



Identity-Based Sustainable Conservation Strategies in Rural Heritage Sites

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ABSTRACT

Rural heritage sites are shaped by traditional life routines, local production systems, and craft activities. Due to their local characteristics, the rural heritage sites have unique cultural, social, architectural, and economic values that shape the heritage site's identity. Identity and sustaining identity are essential topics of conservation discipline through the concepts of uniqueness and authenticity. In this context, sustainable and identity-oriented conservation strategies focusing on rural heritage areas come to the forefront. This study investigates the conservation strategies for rural heritage sites in terms of sustainability and identity. In order to produce a conservation strategy for a rural heritage site, it is necessary to analyze the place. Analyzes are the facts that guide the strategies. In this respect, it is crucial to decipher the analysis-strategy relationship in rural heritage preservation. This study produces a model on how to read the unique dynamics of a rural heritage area with an identity focus and decipher the analysis-strategy relationship. From this point, it identifies the analyses needed to understand the rural heritage site with an identity focus, examines the selected dissertations and projects through the analyses, and defines conservation strategies. Based on the data obtained, it interprets analyzes and strategies in relation.

Keywords: Rural heritage, Identity, Sustainability, Conservation Strategies

INTRODUCTION

The formation of the physical environment based on the concept of place is linked to meanings and emotions. The place is a phenomenon in relation to a person, group, or community and it is shaped by these. Tuan mentions that place is not just a phenomenon within the framework of space but a concept that is given meaning by people (1979, 387). Similarly, Creswell defines place as a meaningful location (2004, 7). In this sense, the place is associated with meaning. Besides, it is shaped by human activities, social relations, daily life and the characteristics of its users. Thus, human-environment relations are complicated, dynamic and interactive.

According to the definition of Speller, place acquires meaning as a result of interaction with people (Hauge 2007, 45). This dynamic interaction creates the social, cultural and psychological meanings of the place and through all these meanings, the place is identified. Much information such as daily life, cultural environment, economic and social characteristics can be learned through the identity components of a place. In addition, identity components distinguish a place from other places and make it unique while contributing to social identity formation with the sense of belonging and attachment. Therefore, the phenomenon of identity is an essential topic for the discipline of conservation, which deals with the sustainability of the historical environment that strengthens place-society relations.

Conservation discipline aims to carry the information about historical buildings and sites while preserving their values. The purpose of conservation strategies is not only to



protect the physical environment but also to maintain the meanings, values and information. In this sense, preserving the identity is significant as it gives various information about a place, correlates the users and the place, and constitutes sense of belonging and attachment. Thus, identity-oriented conservation strategies come to the forefront. The identity-oriented conservation strategies are expected to be long-term strategies that can resist the destructive effect of time while maintaining the identity of the place and strengthening the bonds between the place and its local user. On the other hand, they are expected to adapt the historical place to present and future conditions to make the conservation permanent. For this reason, sustainable strategies should be taken into consideration while producing identity-oriented conservation strategies.

In order to discuss the conservation strategies that prioritize sustainable and identity-oriented goals, the rural heritage areas that stand out with their place-specific characters become prominent. As a result of the interaction of the built and natural environment, rural heritage sites are significant areas with economic, social and cultural values. These areas have vernacular characteristics that reflect local lifestyle, human relations, socio-cultural interactions, local production and environmental relations. Regarding their vernacular characteristics, rural settlements cover the knowledge of the local people's relations with the environment, their economic activities, needs and lifestyle (Özcan 2007, 41; Gümüş & Kışalı, 2018, 911).

The physical environment of a rural heritage site is not only shaped by the built environment but also by the cultural inputs such as social relations, local life, beliefs, customs and traditions. While the built environment provides the emergence of different spatial identities and the formation of the spatial typologies of the region, identity elements arising from the place-society relations shape the tangible and intangible values of the place. Rural heritage sites have tangible values in terms of architecture, art, craft, and production technologies. They also have intangible values in terms of traditions and customs, memories, myths, and narratives. Due to their traditional lifestyle, they carry the information of the past to the present and reflect the traces of these lifestyles through the physical environment. Saçan *et al* (2019) define these reflections as the outputs of place-identity relations. Pointing out the tangible and intangible values of the rural heritage, Du and Shi (2019, 2) defines the main tangible elements of these areas as geographical, cultural and biological elements and the intangible ones as the lifestyle and the local production systems. Due to their classification; mountains, water bodies, plants, animals, buildings and infrastructure constitutes the tangible elements while clan structure, belief system, cultural education, basic needs of locals and cultivation approaches constitute the intangible ones. All the knowledge and value covered by these elements come into prominence on rural heritage site and generate place-specific values that makes them unique.

Unfortunately, since the Industrial Revolution, many factors have threatened the unique characteristics of rural sites, such as uncontrolled growth, abandonment, and changes in lifestyle and production systems. In addition, problems such as tourism pressure and gentrification implementations prevent rural heritage sites from maintaining their original values. However, protecting these areas with their original and authentic values is vital in sustaining the knowledge and experience. Besides, to preserve their original characteristics, the rural identity of these heritage sites has to be sustained.

Despite many theoretical and practical studies that aim to preserve the rural heritage, only some have focused on identity-oriented preservation approaches. However, rural heritage can sustain its meaning and existence by preserving its originality with its identity values. Therefore, the conservation strategies that aim to sustain the meaning and the cultural identity of the rural heritage must be identity-oriented, and these strategies should be considered to strengthen place-identity relations.



Place-identity relations are important as they constitute the rural identity of the site by forming the character of rural heritage and ensuring its authenticity. The social, cultural, economic, and ecological dynamics that create the identity of the place ensure the protection of the rural environment and maintain the authentic functions of the spaces, thus contributing to the preservation of the spatial culture and supporting the traditional life. Place-identity-oriented preservation approaches also contribute to the sustainability of local identity. By prioritizing the continuity of the local user and strengthening the sense of belonging and place attachment, these preservation approaches sustain the local identity and meaning of the place. From this point, conservation strategies that prioritize place-identity relations provide multi-faceted protection.

The role of place-identity relations within the goals of sustainable development tools differs due to the priorities of the working fields. Regarding the interdisciplinary nature of the subject, identity-oriented preservation approaches developed in economic and social sciences as well as those focusing on environmental studies such as restoration, cultural heritage protection, architecture, urban planning, and landscape architecture must be investigated.

In economic sciences, the primary goals in rural sites are economic and rural development (UKKS-III; Chen, Ren, & Zhang, 2021; Bahçe, 2009; Feiner, Mi & Schmid, 2002; Lane, 1994). These studies jointly and primarily analyze economic inputs, market strategies, economic relations, and production patterns. They also analyse the history of the heritage site, cultural assets, demographical structure, components of local identity, natural and physical elements, daily and traditional life, festivals, arts, and crafts. Strategies produced in these studies aim to maintain the traditional way of life, production, and craft activities, preserve the identity characteristics, increase employment with new local business opportunities, improve social and physical infrastructure, support agriculture, sustain natural resources, restore architectural heritage, protect cultural activities and intangible assets, and raise awareness. The most important reason for considering strategies other than economic is that rural tourism is supported by the rural character of the site and considered as an economic input. Therefore, most of these strategies are presented under or in conjunction with the tourism strategy, and rural tourism is considered as a prominent strategy in almost all these studies.

In social sciences, the primary goal is to establish a community-oriented perspective in rural heritage areas (Zhao, 2019; Thakuri & Nepal, 2018; Mokoena, 2017; Hribar *et al.*, 2015). The analysis mostly includes surveys, interviews, and in-depth interviews with the local community and individuals in various social roles. They regard the tangible/intangible cultural values, the local area's history, and traditional events such as festivals and ceremonies. Besides, studies examine the social relations and place attachment in rural heritage sites (Zhao, 2019; Hribar *et al.*, 2015), society's heritage perception (Mokoena, 2017), and the tourism motivation of local people (Thakuri & Nepal, 2018). They all develop community-focused analyses and adapt the community-oriented development and management strategy, while pointing out the importance of participation-based strategies.

The main aim of environmental sciences is to conserve the cultural heritage of rural sites. Therefore, cultural environment and architectural heritage come to the forefront, while economic and social issues also taken into consideration. Besides, the obtained data related to community identity, place identity, place-society relations, and production systems makes it possible to develop strategies to maintain local production, create new social areas, ensure participation, increase awareness, conserve the environment and buildings, maintain traditional production, and create new income sources.

These three disciplines jointly strive to understand the local values and character of rural areas; arts and crafts; traditional life; local identity; and history of rural areas, while



each of them gives priority to particular strategies. The economic and environmental studies jointly analyse the local production patterns, while the economic sciences prioritize the market strategies through analyses based on economic relations. Although there are topics that environmental sciences and social sciences share in common, social science studies focus on understanding community relations, place attachment, and society's perception of cultural heritage in more detail and do not give due importance to the economic and environmental aspects of the phenomenon.

In this framework, this study aims to determine the prominent facts within the sustainable conservation strategies of rural heritage. Regarding the different focuses and priorities of environmental, social, and economic sciences, this study focuses on the approaches of environmental sciences. With this in mind, it aims to clarify the role of the identity phenomenon and place-identity relations within the preservation of rural heritage. It also aims to define the data needed to establish a preservation strategy prioritizing the identity phenomenon, and how the previous studies took this into concern.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The method of this study is to investigate the identity phenomenon in rural heritage in terms of sustainable conservation strategies. For this purpose, it examines the dissertations and research projects, analyses the findings, and evaluates the conservation strategies established in light of the findings. In order to form the conceptual framework of this study, the concept of place-identity relations and their role in the conservation of heritage places were taken into consideration. Besides, identity-oriented conservation strategies were handled. Place is the core concept in place-identity relations, and the studies focused on rural heritage. Furthermore, both topics take into account the cultural values with their tangible and intangible components that carve out a niche. The characteristics and status of the physical environment are also a significant part of these studies. However, most of the studies focus on conserving the physical environment, while studies on place-identity relations are more comprehensive regarding the sustainability of the local values. On the other hand, some rural heritage conservation strategies considering the identity phenomenon are more inclusive and sustainable. In this regard, studies on identity-oriented strategies were reviewed to understand how the identity phenomenon is or should be handled in sustainable conservation strategies. In order to clarify the structure of these studies, all the samples were examined through two main stages, which are: *understanding the place and developing a strategy*.

In order to determine the method required to "understand the place," identity-oriented rural heritage studies were examined through the literature. Despite the main focus on the physical characteristics of the place, some studies put forward the rural and socio-cultural dynamics of the heritage place. In the study of Basille and Cavallo (2020), which focuses on the inner rural areas of Italy, *the demographic and socio-cultural characteristics, local productive systems, and leading economic and tourist features of the area* were analyzed to understand the regional identity. Topçuoğlu & Kiper (2020) argue that the *topography, geology, soil characteristics, water surfaces, vegetation and physical characteristics, economics, structure-function compatibility, and architectural character* are significant place identity components. *User profile, place-society relations, place attachment, feelings about the place, production systems, daily life, satisfaction, history of the place, social, cultural, religious characteristics, and physical environment* are analyzed in Birol, Saçan, and Yılmaz's study (2019). Mısırlı, Kiper, and Korkut (2019) aim to understand rural identity and develop a development-oriented strategy. They examined *the natural, artificial and socio-cultural characteristics* in order to understand the rural character. Yeşilbağ's study (2018) determined the factors affecting the place's sustainability. In this process, the values that ensure the continuity of the rural identity are given priority. Three components of rural identity are *community, built environment, and nature*. Väisänen & Törn-Laapio's study (2018) focuses on the effects of place identity on sustainability performance. It reveals *that nature, cultural environment, and*



place attachment are essential for place identity and sustainability. Özcan (2017) deals with rural heritage with its local characteristics. His study claims that an identity-oriented strategy should be aligned with *spatial, ecological, economic, social-cultural, and institutional-managerial characteristics*. Özhancı & Yılmaz's study (2017), the identity of the place was defined through *demographical data, socio-economic system, natural and cultural components, built environment, architectural characteristics and landscape values*. Demiroğlu, Eroğlu & Semerci (2020) listed the dynamics that make up a rural identity: *natural identity components, artificial identity components, socio-cultural identity components, environment-location relations, landmarks, structural borders, and road networks*.

According to the above findings, analyses focusing on the place-identity relations were grouped according to the three main headings of sustainable development. From this point of view, the data obtained from the environmental analyses was taken as the findings to understand the place identity. The economic analyses clarify the relationship between society, place, and local production systems. The social analyses enable to understand the community identity and society-place relations. Under these headings, the identity-based analyses that should be carried out in rural heritage areas were defined as follows.

- **Analyzes to understand community identity:**
 - Demographical structure (age, gender, education level, job, population data)
 - In-depth interviews (lifestyle, life routines & standards, community relations, neighbourhood, family relations, cultural, social and religious activities,)
- **Analyzes to understand society-place relationships:**
 - Local people's feelings about where they live
 - Satisfaction with the place of residence
 - Memory places
 - Social life and spaces
- **Analyzes to understand place identity:**
 - Natural and artificial components of the place
 - Architectural and rural characters of the place
 - Cultural landscape
 - Historical background of the place
 - Socio-cultural values of the place
- **Analyzes to understand the society-production-place relationship:**
 - Production pattern
 - Production places

The method described above was adopted as the method of the study. With this in mind, the selected studies have been evaluated regarding the analyzed data and the methodology of the phase of understanding. Analyses to understand the place were obtained from the selected dissertations and research projects. The selection was made regarding the subject and the date of the study. The selected forty dissertations are all focused on the conservation of rural heritage sites in Türkiye and published since 2015. On the other hand, these studies developed in different disciplines, such as restoration, cultural heritage conservation, architecture, urban planning, and landscape architecture.

Table 1. Dissertations Assessed Within the Scope of the Study

Year	Title
2021	A model proposal for conversation of rural settlements: Case study of Karaşar neighborhood of Beypazari district of Ankara province
	Scrutinising The Problematics of Conservation of Rural Settlements and Development of a Model
	Understanding The Integrity Of Rural Life And Architecture For Sustainable Conservation Case Study: Çomakdağ, Milas
2018	Determination of cultural landscape values of Gokceada and principles for the conservation
	A historical rural settlement on the verge of transformation: the conservation proposal for Ayvacik-Buyukhusun village
2021	Rural architectural features and conservation problems in İran-atropatena (Azerbaijan) region: Ushtibin village case
	Preservation of rural landscape and vernacular architecture: The case of Emen neighbourhood, Konya
	The study which is about sustainability of rural settlement: Eskişehir Dağköplü village
2020	Investigation of the rural architectural heritage of Edirne Keşan Çamlıca village and conservation suggestions
	Examination of Güzelsu rural settlement in Akseki district of Antalya province within the context of integrated conservation
	Analysis of Şile Akçakese village in rural architectural context and protection recommendations
2019	Traditional texture characteristics and preservation issues in Kemer village, Manisa province
	Identification of the components of rural heritage and integrated conservation approach: Gökçeada - Zeytinliköy case study
	Rural characteristics and preservation problems of Narhisar settlement, Milas
	Rural settlements of Hatay Mount Musa and proposals for conservation of the traditional houses
	The effective role of eco-tourism for sustainability of rural settlements: Bursa, Eskikaraağaç village as a case
	Divriği-Tuğut (Çiğdemli) Village rural architectural heritage and possibilities of the sustainability
	Evaluation of the Iznik Hisardere rural area vernacular architecture and review of the issues regarding rural contest
	Examination of the rural architecture of Iznik Omerli settlement in the context of environmental sustainability and to development on conservation proposal
	Discussing the rural architecture and the preservation problems of Erdek Kapıdağ Peninsula through the analyses on Ballıpınar and Hamamlı Settlements
	Conservation of rural architecture in Girelbelen Village, Bodrum district
	The characteristic of rural architectural heritage and the conservation problem in Urla region
	Evaluation of rural fabric within the example of Geyve-Kozan villages and its immediate surrounding
	Investigation of traditional architectural fabric in Kucukkoy rural area within the context of conservation
	Conservation of rural architectural heritage as part of historic rural landscapes: Principles and strategies for Zeytinliköy-Agios Theodoros (Gökçeada)
	Evaluation of samsun Kavak - sirali village in the context of rural architecture heritage
	Conservation-oriented architecture of local rural development İbradi
	Conservation and sustainability of rural architecture in Iznik Hisardere Village
A study on aliç tableland sample of vernacular architecture, conservation problems and solution proposals of the tablelands in Sinop-Boyabat region	
2018	Traditional architectural and sustainability problems in the rural areas of Kocaeli province Korfez district the North Marmara Motorway surrounding
	A research on the determination of rural development oriented strategies: Tekirdağ, Saray case
	Investigation of the traditional architecture of Bursa-Keles district Gelemic rural settlement and evaluation of protection purpose
2017	Historic rural landscape preservation project of Bilecik-Osmaneli Gunuoren Village
	The analysis, evaluation and the preservation-rehabilitation proposal of rural settlement pattern of Buyukalan Village at Akseki province, Antalya
2016	Determination of conservation and design principles of traditional housing pattern for sustainable shelter in İlvat region, Akseki, Antalya
	Defining the preservation problems and analysis of vernacular architecture herigate of Denizli Hisarköy (Attuda) settlement
	Conservation problems in rural settlements: Case of Bağlar region-Bergama
2015	Rural conservation project of Muğla- Datça Hızırşah Village
	Place And Community Driven Conservation And Empowerment In Historic Rural Landscapes: Principles And Strategies For Taşkale Village, Turkey
2015	Assessment of rural architectural characteristics in Belenalan village, Akseki



Besides the academic studies, research projects that focused on the identification and preservation of heritage places were examined. Like as the dissertations, the completed projects that consider the rural heritage sites in Türkiye since 2005 were selected. The examined projects are as follows: *Project of Determination of Local Texture and Architectural Characteristics in Rural Areas* (Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change, 2008-2010), *Kastamonu Küre Ersizdere Village Design Guide* (North Anatolian Development Agency and Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, 2015) and *Southern Marmara Rural Heritage Strategy Plan* (ÇEKÜL, 2013). Through the selected studies, analyses aimed to understand the place were systematically categorized and assessed under three main pillars of sustainable development: economic, environmental, and social.

After understanding the place, it was focused on which strategies the data obtained from the selected studies allowed to produce. In this sense, the data was evaluated, and the proposed strategies were identified. The strategies developed in the dissertations and projects were also tabulated under three main pillars of sustainability. As a result, the relation between the dynamics of the place (analyses) and the conservation approaches (strategies) regarding to the rural heritage was identified. Finally, an assessment was conducted on how identity-oriented sustainable conservation strategies are or should be established in rural areas.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The reviewed forty-three studies offer analyses to understand place identity in rural heritage sites. Most of the analyses prioritize the characteristics of the physical environment such as artificial features of the built environment, rural, natural and architectural characteristics, and physical obsolescence. Additionally, these analyses aim to compile the knowledge about the place's demographical, physical, and socio-cultural characteristics and production systems.

Understanding the Place

Environmental analyses surpass social and economic analyses in terms of sustainability headings in selected studies. The analyses that aim to *understand place identity* are the most prominent analysis sets both in dissertations and projects, while the ones that aim to *understand society-place relations* are disregarded. Although analyses of *understanding society-production-place relations* and *community identity* are considered, not all analyses under these two headings are made with due diligence.

Under the heading of Understanding the Place Identity, natural and artificial components of the place and architectural and rural characters are analyzed in all studies. Besides, understanding the historical background of the place is taken as a subject of great importance. Under the heading of Understanding the Society-Production-Place Relations, production pattern is analyzed in all dissertations and projects. On the contrary, detection of the production places is not considered as much as the production pattern in these studies. Demographic data come to the forefront under the heading of Understanding the Community Identity. Almost all dissertations and two of the three projects seriously examine this phenomenon. However, in-depth interviews are incompetent in all studies. Among all analyses, the most ignored ones are under the heading of Understanding the Society-Place Relations. Although the information about daily-traditional life is analysed in most of the studies, other analyses that required to understand society-place relations are done only in a few dissertations. Besides, analyses about feelings and belonging, memory places and satisfaction are substantially disregarded.

Table 2. Evaluation of the dissertations and projects in the context of understanding the place

UNDERSTANDING-ANALYSIS													
STUDIES	SOCIAL						ENVIRONMENTAL					ECONOMIC	
	Understanding the Community Identity		Understanding the Society-Place Relations				Understanding the Place Identity					Understanding the Society-Production-Place Relations	
	Demographic Data	In-depth interviews	Feelings-Belonging-Possession	Memory Places	Satisfaction	Every day-traditional places/ Information about daily-traditional life	Natural-artificial components of the place	Architectural and rural character	Cultural landscape value	Socio-cultural values of place	History of place	Production pattern	Production places
Academic Dissertations (out of 40)	39 97,5%	16 40%	4 10%	5 12,5%	4 10%	26 65%	40 100%	40 100%	36 90%	27 67,5%	39 97,5%	40 100%	26 65%
Projects (out of 3)	2 66,6%	1 33,3%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	3 100%	3 100%	3 100%	3 100%	2 66,6%	3 100%	2 66,6%	

All the selected studies display a similar perspective on understanding the place. The priority of the analysis is to understand the place's identity and to consider the relationship between society, production systems, and place. This approach can be explained as all these studies are developed in the field of environmental sciences. Nevertheless, dissertations are slightly more willing to understand community identity and society-place relations than ministries and non-governmental organizations.

Based on Table 2, natural and artificial components, architectural and rural characteristics, historical background, cultural landscape values, socio-cultural values, production patterns and places, and demographical data of a rural heritage site are significant to understand the meaning and identity components of place. Besides, information about daily and traditional life has to be understood. However, in order to analyze a rural heritage site from an identity-based point of view and establish an identity-oriented strategy, the other queries about place-society relations should also be taken into consideration.

Developing the Strategy

The uniqueness of heritage sites does not only depend on the values but also on the dynamics and problems of the place. Therefore, the conservation strategies have to strengthen the cultural values and find solutions to the problems of the heritage place. In other words, all studies have to maintain a correlation between the analyzed data and the strategies. From this point of view, the strategies and the intervention proposals that

developed in the selected studies were defined. These proposals and strategies were classified and grouped under the three headings of the sustainability as well.

Environmental strategies include conservation proposals for the built and natural environment. Preservation of traditional production systems, and creating new income sources and employment are the strategies for economic sustainability. Sustainability of traditional life, creating new public and social spaces, increasing social awareness, and ensuring participation come to the forefront in the sense of social strategies. Besides, all these strategies are supported by legal and administrative proposals in the majority of studies (Table 3).

Table 3. Evaluation of The Dissertations and Projects in The Context of Producing Sustainable Conservation Strategy.

PRODUCING SUSTAINABLE CONSERVATION STRATEGY									
STUDIES	SOCIAL				ENVIRONMENTAL		ECONOMIC		SUPPORTING THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS
	Strategies for Sustainability of Traditional Life	Strategies for Creating New Public and Social Spaces	Participation-Based Protection Strategies	Strategies for Increasing Social Awareness	Strategies for Natural Environment/Settlement	Strategies for Buildings	Strategies for Sustaining Traditional Production	Strategies for Creation of New Income Sources and Employment	Legal-Administrative Conservation Strategies
Dissertations (out of 40)	34 85%	21 52,5%	18 45%	31 77,5%	39 97,5%	39 97,5%	35 87,5%	33 82,5%	35 87,5%
Projects (out of 3)	3 100%	3 100%	2 66,6%	2 66,6%	3 100%	3 100%	2 66,6%	2 66,6%	3 100%

As seen in Table 3, the strategies of the selected studies include all three sustainability headings while establishing different strategies simultaneously in the general framework. In parallel with the analyses, the priority is on environmental strategies. Almost all studies have proposals for the natural and built environment, and historical buildings. Economic strategies and legal-administrative strategies also have a high percentage in all studies. Strategies regarding the sustainability of traditional life, and the ones that aim to increase awareness have a high percentage in the set of social strategies, while participation-based approaches and the ones that aim to create public spaces have secondary importance.

Environmental strategies aim to protect the place with its natural and built environment. It also aims to sustain the traditional buildings, spatial features, and construction techniques. Authentic rural texture, cultural landscape, and architectural elements are essential in environmental strategies. In addition, these strategies include proposals for rehabilitation in social areas and historical buildings' plans and façade orders to adapt to today's comfort conditions. All of the projects and almost all of the dissertations establish conservation strategies for the natural and built environment, and traditional buildings.

Economic strategies aim to sustain the traditional production systems and create new income sources. Because of the significant connection between traditional life and production systems, the strategies for sustaining traditional production systems have great importance in terms of ensuring the sustainability of economic and traditional life. Besides, the proposals for creating new income sources and ensuring employment maintain social stability and prevent abandonment of the rural areas. Regarding the importance of the subject, most of the dissertations cover strategies related to strengthening traditional production, income, and employment, while only one project covers both goals of economic sustainability.

Sustainability of the traditional life comes to the forefront in social strategies. There are two main suggestions to maintain traditional life by means of economic and environmental sustainability, which are revitalizing traditional activity places and increasing traditional production areas. In addition, raising public awareness has an important place in all studies. Educating the local people about traditional construction techniques and production systems is also essential for the sustainable preservation of the building stock in the environmental context and maintaining traditional production in the economic context. According to Table 3, the sustainability of traditional life is a priority issue in the social context both in dissertations and projects. Increasing social awareness also has a high percentage in dissertations. Creating new public/social spaces and participation strategies has a low percentage in the social context compared with the other strategies.

The studies examined showed that the preservation strategies are formed in conjunction with each other. In this sense, strategies are intertwined with each other and often do not have clear boundaries (Figure 1). One strategy supports another. In particular, the strategy of maintaining traditional life is fed by economic and environmental strategies. Social strategies are also in a close relationship with economic and environmental strategies. At the same time, a close relationship was observed between economic and environmental strategies of the studies.

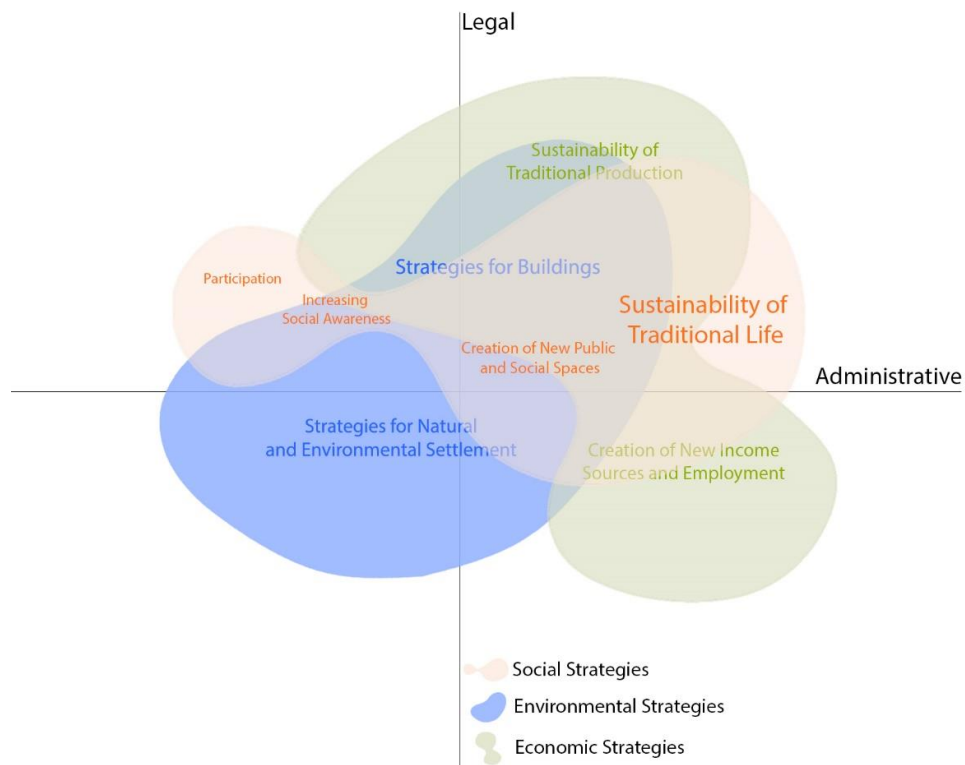


Figure 1. Strategy Relationship Diagram

Regarding the findings and proposals of the selected studies, it was seen that various types of data are needed to establish a particular strategy. For instance, in order to establish an economic strategy, both environmental and social data are needed. In this respect, collecting data from all three headings and deciphering the relation between the analysed data and the strategy becomes important.

As it was mentioned previously, the priorities of identity-based preservation strategies may differ in environmental, social and economic sciences. Despite the common motivation of maintaining traditional life and protecting local values in all three disciplines, the social sciences prioritize community-oriented development that is based on a participation-based decision process, while economic sciences focus on to economic suggestions such as maintaining local production, increasing employment, supporting agriculture, and maintaining natural resources. On the contrary, besides the environmental strategies focusing on the rehabilitation of the natural and built environment and sustainability of the natural resources, environmental sciences also develop social and economic strategies such as sustaining traditional production, creating new income sources, maintaining cultural activities, and raising awareness. Thus, no matter in which discipline the study takes part, all studies related to rural heritage sites that are handled with an identity focus develop strategies for environmental, economic, and social concerns. In addition, all studies cover strategies that were developed in line with the analysed data. With this in mind, the relationship between the obtained data and the analyses, and the correlation between the data and the strategies were examined through the selected forty-three studies.

Regarding the selected studies, the key issues of an identity-based preservation approach for a rural site are defined as community-place relations, society-place relations, place identity, and society-place-production relations. The analyses aimed to understand community identity were referred to the data obtained from the local community's demographics and local population characteristics. For understanding society-place relations, feelings, belonging, satisfaction, memory places, and everyday places were analysed. Place identity was understood through the analyses related to history, socio-cultural value, natural and artificial components, cultural landscape, and rural and architectural character. Lastly, production patterns and production places were analyzed to obtain data related to the relationship between society, place, and production systems (Figure 2).

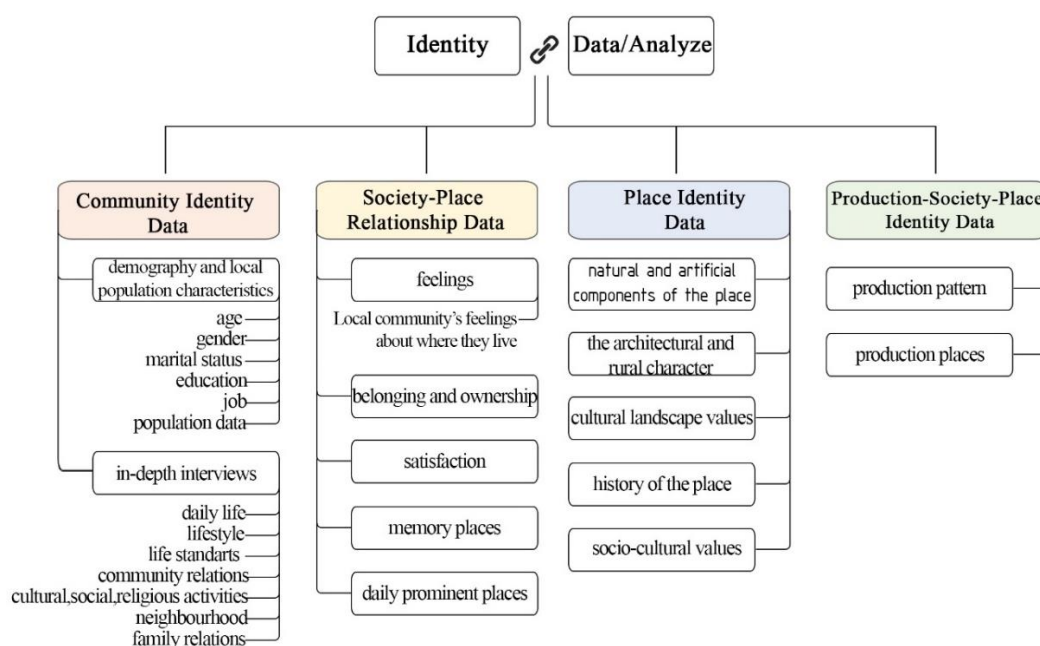


Figure 2. Correlation between the analyses and the data sets.



After clarifying the correlation between the analyses and the data sets, the obtained data and the strategies were evaluated together (Figure 3). To produce an environmental strategy, the data related to community-place relations and place identity are needed, while society-production-place relations are considered in some studies. In order to establish a strategy for the rehabilitation of the natural and built environment, analyses related to the place identity, such as components of the place, architectural and rural character, cultural landscape, socio-cultural values, and history, and most of the analyses related to the place-identity relationship, such as memory places, satisfaction, daily and traditional life, and places are required. In addition, understanding the production pattern is vital for this strategy. In order to establish a strategy for the rehabilitation of heritage places; satisfaction, daily/traditional life, architectural and rural character, history, and production places come to the forefront.

All the defined data sets; community identity, society-place relations, place identity, and place-society-production, are needed to develop economic strategies. In order to sustain traditional production systems, analyses of demographic structure, in-depth interviews, dynamics of daily and traditional life and places, architectural and rural character, socio-cultural values, history, production patterns, and production places are used. All these analyses, except the historical data, were used in the strategies to create new income sources, while the natural and artificial components of the place and the analyses related to socio-cultural value were required to develop this strategy.

The most prominent strategy in the social context is the sustainability of traditional life. This strategy requires a comprehensive understanding phase. This strategy uses the analysis of demographic data, architectural and rural character, cultural landscape, socio-cultural values, history, production patterns, and production places. The other main strategy of the social context, creating new public and social spaces, mainly uses the data related to the place's identity, which are natural and artificial components of the place, architectural and rural character, landscape value, and socio-cultural value, while necessarily requiring the data related to daily and traditional life. Participation-based strategies and strategies for increasing social awareness mainly need analyses of community identity that obtained from demographic data and in-depth interviews. Also, these strategies both need to understand the local community's feelings, belonging, and possessions to the place, while participation-based strategies need data related to the users' satisfaction.

In addition to all these main strategies, legal and administrative regulations are proposed to assist the implementation phases in most of the studies. Besides, these regulations produce strategies for the functioning of the process, the actors that will take part in its implementation, and the formations that will provide financial support.

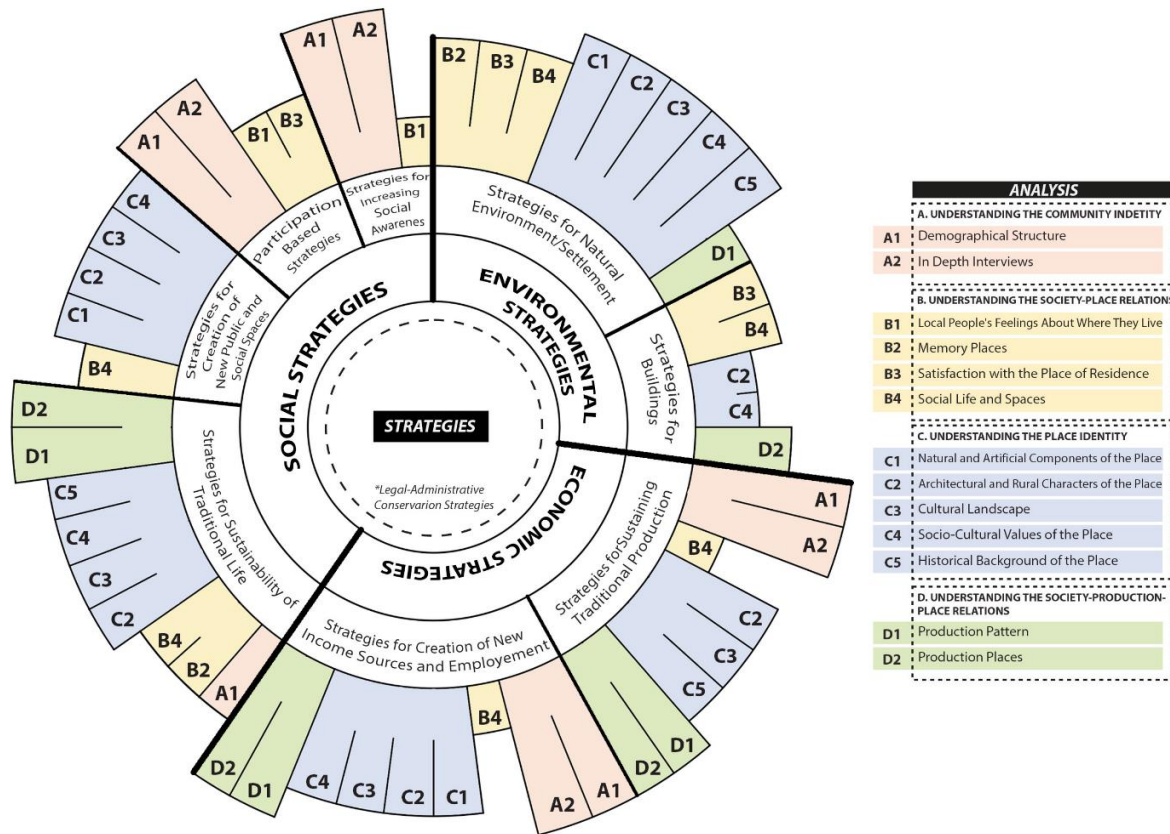


Figure 3. The correlation between the strategies and the required data

CONCLUSION

Conservation of the rural heritage sites is possible with the sustainability of the place's tangible and intangible heritage values. Thus, conservation and rehabilitation strategies of heritage sites are expected to contain proposals to strengthen these values. On the other hand, the dynamics of rural heritage sites requires to take these strategies into consideration in a different perspective from urban sites. Within the rehabilitation of rural sites place-identity relations and production-community relations come to the forefront. For this reason, rural conservation strategies should be developed from this perspective.

Another key issue of the subjects is the methodology of the decision process. This study states that rural heritage strategies should be aligned with place dynamics. It aims to produce a model to read the rural site's unique dynamics and decipher the analysis-strategy relationship. For this reason, the study was established through 2 basic stages (understanding the place and developing the strategy). The rural heritage area has values focused on the community-place relationship. For this reason, it is necessary to understand the rural area as identity-oriented and establish a unique strategy after understanding it. In the study, the analysis needed to be done was determined from the literature in order to understand the rural heritage with an identity-oriented approach. With this perspective, forty-three selected studies were examined in line with the data obtained from the literature. Analysis and strategies of the selected studies were determined. It was questioned which strategies the data obtained as a result of the analyzes allowed to produce in forty-three selected studies.

According to the selected studies, it was observed that the strategies related to the three sustainability tools (environmental, social and economic) are in conjunction with each other. Not only the required data, but also the activities that supposed to realize these strategies may be the same. Therefore, the correlation between the obtained data

(dynamics of the place), the strategies (goals of the intervention) and the activities (implementation and management) shall be planned in a holistic point of view.

This study proposes a methodology to develop sustainable preservation strategies prioritizing identity phenomenon in rural heritage sites. This methodology was improved with reference to the experiences of the selected studies. On the contrary, the strategies that proposed in these studies have not yet been implemented, and the feedback processes have not been completed. Therefore, despite the detailed data-strategy relationship, the impact and success of the strategies cannot be evaluated. In order to go ahead and present a realistic intervention model prioritising the concepts of a sustainable preservation approach and identity-based preservation, activities that can realize the strategies shall be developed, implemented, and the impact of all activities and strategies shall be defined. On the other hand, regarding to the interdisciplinary nature of both preservation and sustainability, all the above discussions shall be done in the fields of social and economic sciences. Thus, the holistic approach that covers all tools of sustainable development, all fields of preservation discipline, and all paradigms of identity phenomenon can be enabled, and be put forward as an identity-based, sustainable preservation approach for rural heritage sites.

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