

## Evaluating Destination Performance with a Manager-Oriented Approach: Case of Nevsehir Cappadocia

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**DOI Link:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v6-i5/2145>

**Published Date:** 19 May 2016

### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to evaluate Nevsehir Cappadocia's destination performance through region's tourism managers' perspectives considering the region's tourism features. Data were collected from 114 tourism managers in Nevsehir Cappadocia from May 2014 through October 2014. It was determined that the region had a positive image and it performed moderately regarding attractions, facilities/services, and hospitableness and human resources. The region performed insufficiently regarding infrastructure. Overall performance was relatively high. The findings of this study could be useful especially for destination managers and tourism business managers because it revealed the weaknesses and strengths of the region while evaluating the performance. Increasing destination performance may also influence visitors' future behaviour positively. Thus, indirect impacts of overcoming the weaknesses should also be considered. Although implications might be primarily for tourism planners, the businesses in the region might also consider the findings in many respects such as business investment decisions, new product development, and design of their services. Evaluating Nevsehir Cappadocia's performance could contribute to the literature while also being of benefit to the managers of the businesses in the region. Moreover, to our knowledge, it is the first study to examine destination performance in this region from supply side.

**Keywords** Destination, Destination Performance, Nevsehir, Cappadocia

## 1. Introduction

Due to its economical benefits, tourism is considered as an important source by many countries (Kayar & Kozak, 2010) and it is also a major source of economic growth in developing countries (Njoya, 2013). Pestana et al. (2011) indicated developments in economy, increase in purchasing power, and decrease in transportation costs as the main sources of rapid development in tourism industry for the last three decades. "The market share of emerging economies increased from 30% in 1980 to 47% in 2013, and is expected to reach 57% by 2030 ... " (UNWTO Tourism Highlights, 2014 edition, p.2). In the same report, it was pointed that tourism industry continued to grow despite weak global economy and international tourist arrivals reached 1,087 billion which is a record.

As income and prosperity increases, money spent on travel and leisure is expected to increase. This results in destinations' competition with each other to gain more share from the growing tourism market (Bahar & Kozak, 2010). Due to globalization, this competition gains a more international nature (Mısırlı, 2002), therefore countries aim to gain a competitive advantage in relevant industries. As stated by Aksöz (2013), competition between countries is getting even fiercer in tourism industry because of the steady increase in international tourism and various tools began to be used to gain a competitive advantage.

Destinations can gain competition advantage if they can totally satisfy tourists while differentiating themselves from the other destinations with higher quality and sustain this situation (Bahar, 2004). Because destinations compete with each other, their performance should be evaluated in relation to each other. Bahar and Kozak (2005) stated that a proper evaluation of destination performance should include views of those who offer the service (supply side) as well as demand side (tourists). Özdemir (2008) noted the availability and diversity of attractions and facilities, quality, natural environment, and friendly atmosphere as the measures for comparison. There are also some external factors that affect destination performance. Onbaş (2009), citing World Tourism Organization, stated that natural disasters, disease outbreaks, increase in oil prices, fluctuation in currencies, and economic and political instability were among these factors and noted that WTO evaluated destination performance based on the number of visitors, income and the change in income. Although 'increase in oil prices' is a different issue in recent years due to global economic downturn and some other reasons (e.g. alternative energy sources), but this also shows the economic instability.

Tourists, while choosing a destination for their holiday, pay attention to some factors such as natural resources, cultural heritage, infrastructure and superstructure, service quality, and etc. (Doğan & İpar, 2013). Thus, it can be assumed that all factors related to supply side of tourism may reflect the performance of a destination and each of these factors is important for the destination although the level of their importance in comparison to each other could be different.

Nevsehir Cappadocia is a major tourism destination with her natural and cultural attractions. The purpose of this study is to evaluate Nevsehir Cappadocia's performance as a tourism destination from the viewpoint of managers. In the literature review for this study, only one study which evaluated Nevsehir Cappadocia's destination performance was found (Çalhan, 2010). Moreover, studies on destination performance mostly focused on visitors' viewpoint (e.g. Kozak & Rimmington, 1999; Kozak, 2002c; Baloglu, Pekcan, Chen, & Santos, 2003). For this reason, it would be useful to evaluate the performance of a destination from the supply point of view. Thus, this study aimed to contribute to the literature by evaluating the performance of a major tourism destination from the managers' viewpoint who play a key role in tourism development.

## 2. Destination Performance

The concept of tourism destination gained more importance in tourism literature recently (Presenza, 2005). Due to continuous growth in tourism industry, many destinations enter the market and the competition between destinations becomes fiercer (Çelik, 2014). Akdoğan and Kale (2011) also drew attention to the growth in national and international tourism and the impact of diversity in tourists' features, expectations, and preferences on the competition between destinations. All these factors result in the necessity for differentiation for the destinations (Çalışkan, 2013). However, the difficulty of gaining competitive advantage increased even more due to stronger current destinations with new strategies and new destinations that entered the market (Özdemir, 2007).

Tourists may travel for many reasons but they spend most of their vacation time in the visited destination (Bahar & Kozak, 2010) where they are served an integrated tourism product (Bahar & Kozak, 2012). "Destinations are amalgams of tourism products, offering an integrated experience to consumers" (Buhalis, 2000, p. 97). Thus, destination is a crucial factor for tourists' preferences. Many definitions of destination can be found in the literature. According to Buhalis (2000) "... a destination can be regarded as a combination ... of all products, services and ultimately experiences provided locally" (p. 98). So, a destination can be defined as a geographical region in which there are natural beauties, entertainment facilities, infrastructure and superstructure amenities, and some other factors that may attract tourists.

Every region, as a tourism destination, might have a different history, traditions, and life-style. In other words, every destination might have distinct social values and characteristics. Any attraction in a destination affects its performance and is expected to increase competitiveness. Destination performance is quite important for a destination's competitiveness because the visitors' satisfaction and future behaviour are expected to be mainly influenced by that performance (Baloglu et al., 2003). Ritchie and Crouch (2003) stated that a proper information system would be useful for the managers because it would provide them with the information on visitor needs and this would also be useful for product development. This shows the importance of evaluating a destination's performance because it contains most of, if not all, the factors that might affect consumers' satisfaction. Enright and Newton (2004) linked destination performance to destination competitiveness stating that a destination's competitiveness was high if it could attract and satisfy tourists and both tourism-specific and other factors that influence service providers played a role in this competitiveness. Thus, higher destination competitiveness means better destination performance. d'Hautesserre (2000) defined competitiveness as "... the ability of a destination to maintain its market position and share and/or to improve upon them through time" (p. 23). So, it is possible to keep competitiveness with high destination performance and evaluating destination performance will give the hint on what is bad (what is to be improved for competitiveness) and what is good (what is to be maintained for competitiveness) in the related destination. Kozak (2002a) indicated that destinations might have distinct features and different future ambitions, so proper models and techniques that are to be applied might differ due to these specific factors. Thus, each destination might perform differently due to different combination of factors that affect performance. Moreover, the same performance might be perceived differently by different visitors.

Destinations need to meet customer demands to achieve a certain level of performance (Onbaş, 2009). In addition, it is required to evaluate tangible and intangible assets (Çalhan, 2010) and strengths and weaknesses of the destination. Those who develop marketing

strategies, evaluate customer satisfaction, analyse the demand, forecast future needs and wishes, and offer alternatives accordingly are the managers. For this reason, a destination's performance could be best evaluated through managers' perspectives.

In the literature, there are many studies evaluating destination performance. These studies examine the performance theoretically (Kozak & Rimmington, 1998), compare performances of countries as destinations or compare a local destination with a foreign country's local destination (Jayawardena & Ramajeasingh, 2003; Onbaş, 2009; Pestana et al., 2011; Duman & Kozak, 2010; Kozak, 2002a; Kozak, 2002b; Bahar & Kozak, 2005; Kayar & Kozak, 2010; Prebensen, 2004), or examine destination performance based on foreign tourists' views (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999; Kozak, 2002c; Baloglu et al., 2003). In order to evaluate destination performance, factors such as friendliness of local people, cleanliness of beaches, attitude of staff, sport facilities and activities (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999; Kozak, 2002c), value/overall value for money (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999; Kozak, 2002a; Kozak, 2002c; Baloglu et al., 2003), safety and security, atmosphere (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999; Baloglu et al., 2003), transport services (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999; Kozak, 2002a; Kozak, 2002b; Kozak, 2002c; Kayar & Kozak, 2010), natural environment (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999; Kozak, 2002c; Kayar & Kozak, 2010; Baloglu et al., 2003), airport facilities and services (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999; Kozak, 2002a; Kozak, 2002c), quality of restaurants and bars (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999; Baloglu et al., 2003), nightlife and entertainment (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999; Kozak, 2002a; Kozak, 2002b; Kozak, 2002c; Baloglu et al., 2003), food, facilities on beaches, quality of resort information, responsiveness to customer complaints, intention to recommend (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999), variety of tourist attractions (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999; Bahar & Kozak, 2005), shopping facilities (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999; Kozak, 2002c; Baloglu et al., 2003), English language level, facilities for children (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999; Kozak, 2002a; Kozak, 2002c), tourist arrivals, average tourist nights, total tourist nights, expenditure per tourist stay/night (Jayawardena & Ramajeasingh, 2003), intention to revisit (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999; Bahar & Kozak, 2005), overall satisfaction (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999; Baloglu et al., 2003; Bahar & Kozak, 2005), quality of product/environment (Baloglu et al., 2003; Bahar & Kozak, 2005), infrastructure (Kozak, 2002a), tourism infrastructure, air transport infrastructure (Kayar & Kozak, 2010), accommodation facilities (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999; Kozak, 2002a; Kozak, 2002b; Kozak, 2002c; Baloglu et al., 2003), hygiene and sanitation (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999; Kozak, 2002a; Kozak, 2002c; Kayar & Kozak, 2010), attitude of local people and staff towards tourists (Kozak, 2002b; Kozak, 2002c), price (Kozak, 2002a; Kozak, 2002b; Kozak, 2002c), weather of the destination (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999; Baloglu et al., 2003; Kozak, 2002a), and image and innovation (Bahar & Kozak, 2005) were considered. These studies evaluated all these factors from customer perspective.

As stated above, in the literature review for this study, only one study which evaluated Nevsehir Cappadocia's destination performance was found (Çalhan, 2010). Çalhan (2010) evaluated destination performance based on customer satisfaction by analyzing push and pull factors that motivate people to travel with importance-performance analysis. In that study, the participants reported relatively much higher levels of satisfaction with factors "travelling to a different place", "exploration and discovery", "sightseeing", "getting to know a different culture". In addition, performance levels of "panoramic landscape", "nature wonders", "historical and heritage areas", "security", "hospitality of local people", "climate", and "unique culture" were found very satisfying by tourists.

In this study, Nevsehir Cappadocia's destination performance was evaluated based on supply factors considering managers' viewpoint. To our knowledge, there has been so far no study

that evaluated destination performance this way. For this reason, this study might contribute to the literature by filling this gap.

### **3. Methodology**

Evaluating a tourism destination based on stakeholders' views might be useful for future tourism planning (Ekin & Ören, 2012). For this reason, the purpose of this study is to evaluate Nevsehir Cappadocia's tourism performance (success) based on tourism business managers' views. This study will reveal tourism managers' evaluations and perceptions of Nevsehir Cappadocia's tourism performance and serve as a guide for planning for managers to increase Nevsehir Cappadocia's destination performance thus competitiveness.

The population of the research is tourism managers in Nevsehir Cappadocia. As sampling method, purposive sampling was preferred. Managers of 3, 4, and 5-star hotels and the managers of group A travel agencies (there are only group A travel agencies in Nevsehir Cappadocia) were included in the research. The reason for this was that they were expected to evaluate destination performance from more of a professional point of view. Moreover, that there were a lot of businesses in the area required some elimination. Data were collected through survey method. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. Destination performance scale developed for this study constituted the first part. To determine the scale items, first the related studies in the literature were reviewed. Then interviews on the subject were made both with tourism managers and academicians. In the result of literature review and interviews, 56 items related to destination performance were determined, and 48 of these items constituted the final scale. In the second part of the questionnaire, questions on demographics and work situation characteristics were asked. The questionnaire was pre-tested with a 20-manager sample group. In the result of this pre-test, 7 statements, which were misunderstood or not understood, were excluded from the questionnaire.

The questionnaires were applied to managers of group A travel agencies and 3, 4, and 5-star hotels face to face. 114 managers, 90 of which were travel agency managers and 24 were hotel managers, participated in the survey from May 2014 through October 2014. Since the questionnaires were applied face to face, there were no missing data or mis-filled questionnaire.

### **4. Results**

#### **4.1. Factors Analysis**

The scale used in the research was factor analysed. Before the factor analysis, normality tests were applied in order to determine whether the data showed normal distribution. In the results of normality tests, it was determined that the data did not show normal distribution. So, normality was reached through logarithmic transformation of the data.

An explanatory factor analysis was made in order to determine the factor structure of the research scale. Factors which had an eigenvalue greater than 1,00 and factor loading greater than 0,50 were considered. In the result of factor analysis, Keiser Meyer Olkin value was 0,833 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity indicated significance ( $p > 0.001$ ). These two results showed that sample was adequate and data were suitable for factor analysis. The results of factor analysis were illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1.**

Factor Analysis Results of Destination Performance Scale

Factors	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Variance (%)	Reliability
<b>Attractions</b>		17,031	34,756	0,845
Item1. Nevsehir Cappadocia's traditional handicrafts attract visitors' attention.	0,807			
Item 2. Nevsehir Cappadocia's local foods attract visitors' attention.	0,785			
Item 3. Nevsehir Cappadocia's customs and traditions attract tourists' attention.	0,731			
Item 4. There are interesting historical venues and cultural heritage in Nevsehir Cappadocia.	0,662			
Item 5. There are unique natural beauties in Nevsehir Cappadocia.	0,659			
Item 6. Nevsehir Cappadocia hosts interesting cultural events and festivals	0,647			
Item 7. Nevsehir Cappadocia is quite suitable for outdoor sports.	0,622			
Item 8. Souvenirs sold in Nevsehir Cappadocia are authentic and worth buying.	0,618			
Item 9. Nevsehir Cappadocia's climate is suitable for tourism.	0,589			
Item 10. Visitors of Nevsehir Cappadocia get value for their money for every tourism product.	0,588			
Item 11. The prices of tourism products (transportation, accomodation, souvenir, etc.) in Nevsehir Cappadocia are reasonable.	0,565			
<b>Infrastructure and Accessibility</b>		6,347	12,953	0,911
Item 12. Sewage infrastructure in Nevsehir Cappadocia is quite convenient.	0,860			
Item 13. Carrying capacity of Nevsehir Cappadocia is considered and properly planned.	0,781			
Item 14. Electricity infrastructure and service in Nevsehir Cappadocia is quite good	0,749			
Item 15. Nevsehir Cappadocia has a clean environment.	0,745			
Item 16. Spatial planning in Nevsehir Cappadocia is quite proper (pavements, parks, etc.)	0,738			
Item 17. Nevsehir Cappadocia is a tourism region in which any information is easily accessible (accessibility to information on reservation, facilities in the destination, etc.).	0,675			
Item 18. Nevsehir Cappadocia is a safe and secured region.	0,663			

Item 19. Tap water in Nevsehir Cappadocia is sanitary.	0,652			
Item 20. Communication facilities in Nevsehir Cappadocia are quite good.	0,616			
Item 21. City roads in Nevsehir Cappadocia are quite convenient.	0,602			
Item 22. The bus terminal in Nevsehir Cappadocia is sufficient in terms of capacity and convenient.	0,587			
Item 23. The airport in Nevsehir Cappadocia is sufficient in terms of capacity and convenient.	0,569			
<b>Facilities and Services</b>		2,391	8,765	0,882
Item 24. Nevsehir Cappadocia has various night life entertainment facilities.	0,785			
Item 25. Interesting local tours are organized in Nevsehir Cappadocia.	0,759			
Item 26. There are sufficient local transportation facilities in Nevsehir Cappadocia (e.g. frequency of departures, quantity of itineraries, quality of vehicles, etc).	0,748			
Item 27. There are a sufficient number of local travel agencies in Nevsehir Cappadocia.	0,747			
Item 28. Nevsehir Cappadocia is quite developed in terms of leisure time opportunities.	0,743			
Item 29. There are a sufficient number of accommodation facilities in Nevsehir Cappadocia.	0,730			
Item 30. Hot-air balloon tours in Nevsehir Cappadocia increase the attractiveness of the region.	0,686			
Item 31. There are a sufficient number of restaurants in Nevsehir Cappadocia.	0,680			
Item 32. There are various shopping opportunities in Nevsehir Cappadocia.	0,667			
Item 33. Quality of services provided by accommodation businesses in Nevsehir Cappadocia is quite high.	0,593			
Item 34. Quality of services provided by travel agencies in Nevsehir Cappadocia is quite high.	0,578			
Item 35. Adequate healthcare service is provided for tourists in Nevsehir Cappadocia.	0,562			
Item 36. Quality of city transportation in Nevsehir Cappadocia is sufficient.	0,561			
Item 37. Hygiene and sanitation standards of tourism businesses in Nevsehir Cappadocia are sufficient.	0,560			

Item 38. Restaurants in Nevsehir Cappadocia provide quality service.	0,555			
<b>Hospitableness and Human Resources</b>		2,197	7,445	0,914
Item 39. The staff of tourism businesses in Nevsehir Cappadocia behave in a gentle and proper manner towards visitors.	0,806			
Item 40. Nevsehir Cappadocia is a region where local people support tourism development.	0,768			
Item 41. Foreign language proficiency of shopkeepers in Nevsehir Cappadocia is quite good.	0,732			
Item 42. Local people and employees in Nevsehir Cappadocia are quite helpful towards visitors.	0,730			
Item 43. Nevsehir Cappadocia is a region where a feeling of trust was developed between local people and tourists.	0,689			
Item 44. Local people in Nevsehir Cappadocia are kind and hospitable towards tourists.	0,625			
Item 45. Professional competencies of tourism employees in Nevsehir Cappadocia are quite good.	0,618			
Item 46. Foreign language proficiency of tourism employees in Nevsehir Cappadocia is quite good.	0,508			
<b>Image</b>		1,223	5,613	0,919
Item 47. Nevsehir Cappadocia is well-known internationally.	0,689			
Item 48. As a destination, Nevsehir Cappadocia is well-known in international tourism market.	0,635			

Destination performance scale showed a five-factor structure. Factor loadings of all items in the factors were greater than 0,5 and this showed a strong relationship between the items and the factor they belonged to. Those five factors' level of explaining total variance was 69.532 %. The first factor was named as "attractions" and its variance was 34,756 %. The second factor was named as "infrastructure and accessibility" and its variance was 12,953 %, the third factor "facilities and services" had a variance of 8,765 %, the fourth factor "hospitableness" had a variance of 7,445 % and the fifth factor "image" had a variance of 5,613 %. In the result of factor analysis, one item was excluded from the scale since it had a factor loading less than 0,50.

#### 4.2. Validity and Reliability

Overall reliability of the scale and the reliability of each factor were examined. The overall reliability coefficient of the scale was 0,958 (Cronbach's Alpha). The reliability coefficients of "attractions", "infrastructure and accessibility", "facilities and services", "hospitableness", and "image" dimensions were 0,84; 0,91; 0,88; 0,91; and 0,91 respectively (Table 1). Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson (2014) indicated the lower limit for Cronbach's alpha value as 0,70. Thus, reliability levels of the total scale and dimensions were both satisfactory.

In order to examine the validity of the scale, first, item to total correlations were calculated. Then, each item's correlations with the total dimension it belonged to (if the relevant item excluded) and with other dimensions were examined. Analyses showed that items showed higher correlations (0,811-0,687) with the dimensions they belonged to than they showed with other dimensions of the scale. Correlations of dimensions between each other were also calculated. These analyses of the scale revealed that dimensions showed low levels of and positive correlations between each other at  $p < 0.01$  and  $p < 0.05$  significance level. According to the results of reliability and validity analyses, it could be stated that the scale was valid and reliable.

#### 4.3. Profiles of Tourism Managers Participated in the Study

Data on the profile of tourism managers participated in the study were illustrated in Table 2.

**Table 2.**

Profiles of Tourism Managers Participated in the Study

<b>Gender</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	100	12,3
Female	14	87,7
<b>Age</b>		
23 thru 32	30	26,3
33 thru 42	29	25,4
43 thru 52	41	36,0
53 thru 62	14	12,3
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	79	69,3
Single	35	30,7
<b>Educational Level</b>		
Secondary School	11	9,6
High School	29	25,4
2-year Vocational College	19	16,7
Undergraduate	44	38,6
Graduate	11	9,6
<b>Work Experience in Tourism</b>		
1-10 Years	29	25,4
11-20 Years	31	27,2
21-30 Years	43	37,7
31-40 Years	10	8,8
41 years or more	1	0,9
<b>Education on Tourism</b>		
Certificate	35	30,7
High School	13	11,4
2-year Vocational College	14	12,3
Undergraduate	33	28,9
Graduate	5	4,4

The majority of the respondents (87,7%) were male while female managers constituted the 12,3%. The majority of the managers (36%) were between 43-52 years old and average age of the respondents was 41. 69,3% (n=79) were married and 30,7% (n=35) were single. Most of the managers (38,6%) held an undergraduate degree. High school graduates constituted 25,4% and 16,7% were graduates of 2-year vocational colleges. 6,7% of the managers were graduate degree holders. The rest 6,7% were secondary school graduates. Thus, it could be stated that managers of tourism businesses in Nevsehir Cappadocia had a relatively higher level of education. The participants had an average of 19 years of experience in tourism industry. 37,7% of the managers had 21-30 years of experience. There was only one respondent who had more than 41 years experience in the industry.

Managers were also asked whether they had received any education specifically on tourism. 87,7% stated that they had received tourism education. This 87,7% were constituted of 30,7% who received tourism education in certificate level; 28,9% in undergraduate level; 12,3% in 2-year vocational college level; 11,4% in high school level and 4,4% in graduate level. To make an overall evaluation of the profiles on managers, it could be stated that tourism managers in the region had high educational level, received tourism education, and were in majority married, males, and between 43-52 years old who had many years of experience in the industry.

#### 4.4. Evaluation of Nevsehir Cappadocia's Destination Performance

Means and standard deviances of factors and items of the scale were illustrated in Table 3.

**Table 3.**

Means and Standard Deviances of Factors

Factors	Mean	Std. Dev
<b>Attractions</b>	<b>3,50</b>	
Nevsehir Cappadocia's traditional handicrafts attract visitors' attention.	3,50	1,16
Nevsehir Cappadocia's local foods attract visitors' attention.	3,21	1,17
Nevsehir Cappadocia's customs and traditions attract tourists' attention	3,64	1,24
There are interesting historical venues and cultural heritage in Nevsehir Cappadocia.	4,38	0,90
There are unique natural beauties in Nevsehir Cappadocia.	4,35	0,98
Nevsehir Cappadocia hosts interesting cultural events and festivals	2,68	1,29
Nevsehir Cappadocia is quite suitable for outdoor sports.	3,64	1,37
Souvenirs sold in Nevsehir Cappadocia are authentic and worth buying.	3,13	1,09
Nevsehir Cappadocia's climate is suitable for tourism.	3,91	0,95
Visitors of Nevsehir Cappadocia get value for their money for every tourism product.	3,09	1,15
The prices of tourism products (transportation, accomodation, souvenir, etc.) in Nevsehir Cappadocia are reasonable.	3,06	1,31
<b>Infrastructure and Accessibility</b>	<b>2,78</b>	
Sewage infrastructure in Nevsehir Cappadocia is quite convenient.	2,71	1,15
Carrying capacity of Nevsehir Cappadocia is considered and properly planned.	2,55	1,10
Electricity infrastructure and service in Nevsehir Cappadocia is quite good	2,73	1,09

Nevsehir Cappadocia has a clean environment.	2,76	1,24
Spatial planning in Nevsehir Cappadocia is quite proper (pavements, parks, etc.)	2,47	1,22
Nevsehir Cappadocia is a tourism region in which any information is easily accessible (accessibility to information on reservation, facilities in the destination, etc.).	2,77	1,40
Nevsehir Cappadocia is a safe and secured region.	3,07	1,39
Tap water in Nevsehir Cappadocia is sanitary.	2,68	1,09
Communication facilities in Nevsehir Cappadocia are quite good.	2,92	1,39
City roads in Nevsehir Cappadocia are quite convenient.	2,81	1,26
The bus terminal in Nevsehir Cappadocia is sufficient in terms of capacity and convenient.	2,97	1,24
The airport in Nevsehir Cappadocia is sufficient in terms of capacity and convenient.	3,00	1,31
<b>Facilities and Services</b>	<b>3,15</b>	
Nevsehir Cappadocia has various night life entertainment facilities.	2,71	1,34
Interesting local tours are organized in Nevsehir Cappadocia.	3,67	1,23
There are sufficient local transportation facilities in Nevsehir Cappadocia (e.g. frequency of departures, quantity of itineraries, quality of vehicles, etc).	3,02	1,33
There are a sufficient number of local travel agencies in Nevsehir Cappadocia.	3,55	1,21
Nevsehir Cappadocia is quite developed in terms of leisure time opportunities.	2,71	1,30
There are a sufficient number of accommodation facilities in Nevsehir Cappadocia.	3,49	1,22
Hot-air balloon tours in Nevsehir Cappadocia increase the attractiveness of the region.	4,21	1,22
There are a sufficient number of restaurants in Nevsehir Cappadocia.	3,21	1,29
There are various shopping opportunities in Nevsehir Cappadocia.	2,54	1,26
Quality of services provided by accommodation businesses in Nevsehir Cappadocia is quite high.	3,14	1,02
Quality of services provided by travel agencies in Nevsehir Cappadocia is quite high.	3,45	1,16
Adequate healthcare service is provided for tourists in Nevsehir Cappadocia.	2,72	1,10
Quality of city transportation in Nevsehir Cappadocia is sufficient.	2,68	1,03
Hygiene and sanitation standards of tourism businesses in Nevsehir Cappadocia are sufficient.	3,17	1,05
Restaurants in Nevsehir Cappadocia provide quality service.	3,03	1,04
<b>Hospitableness and Human Resources</b>	<b>3,14</b>	
The staff of tourism businesses in Nevsehir Cappadocia behave in a gentle and proper manner towards visitors.	3,37	0,98
Nevsehir Cappadocia is a region where local people support tourism development.	3,21	1,15

Foreign language proficiency of shopkeepers in Nevsehir Cappadocia is quite good.	2,80	1,12
Local people and employees in Nevsehir Cappadocia are quite helpful towards visitors.	3,26	1,13
Nevsehir Cappadocia is a region where a feeling of trust was developed between local people and tourists.	3,13	1,25
Local people in Nevsehir Cappadocia are kind and hospitable towards tourists.	3,30	1,12
Professional competencies of tourism employees in Nevsehir Cappadocia are quite good.	3,13	1,17
Foreign language proficiency of tourism employees in Nevsehir Cappadocia is quite good.	2,93	1,12
<b>Image</b>	<b>3,80</b>	
Nevsehir Cappadocia is well-known internationally.	3,81	1,10
As a destination, Nevsehir Cappadocia is well-known in international tourism market.	3,79	1,12

**Scale:** 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5= strongly agree

As illustrated in Table 3, image dimension had the highest mean (3,80) among other dimensions of Nevsehir Cappadocia's destination performance. Respondents evaluated Nevsehir Cappadocia as an internationally well-known destination. Attractions dimension had the second highest mean (3,50). Especially, the items 'there are interesting historical venues and cultural heritage in Nevsehir Cappadocia' (4,38) and 'there are unique natural beauties in Nevsehir Cappadocia' (4,35) were agreed by most of the managers. In addition, Nevsehir Cappadocia's climate was regarded as suitable for tourism. In other words, the managers perceived that Nevsehir Cappadocia's suitable climate contributed its destination performance. The item 'Nevsehir Cappadocia hosts interesting cultural events and festivals' had the lowest mean (2,68).

'Facilities and Services' dimension had the third highest mean (3,15) in Nevsehir Cappadocia's performance evaluation. Especially the statements 'Hot-air balloon tours in Nevsehir Cappadocia increase the attractiveness of the region' (4,21) and 'Interesting local tours are organized in Nevsehir Cappadocia' (3,67) were agreed. However, managers found 'the variety of shopping opportunities, quality of city transportation, leisure time and entertainment opportunities, and healthcare services for tourists' poor in Nevsehir Cappadocia.

'Hospitableness and Human Resources' dimension had a mean of 3,14. The managers made a positive evaluation of 'staff's (3,37) and local people's (3,30) gentle, helpful, and hospitable manner towards visitors'. However, they found 'tourism employees' (2,93) and local people's (2,80) foreign language proficiency insufficient.

The dimension of 'Infrastructure and Accessibility' had the lowest mean (2,78). Most of the statements in this dimension were scored low by the managers. Especially 'spatial planning' (2,47) and 'carrying capacity management' (2,55) were found poor. Thus, as a tourism destination, Nevsehir Cappadocia was found unsuccessful in terms of infrastructure and accessibility by the managers. The mean of the whole scale was 3,27 which indicated that tourism managers who participated in this study evaluated Nevsehir Cappadocia's destination performance relatively high.

## **5. Discussion and Conclusions**

Tourism destinations are geographical regions which have various tourism assets. Their success as a destination depends on some factors such as service quality, customer (visitor) satisfaction, effective overall marketing management, and the destination's properties that matter for tourism. All properties that a destination has affect its competitiveness and performance. For this reason, this study examined tourism managers' views on Nevsehir Cappadocia's destination performance by investigating their opinions on some factors that are expected to affect destination performance.

It was determined that Nevsehir Cappadocia's destination performance was found relatively high by the managers. In terms of image, the respondents found Nevsehir Cappadocia's performance rather good. However, they pointed the lack of specific promotion of Nevsehir Cappadocia by the related organisations. Thus, although the image aspect of Nevsehir Cappadocia's performance was found successful, it was also stated that more specific promotion of the region might be of further contribution to the destination's performance.

Another positive evaluation was made in terms of attractions but managers stated that Nevsehir Cappadocia did not host many major events such as festivals, carnivals, etc. despite historical heritage and unique natural beauties in the region. These sorts of events are expected to be quite effective in increasing a destination's attractiveness. Hosting more events of this sort, especially international ones, might enhance Nevsehir Cappadocia's destination performance.

The region's performance was found high also in terms of hospitableness – human resources and facilities – services. Especially hot-air balloon tours and interesting local tours were regarded significant for the destination. However, the destination's performance in terms of shopping facilities, entertainment opportunities, city transportation, and healthcare services for tourists was found poor. Improving these factors might enhance visitors' satisfaction and even extend duration of stay, thus making the destination more competitive.

Nevsehir Cappadocia's destination performance was poor in terms of infrastructure according to the managers. Infrastructure might not be considered as an attraction by itself but it could be a facilitator for other factors to be effective. Vice versa, the poor performance in infrastructure might undermine the other factors' effectiveness, resulting in a poorer overall performance. For these reasons, infrastructure should be improved with a primary focus on spatial planning and carrying capacity management. For better accessibility, much effective use of bus terminal and the airport is needed. Transportation net should be improved and international direct flights could be very helpful.

This study revealed tourism managers' views on Nevsehir Cappadocia's destination performance and its weaknesses and strengths. Strengthening the weak points while keeping the current strengths might be difficult to achieve in practice but the recommendations in this study and other related studies could help the destination managers overcome this challenge.

### **5.1. Practical implications**

The findings of this study could be useful especially for destination managers and tourism business managers because it revealed the weaknesses and strengths of the region while evaluating the performance. Destination managers should focus on weaknesses. Some weaknesses might be quite difficult to overcome in practice. For instance, strengthening transportation infrastructure might be very expensive. However, achieving this will not only contribute tourism but also whole economy and quality of life in the region. In addition,

increasing destination performance may also influence visitors' future behaviour positively. Thus, indirect impacts of overcoming the weaknesses, both on tourism and other areas, should also be considered.

Although the businesses in the region might have an influence on the destination's performance, it would be wiser for them to adapt their strategies according to the current situation unless they are so powerful to impact the whole destination's performance. The findings of this study could be useful for the businesses in many respects such as investment decisions, new product development, and design of their services. Moreover, some weaknesses might be an opportunity for some businesses and new products (e.g. if transportation is not convenient, then it might be an opportunity for some new private or mass transportation services/solutions). Strengthening the total tourism product with new products and/or businesses will contribute to destination performance while creating more value in the economy.

### 5.2. Limitations and future research directions

This research was conducted in one region and through a period of several months. Thus, overgeneralisation should be avoided. However, comparing these findings with those of other researchs conducted in different time and locations could provide a better basis especially for decision makers. Only managers of 3,4, and 5-star hotels and group A travel agencies in Nevsehir Cappadocia were included in this study. Since the data were collected only from tourism managers in the region, other stakeholders' views should not be neglected due to the complexity of tourism. Future researchers might conduct a similar research in different regions or in the same region by including managers of other tourism businesses. In this study, the issue was approached from the supply point of view. It would also be useful to examine the same issue from the demand, mainly tourists', point of view.

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