



PARAGLIDING TOURISM AND ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS OF BABADAG PARAGLIDING CENTER

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Abstract:

This study addresses the importance of paragliding activities in the Ölüdeniz region of Fethiye in terms of national and regional tourism. In addition to several international activities organized in Ölüdeniz, Babadağ has become a globally renowned tourism destination for paragliding, with the number of flights and tourism revenues increasing every year. In this study, the economic, social and environmental impacts of Babadağ on the region are evaluated, and some suggestions for sustainability are presented. Tandem paragliding flights for tourism from the 1965-meter Babadağ with the view of Ölüdeniz contributed more than 15 million dollars to the regional economy in 2024. The multiplier effect of this direct income and its impact on sectors such as accommodation, food and beverage and travel are important for the regional economy. The number of visitors to the country and the region and the region's revenues from paragliding for the last 5 years have been analyzed with comparative tables, and the effects of this on the regional economy have been explained with tables and graphs. Considering its international value, paragliding activities in Babadağ need to be protected and developed. In this context, the problems faced by the destination and solution proposals are discussed in terms of sustainability. Suggestions are given for economic, social and environmental sustainability. Legal regulations such as safety standards, air traffic management, environmental regulations, and capacity limitations are included. In addition, strategic marketing techniques and digital promotion campaigns are suggested to increase international recognition. It is concluded that Babadağ is an important tourism destination not only for Fethiye and Turkey but also on a global scale.

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Keywords: recreation, sports, tourism, economy, paragliding

1. Introduction

Babadağ, located in the Fethiye district of Muğla, stands out as an internationally renowned center for paragliding tourism. Its geographical features, 1965 meters of altitude, and favourable wind conditions throughout the year make Babadağ one of the best options for both amateur and professional paragliding pilots (Fethiye Chamber of Commerce and Industry [FTSO], 2024).

Offering exciting experiences to its participants, this region also has a great impact on the local economy. The number of tourists continues to increase every year, with the international events organized in the region. The International Ölüdeniz Air Games Festival (Habertürk, 2024), which has been organized since 2000, and the “Paragliding World Aerobatic Cup” (360 Yachting, 2024), which has been organized since 2022, have highlighted the region as one of the best center for air sports. With the completion of the Babadağ Cable Car Project in 2021, both the number of visitors and paragliding flights increased (FTSO, 2021). With the investments made in the region, the infrastructure was further strengthened, raising Ölüdeniz's national and international profile. This has led to multi-sectoral economic growth in the region.

Paragliding flights, which are active throughout the year in Babadağ, play a critical role in Fethiye's tourism economy. According to the annual socio-economic report of the Fethiye Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 233,314 paragliding flights were made from Babadağ in 2023. While the year 2024 has not yet been completed, according to the official statements made by the chamber official, 174,866 flights were made in the period until November (FTSO, 2024). It has been determined that the income obtained from these flights alone is around 15 million dollars. Considering the multiplier effect of the economy, paragliding tourism has a central place in the economic and social development of Fethiye. This adventure activity not only brings money directly to the local economy, but also increases the accommodation industry, restaurant services, transportation networks and other service sectors, causing economic benefits to increase exponentially.

The rapid development of tourism activities in Babadağ brings with it many problems, including environmental sustainability, community dynamics and infrastructure problems. It is assessed that comprehensive research is needed to keep the ecosystem safe, expand sustainable tourism plans and strengthen the legal framework.

In line with this purpose, this research focuses on how paragliding flights in Ölüdeniz affect the tourism sector, their economic impacts and solution proposals for the sustainability problems it faces. The study addresses the place of Fethiye in the tourism sector, the importance of Babadağ and the economic impacts of paragliding activities.

2. Method

This study is a compilation study and aims to examine the contribution of Fethiye's paragliding center Babadağ to Fethiye and regional tourism. The numerical data subject to the compilation was obtained by using tourism statistics, official reports, websites, academic studies and news sources between the years 2020-2024.

Limitations of this manuscript are that the prices used to calculate the revenues from tandem paragliding flights in this study include some important limitations and uncertainties. Flight prices are based only on the price information on the websites of some companies. However, the pricing strategies of the companies are different from each other. While some companies may include extra services such as camera shooting or mountain entrance fees in addition to the flight prices, some companies keep these fees separate or do not clearly state them. In addition, companies may apply different pricing strategies according to their customer portfolios and target markets. In other words, the prices displayed on the websites may differ from the prices given to agencies, hotels or door-to-door customers. In addition, prices may vary depending on the season depending on the flight density. For this reason, the price information on the websites does not reflect the price valid for the entire year, but the sales prices for a certain period. There is no definitive data on whether these prices reflect the annual average prices for each company. These situations make it difficult to reflect the prices realistically. Therefore, these prices may not be a complete reflection of the companies' actual annual sales prices. Therefore, the prices used in the calculation are based on certain assumptions and limited data. The income calculations made on the annual flight numbers are made on the average values of these prices, and it should be considered that the actual income per flight may differ.

3. Fethiye and Babadağ: Geographical and Tourist Perspective

Fethiye and Babadağ are located on the southwestern coast of Türkiye at the meeting point of the Mediterranean and the Aegean. Fethiye has numerous natural, historical and cultural treasures as a tourism center. Its characteristic Mediterranean climate and striking geographical features make it an important destination in both domestic and international tourism markets. Fethiye makes significant contributions to the country's economy with its diversified tourism operations and well-developed infrastructure (Muğla Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, n.d.).

Fethiye is 78 km from Kalkan, 105 km from Kaş, 136 km from Marmaris, 137 km from Muğla, 148 km from Demre, 180 km from Denizli, 210 km from Antalya and 241 km from Bodrum, which are also important tourism centers of Turkey. It is also 44 km from Dalaman Airport, which has a busy flight capacity, especially during the high season. This proximity has great potential not only for local or foreign tourists staying in Fethiye but also for daily visits by tourists coming to the surrounding area.

Considering the benefits of tourism revenues to the country's economy, Fethiye is among Turkey's important tourism destinations with its diversity in tourism. The

region's tourism revenues cover a wide range from the accommodation industry to adventure sports. Boutique hotels, restaurants, local businesses and coastal facilities benefit from this economic activity. In addition, boat tours and daily tours are some of the other factors that increase the economic vitality of the region (Gerçek Fethiye, n.d.).

The most basic element affecting the demand and supply of a destination is the push and pull factors of that destination (Eren et al. 2017). According to Ardahan (2003), push factors are individuals' desire to have a holiday and are also the most basic input in the structuring of touristic products. According to a study conducted by Ardahan in 2003, the reasons for individuals to go on holiday are listed in order of priority; "Desire to rest", "Desire to have fun", "Desire to see new places", "Get away from busy work life", "Desire to see historical and cultural heritage", "Try a new and different life", "Desire to escape from the ordinary", "Desire to be away from home", "Desire to meet new people", "Desire to shop", "Rediscover myself", "Desire to relive memories", "Desire to participate in sports activities", "Visit friends and relatives", "Health reasons", "Desire to receive education", "Desire to attend meetings and conferences", "Business requirements" and "Religious reasons" were found. The pull factors can be considered as the sum of the features specific to that destination and not found in any other destination, and can be listed as natural beauties, cultural and historical heritage, and accommodation opportunities (Bahar and Kozak, 2005; Çakıcı and Aksu, 2007).

It is possible to evaluate the pull factors in Fethiye's tourism potential under the titles of Adventure Tourism, Nature Tourism, Cultural Tourism and Luxury Tourism (TÜRSAB, 2024).

- **Adventure Tourism:** The region has serious potential for thrill seekers paragliding, whitewater rafting, rock climbing and diving.
- **Nature Tourism:** Saklıkent canyon tours, the opportunity to swim in Ölüdeniz's blue lagoon, and 12 islands boat tours offer unique experiences to nature lovers.
- **Culture Tourism:** Historical areas such as the Lycian Way, which was the longest hiking route, Telmessos ruins, Kayaköy attract people looking for cultural tours.
- **Luxury Tourism:** Luxury accommodations, yacht rentals and blue cruise tours appeal to these high-level tourism demands.

Apart from these, other attractive factors that can be addressed in the Fethiye tourism potential in the studies of Palaz and Dönmez (2023) can be added as Plateau Tourism, Faith Tourism, Gastronomy Tourism, Cruise Tourism and Cave Tourism. As can be seen from Figure 1, Fethiye has significant historical potential in terms of both the region's and our country's tourism potential.

3.1 Natural Beauties

Fethiye's unique landscape and geography are like an open-air museum for nature lovers. One of the iconic symbols of the region, Ölüdeniz, has an important place in the global tourism market with its unique lagoon and forest ecosystem rich in biodiversity. According to 2023 figures, Ölüdeniz attracts millions of visitors and contributes to the local economy. Saklıkent Canyon, Katrancı Bay, Kabak Bay, Butterfly Valley and 12 Islands in Fethiye Bay are other important points that showcase the ecological richness

Fethiye is one of the prominent tourism spots in Türkiye with its unique geography and rich touristic attractions. This region appeals to a wide audience by blending traditional touristic activities with adventure sports. Adopting sustainable tourism practices and protecting natural resources will ensure the long-term success of the Fethiye tourism industry. In addition, the majority of Fethiye's current tourism potential is due to the warm and attractive climate of the Mediterranean, as well as its clean and quiet seashores and bays, which have significant potential for blue cruises and yacht tourism in the future (Güner, 2002).

Of course, whether all these potentials of Fethiye are known by visitors is also important in terms of Fethiye's tourism marketing. The findings of the study titled "Evaluation of the Urban Tourism Potential of Touristic Destinations from the Perspective of Private Tour Captains" by Atar et al. (2019) are given in Table 1. As can be seen from Table 1, there are different expressions given by the participants to the questions "Why do you Plan a Holiday to Fethiye? and What are the Brand Values of Fethiye in your opinion?" asked by the researchers. The answers given by the participants to the question "Why do you think Fethiye is?" can be listed as: "being the capital of green and blue", "climate", "abundance of activities", and "affordability of tourism activities", considering the majority. The answers given by the participants to the question "What are the Brand Values of Fethiye?" can be listed as: Ölüdeniz, Kelebekler Valley, Fethiye Bays and Babadağ, considering the majority.

The more tourists come to a city, regardless of the purpose of their visit, the more tourism potential that city will have. In their study, Atar et al. (2019) stated that promotions are not enough to increase the tourism potential of Fethiye, information should be obtained from the young and conscious generation and promotion activities should be carried out, visual promotion activities aimed at abroad should be increased, all attractive elements of the city and elements that will be accepted as brand value should be highlighted, visual promotion activities and the number of repeat tourists should be increased.

4. The Importance of Babadağ in Terms of Paragliding Tourism

The importance of Babadağ has raised both the economic and touristic value of Fethiye to an international brand status with paragliding tourism. The peak of the mountain is 1965 meters high and has one of the paragliding take-off runways (FTSO, 2024). The other take-off runways of 1800, 1700 and 1200 meters facing different directions provide suitable conditions according to the changing wind directions and allow flights throughout the year. In addition, a magnificent view of Ölüdeniz, which is given in Picture 1, accompanies those who visit here for the purpose of flying and visiting (FTSO, 2022).

Table 1: Reasons for Coming to Fethiye and Fethiye's Brand Values

Why Fethiye?	n	Brend Values of Fethiye	n
Being the capital of Green and Blue	20	Ölüdeniz	51
Climate	15	Kelebekler Valley	33
Excess of activities	11	Fethiye Bays	25
Affordability of prices	10	Babadağ	13
Geographical location	8	Saklıkent Canyon	10
The abundance of attractive elements of the city	7	Çalış Beach	2
Being a Citatslow	7	Kabak Bay	2
Being in a holiday region, having everything desired	6	Hisarönü	1
Including certain destinations	5		
Having the most beautiful bay in Türkiye geographically	4		
Being a distinguished place in terms of tourism	1		

Picture 1: Picture of Ölüdeniz from Babadağ



Paragliding, which started with the discovery of amateur athletes looking for excitement in the 1980s, has turned Babadağ into a world-famous flight destination over time. Both commercial tandem paragliding flights and individual flights for educational and hobby purposes can be made in the region. According to the Fethiye Chamber of Commerce and Industry (2024); 115,916 tandem flights and 51,985 individual flights were made from Babadağ until November 2024. It was determined that the income obtained from the sales of tandem flights for tourism purposes alone was around \$15 million. This income also provided indirect income for accommodation, transportation, restaurants and other local businesses in the region (FTSO, 2023).

International events play a key role in Babadağ becoming a well-known destination. The International Ölüdeniz Air Games Festival has been hosting athletes from all over the world since 2000 (Habertürk, 2024). In addition, the Paragliding World Aerobatic Cup, which started to be organized in 2022, is another important international event that increases the prestige and economic gain of the region. Holding these events towards the end of October, which is called the end of the season, revives tourism, which has started to weaken in the region due to seasonal effects. During these periods, while a decrease in the number of tourists is normally expected, a significant increase in the number of tourists is observed because of the festival and competition. Significant

increases in local business revenues were observed during these events (Anadolu Agency, 2024).

The Babadağ Cable Car Project, which was launched in 2021, has been another important project in Ölüdeniz tourism (FTSO, 2021). This project has facilitated access to Babadağ for both visitors and athletes. As a result, a significant increase has been seen in the number of tourists and flights in the region. Babadağ's spectacular promotions at high-level global fairs such as ITB Berlin, World Travel Market in London and EMITT have increased its reputation worldwide and caused an increase in the number of tourists coming from abroad (FTSO, 2024).

Although Babadağ stands out with its paragliding, paragliding is not the only thing that makes Babadağ attractive to visitors. In addition, it has nature walks, camping options and magnificent viewpoints. All of these are factors that increase the attractiveness of Babadağ as a tourism destination. Therefore, the infrastructure expenditures made to the region, the international events organized, the worldwide promotional activities and the respected position in paragliding sports highlight Babadağ as a national and international tourism brand. The rise of Babadağ also provides very valuable gains for the local economy. In order for these gains to be sustainable, Babadağ needs to be shaped within the framework of environmentally friendly tourism principles.

5. Development Stages of Paragliding Tourism in Babadağ

Evaluating the development of paragliding in Babadağ over the years will help understand how the development line of the region has changed.

5.1 1980s: The Beginning of Everything

The first flights from Babadağ took place in the early 1980s when some amateur athletes discovered the flight potential of the mountain. Babadağ's geographical structure is suitable for flight, and the magnificent view of Ölüdeniz was the first attractive element for paragliding. The first flight efforts were limited due to simple but important infrastructure problems, such as transportation to the mountain. However, the amateur athletes who made the flight revealed the potential of the region (Ölüdeniz Babadağ, n.d.).

5.2 1990s: The Beginning of Commercial Activities

This period indicates the professionalization of paragliding tourism. Tandem flights began to offer unique experiences to tourists in 1993. Infrastructure projects in 1997 increased accessibility to the mountain, and Babadağ managed to reach between 10,000 and 15,000 flights per year. The increasing demand also accelerated the region's tourism economy (FTSO, 2023).

5.3 2000s: International Recognition and Organizations

During this period, Babadağ branded itself as an international paragliding center. The International Ölüdeniz Air Games Festival, which started in 2000, increased the

destination's worldwide reputation. Thanks to the festival, hundreds of professional and novice paragliding pilots from all over the world came to Fethiye. This situation allowed the participants to observe the suitability of the region for educational, commercial and hobby flights. This meeting greatly increased Babadağ's global profile (Habertürk, 2024). The highest impact on the region's tourism economy occurred in 2008. In 2008, 5% of Fethiye's total tourism revenue was obtained from paragliding. The increase in the popularity of tandem and training flights has also increased the commercial potential for local businesses (FTSO, 2023).

5.4 2010s Infrastructure Development and Modernization

The 2010s were a period marked by infrastructure modernization and international mobility. The expansion of paragliding take-off runways on Babadağ in 2011 increased the annual flight capacity, allowing Babadağ to reach more than 100,000 flights by 2018 (FTSO, 2023). The investments made and the international events organized have not only made Babadağ a center for paragliding, but also a popular region for nature and adventure tourism.

5.5 2020 and After Cable Car Project and Important Events

Another milestone for paragliding tourism in Babadağ was the cable car project completed in 2021. This project made it easier to reach the mountain and led to a 25% increase in the number of visitors (FTSO, 2021). The Paragliding World Acrobatic Cup, which started in 2022, further strengthened Babadağ's reputation in the international paragliding community. This event, beyond being a sporting competition, made a significant contribution to the region due to its contribution to the local economy and to increasing the reputation of the region (Fethiye Governorship, 2022). According to the data for the end of October 2024, the total number of single and tandem flights from Babadağ reached 174,866, and the economic benefit reached 15.1 million dollars (FTSO, 2024). This has led to the need for a detailed examination of the contribution of paragliding tourism to the economy in the region.

6. Economic Share of Paragliding Tourism

In order to analyse tourism dynamics, it is important to evaluate Fethiye's place in tourism based on general Turkish tourism data, and then the impact of specific activities such as paragliding in Fethiye. In this context, using tables and graphs containing participant numbers and income distributions will be useful in clearly revealing Fethiye's place in Turkish tourism and the contribution of paragliding activities to the local economy.

According to the statistics published by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2024), the number of tourists is given in Table 2 and Figure 2. As can be seen from Table 2, while the number of foreign tourists was at the level of 12.73 million in 2020, it broke a record and increased to 49.21 million by 2023. Citizens living abroad represent Turkish citizens living in other countries, i.e. expatriates,

who visit Turkey for reasons such as vacation or family visits. The number of expatriate tourists increased from 2.46 million in 2020 to 7.48 million in 2023. The total number of visitors in 2020 was 15.18 million and increased to 56.69 million in 2023. The total number of visitors, which was 54.63 million in the first ten months of 2024, is expected to exceed the total number of visitors in 2023 by the end of the year. This increase from 2020 to the present may be due to the removal of travel restrictions after the coronavirus outbreak.

When the data seen in Table 2 is examined in more detail, the number of foreign visitors between 2020-2023 is shown in blue, the number of citizen visitors is shown in orange, the total visitor numbers for the first 3 quarters of 2024 are shown in green and the ministry's end-of-year additional visitor estimates are shown in purple. This chart clearly presents the total visitor composition to Türkiye.

When looking at the share of foreign and citizen visitors, the data shows that the rate of foreign visitors is higher than that of Turkish visitors every year. A rapid recovery has been seen in both visitor categories since 2021, the return after the pandemic. This progress has brought the tourism sector back to its pre-pandemic performance levels for 2022 and 2023.

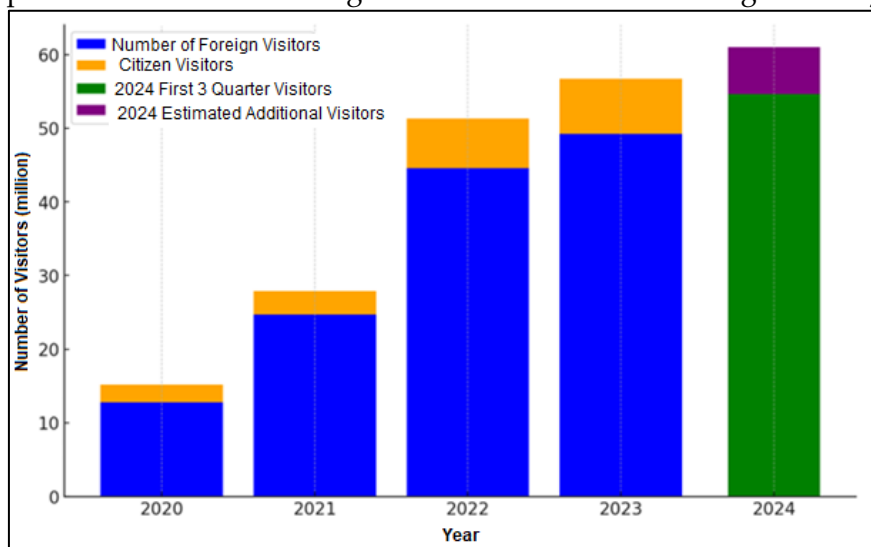
The total number of visitors recorded in the first ten months of 2024 is 54.63 million. This indicates a trend close to the levels seen in 2023. The Ministry of Tourism aims to reach 61 million visitors by the end of the year (sondakika.com, 2024).

Table 2: Number of Domestic and Foreign Visitors Coming to Türkiye between 2020 and 2024

Year	Number of Foreign Visitors	Number of Citizens Residing Abroad	Total Number of Visitors
2020	12.734.213	2.455.506	15.189.719
2021	24.712.266	3.165.538	27.877.804
2022	44.564.395	6.746.433	51.310.828
2023	49.209.180	7.484.657	56.693.837
2024*	-	-	54.629.687

* Data for January and October 2024. The detailed year-end report has not been announced yet.

Figure 2: Graph of the Number of Foreign and Citizen Visitors Coming to Türkiye (2020-2024)



Of course, the number of tourists in a region is affected by many factors, starting from the general tourism destination attractiveness of that country to the attractiveness of the region, that region and that point. The increasing number of foreign tourists in terms of Türkiye's attractiveness for tourists shows Türkiye's solid place in the global tourism market. In addition, the increase in the preferences of our Turkish citizens living abroad to travel to our country, their hometowns and holiday destinations for holiday purposes may require the creation of new marketing tactics as a potential customer for expats.

The data after the pandemic confirms that the sector has made a strong recovery. The Turkish tourism sector is progressing on the path of sustainable growth by maintaining its international competitiveness.

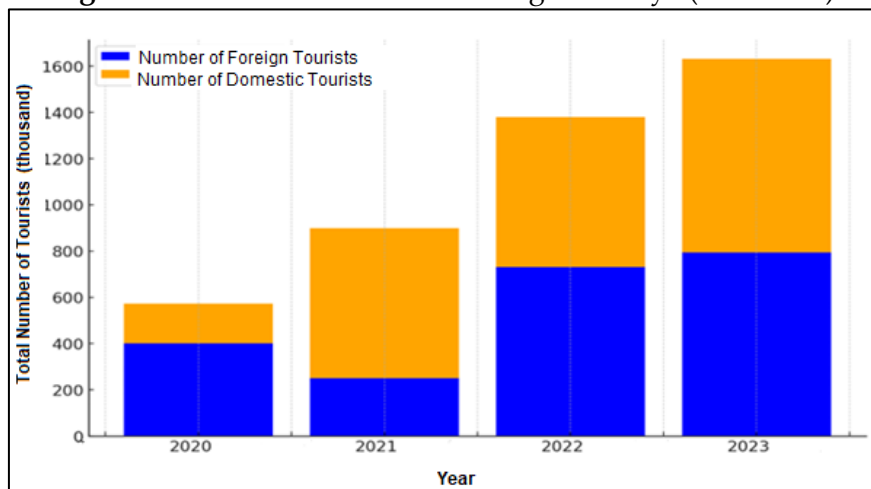
After the number of visitors to Turkey, the tourist statistics specific to Fethiye are given in Table 3 and Figure 3. As can be seen from Table 3, the total number of visitors in 2020 was 574,000 due to the impact of the pandemic, and 70% of this number consists of foreign tourists. In 2021, the number of domestic tourists increased to 650,000, and the total number of visitors increased to 900,000. In 2022, the number of foreign tourists reached 730 thousand, and the total number of visitors increased to 1.38 million. In 2023, the number of domestic tourists increased to 837 thousand, and the total number of tourists increased to 1.63 million.

Table 3: Number of Tourists Coming to Fethiye between 2020 and 2024

Year	Number of Foreign Tourists	Number of Domestic Tourists	Total Number of Tourists
2020	400.000	174.000	574.000
2021	250.000	650.000	900.000
2022	730.433	650.000	1.380.433
2023	793.936	837.943	1.631.582

Note: Data for 2024 has not been published yet (FTSO, 2023).

Figure 3: Number of Tourists Coming to Fethiye (2020-2023)



As can be seen from Figure 3, the number of tourists in the Fethiye region, which was 574,000 visitors in 2020, tripled to 1.63 million by 2023. With the end of the pandemic, a clear increase in the number of domestic tourists began to be seen in 2022. The end-of-2024 data will provide an opportunity to see whether this increase continues.

The fact that tourists coming to Fethiye participate in nature and adventure activities in this region or come only to do these activities shows that Fethiye is a strong destination. The number of participants in different sports activities for tourism purposes in Fethiye between 2020 and 2024 is given in Table 4 and Figure 4. As can be seen in detail from Table 4, the data for 2024 have not been published yet. For this reason, the most up-to-date statistical data available for our topic, paragliding, has been reached (FTSO, 2023; FTSO, 2024; Sabah, 2024).

Paragliding played an important role in the economic growth of the region from 2020 to 2023. It was the most preferred sporting activity in the tourism industry in the region, with 233,314 participants in 2023. Jeep/Minibus Safari; While it had 53,000 participants in 2021, this number decreased to 45,000 by 2023. Underwater and Surface Activities; It has progressed consistently until that date, with 27,000 underwater and 35,000 surface participants in 2023. ATV-Quad Safari and Horseback Riding Nature Walks; While ATV-Quad Safari has remained stable at around 15,000 in the last two years, there has been limited participation in Horseback Riding Nature Walks.

Table 4: Number of Participants in Different Sports
Activities for Tourism Purposes in Fethiye between 2020 and 2024

Year	Paragliding	Jeep/Minibus Safari	ATV-Quad Safari	Underwater	Above Water	Horse Riding	Total
2020	74,247	23,000	5,779	12,000	34,000	500	299,526
2021	167,173	53,000	18,000	20,000	40,000	1,000	799,173
2022	198,724	50,000	15,000	25,000	40,000	2,500	1,081,224
2023	233,314	45,000	15,000	27,000	35,000	2,500	1,057,814
2024*	174,866	-	-	-	-	-	-

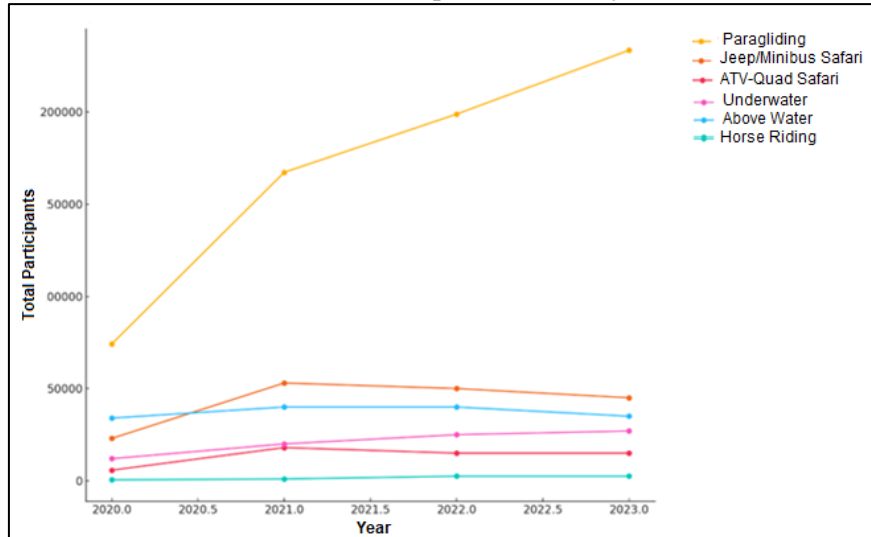
Note: Data from January to October 2024 (FTSO, 2023).

The number of participants in sports activities in Fethiye between 2020 and 2023 is given in Figure 4. According to this data, the increasing number of participants in paragliding every year may indicate that Babadağ's recognition is increasing. Jeep/Minibus Safari; Changes in demand show the variable and inconsistent structure of the interest in the event. Water Activities: The constant number of participants indicates that the event focuses on a certain tourist profile. As a result, paragliding activity in Fethiye has become the most important tourist activity in the region, showing a regular increase from 2020 to 2023. Jeep/minibus safaris and water sports activities have a constant number of participants. Other activities seem to be less popular.

The details of paragliding flights, which are the most important activities in the region, are given in Table 5 and Figure 5. While listing the flight numbers, local reports

and statistics were used. 2024 flight data and Air Games flight data were taken from official news sources and notifications of local authorities.

Figure 4: Number of Participants in Sports Activities for Tourism Purposes in Fethiye (2020-2023)



As can be seen from Table 5, the types of paragliding flights from Babadağ (tandem, single and air games) and the total number of flights are shown by year.

Paragliding flights in Babadağ vary seasonally. The flight season is generally between April and October. The highest demand is in the summer months of suitable weather conditions, July and August, and a significant increase in the number of flights is observed during those months. In the remaining months of the year, there are decreases in the number of flights due to weather conditions and the decrease in tourist density (FTSO, 2022).

Tandem Paragliding Flight Statistics: Tandem paragliding flights increased from 63,481 to 149,890 from 2020 to 2023, an increase of 136.18%. However, this number decreased to 115,916 flights in the first ten months of 2024. This decline could indicate rising prices, falling demand or a potential capacity limit. Tandem flights remain at the top of the list in the region, while solo flights have also seen a similar increase.

The International Ölüdeniz Air Games, which have been held since 2000 (for the 24th time this year), have continued to strengthen Fethiye's reputation as an international tourism and paragliding center. The organization was not held in 2020 due to the pandemic.

The organization of the World Paragliding Acrobatics Cup in Ölüdeniz as of 2022 is another event that has increased Ölüdeniz's worldwide fame. The flights made within this scope are included in the Air Games category.

Table 5: Statistics on the Number of Paragliding Flights from Babadağ in Fethiye between 2020-2024 Year Tandem Flight Single Flight Air Games Flight Total Flight

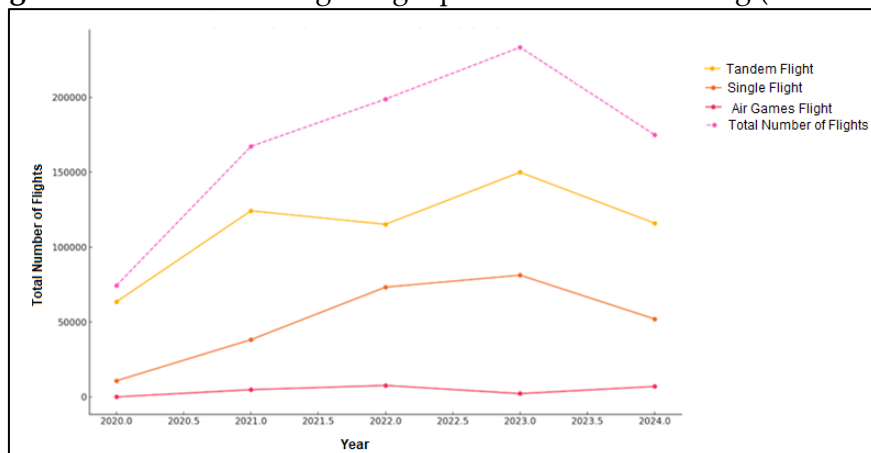
Year	Tandem Flight	Single Flight	Air Games Flight	Total Flight
2020	63.481	10.766	Not done	74.247
2021	124.158	38.185	4.830	167.173
2022	115.144	73.230	7.650	198.724
2023	149.890	81.215	2.209	233.314
2024*	115.916	51.985	6.965	174.866

*Data from January to October 2024. The current report has not yet been published (FTSO, 2023; FTSO, 2024; Sabah, 2024).

A detailed analysis of the paragliding flights made from Babadağ between 2020 and 2024 is given in Figure 5. As can be seen from Figure 5, tandem flights broke a record in 2023 (149,890) but decreased to 115,916 in the first ten months of 2024. However, it is still the most preferred flight type. Individual flights in 2020, there were 10,766 individual flights, rising to 81,215 by 2023, and then falling to 51,985 in the first ten months of 2024. Air Games Flights The event, which could not be held in 2020 due to Covid-19, reached its peak with 7,650 flights in 2022, with the addition of the Aerobatic World Cup. The number of flights decreased to 2,209 in 2023, but recovered again in 2024, returning to 6,965 flights. Total flights increased from 74,247 flights in 2020 to a record 233,314 in 2023. 174,866 flights were recorded in the first 10 months of 2024.

The increase in both tandem and single paragliding numbers is an indicator of Babadağ's attractiveness in air sports tourism. The decrease in the number of flights in 2024 may be related to macroeconomic conditions, weather elements or capacity restrictions. A slight increase may be observed in the year-end data, but since it is not the peak flight season, it is not expected to increase significantly. Air Games exhibit differences annually and generally contribute to the total number of flights to a limited extent. Babadağ clearly proves with these data that it is a destination preferred by both local and international tourists for paragliding.

Figure 5: Number of Paragliding Operations from Babadağ (2020-2024)



The total number of tourists coming to Turkey and Fethiye is given in Table 6 based on the data from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (2024), Fethiye Chamber of Commerce and Industry (2023), and other reliable sources (Sabah, 2024).

Table 6: Total Number of Visitors to Türkiye, Total Number of Tourists Coming to Fethiye and the Total Number of Tourists Doing Tandem Paragliding by Year

Year	Total Number of Tourists Coming to Türkiye	Total Number of Tourists Coming to Fethiye	Number of Tourists Doing Tandem Paragliding in Fethiye
2020	15,189,719	574,000	74,247
2021	27,877,804	900,000	167,173
2022	51,310,828	1,380,433	198,724
2023	56,693,837	1,631,582	233,314
2024*	54,629,687*	-	174,866*

***Notes:** The total number of tourists coming to Türkiye and the number of tourists doing tandem paragliding in Fethiye 2024 data covers the January-October period. The final year-end data has not yet been announced. The 2024 total tourist number report for Fethiye has not yet been announced.

The number of tourists flying into Fethiye constitutes a portion of 1.6 to 2.8 percent of Türkiye's total tourism volume when compared to the number of tourists in Turkey. Although this number may seem very small at first glance, the number of tandem tourist passengers in Fethiye alone is not negligible compared to the total number of tourists in Turkey. Fethiye has a very dominant position in the specific tourism field, such as tandem paragliding.

Paragliding flights are an important destination for the Fethiye region. The number of people participating in tandem paragliding activities is increasing steadily every year. This progress strengthens Fethiye's international position as a paragliding destination, while directly contributing to the local economy. There has been a recovery period after the pandemic. Data also show that the tourism sector in Turkey and Fethiye has experienced a rapid recovery after the pandemic. The number of tourists exceeded pre-pandemic levels in the 2022-2023 period.

The growth rates of Fethiye tourism follow the growth rates of national tourism. However, Fethiye's performance exceeded the national average in the 2021-2022 period. When looked at proportionally, the increasing rate in tandem paragliding activities has surpassed both general tourism growth in Fethiye and national tourism growth. This statistic underlines the strategic importance of paragliding tourism in the region.

Covid-19 has negatively affected the paragliding sector, as it has many other sectors, but it has become one of the least affected tourism activities. This sector has been on the rise since 2020 and is becoming a key element of Fethiye's tourism image. In 2023, the number of people paragliding in Fethiye reached 14% of all visitors, showing how important this sport is for local tourism. Figures like these show that Fethiye is becoming increasingly famous for paragliding. Participating in activities such as paragliding is one of the main reasons why tourists continue to flock to this region.

Fethiye may only have a small slice of Türkiye's overall tourism pie, but when it comes to tandem paragliding, it is on the map as a major hub.

There has been a noticeable jump in Fethiye's tourism figures since 2021. Tourists involved in paragliding activities have shown a steady increase of 15-20% every year. This data indicates that Fethiye, which has a value such as paragliding, maintains its strong place in the tourism industry. Paragliding has become one of the most important driving forces of the local economy. When the figures are shed light on, the contribution of Fethiye to the country's tourism and the status of paragliding in tourism can be seen more clearly. In this context, addressing paragliding revenues by considering tourism revenues will provide a clearer picture for the sector.

The Share of Sports, Education and Culture Expenditures in Total Tourism Revenues in Turkey between 2020 and 2024 is given in Table 7. The Ratio of Sports, Education and Culture Expenditures to Revenue (2020-2024) is given in Figure 6. As can be seen from Table 7, paragliding falls into the category of sports and adventure tourism. Therefore, expenditures made for paragliding can be collected under the heading of "sports, education, culture". It is seen that Türkiye's total tourism revenue increased fourfold from 2020 to 2023, from 15.17 billion dollars to 55.87 billion dollars. The first three quarters of 2024 yielded 46.88 billion dollars. The Ministry's target for the end of 2024 is 60 billion dollars (sondakika.com, 2024).

Table 7: Share of Sports, Education and Culture Expenditures
in Total Tourism Revenues in Turkey between 2020 and 2024

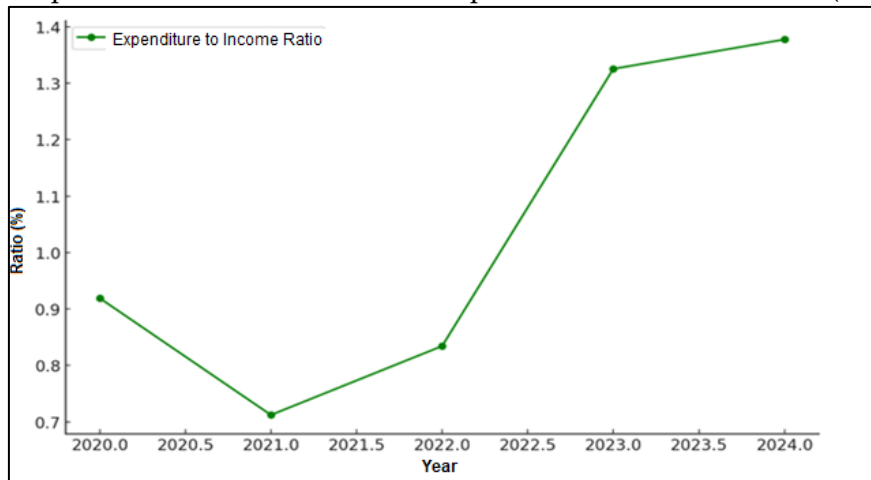
Year	Total Tourism Revenue (Billion\$)	Sports, Education, Culture Expenditures (Million \$)
2020	15,169,371	139,426
2021	30,309,722	215,907
2022	49,857,030	415,978
2023	55,874,176	740,612
2024*	46,880,069 (first three quarters)	645,832 (first three quarters)

*Note: When sharing tourism data, 1 year is divided into 4 quarters and reported. Since the 4th Quarter report has not been prepared yet, the available data was used. Annual totals may be updated when 2024 is completed (TÜİK, 2024).

While sports, education and culture expenditures were \$139.43 million in 2020, they increased to \$740.61 million in 2023, an incredible increase of fivefold. In the first three quarters of 2024, these expenditures reached \$645.83 million and are expected to reach the 2023 level by the end of the year. The share of these expenditures in total tourism revenues increased from 0.91 percent in 2020 to 1.32 percent in 2023. This indicates that sports activities such as paragliding have a share in tourism revenues. This increase reached 1.38 percent in the first three quarters of 2024, indicating that demand in this direction continues steadily.

When the data in Figure 6 is examined in detail, sports and culture tourism, like other sectors, were negatively affected during the pandemic period. Restrictions on outdoor activities have limited activities such as paragliding. The economic recovery started in 2021 and evolved into permanent growth in the 2022-2023 period. This shows the resilience of the sector.

Figure 6: Sports, Education and Culture Expenditures to Income Ratio (2020-2024)



When looking at the expectations for 2024, the data for the first three quarters seems promising. The increasing spending on sports and culture in Türkiye's tourism economy is an indicator of the country's strategic investments in these sectors. This information not only emphasizes the economic benefits of tourism but also points to the increasing importance of cultural and sporting activities.

There is a noticeable increase in spending for sports, learning and cultural purposes in 2024. This situation can be associated with investments in adventure tourism, such as paragliding. The paragliding sector, which is growing with package tours and professionally guided flights, has the potential to further increase revenues from tourism. In order to understand the contribution and importance of paragliding to the Fethiye region, it is necessary to see the total revenues obtained from the flights. For this reason, the average sales price was determined by comparing the tandem sales prices of agencies that made tandem flights between 2020 and 2024. This value is given in Table 8. The total average fee brought to the region will be calculated by comparing the average prices on an annual basis with the number of tandem flights.

While calculating the Average Flight Fee (TL), the sales prices of agencies that announced the tandem flight fee on their websites and did not determine a flight price below or above this price were examined and an average fee was selected (Ekstrem Tatil, 2024; Fethiye Yamaç Paraşütü, 2024; Hanuman Travel, 2024; ReAction Paragliding, 2020; Touryus, 2023). Cross-checking was done with the relevant websites and Central Bank data, as the average dollar exchange rate (TL). The accuracy of the data has been confirmed in this way (Döviz724, 2024; TCMB, 2024), and the flight fee has been divided by the average dollar exchange rate of the relevant year, and the approximate USD equivalent has been calculated. Since the majority of international tourism reports report revenues in USD, the flight fee has been converted to USD. This makes the analyses more understandable.

Table 8: Tandem Paragliding Flight Fees in Fethiye between 2020 and 2024 (Annual Averages)

Year	Average Flight Fee (TL)	Average Dollar Exchange Rate (TL)	Flight Fee (USD)
2020	450 TL	7,01 TL	≈ 64,19 USD
2021	750 TL	8,91 TL	≈ 84,17 USD
2022	1.700 TL	16,57 TL	≈ 102,61 USD
2023	2.000 TL	23,80 TL	≈ 84,03 USD
2024	4.250 TL	32,57 TL	≈ 130,49 USD

Note: Tandem paragliding flight fees are based on limited data that includes uncertainties due to different pricing strategies of companies, additional service fees and seasonal changes.

These calculations show the reflection of economic factors such as the depreciation of the TL and inflation on paragliding flight fees in dollar terms.

Figure 7 shows the change in tandem paragliding fees in Fethiye from 2020 to 2024 in Turkish Lira and US Dollars. The average flight cost has shown a steady climb when observed in Turkish Lira. The flight fee, which was 450 TL in 2020, reached 4,250 TL in 2024. This caused a 9.4-fold increase. This increase may reflect inflation and exchange rate fluctuations occurring throughout the country.

Prices for paragliding flights vary in dollars. As a striking element, flight fees were 102.61 USD in 2022, decreased to 84.03 USD in 2023 and then rose to a record level of 130.49 USD in 2024. This fluctuation is thought to be due to international tourism trends and changes in exchange rates.

Although a sharp increase is observed in Turkish Lira, changes were milder in US Dollar terms. This situation shows the effect of both local and international tourism dynamics on pricing.

The annual total revenues obtained from tandem paragliding flights carried out in Fethiye Babadağ between 2020 and 2024 are given in Table 9 and Figures 8 and 9. As can be seen from Table 8, there has been an increase over the years. Of course, the contributions of visitors to the Fethiye tourism economy are not only as given in this table. Unfortunately, although it is not possible to reach a healthy data based on the region, the amount of expenditure will be much higher when the expenditures from all other tourism activities are considered.

When the data in Figure 8 is checked, there is a clear connection between the total number of flights performed in a year and the price requested. While the number of flights and fees appear balanced in 2020, it is observed that the income obtained from flights decreased in 2021, but the number of flights increased. A balance was achieved again in 2022, and in 2023, the number of flights was at its highest level, while the fees were lower. As a result of this, it can be said that low fees increase demand. In 2024, the opposite of a similar situation occurred. With the increase in the fee, the demand for flights decreased. However, despite the decrease in the number of flights, the increase in fees ensured that the total income was higher than the previous year. This created a more profitable position for the regional and national economy in terms of total income. This situation can be clearly observed in the next graph.

Figure 7: Tandem Paragliding Flight Fees in Fethiye (2020-2024)

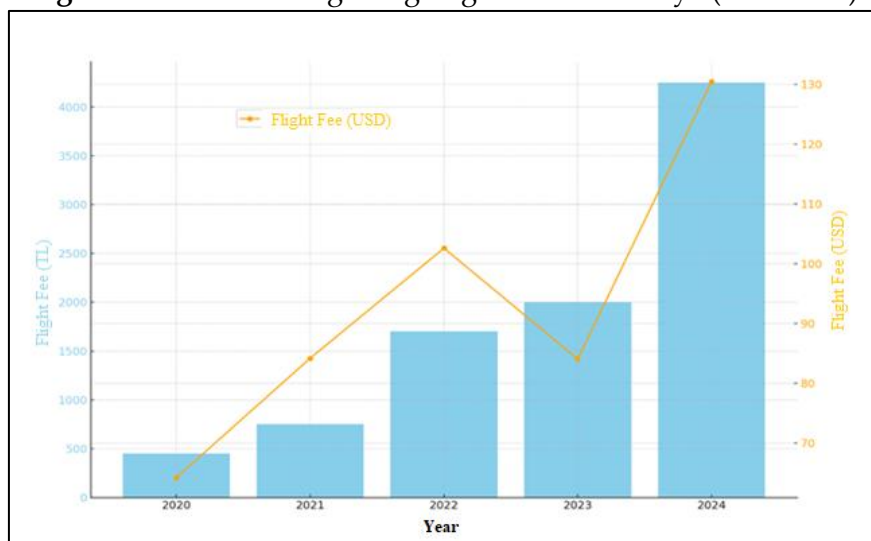


Table 9: Total Annual Income from Tandem Paragliding Flights in Fethiye Babadağ between 2020 and 2024

Year	Tandem Flight Number	Flight Fee (USD)	Total Revenue (USD)
2020	63.481	64,19	4.075.845,39
2021	124.158	84,17	10.450.378,86
2022	115.144	102,61	11.814.925,84
2023	149.890	84,03	12.595.256,70
2024*	115.916	130,49	15.125.878,84

*2024 data covers the January-October period (FTSO, 2023; Sabah, 2024).

Figure 9 shows the number of tandem paragliding flights performed in Fethiye Babadağ between 2020 and 2024 and the annual total USD income obtained from these flights. In 2020, 63,481 tandem flights were made, and in 2021, this number almost doubled to 124,158. In 2023, the record number of flights was made with 149,890. In 2024, the number of flights decreased, but the effect on revenue was balanced by increasing the fares. Despite the fluctuations in the number of flights, the annual total revenue increased continuously from 2020 to 2024. In 2024, although fewer flights were made compared to the previous year, the total revenue increased by 20.07%. This situation reveals that fare increases have a significant impact on total revenue.

7. Economic Impacts of Babadağ Paragliding Tourism

When Babadağ is mentioned, the first thing that comes to mind is paragliding. Paragliding activities in the region are one of the lifeblood of Fethiye's economy. Considering its contributions to the local economy, paragliding is more than just an adventure sport alternative. The need for accommodation, the need to explore the surroundings, the expenses they make for food and beverages, the clothing products and souvenirs they buy by tourists visiting the region for this activity stimulate the local

economy. In addition, the income obtained from Babadağ contributes to the development of infrastructure facilities in the region and to its gaining a sustainable structure.

According to 2024 data, the total income obtained from tandem paragliding flights alone reached 15.1 million dollars. This income emphasizes the stable growth of the sector and its contribution to the economy (FTSO, 2024). These direct incomes allow the paragliding sector to grow and indirectly contribute to the development of the regional economy. It has also created significant job opportunities for the people of Fethiye in sectors such as accommodation, food, transportation and retail in the region.

The paragliding sector offers a wide range of job opportunities from guides to pilots, agencies to cable car personnel, while also supporting the economic resilience of local small and medium-sized businesses.

8. Tourist Profile and Spending Habits

The tourist profile in Babadağ has been formed around tourists from England, Germany, Russia and China in recent years. These international visitors spend about half as much per capita as domestic tourists (TÜRSAB, 2024). The accommodation, food and beverage expenses of these tourists provide a significant cash flow for the local economy (FTSO, 2023).

In the period after the pandemic, there has been a significant increase in domestic tourists interested in paragliding. The 2023 statistics show that 51% of the visitors to Fethiye are local visitors, which has led to a promising picture in terms of the movement of domestic tourism.

Figure 8: Comparison of Tandem Flight Numbers and Fees (2020-2024)

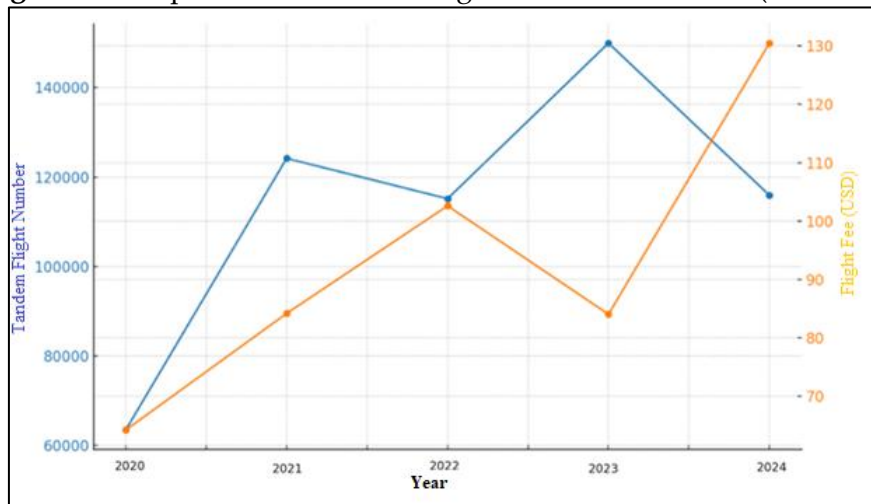
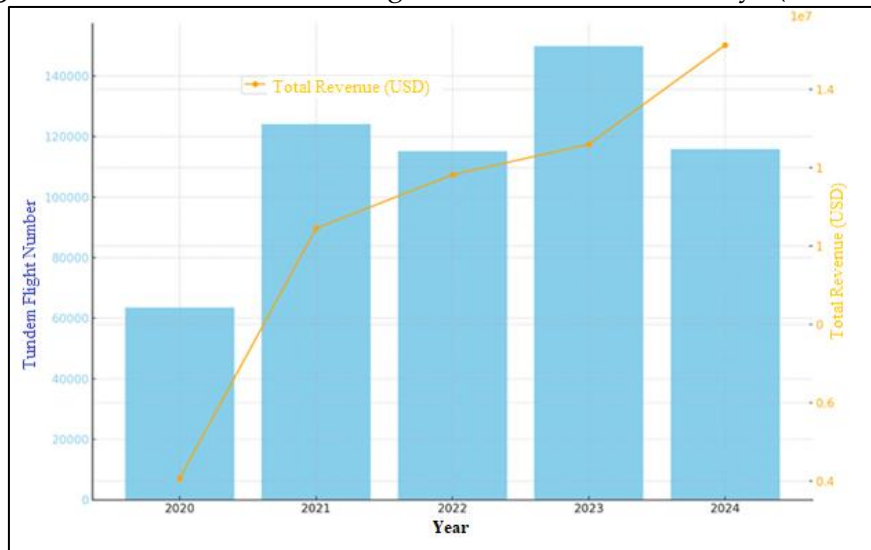


Figure 9: Number of Tandem Flights and Revenues in Fethiye (2020-2024)



The revenues obtained from paragliding in Babadağ have a great impact on the rest of the tourism sector. This financial mobility has a knock-on effect in sectors such as accommodation, transportation, food and beverage, entertainment, and handicrafts.

Prestigious events such as the International Ölüdeniz Air Games Festival and the World Aerobatic Cup held in Babadağ increase the local economy and the region's worldwide recognition. During the times when these events are held, the region's tourism revenues, especially accommodation and restaurant services, increase rapidly.

The average cost of tandem paragliding in Babadağ reached \$130.49 in 2024. It is remarkable how this increase in prices affects demand. The decrease in the number of flights may mean that it is time to reconsider pricing policies. However, when looked at in terms of tourism revenues, the increase in revenues despite the decreasing number of flights is another striking element.

Paragliding tourism in Babadağ causes a movement in the economy at both micro and macro levels. By 2024, the revenues obtained will have led to a revival in the regional economy with a multiplier effect. This economic activity makes significant contributions to the local economy of Fethiye and the tourism sector in Türkiye in general.

The paragliding sector in Babadağ is a catalyst for the economic development of Fethiye. The project, supported by stable tourism investments and strategic promotion efforts, is turning the region into an international center of attraction. This increase in tourism revenues supports regional development but also creates the need to bring environmental and social sustainability issues to the agenda.

9. Sustainability Strategies in Paragliding Tourism

Babadağ is a destination that plays an important role in the economic and touristic development of Fethiye with paragliding tourism. However, for the sustainability of this success, environmental, social, economic and legal regulations must be effectively planned and implemented. The increasing tourist density and the effects of touristic

activities on the region may threaten the natural, social and economic balances of Babadağ if they are not handled with careful management and long-term strategies.

9.1 Environmental Sustainability

Babadağ's ecosystem is under pressure due to the increasing visitor density. The intense human movement in the take-off and landing areas also brings environmental threats. In addition, considering the negative image it will leave for tourists and the damage it causes to the habitat, the businesses in Babadağ take-off areas and the businesses in Belcekız beach used as a landing area and daily tour boats have the potential to create environmental problems that may threaten the ecological balance in the region.

The solution to these problems is to look at it in terms of Natural Infrastructure Solutions, Recycling and Waste Management, Noise and Environmental Pollution Management, Habitat Protection Programs and Carbon Neutral Policies.

- **Natural Infrastructure Solutions:** Take-off runways and landing areas can be rearranged with natural materials. By grassing the take-off and landing areas, soil erosion can be prevented, and sports can be performed more safely. It will also create a visually harmonious image with nature.
- **Recycling and Waste Management:** All facilities in Ölüdeniz and Babadağ should be strictly inspected and ensured to comply with waste processing norms. Waste reduction and environmental awareness training should be widespread in the region.
- **Noise and Environmental Pollution Management:** Some inspections and restrictions should be introduced to reduce the noise and environmental pollution created by businesses in Babadağ and Ölüdeniz. It should be aimed to develop protocols that facilitate business operations while ensuring minimum negative impact on the environment, especially during busy touristic periods.
- **Habitat Protection Programs:** Biological treatment systems should be implemented for wastewater and bilge discharge that threaten the marine and mountain ecosystems, the practices of businesses in Babadağ and Belcekız coast, which are home to many living species, should be kept under control with regular inspections, and a sustainable system should be provided.
- **Carbon Neutral Policies:** Prioritizing the use of renewable energy sources in cable car projects and investing in technologies to reduce carbon emissions should be done.

9.2 Social Sustainability

Tourism revenues from Babadağ contribute significantly to the regional economy. However, due to external investors, the local people's earnings from these revenues may be limited. In addition, the increase in the number of tourists may cause social unrest by increasing the cost of living in the region.

The solution to these problems should be considered in terms of Supporting Local Enterprise, Fair Income Distribution and Community-Based Tourism.

- **Supporting Local Enterprises:** Financial assistance programs and training programs designed to establish small businesses for local people should be organized, and people should be encouraged to establish new businesses.
- **Fair Income Distribution:** A portion of the tourism revenues from Babadağ should be allocated to social enterprises and local infrastructure investments.
- **Community-Based Tourism:** In order to increase the interaction between local people and tourists, events that introduce culture and traditions should be organized, and efforts should be made to familiarize the local people and the tourist profile with each other.
- **Economic Sustainability:** The nature area where Babadağ, Belcekız Beach and Kumburnu Beach are located is in a critical situation in terms of infrastructure capacity due to the increasing influx of visitors and increased flight operations. Especially the density in the take-off and landing areas causes the physical capacity to reach its limits, making it difficult to evaluate the tourism potential correctly. In order for Babadağ to sustain its economic success from tourism in the long term, infrastructure investments should be increased, and pricing strategies that consider all the factors affecting pricing should be meticulously designed.

It is necessary to look at the solution to these problems in terms of Capacity Management, Price Policies and Infrastructure Investments.

- **Capacity Management:** New take-off areas need to be designed, or existing take-off areas need to be expanded. Similarly, landing areas need to be expanded, or new landing areas need to be created. Alternative solutions should be produced to prevent traffic during high season on the road to Belcekız and Kumburnu beaches, which are also used for paragliding flights. For this purpose, solutions such as providing parking services to visitors in the Ovacık region and providing access to the beaches with shuttle services can be evaluated.
- **Price Policies:** Paragliding flights should be made more accessible to local tourists by implementing accessible pricing strategies, thus increasing demand with the active participation of local tourists. The fact that the accommodation and restaurant services on Belcekız beach are also at affordable prices may cause visitors who prefer the Ovacık region for accommodation to prefer Belcekız for accommodation due to affordable prices. This situation can positively affect the vehicle traffic of the Belcekız region and increase the population of the region, thus increasing flight demand and popularity.
- **Infrastructure Investments:** Ensuring the integration of cable car lines with paragliding landing areas, ensuring the integration of cable car lines between take-off runways in a way that is also suitable for tandem paragliding pilots is of primary importance. The paper ticket system for take-off runways and cable car use from Babadağ should be removed, and digital ticketing systems should be implemented. In this way, the congestion in front of the cable car operation will be removed, both vehicle traffic will be relieved and delays in paragliding operations will be prevented, and tourism operations will be planned more efficiently. Road, traffic and cable car arrangement works should be carried out to

prevent the traffic problem in Ölüdeniz. The road providing access to Babadağ, where the take-off runways are located, and Belcekız, Kumburnu beaches, where the landing areas are located, is extremely busy during the high season, while the starting point of the cable car line is on this road, causing even more vehicle traffic. The starting point of the cable car line can be arranged to provide access to Belcekız beach.

9.3 Legal and Legislative Regulations

Legal and legislative regulations need to be updated to ensure the sustainability of paragliding tourism in Babadağ. These regulations will increase safety standards, ensure more effective management and supervision of environmental protection and tourism activities.

It is possible to address the current problems like the Lack of Safety Standards, Air and Land Traffic Problems and Deficiencies in Environmental Regulations.

- **Lack of Safety Standards:** The density of both pedestrians and pilots in take-off and landing areas puts the safety of pilots and tourists at risk. The fact that professional and amateur flights are performed in a mixed manner without adhering to a certain standard causes inexperienced student pilots to perform dangerous maneuvers and puts professional flights at risk.
- **Air and Land Traffic Problems:** The fact that the number of paragliders in the air at the same time is too high during the season causes flight traffic. This increases in a way that causes accidents during take-off, in the air and landing.
- **Deficiencies in Environmental Regulations:** Legal infrastructure is inadequate regarding waste management and protection of natural habitat.

Addressing the solutions to these problems under the titles of Pilot, Agency or Flight Limitation, Pilot Competence Audit, Air Traffic Management, Management of Take-off, Flight and Landing Areas, Separation of Landing and Walking Areas, Environmental Control Mechanisms and Waste Management Standards will make it easier to group the solutions.

- **Pilot, Agency or Flight Limitation:** A capacity study should be conducted in the region to determine how the increasing number of pilots, agencies and flights affects flight safety, and the necessary steps should be taken to implement certain limitations. This will prevent serious accidents in the future and ensure that Babadağ preserves its brand image.
- **Pilot Competence Audit:** Within the framework of a certification program in line with international standards, tandem pilots should be subject to inspections on their flight and communication skills at certain intervals, and the activities of pilots with low competence should be reviewed.
- **Air Traffic Management:** A feasibility study should be conducted on the use of take-off and landing areas; daily flight restrictions should be imposed.
- **Management of Take-off, Flight and Landing Areas:** A plan should be made to separate take-off, flight and landing areas for amateur and professional fliers. In

this way, potential accidents that will harm Fethiye's paragliding tourism will be prevented.

- **Separation of Landing and Walking Areas:** By separating landing areas from pedestrian traffic, accidents during paragliding landings should be prevented and made safe.
- **Environmental Control Mechanisms:** A regulatory structure should be established to monitor compliance with environmental protection standards for facilities in Babadağ and Ölüdeniz.
- **Waste Management Standards:** Strict environmental rules and sanctions should be applied to facilities in the region.

9.4 International Promotion and Marketing

Increasing the international awareness of Babadağ is one of the cornerstones of sustainably increasing the number of tourists coming to the region.

- **Digital Marketing Strategies:** Babadağ should be promoted as a leading destination for adventure tourism through social media initiatives and campaigns.
- **Target Market Campaigns:** Special promotion activities should be systematically organized for developing tourism markets such as China, India and the USA. Integrated tour programs should be created to increase competitiveness in the European market.
- **International Organizations:** Events such as the World Aerobatic Cup and Ölüdeniz Air Games should be promoted in a way that will attract the attention of wider audiences. Global visibility can be increased by organizing prestigious meetings such as the International Air Sports Congress.

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

As Palaz (2023) and Atar et al. (2019) also mentioned in their studies, although Fethiye is a tourism destination with brand value in many aspects, the “Future Face of Fethiye Tourism” must be resolved with medium and long-term strategic plans, and tourism development strategies must be put forward. For this, market segmentation must be made in destinations like Fethiye. This is also necessary to reveal the tourist profile required to design tourism policies, destinations and tourist product marketing strategies.

As Küçükkambak and Armağan (2019) also stated, Fethiye as a destination and each tourist product in Fethiye should be addressed in depth with a market segmentation and how each tourist product will be transformed into a unique tourism product separately, in terms of changing market diversifications. Of course, each product should be associated with another tourist product, and the product network of the tourism market should be created. This will also ensure an increase in the branded tourist products of Fethiye. The best example of this is the association of cultural heritage with tourism, which Atak and his colleagues (2017) studied. In this study, although it is not very well-known, a cultural heritage, Fethiye Music Village Event, which is based on folk

culture elements in the formation of social identity and was first organized in 2015, but could not be held for various reasons, was discussed. Events that have the potential to be a cultural heritage element in terms of the period they are organized, and their content, should be considered valuable in terms of Fethiye's tourism potential. Even local weddings should be presented to the appreciation of local and foreign tourists.

In addition to these, Fethiye also has the potential to be a concert center where only young people can come in terms of Youth Tourism, such as Zeytinli Rock Concerts ([http-02](http://02)), which were first held in Edremit in 2005 and will be held in Muğla Ortaca Sarı Germe in 2025. For this purpose, Rock or Jazz Music Festivals can be planned every year, focusing on a historical heritage and named after it.

As Şenel (2019) also stated, the Lycian Way, which has recently become popular and is the longest Cultural Walking Path in Turkey, covering a total distance of 580 km from Antalya to Fethiye and spreading over days, should be focused on how to improve this value by the Ministry of Tourism, National Parks, and the Ministries of Agriculture and Forestry. As Üzümcü and Koç (2017) also stated, Fethiye's Eco Tourism Opportunities, such as Tangala Farm, Pastoral Valley, Yonca Lodge, and Reflections Camp should be increased.

Designing all tourism activities of Fethiye as a destination as a touristic product makes it important to know the push and pull factors in tourism for that destination. For this, it is necessary to investigate why holidaymakers who stay at regular intervals or come for a day come to Fethiye for a holiday (Ardahan, 2003; Bahar and Kozak, 2005; Çakıcı and Aksu, 2007).

In addition to all other tourism potentials, Babadağ has made a significant contribution to the regional economy by earning \$15.1 million in direct income from tandem paragliding operations in 2024. With the multiplier effect of the economy, this income has created a ripple effect in other sectors such as accommodation, restaurants and transportation and has resulted in a positive effect on general economic activity. The multiplier effect in the economy explains the indirect effects of the growth of a sector on other sectors. Especially in the tourism sector, all expenditures made by tourists indirectly lead to more spending in accommodation, food, transportation and other services (Johnson, 2014).

Tandem paragliding sales prices have affected the demand for the service. The number of flights has decreased in the face of rising prices. This situation can be explained by the demand elasticity theory. Demand elasticity examines the effect of price changes on demand. Demand and price can be elastic, especially in sectors such as tourism services and luxury consumer goods. In other words, demand may decrease as prices increase (Mansfeld, 2016). Despite this, the fact that total revenues from flights continue to increase shows that correct pricing strategies are being implemented and indicates the necessity of using a meticulous pricing strategy.

In addition, some investments in the region have contributed to the activation of the tourism economy. The completion of the Babadağ Cable Car Project in 2021 has facilitated the accessibility of the region. Thanks to this, there has been a significant increase in the number of both domestic and foreign tourists. This situation is consistent

with research on the impact of tourism investments on economic growth. Tourism investments, with the development of new infrastructure projects and services, help attract more tourists to the region and indirectly grow the economy (Dwyer et al., 2014). The Babadağ Cable Car Project is such an investment and increases the attractiveness of the region and ensures tourist flow.

Babadağ's tourism success is linked to the variety of international events and promotional strategies. It is possible to explain this situation with the directed demand theory. According to this theory, major events or festivals increase the demand for tourism and increase the international recognition of destinations. Major events and festivals generally increase the interest of tourists in the destination and contribute to the regional economy (Connell, 2016). In this context, festivals and competitions such as the International Ölüdeniz Air Games and the World Aerobatic Cup have made significant contributions to Babadağ's international recognition as a center for air sports. However, for the region to sustain this economic growth, environmental, social, economic, legal regulations and promotional activities and the design of sustainable development plans are of great importance for the future of regional tourism.

In order to achieve sustainable development goals in Babadağ; policies for the protection of natural resources, effective management of the density in take-off and landing areas, the operation of flight safety controls within an effective mechanism, and the active role of the local people in social and economic development processes should be among the priority strategies. If concrete steps are not taken in these basic issues, it will not be possible for regional development to be sustainable in the long term.

In conclusion, Babadağ is a prominent brand in the adventure tourism sector with its unique geographical features, natural charm and world-renowned events. With this feature, it has a very important place in the tourism strategy of not only Fethiye but also all of Türkiye. However, the continuity of this success depends on the balanced and comprehensive management of its environmental, social and economic dimensions within the framework of legal bases. Knowing the value of paragliding activities in Babadağ in the tourism economy and implementing such strategies will ensure that Babadağ strengthens its reputation as a sustainable tourism destination, not only at the national level but also at the international level.

Acknowledgements

In this study, both authors contribute equally. Their contribution rate can be defined as 50%.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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