change, companies continually try to improve their marketing activities. For example, they change their strategies and try to produce products that appeal to consumers' demands. In this sense, the touristic product is important in terms of the brand that has been created, image, management and organization marketing (Ersun & Arslan, 2011). In his definition of the term marketing, Kotler (1997) states that it is not like euclidean geometry, a fixed idea or axiomatic, reversely, it is one of the most dynamic fields in marketing management.

Marketing can be said to include all promotional and presentational stages of something that is discovered as missing or needed in the market. It is possible to say that as long as humanity exists, marketing activities will also continue to exist by going through changes and transformation. It can be said that people were in constant consumption even in the earliest period of history. Humans have to meet their needs to survive and at the point of meeting their needs, marketing gets involved. The concept of marketing has spread to more fields together with globalization beyond just being related to a product. For instance, marketing a product so that it can be demanded more, marketing a region in order to increase its tourism mobility and also in the most general sense, a country's efforts to evoke interest so that it can meet its need of labor force are some examples that show how the concept of marketing Works

### **1.3. Destination and Destination Marketing**

According to Metelka (1990), a destination, in the simplest definition, is a geographical region, territory, a place that people visit during their travel. According to a different well-accepted definition, it is explained as a place that people want to reach, target region'. The concept of destination in people's minds within the framework of tourism in the region that people want to visit and where they want to take advantage of the opportunities to be offered. It can be said that there are numerous destinations in Turkey and all around the world and they are all in competition to become a destination that has the most attractive factors in their related field in the market. Destinations with similar features have to prove their superiority in service and quality to gain an advantage over one another. Therefore, marketing and destination marketing should be given importance. At this point, the related destination needs to leave a positive impact and image on its consumer. Creating different marketing strategies might be necessary to meet the needs of tourists and to make the destination popular by differentiating it from its rivals. Destinations start to turn into an attraction center together with marketing activities. Destination marketing is important in terms of creating a positive image about the destination and also promoting it with its features of price, quality, service and brand (İşbilir Yüceşık & Özer, 2019). A destination is a product that hosts tourism resources and services, economic and sociological features of the region and also hosts variety that affects customers directly or indirectly. At the same time, a destination is a place that tourists planning their holidays find attractive and want to visit abroad. The charm of a destination changes according to the travel history of tourists, their purposes of visit and expectations (Kilinç & Ogun, 2019).

One of the biggest factors for cities that helps them turn all their beauties into a source of charm and also helps them progress in socioeconomic and cultural fields is destination marketing exercises that are done today. Cities and regions that are aware of this progress should aim to compete with destinations abroad in a struggle for branding by using their unique beauties and attractions

(Çiçek & Pala, 2017). The brand is a concept that includes products that are valued and it means creating awareness with their quality. Destination branding, from the perspective of this concept, is defined as promises such as trying to offer a special experience to customers in the destination. Destination branding deals with what kind of perception and positioning organizations that take place in marketing and management, want to create with the destination (Adan, 2015). In the latest years, the number of destinations coming to the forefront in destination branding has been increasing. Austria, Brazil, Colombia and Spain can be named related to branding strategies exercises. For instance, the graphic composition designed by Joan Miro (the sun, a star, vibrant yellow, red and black letters) has been used in the promotion of national tourism as the symbol of Spain since 1983. At the same time, Spain keeps its brand image alive with the slogan of 'Smile! You are in Spain!'. Another example is Colombia. After changing its image in 2004, the country managed to double its volume of foreign tourists in 2016 with the slogan of 'Colombia is passion' (García, Rico, & Collado, 2012).

#### **1.4. Stakeholders in destinations**

Stakeholders can be said to play an important role in tight control of the destination management and also in providing the destination with competitive capacity. Stakeholders can contribute to the growth and the successful management of the destination only to the extent that they fulfill their responsibilities. Although destination management in Turkey is controlled by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, it is seen that development agencies in Turkey have taken a significant initiative in this field. It can be said that unity has been formed among stakeholders thanks to the cooperation with the provincial directorates of culture and tourism. Destination stakeholders are development agencies, accommodation and catering enterprises, support services enterprises that are already available in destinations, tour operators, travel agencies, educational institutions that grow qualified people, NGOs that constitute the volunteer group for the success of destination, government offices that are closely worked together for the growth of the destination, domestic and foreign tourists, the local community that will be in direct contact with tourists (Bayat, 2019). In destination marketing, receiving the opinions of stakeholders that have different perspectives is crucial. It is also helpful to remind that it can turn into a competent destination thanks to the cooperation that includes available resources and various actors. In such a case, network and stakeholders theories can create a cooperation mechanism by bringing the different perspectives of the stakeholders together related to the destination (Ness, Haugland, Aarstad, & Grønseth, 2013). Therefore, the stakeholder theory focuses on the marketing approach, in which stakeholders are included and considered during destination marketing (D'Angella & M. Go, 2009). As it can be understood, the stakeholders' theory emphasizes the importance of stakeholders.

### **1.5. Mesopotamia destination**

The name Mesopotamia holds importance in tourism due to its representation of the region that will be marketed. Mesopotamia means ‘the land between two rivers’ (Wikipedia 2020) . While the rivers of Euphrates and Tigris vivify the region, they also divide the region into two parts; Lower Mesopotamia and upper Mesopotamia. Civilization is believed to have started in lower Mesopotamia with the invention of writing in Sumerian civilization. However, after the discovery of Gobeklipe in Sanliurfa, Turkey can be thought as the region, where the history of civilization started.

The Mesopotamia region has a huge potential for gastronomy tourism in addition to being rich in cultural, historical and religious values. Therefore, it can be said that its potential for marketization is very high thanks to its long-time popularity. The cuisine of a region, its local products and its other attractions are presented as a whole product. Therefore, the marketing products that the Mesopotamia region has within the framework of gastronomy will be beneficial.

Each province in the region that will be marketed as Mesopotamia, has very rich tourism industry supply resources. Known especially for its cultural and religious tourism, Adıyaman runs limited industrial activities and its main sources of income are agriculture and stockbreeding. Kahta, a district of Adıyaman, was declared as ‘Tourism City by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and therefore, Adıyaman has the qualification of a brand city (Ukav, 2014).

Gaziantep, known as one of the oldest cities in the world, is located between Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean. Until now, it has hosted many different civilizations, thereby getting rich both in terms of culture and urbanization. Moreover, Gaziantep is a city of high importance for Turkey's industry and trade. In addition to its developed economy, it is also well-known for culture, health, industry, gastronomy, university, congress and fair tourism. In 2005, it joined the Creative Cities Network of UNESCO and registered its cultural richness (Ulusoy & Turan, 2016).

Batman Province is located in the basin among the Tigris river, Batman and Garzan small streams. It is an important city in terms of historical and cultural attractions. The cultural sites, bridges, monasteries, castles and mosques within the borders of Hasankeyf district increase the historical and cultural charm (Çoban, Dilek, & Harman, 2017).

Diyarbakır is located in the north of Mesopotamia. The main source of income in Diyarbakır is agriculture. Hevsel Gardens and the Castle of Diyarbakır were declared as World Heritage by UNESCO in 2015. Similarly, in 2018, Diyarbakır won the Golden Apple prize, known also as the Oscar award in Tourism. It is given by the International Journalists and Writers Association as a result of its evaluation of touristic places, accommodation and hospitality. Diyarbakır has a rich cuisine since it has hosted many different communities. It has many places of worship and tourist places (Wikipedia 2020).

Kilis has a history of thousands of years. The income of the civilizations here was agriculture. Due to its geographic location, Kilis has Aleppo dishes in its cuisine as well as Turkish ones. It has important attractions that reflect its culture such as Ravanda Castle, Oylum Mound, Kilis Castle, Canbolat Pasha Mosque(Gökşen & Burkay , 2020).

Mardin is located on the hillside of Mardin plateau facing Kiziltepe plains. The main source of income in Mardin is agriculture. It has gained attention in tourism thanks to its religious structures and cultural richness. Being a candidate for UNESCO World Heritage Cities, Mardin is shown as a brand city in Turkey Tourism Strategy Action Plan. Additionally, it is shown as a brand city in religious tourism within the framework of 2023 Turkey Tourism Strategies. It is stated that golf tourism, health tourism, youth tourism, eco-tourism, paragliding, trekking, water sports, canoeing, bird watching and congress tourism can contribute to the development of the city in addition to cultural tourism (Aykol, Toprak, & Yarış, 2014).

Şırnak, hosting many civilizations such as Roman, Byzantium, Seljuk and Ottoman, is very rich in culture. Its main source of income is trade. In addition to cultural and historical values, it also takes attention to its gastronomy potential (Çelik, 2018).

Siirt is located at a transit point between the regions of Eastern Anatolia and Southeastern Anatolia. The sources of income are agriculture, stockbreeding and service sectors. According to the tourism Strategy of Turkey-2023, restoration of cultural tourism structures and improving religious tourism are planned (Özgen, 2012).

Şanlıurfa has been included among the brand cultural cities, whose cultural tourism potentials are planned to improve in the Tourism Strategy of Turkey-2023. In addition, it is a city that is a part of the religious tourism corridor. It is a city that strongly reflects history, culture and religion. The Pool of Sacred Fish, Halfeti and Gobeklitepe are some of the important places that affect tourism (Yaşarsoy & Oktay, 2020).

Although many studies have been carried out about the provinces that constitute the Mesopotamia region in terms of destination marketing and branding,(Serçek & Hassan, 2016),(Kılıç Sağlam , Mancı , & Doğan, 2020), no study that considers Mesopotamia as a destination, has been found. Therefore, this study is the first in the literature related to the Mesopotamia destination.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1. The Purpose and Importance of the Study**

The GAP Regional Development Administration that works under the supervision of the Ministry of Industry and Technology started a long-termed project in September 2014 to develop, promote and brand regional tourism and improve its infrastructure. The ‘GAP Regional Tourism Oriented Promotion and Branding Project’ aims to make the region including 9 provinces (Adıyaman, Batman, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Kilis, Mardin, Siirt, Şanlıurfa, Şırnak) a significant sustainable



destination by branding it under a single name with an integrated approach. The team that has started to serve this purpose, has chosen the name Mesopotamia as the tourism destination brand. This name or brand was chosen since it refers to the whole region and also it embraces all elements of history, culture, nature, faith, folklore, gastronomy of the region. The brand was also chosen due to its recognition and familiarity on both national and international levels so that it could be easily branded and promoted. Regarding the project idea, the aim of this study is to determine the current state of the Mesopotamia destination regarding its tourism industry supply resources and infrastructure competence. The study holds great importance since it presents comprehensive information for local administrators, tourism and accommodation business operators about the tourism industry supply resources and infrastructure competence of the Mesopotamia destination. Additionally, the study offers some suggestions that will improve the potential of the region in tourism and that will draw more attention to destination management strategies. The activities for branding the region with the new name have just started and no study has been found related to this topic. Therefore, this study can be regarded as a first in terms of studying the region as Mesopotamia destination.

## **2.2. The Method of the Study**

People working in tourism industry in the region that involves 9 South Eastenn Anatolia cities (Adiyaman, Batman, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Kilis, Mardin, Siirt, Şanlıurfa, Şırnak) constitute the study population. In the study, a convenience sampling method has been used and 306 people were surveyed online between September and November in 2019. The scale used by Cakir ve Kucukkambak (2016) and also the literature review have helped to carry out the study.

The survey used in the study has 2 parts. In the first part, 8 questions were asked regarding demographic information of the participants while questions regarding tourism industry supply resources of the Mesopotamia destination and suggestions for destination marketing were asked in the second part. The statements used to determine the opinions of the participants regarding the tourism industry supply resources, infrastructural competence and destination marketing in the second part are in the form of 5 points Likert scale. The Likert scale has been graded as 5-Definitely Agree and 1-Definitely Disagree.

In this study, all rules stated to be followed within the scope of "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" were followed. None of the actions stated under the title "Actions Against Scientific Research and Publication Ethics", which is the second part of the directive, have been carried out. The research conducted does not contain ethical violations. The data in the study were obtained by obtaining permission and approval from the participants. The data obtained has been evaluated within the scope of scientific studies. For this reason, it is a study that intellectual property and copyright principles have been taken care of at most levels in the article.

According to the TR Index 2020 criteria, since the data related to the research were obtained between the months September and November 2019, an ethics committee report was not required.

### 2.3. The Population of Study and Sampling

The stakeholders living in the Mesopotamia destination constitute the population of this study. The sample size has been determined as %95 meaningful by considering the rate (p:50) that maximizes variation and 306 people with %5 sampling error (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2015). The convenience sampling method, a non-probability type of sampling method, has been applied in the study.

## 3. FINDINGS

### 3.1. Demographic Findings and Participant Profile

In this part of the study, information related to the demographic findings of the participants is given. The titles of gender, age, education level, job and experience in tourism have been selected to reveal demographic information of the participants and the findings have been tabularized. The frequency and the percentage distributions that have been calculated after the participants have answered the questions about their demographic information are shown in [Table 1](#).

According to Table 1, %76,8 of the participants are male and %23,2 of them are female. When it comes to age, %27,5 of the participants are between 25-34, %41,5 between 35-44, , %23,2 between 45-54, %7,2 between 55-64 and finally %0,7 65 and over. In education level; %1 of the participants are primary-secondary school graduate, %12,1 high school graduate, %11,8 have associate's degree, %43,8 have bachelor's degree, %16 have master degree and %15,4 have Ph.D. degree. %15 of the participants are civil servants, %37,9 general public, %5,9 NGO workers, %13 tourism professionals and %28,1 work in the private sector. %23,9 of the participants live in Adyaman, %1,6 in Batman, %9,5 in Diyarbakir, %24,5 in Mardin, %2,9 in Siirt, %16,3 in Sanliurfa, %2 in Sirnak, %18 in Gaziantep and %1,3 in Kilis. Regarding work experience in their institutions or organizations; %36,6 of the participants have been working for between 1-5 years, %31 between 6-10 years, %14,1 between 11-15 years, and %18,3 for more than 15 years. Finally, regarding the work experience in their current positions, %44,1 of the participants have been working for between 1-5 years, %29,1 between 6-10 years, %11,8 between 11-15 years and %15 for more than 15 years.

**Table 1:Demographics**

Gender	N	%
Male	235	76,8
Female	71	23,2
Total	306	100
Age	N	%
25-34	84	27,5
35-44	127	41,5
45-54	71	23,2
55-64	22	7,2
65 and over	2	,7

Total	306	100
Education Level	N	%
Primary-Secondary School	3	1,0
High School	37	12,1
Associate Degree	36	11,8
Bachelor Degree	134	43,8
Master Degree	49	16,0
PhD	47	15,4
Total	306	100
Job	N	%
Civil Servant	46	15,0
Public	116	37,9
NGO	18	5,9
Tourism Professional	40	13,1
Private Sector	86	28,1
Total	306	100
Cities	N	%
Adiyaman	73	23,9
Batman	5	1,6
Diyarbakir	29	9,5
Mardin	75	24,5
Siirt	9	2,9
Sanliurfa	50	16,3
Sirnak	6	2,0
Gaziantep	55	18,0
Kilis	4	1,3
Total	306	100
Work Experience in Current Institution/Organization	N	%
1-5 years	112	36,6
6-10 years	95	31,0
11-15 years	43	14,1
15 and more	56	18,3
Total	306	100
Work Experience in Current Position	N	%
1-5 years	135	44,1
6-10 years	89	29,1
11-15 years	36	11,8
15 and more	46	15,0
Total	306	100

### 3.2. Measurement and reliability of the implementation

The data has been analyzed as frequency and percentage analysis by using SPSS. At the end of the reliability analysis applied to the survey questions, the Cronbach's Alpha value of the survey, in which the opinions of Mesopotamia tourism industry workers on tourism industry supply resources, infrastructure competence and destination marketing policies have been measured, has been determined as 0,954. It has been understood that the number of the suggestions related to determining the state of tourism industry supply resources is 65 and the Cronbach's Alpha value is,953. The number of statements, by which the opinions of Mesopotamia tourism industry workers on the destination marketing policies have been determined, is 6 and the Cronbach's Alpha value is .970. According to these results, it has been understood that the scale is highly reliable(Özdamar, 2004) (After revealing the reliability of the scale in the study, the factor load values of the questions related

to the scales have been calculated. Accordingly, Bartlett's Test of sphericity has been applied in order to understand if there is a relation among the variations in the parts of the survey in sufficient proportion and the p value for the parts of the survey has been determined as 0,000 ( $p \leq 0,05$ ). Therefore, it has been concluded that this value is meaningful. Additionally, Kaiser Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test has been applied in order to test the suitability of the correlations among the variables for factor analysis. This value has been calculated as 0,899. Therefore, it has been noticed that the suitability of the variables in the study for factor analysis is sufficient.

### 3.3. Findings related to the status of the Mesopotamia destination

In this part, findings related to the Mesopotamia Destination Supply Resources, Tourism Infrastructure and Marketing Policies are shared. Factor analysis, one of the data analysis techniques used in the study, is an analysis technique that enables the presentation of data in a more meaningful way and summary. It is possible to reduce variables that are high in number in a study to a few common variables thanks to this technique. In addition, some questions asked to measure a dimension can be eliminated due to their low effect on the measurement and they can be reduced to suggestions less in number (İslamoğlu, 2003; Bayram, 2004; Akbulut, 2010; Tutar ve Erdem, 2020).

The factors that have come out as a result of factor analysis, have been subject to 'Varimax' rotation. The method of unrotated Principal Components has been used in order to determine the least number of factors that best reflect the relationship among the variables belonging to the related parts in the survey by considering the Kaiser criterion. The findings related to the Mesopotamia Destination Supply Resources, Tourism Infrastructure and Marketing Policies have created a structure with 13 dimensions. In table 2, in addition to thirteen dimensions that have been found as a result of factor analysis and eigenvalues belonging to these dimensions, values that show with which factor each item in the scale is related has been indicated. Additionally, the rates of eigenvalues explaining the variance are shown (İslamoğlu, 2003; Bayram, 2004; Akbulut, 2010; Tutar ve Erdem, 2020).

**Table 2: Factor analysis**

Stnt. No	FACTORS	F. Load
	<b>GASTRONOMY TOURISM DIMENSION</b>	
52	More young chiefs should be grown for the development of gastronomy tourism	,864
55	A certification system should be set on food&beverage enterprises in the region	,840
54	All of the enterprises and local cuisine products that will be a part of gastronomy tourism in the city should be registered	,832
51	Different vocational pieces of training should be given to local chiefs within gastronomy tourism	,818
49	Target city markets should be determined in my city and the country within the framework of gastronomy tourism and marketing activities should be carried out accordingly.	,779
50	Target cities should be determined abroad within the framework of gastronomy tourism and marketing activities should be carried following these target cities	,764
48	Taste routes should be created in my city within the framework of gastronomy tourism	,757
47	An integrated marketing approach should be adopted in my city within the framework of gastronomy tourism	,688
53	Popular people in social media should be invited to the region to develop gastronomy tourism	,643
11	<b>ACCOMMODATION ESTABLISHMENTS DIMENSION</b>	,791
	Accommodation establishments in my city services in a customer-satisfaction oriented way	

10	Accommodation establishments in my city have a high level of service quality	,778
12	Accommodation establishments in my city are managed in a professional management system	,773
13	Qualified personnel are employed in accommodation establishments in my city	,713
14	Accommodation establishments in my city serve domestic tourists in line with their expectations	,695
15	Accommodation establishments in my city serve foreign tourists in line with their expectations	,672
9	The number of accommodation establishments in my city is sufficient.	,641
	<b>FAITH TOURISM DIMENSION</b>	
59	Faith tourism routes should be determined in my city	,859
58	An inventory of faith tourism supply resources should be created in my city	,852
60	Faith tourism centers in my city should be promoted domestically	,839
57	Craftsmen around the faith tourism attractions should be informed about faith tourism and its importance	,832
61	Faith tourism centers in my city should be promoted abroad	,825
56	The awareness of the local community in my city on faith tourism should be raised	,789
62	An integrated approach should be adopted for the marketing of Faith Tourism	,784
	<b>MESOPOTAMIA BRAND DIMENSION</b>	
69	The use of Mesopotamia brand in gastronomy tourism helps to develop a more qualified marketing approach for the region	,921
68	Conducting activities under the name of Mesopotamia brand in gastronomy tourism provides more efficient use of resources	,908
66	I think, gastronomy attractions in my city should be marketed under the brand of Mesopotamia in an integrated approach	,908
70	I think, a faith tourism corridor that will be created considering the Mesopotamia brand, will be more successful	,882
71	I think, conducting faith tourism marketing activities within the framework of Mesopotamia brand will bring a supra-city success.	,874
67	I think, faith tourism attractions in my city should be marketed under the brand of Mesopotamia in an integrated approach	,869
	<b>ENTERPRISE HYGIENE DIMENSION</b>	
44	The level of hygiene knowledge of kitchen personnel working in hotels in my city is sufficient	,790
42	The level of hygiene knowledge of kitchen personnel working in food&beverage enterprises in my city is sufficient	,774
43	The level of hygiene knowledge of service personnel working in hotels in my city is sufficient	,765
45	The level of hygiene knowledge of housekeepers working in hotels in my city is sufficient	,739
41	The level of hygiene knowledge of service personnel working in food&beverage enterprises in my city is sufficient	,737
46	The level of hygiene knowledge of costers selling street delicacies in my city is sufficient	,636
	<b>TRAVEL AGENCIES DIMENSION</b>	
19	Travel agencies in my city can develop new routes	,773
21	Travel agencies in my city can put touristic products that they develop themselves on market	,742
18	Travel agencies in my city can develop new touristic products	,728
22	Administrators of travel agencies in my city have representational competence	,690
23	Qualified personnel are employed in travel agencies in my city	,633
20	Personnel that can speak a foreign language are employed in travel agencies in my city	,529
	<b>FOOD&amp;BEVERAGE ENTERPRISES DIMENSION</b>	
3	Food&Beverage enterprises in my city present dishes and beverages with different ingredients to guests	,715
2	Food&Beverage enterprises in my city have a high standard of service quality	,693
5	Food&Beverage enterprises in my city are managed in a professional management system	,659
1	The number of Food&Beverage enterprises in my city is sufficient	,617
4	Food&Beverage enterprises in my city services in a customer-satisfaction oriented way	,581
6	Qualified personnel are employed in Food&Beverage enterprises in my city	,524
8	Food&Beverage enterprises in my city serve local dishes to their guests	,433
	<b>TAXI DRIVERS DIMENSION</b>	
33	Taxi drivers in my city reflect the identity of my city well	,799
35	Communication of taxi drivers in my city with their customers is good	,775
36	Taxi drivers in my city respect other drivers while in traffic	,764
34	Personal care of taxi drivers in my city is sufficient	,714
	<b>TOURIST GUIDES' COMPETENCE DIMENSION</b>	
28	Tourist guides working in the region are well-educated	,856
27	Tourist guides working in the region has sufficient knowledge about the region	,834

29	Tourist guides have sufficient knowledge about tourists visiting the region and their cultures											,818
BUSINESS OWNERS DIMENSION												
64	Owners and administrators of tourism enterprises in my city effectively carry out marketing activities through social media											,852
63	Owners and administrators of tourism enterprises in my city successfully carry out marketing activities through social media											,835
65	Owners and administrators of tourism enterprises in my city use social media effectively											,822
HISTORICAL PLACES DIMENSION												
39	Historical places in my city and their surrounding are clean											,751
38	Historical places in my city are physically well-protected											,706
40	Landscaping of historical places in my city is implemented well											,704
37	Historical places in my city are easy to access											,625
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATORS DIMENSION												
25	Public administrators in my city work in an effective cooperation											,831
24	Public administrators in my city are in effective communication with one another while making decisions on the tourism sector											,811
26	The projects developed by public administrators for tourism is sufficient											,743
SUGGESTIONS FOR TOURIST GUIDES' COMPETENCE DIMENSION												
31	Tourist guides should specialize more in gastronomy tourism											,864
30	Field knowledge level of tourist guides should be increased through in-service and some other various training											,789
32	Tourist guides should specialize more on faith tourism											,745
	Eigenvalue	17,63	11,66	3,88	2,78	2,51	2,25	2,17	1,87	1,79	1,69	1,53
	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient	,937	,918	,966	,968	,940	,901	,865	,858	,929	,928	,861

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### 3.4. Findings related to supply resources, tourism infrastructure and marketing policies of the Mesopotamia destination

The arithmetic mean and values of standard deviation of the answers given by the participants on findings related to supply resources, tourism infrastructure and marketing politics of the Mesopotamia destination are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Findings related to supply resources, tourism infrastructure and marketing politics of the Mesopotamia destination**

	Mean	Std. Dev.
Gastronomy Tourism Dimension		
More young chiefs should be grown for the development of gastronomy tourism	4,35	,850
A certification system should be set on food&beverage enterprises in the region	4,38	,838
All of the enterprises and local cuisine products that will be a part of gastronomy tourism in the city should be registered	4,38	,834
Different vocational pieces of training should be given to local chiefs within gastronomy tourism	4,25	,881
Target city markets should be determined in my city and in the country within the framework of gastronomy tourism and marketing activities should be carried out accordingly.	4,15	,906
Target cities should be determined abroad within the framework of gastronomy tourism and marketing activities should be carried in accordance with these target cities	4,12	,960
Taste routes should be created in my city within the framework of gastronomy tourism	4,28	,928
An integrated marketing approach should be adopted in my city within the framework of gastronomy tourism	4,12	,985
Popular people in social media should be invited to the region to develop gastronomy tourism	4,10	1,030
GRAND TOTAL	4,24	,746
Accommodation Establishments Dimension		
Accommodation establishments in my city services in a customer-satisfaction oriented way	3,00	1,049
Accommodation establishments in my city have a high level of service quality	2,84	1,104
Accommodation establishments in my city are managed in a professional management system	2,60	1,053
Qualified personnel are employed in accommodation establishments in my city	2,51	1,023
Accommodation establishments in my city serve domestic tourists in line with their expectations	2,88	1,078

Accommodation establishments in my city serve foreign tourists in line with their expectations	2,64	1,016
The number of accommodation establishments in my city is sufficient.	2,63	1,246
GRAND TOTAL	2,73	,888
Faith Tourism Dimension		
Faith tourism routes should be determined in my city	4,27	,894
An inventory of faith tourism supply resources should be created in my city	4,24	,868
Faith tourism centers in my city should be promoted domestically	4,29	,907
Craftsmen around the faith tourism attractions should be informed about faith tourism and its importance	4,21	,867
Faith tourism centers in my city should be promoted abroad	4,30	,902
The awareness of the local community in my city on faith tourism should be raised	4,17	,918
An integrated approach should be adopted for the marketing of Faith Tourism	4,28	,886
GRAND TOTAL	4,25	,812
Mezopotomia Brand Dimension		
The use of Mesopotamia brand in gastronomy tourism helps to develop a more qualified marketing approach for the region	3,99	1,051
Conducting activities under the name of Mesopotamia brand in gastronomy tourism provides more efficient use of resources	3,99	1,046
I think, gastronomy attractions in my city should be marketed under the brand of Mesopotamia in an integrated approach	4,01	1,019
I think, a faith tourism corridor that will be created considering the Mesopotamia brand will be more successful	3,97	1,050
I think, conducting faith tourism marketing activities within the framework of the Mesopotamia brand will bring supra-city success.	3,96	1,038
I think, faith tourism attractions in my city should be marketed under the brand of Mesopotamia in an integrated approach	4,00	1,019
GRAND TOTAL	3,99	,963
Enterprise Hygiene Dimension		
The level of hygiene knowledge of kitchen personnel working in hotels in my city is sufficient	2,56	1,074
The level of hygiene knowledge of kitchen personnel working in food&beverage enterprises in my city is sufficient	2,25	1,049
The level of hygiene knowledge of service personnel working in hotels in my city is sufficient	2,52	1,063
The level of hygiene knowledge of housekeepers working in hotels in my city is sufficient	2,67	1,062
The level of hygiene knowledge of service personnel working in food&beverage enterprises in my city is sufficient	2,17	1,051
The level of hygiene knowledge of costers selling street delicacies in my city is sufficient	2,08	1,001
GRAND TOTAL	2,37	,921
Travel Agencies Dimension		
Travel agencies in my city can develop new routes	2,47	1,071
Travel agencies in my city can put touristic products that they develop themselves on market	2,39	1,055
Travel agencies in my city can develop new touristic products	2,35	,995
Administrators of travel agencies in my city have representational competence	2,61	1,086
Qualified personnel are employed in travel agencies in my city	2,42	,941
Personnel that can speak a foreign language are employed in travel agencies in my city	2,30	,945
GRAND TOTAL	2,42	,832
Food&Beverage Enterprises Dimension		
Food&Beverage enterprises in my city present dishes and beverages with different ingredients to guests	2,86	1,207
Food&Beverage enterprises in my city have a high standart of service quality	2,49	1,202
Food&Beverage enterprises in my city are managed in a professional management system	2,16	1,038
The number of Food&Beverage enterprises in my city is sufficient	2,77	1,284
Food&Beverage enterprises in my city services in a customer-satisfaction oriented way	2,84	1,172
Qualified personnel are employed in Food&Beverage enterprises in my city	2,20	1,022
Food&Beverage enterprises in my city serve local dishes to their guests	3,23	1,178
GRAND TOTAL	2,65	,862
Taxi Drivers Dimension		
Taxi drivers in my city reflect the identity of my city well	2,32	1,098
Communication of taxi drivers in my city with their customers is good	2,55	1,056
Taxi drivers in my city respect other drivers while in traffic	2,42	1,079
Personal care of taxi drivers in my city is sufficient	2,09	1,015
GRAND TOTAL	2,34	,890
Tourist Guides Competence Dimension		

Tourist guides working in the region is well-educated	2,91	1,057
Tourist guides working in the region has sufficient knowledge about the region	2,98	1,043
Tourist guides have sufficient knowledge about tourists visiting the region and their cultures	2,96	1,076
GRAND TOTAL	2,95	,990
Business Owners Dimension		
Owners and administrators of tourism enterprises in my city effectively carry out marketing activities through social media	2,66	1,067
Owners and administrators of tourism enterprises in my city successfully carry out promotional activities on social media for their business	2,71	1,118
Owners and administrators of tourism enterprises in my city use social media effectively	2,64	1,069
GRAND TOTAL	2,67	1,014
Historical Places Dimension		
Historical places in my city and their surrounding are clean	2,56	1,142
Historical places in my city are physically well-protected	2,77	1,178
Landscaping of historical places in my city is implemented well	2,56	1,131
Historical places in my city are easy to access	3,21	1,179
GRAND TOTAL	2,77	,973
Public Administrators Dimension		
Public administrators in my city work in an effective cooperation	2,40	1,070
Public administrators in my city have an effective communication with one another while making decisions on the tourism sector	2,44	1,117
The projects developed by public administrators for tourism is sufficient	2,25	1,050
GRAND TOTAL	2,37	1,005
Suggestion for Tourist Guides Competence Dimension		
Tourist guides should specialize more in gastronomy tourism	3,88	1,093
Field knowledge level of tourist guides should be increased through in-service and some other various training	3,87	1,122
Tourist guides should specialize more in faith tourism	3,73	1,134
GRAND TOTAL	3,82	,997
TOTAL OF MESOPOTAMIA DESTINATION SUPPLY RESOURCES, INFRASTRUCTURE, MARKETING POLICIES	3,04	,534

\*1,00-1,179: very low level; 1,80-2,59: low level; 2,60-3,39: medium level; 3,40-4,19 high level; 4,20-5,00: very high level

In this part of the study, questions under 13 dimensions have been asked to the participants to learn the opinions of stakeholders living in Mesopotamia destination on tourism industry supply resources of the region, its infrastructure and destination marketing policy. When the dimensions are examined carefully, it is seen that 68 questions in total have been directed to the participants. 9 of them are under 'Gastronomy Tourism Dimension', 7 under 'Accommodation Establishments Dimension', 7 under 'Faith Tourism Dimension', 6 under 'Mesopotamia Brand Dimension', 6 under 'Enterprise Hygiene Dimension', 6 under 'Travel Agencies Dimension', 7 under 'Food&Beverage Enterprises Dimension', 4 under 'Taxi Drivers Dimension', 3 under 'Tourist Guides' Competence Dimension', 3 under 'Enterprise Owners Dimension', 4 under 'Historical Places Dimension', 3 under 'Public Administrators Dimension' and finally 3 under 'Suggestions for Tourist Guides' Competence Dimension'.

When the opinions of the participants on tourism industry supply resources of the Mesopotamia Destination, its infrastructure and destination marketing policy are examined according to the dimensions, the results are as follows: 'Gastronomy Tourism' dimension ( $\bar{x}$ :4,24, s.s: ,746), 'Accommodation Establishments' dimension ( $\bar{x}$ :2,73, s.s: ,888), 'Faith Tourism' dimension



( $\bar{x}$ :4,25, s.s: ,812), 'Mesopotamia Brand' dimension ( $\bar{x}$ :3,99, s.s: ,963), 'Enterprise Hygiene' dimension ( $\bar{x}$ :2,37, s.s: ,921), 'Travel Agencies' dimension ( $\bar{x}$ :2,42, s.s: ,832), 'Food&Beverage Enterprises' dimension ( $\bar{x}$ :2,65, s.s: ,862), 'Taxi Drivers' dimension ( $\bar{x}$ :2,34, s.s: ,890), 'Tourist Guides' Competence' dimension ( $\bar{x}$ :2,95, s.s: ,990), 'Enterprise Owners' dimension ( $\bar{x}$ :2,67, s.s: 1,014), 'Historical Places' dimension ( $\bar{x}$ :2,77, s.s: ,973), 'Public Administrators' dimension ( $\bar{x}$ :2,37, s.s: 1,050) and finally 'Suggestions for Tourist Guides' Competence' dimension ( $\bar{x}$ :3,82, s.s: ,997). It has been found out that the levels of perception regarding the dimensions are changing between low and very high.

Determining the opinions of the participants on tourism industry supply resources of the Mesopotamia Destination, its infrastructure and destination marketing policy according to the highest and lowest propositions is important for the study. Accordingly; the propositions that are 'A certification system should be set on food&beverage enterprises in the region' ( $\bar{x}$ :4,38, s.s: ,838), and 'All of the enterprises and local cuisine products that will be a part of gastronomy tourism in the city, should be registered' ( $\bar{x}$ :4,38, s.s: ,834) have the highest levels of perceptions. The proposition that is 'Popular people in social media should be invited to the region to develop gastronomy tourism' ( $\bar{x}$ :4,10, s.s: 1,030) is the one with the lowest level of perception under this dimension.

Considering the 'Accommodation Establishments' dimension, the proposition, about which the participants have the highest perception, is 'Accommodation establishments in my city services in a customer-satisfaction oriented way' ( $\bar{x}$ :3,00, s.s: 1,049). However, the proposition that is 'Qualified personnel are employed in accommodation establishments in my city' ( $\bar{x}$ : 2,51, s.s:1,023) is the one with the lowest perception level under this dimension.

The propositions, about which the participants have the highest perception level in 'Faith Tourism', are 'Faith tourism centers in my city should be promoted abroad' ( $\bar{x}$ :4,30, s.s: ,902), 'Faith tourism centers in my city should be promoted domestically' ( $\bar{x}$ :4,29, s.s: ,907), and 'An integrated approach should be adopted for the marketing of Faith Tourism' ( $\bar{x}$ :4,28, s.s: ,886). However, the proposition, about which the participants have the lowest perception level is 'The awareness of the local community in my city on faith tourism should be raised' ( $\bar{x}$ :4,17, s.s: ,918).

The propositions, about which the participants have the highest perception level in 'Mesopotamia Brand' dimension, are 'I think, gastronomy attractions in my city should be marketed under the brand of Mesopotamia in an integrated approach' ( $\bar{x}$ :4,01, s.s: 1,019), and 'I think, faith tourism attractions in my city should be marketed under the brand of Mesopotamia in an integrated approach' ( $\bar{x}$ :4,00, s.s: 1,019). The propositions, about which the participants have the lowest perception level, are 'I think, conducting faith tourism marketing activities within the framework of Mesopotamia brand will bring a supra-city success' ( $\bar{x}$ :3,96, s.s: 1,038) and 'I think, a faith tourism

corridor that will be created considering the Mesopotamia brand, will be more successful' ( $\bar{x}$ :3,97, s.s: 1,050).

The proposition, about which the participants have the highest perception level in the 'Enterprise Hygiene' dimension, is 'The level of hygiene knowledge of housekeepers working in hotels in my city is sufficient' ( $\bar{x}$ :2,67, s.s:1,062). The lowest one in this dimension is 'The level of hygiene knowledge of costers selling street delicacies in my city is sufficient' ( $\bar{x}$ :2,08, s.s:1,001).

The proposition, about which the participants have the highest perception level in the 'Travel Agencies' dimension, is 'Administrators of travel agencies in my city have representational competence' ( $\bar{x}$ :2,61, s.s: 1,086). The lowest one in this dimension is 'Personnel that can speak a foreign language are employed in travel agencies in my city' ( $\bar{x}$ :2,30, s.s: ,945).

The propositions, about which the participants have the highest perception level in 'Food&Beverage Enterprises' dimension, are 'Food&Beverage enterprises in my city serve local dishes to their guests' ( $\bar{x}$ :3,23, s.s: 1,178), 'Food&Beverage enterprises in my city present dishes and beverages with different ingredients to guests' ( $\bar{x}$ :2,86, s.s: 1,207) and 'Food&Beverage enterprises in my city services in a customer-satisfaction oriented way' ( $\bar{x}$ :2,84, s.s: 1,172). However, the proposition that has the lowest perception level is 'Food&Beverage enterprises in my city are managed in a professional management system' ( $\bar{x}$ :2,16, s.s:1,038).

The proposition, about which the participants have the highest perception level in the 'Taxi Drivers' dimension, is 'Communication of taxi drivers in my city with their customers is good' ( $\bar{x}$ :2,55, s.s: 1,056). The one that has the lowest perception level is 'Personal care of taxi drivers in my city is sufficient' ( $\bar{x}$ :2,09, s.s: 1,015).

The propositions, about which the participants have the highest perception level in 'Tourist Guides' Competence' dimension, are 'Tourist guides working in the region has sufficient knowledge about the region' ( $\bar{x}$ :2,98, s.s: 1,043), and 'Tourist guides have sufficient knowledge about tourists visiting the region and their cultures' ( $\bar{x}$ :2,96, s.s: 1,076). However, the one that has the lowest perception level is 'Tourist guides working in the region is well-educated' ( $\bar{x}$ :2,91, s.s:1,057).

The proposition, about which the participants have the highest perception level in 'Business Owners' dimension, owners and administrators of tourism enterprises in my city successfully carry out promotional activities on social media for their business' ( $\bar{x}$ :2,71, s.s: 1,118). The one that has the lowest perception level in this dimension is 'Owners and administrators of tourism enterprises in my city use social media effectively' ( $\bar{x}$ :2,64, s.s: 1,069).

The propositions, about which the participants have the highest perception level in the 'Historical Places' dimension, are 'Historical places in my city are easy to access' ( $\bar{x}$ :3,21, s.s:1,179), and 'Historical places in my city are physically well-protected. The ones that have the lowest

perception levels are 'Historical places in my city and their surrounding are clean' ( $\bar{x}$ :2,56, s.s: 1,142) and 'Landscaping of historical places in my city is implemented well' ( $\bar{x}$ :2,56, s.s: 1,131).

The proposition, about which the participants have the highest perception level in the 'Public Administrators' dimension, is 'Public administrators in my city have an effective communication with one another while making decisions on tourism sector' ( $\bar{x}$ :2,44, s.s: 1,117). The one that has the lowest perception level is 'The projects developed by public administrators for tourism is sufficient' ( $\bar{x}$ :2,25, s.s:1,050).

The propositions, about which the participants have the highest perception level in 'Suggestions for Tourist Guides' Competence' dimension, are 'Tourist guides should specialize more on gastronomy tourism' ( $\bar{x}$ :3,88, s.s: 1,093), and 'Field knowledge level of tourist guides should be increased through in-service and some other various training' ( $\bar{x}$ :3,87, s.s: 1,122). However, the one that has the lowest perception level is 'Tourist guides should specialize more on faith tourism' ( $\bar{x}$ :3,73, s.s:1,134).

### 3.5. Test for normality

Firstly, a normal distribution test has been done in order to decide whether to use parametric or non-parametric analysis in the study. According to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, a performance value higher than (p) 0,05 means that data shows normal distribution (Ayhan Ural, 2013). In addition, another analysis method, Skewness-Kurtosis has been used in order to decide whether the data set shows normal distribution or not. When the coefficients of skewness and kurtosis are between +2 and -2, it means that data shows normal distribution (Darren & Mallery, 2010). In the analysis that has been done, the significance level of the Kolmogorov-Smirnow test for normality is 0,012. This level means that the data set doesn't show normal distribution. It has been determined that the level of Skewness is -0,197 and the level of Kurtosis 1,951 in the study. These levels mean that the data shows normal distribution (George ve Mallery, 2010; Gürbüz ve Şahin, 2018:212-214). In this case, it has been accepted that the data show the normal distribution and therefore, parametric analysis has been applied by considering that they will statistically reveal more powerful results.

### 3.6. Independent T-test

Independent t tests have been done in order to determine whether the opinions of the participants on tourism industry supply resources of the Mesopotamia Destination, its infrastructure and destination marketing policy change under dimensions such as gastronomy tourism, accommodation establishments, faith tourism, Mesopotamia brand, enterprise hygiene, travel agencies, food&beverage enterprises, taxi drivers, tourist guides competence, business owners, historical places, public administrators and suggestions for tourist guides' competence according to gender. The results

of the analysis have been shown in Table 4 in detail. The 'p' value that has been used in commenting t-test analysis shows a significance level (2 tailed).

**Table 4: Independent T-Test related to the gender**

Gender	N	Mean	S.S.	S.D.(Df)	T	P
Male	235	3,05	,528	,304	,355	,723
Female	71	3,02	,556			

### 3.7. Anova Test

Anova test (one-way analysis of variance) has been done in order to test the relation between the opinions of the participants on tourism industry supply resources of the Mesopotamia destination, its infrastructure and destination marketing policy, and their ages.

**Table 5: The results of one-way analysis of variance related to between Mesopotamia destination tourism industry infrastructure, supply resources, marketing policies and demographic variations**

Mesopotamia Destination Supply Resources Infrastructure and Marketing Policies					
Age	N	$\bar{x}$	s.s	F	P
25-34	84	3,01	,630	1,166	,326
35-44	127	3,00	,482		
45-54	71	3,11	,482		
55-64	22	3,21	,565		
65 and over	2	3,07	,557		
Education Level	N	$\bar{x}$	s.s	F	P
Primary-Secondary School	3	3,12	,333	3,829	,002
High School	37	3,19*	,605		
Associate Degree	36	3,13*	,578		
Bachelor Degree	134	3,11*	,474		
Master Degree	49	2,93	,542		
PhD	47	2,79*	,523		
Job	N	$\bar{x}$	s.s	F	P
Civil servant	46	2,92*	,406	4,371	,002
Public	116	2,94*	,485		
NGO	18	3,08	,364		
Tourism Professional	40	3,27*	,601		
Private Sector	86	3,14	,606		
The city they reside	n	$\bar{x}$	s.s	F	P
Adiyaman	73	2,97*	,42922	6,782	,000
Batman	5	2,74	,096		
Diyarbakir	29	3,23*	,491		
Mardin	74	3,04*	,571		
Siirt	9	2,77*	,653		
Sanliurfa	50	2,78*	,498		
Sirnak	6	2,62*	,618		
Gaziantep	52	3,39*	,461		
Kilis	4	2,98	,140		
Work experience in the current institution	n	$\bar{x}$	s.s		
1-5	108	3,08	,504	4,442	,005
6-10	95	2,92*	,563		
11-15	42	2,98	,439		
15 years and more	56	3,23*	,569		
Work experience in the current position	n	$\bar{x}$	s.s	F	P
1-5	131	3,03	,517	2,856	,037
6-10	89	3,00*	,532		
11-15	36	2,96	,471		
15 years and more	46	3,25*	,608		

As it can be seen in Table 5, no meaningful difference has been found between the ages of the participants and tourism industry supply resources of the Mesopotamia Destination, its infrastructure and destination marketing policy has been found ( $p \geq 0.05$ ). Regardless of their ages, the opinions of the participants on the tourism industry supply resources of the Mesopotamia Destination, its infrastructure and destination marketing policy are similar.

As it can be seen in Table 5, it has been found that there is a meaningful difference ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) among the results of one-way analysis of variance regarding the difference between education levels of the participants and Mesopotamia destination supply resources infrastructure and marketing policy. Tukey test has been applied to determine what education level this difference stems from. At the end of the Tuckey test, it has been found that there is a meaningful difference between Primary-Secondary graduates ( $\bar{x}:3,123$ ) and Master's degree graduates ( $\bar{x}:2,938$ ) at the level of Mesopotamia destination supply resources infrastructure and market policy. It is in favor of High School ( $\bar{x}:3,197$ ), Associate Degree ( $\bar{x}:3,131$ ), Bachelor's Degree ( $\bar{x}:3,112$ ) and Ph.D. degree ( $\bar{x}:2,796$ ).

As it is seen in Table 5, it has been found that there is a meaningful difference ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) among the results of one-way analysis of variance regarding the difference between the jobs of the participants and Mesopotamia destination supply resources infrastructure and marketing policy. The Tuckey test has been applied to determine what jobs this difference stems from. At the end of the test, it has been found that there is a meaningful difference between the participants, who work in NGO ( $\bar{x}:3,086$ ) and Private Sector ( $\bar{x}:3,144$ ) at the level of Mesopotamia destination supply resources infrastructure and market policy. It is in favor of Tourism Professional ( $\bar{x}:3,271$ ), Civil Servant ( $\bar{x}:2,925$ ), and Public ( $\bar{x}:2,943$ ).

As it is seen in Table 5, it has been found that there is a meaningful difference ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) among the results of one-way analysis of variance regarding the difference between the cities where the participants reside and Mesopotamia destination supply resources infrastructure and marketing policy. The Tuckey test has been applied to determine what cities this difference stems from. At the end of the test, it has been found that there is a meaningful difference between the participants living in Batman ( $\bar{x}:2,749$ ) and Kilis ( $\bar{x}:2,983$ ) at the level of Mesopotamia destination supply resources infrastructure and market policy. It is in favor of those living in Adıyaman ( $\bar{x}:2,975$ ), Diyarbakır ( $\bar{x}:3,239$ ), Mardin ( $\bar{x}:3,043$ ), Siirt ( $\bar{x}:2,779$ ), Şanlıurfa ( $\bar{x}:2,785$ ), Şırnak ( $\bar{x}:2,622$ ) and Gaziantep ( $\bar{x}:3,396$ ).

As it is seen in Table 5, it has been found that there is a meaningful difference ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) among the results of a one-way analysis of variance regarding the difference between the work experience and Mesopotamia destination supply resources infrastructure and marketing policy. Tuckey test has been applied to determine what year range this difference stems from. At the end of the test, it has been found that there is a meaningful difference between the participants with 1-5 years of experience

( $\bar{x}$ :3,083) and 11-15 years of experience ( $\bar{x}$ :2,987) at the level of Mesopotamia destination supply resources infrastructure and market policy. It is in favor of those with 6-10 years experience ( $\bar{x}$ :2,923) and more than 15 years ( $\bar{x}$ :3,235).

As it is seen in Table 5, it has been found that there is a meaningful difference ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) among the results of one-way analysis of variance regarding the difference between the working years of the participants in their current position and Mesopotamia destination supply resources infrastructure and marketing policy. Tuckey test has been applied to determine what year range this difference stems from. At the end of the test, it has been found that there is a meaningful difference between the participants with 1-5 working years ( $\bar{x}$ :3,030) and 11-15 working years ( $\bar{x}$ :2,968) at the level of Mesopotamia destination supply resources infrastructure and market policy. It is in favor of those with 6-10 years ( $\bar{x}$ :3,000) and more than 15 years ( $\bar{x}$ :3,254).

### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

This study has been carried out to determine the current state of the tourism industry supply resources and infrastructural competence of Mesopotamia destination. The answers are given to the detailed questions have been studied in order to determine the opinions of stakeholders in Mesopotamia destination on tourism industry supply resources, infrastructure and destination marketing policies.

It has been concluded that the scale used to determine the current state of the tourism industry supply resources and infrastructural competence of Mesopotamia destination, consists of 68 suggestions and 13 dimensions. These dimensions are Gastronomy Tourism Dimension, Accommodation Enterprises Dimension, Faith Tourism Dimension, Mesopotamia Destination Brand Dimension, Enterprise Hygiene Dimension, Travel Agencies Dimension, Accommodation Establishments Dimension, Taxi Drivers Dimension, Tourist Guides' Competence Dimension, Business Owners Dimension, Historical Places Dimension, Public Administrators Dimension and Suggestions for Tourist Guides' Competence Dimension. At the end of the study, it has been found that the dimension with the highest eigenvalue is 'Gastronomy Tourism'. The study has revealed that the dimension with the lowest eigenvalue is 'Suggestions for Tourist Guides' Competence'.

The opinions of the participants related to the current state of the tourism industry supply resources and infrastructural competence of Mesopotamia destination and the correlation of the demographic variations have been evaluated. According to the results, their opinions related to the current state of the tourism industry supply resources, infrastructure and destination marketing policies of Mesopotamia destination are on the same level regardless of the age of the participants.

It has been determined that there is a meaningful difference between the results of one-way analysis of variance that is related to the difference between the education level of the participants and the supply resources, infrastructure and destination marketing policies of Mesopotamia destination. At

the end of this analysis, it has been concluded that the opinions of the participants, who are graduates of high school, associate degree, bachelor degree and Ph.D., related to the supply resources, destination marketing policy of Mesopotamia destination have a higher value than that of those who are graduates of the primary-secondary school and master degree.

According to the findings, there is a meaningful difference between the jobs of the participants and the supply resources infrastructure and destination marketing policies of Mesopotamia destination. Accordingly, it has been concluded that the opinions of the participants, who work in the tourism industry and who are civil servants and public, related to the supply resources infrastructure and destination marketing policy of Mesopotamia destination have a higher level than that of those, who work in NGOs and private sector.

Similarly; according to the results of the analysis related to the difference among the cities, where the participants reside and the supply resources infrastructure and destination marketing policy of the Mesopotamia destination, there is a meaningful difference between them. According to these results, it has been concluded that the opinions of the participants living in Adıyaman, Diyarbakır, Mardin, Siirt, Şanlıurfa, Şırnak ve Gaziantep related to the supply resources infrastructure and destination marketing policy of Mesopotamia destination have a higher level than that of those living in Batman and Kilis. Therefore, it reveals that those living in big cities have more positive opinions on Mesopotamia destinations than those living in small cities.

When the findings related to the difference between the terms of employment of the participants in their current institutions and the supply resources infrastructure and destination marketing policy of the Mesopotamia destination have been evaluated, a meaningful difference has been determined between their terms of employment and their opinions about the Mesopotamia destination. Considering these findings, it has been concluded that the opinions of the participants with the experience of 6-10 years and 15 years and more, related to the supply resources infrastructure and destination marketing policy of Mesopotamia destination have a higher level than that of the participants with the experience of 1-5 years and 11-15 years.

Some suggestions could be made for destination administrators and academicians in line with the study results.

#### Suggestions for Destination Administrators;

Since the 'gastronomy tourism' dimension is the highest valued dimension that identifies the Mesopotamia destination in the study, promotional activities, which promote the gastronomical taste of the region should be carried out in such a way as to cover the whole region, not the cities one by one. It requires a new gastronomy tourism activity plan. Similarly, other resource supplies that will add a new meaning to the region are accommodation establishments and faith tourism. Additionally, in

a different promotion activity, marketing activities, in which the historical and mystic architecture of the region is featured and a route is created with the elements of faith tourism, should be carried out and the promotion activities should be supported visually enriched videos. These videos should be published on the official web pages and social media accounts of destination management organizations.

A certification system can be set up for food&beverage enterprises operating in the region in order to bring gastronomy tourism into the forefront. Therefore, a service standardization can be provided among enterprises. Additionally, local cuisine products of the destination can be registered and in this way, they can be marketed with an integrated approach.

Considering the dimension of the study that is ‘Suggestions for Tourist Guides’ Competence’ and its being the lowest dimension in the Mesopotamia destination, in-service training can be organized for tourist guides by the Provincial Directorates of Culture and Tourism to better inform them. In this way, introducing the region that has already a powerful image on a city-by-city basis, under a single name, Mesopotamia destination, is targeted. In this training, tourist guides can be provided with more information on the values of faith tourism that the region has. Related to the ‘Public Administrators dimension’ of the study, aims and objectives of the region should be determined by having meetings with administrations that are closely involved with decisions of the Mesopotamia Destination Management, under the guidance of the Ministry of Tourism and Culture. At this point, unity of purpose should be achieved.

In this newly-promoted region, a common training program can be designed for workers in the tourism industry sector in the region in order to improve their qualifications.

Like in all destinations, hygiene is crucial for Mesopotamia destination, too. Especially, the costers should be inspected and if necessary, they should be trained on food production and hygiene.

English language levels of people in every level and field in the tourism sector should be improved. Language courses can be initiated by Provincial Directorates of Tourism and Culture or local governments for this purpose.

#### Suggestions for Academicians;

Studies can be carried out by using the whole scale or a part of it in consideration of certain stakeholders in the region. It is thought that especially the comparisons of local public and tourist will be helpful in order to better reveal the condition of the region.

More attention can be drawn on the Mesopotamia destination and also its recognition can be increased by carrying out studies that focus on the region and also that will be able to reveal the distinctive or unknown aspects of the region.



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