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**The destination branding in tourism and the case of
Antalya**

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Abstract. The purpose of this dissertation is to determine the level of Turkish tourism industry in the process of being a brand. For this purpose, Antalya where is one of the most important areas of Turkish tourism has chosen as application area and made survey with 520 tourists to determine Antalya's level of being a brand. The main reason of this study, the added value of tourism industry is going to increase with the process of being a brand. Therefore, the contribution of tourism industry's to national economy is going to increase. For this purpose, first, tourism concept has explained and tourism data have explained within World and Turkish values. Second, brand concept and necessities of being a brand have explained by methods which had explained in first and second chapter. In last chapter, Turkish tourism level of being a brand has examined by the study of Antalya case. In conclusion, %98,5 of people who visited Antalya think that Antalya is not a brand. %93.7 of them think that Antalya has substructural problems. %67.5 of them think that Antalya has superstructural problems. %81.9 of them think that they will choose Paris, Venice etc, if there would be an equality at prices. The results of the study showed that Antalya has a very low brand value. Therefore, studies related to being a brand in tourism should focus at invisible values more than visible values. Finally, by being a strong brand in tourism will increase tourism incomes and will contribute country's economy positively.

Keywords. World tourism, Turkish tourism, Branding, Branding in tourism.

JEL. L83, Z32, D47.

Highlights

- * This discourse was performed in order to increase the quantity of already existing studies, addressing destination branding, until that point.
- * The survey of this discourse was handed out in English, German and Russian thus with three languages it is some of the first in its field.
- * The aim of it is to determine the status of the destinations given the fact that they fulfill the necessities of being a brand.
- * In comparison to other western countries, Turkey realized the importance of tourism a little too late and always considered it as a "saving" sector once the economy landed in a bottleneck.
- * Turkey is accommodating all the requests of tourists in the 21st century looking for different options. While it is just a random country in the Mediterranean when it comes to sea, sun and sand, Turkey has a lot more to offer nature wise, historically, culturally, art wise, gastronomically and also people that are warm hearted and welcoming.
- * The government and local governments, civil and private establishments have to work together in a coordinated manner and direct their branding efforts in mutual positioning ideas.

† This summary depends on the PhD thesis which was completed in Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Department of Business Administration, in Suleyman Demirel University. Thesis defence was made in 13/07/2006 to the PhD thesis jury and accepted. The original language is Turkish and the thesis is consisted of 218 pages.

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* A qualitative product has to have a unique side to it as in brand identity, brand spirit and unlimited customer satisfaction guarantee.

Summary

This discourse was performed in order to increase the quantity of already existing studies, addressing destination branding, until that point. This may be the reason why it is shown as a working direction in many studies, still. The discourse, given the fact that it is underlining how tourism incomes will increase with the help of branding endeavors and showing the ways how to approach it, is of a certain importance. The survey of this discourse was handed out in English, German and Russian thus with three languages it is some of the first in its field.

The topic of the discourse is “The Destination Branding in Tourism and The Case of Antalya“. The aim of it is to determine the status of the destinations given the fact that they fulfill the necessities of being a brand. The study carried out would like to detect the status of a destination given by the example of Antalya. The information on the results of this discourse were tried to be summed up down below.

Especially after the second half of the 20th century it was ought to be one of the quickest developing and expanding sectors in the world. The inclinations to globalization worldwide is also influencing tourism destinations and thus causing a competition between the destinations wanting to profit from the world tourism incomes. So, now it has become a must for them to fulfill the tasks of becoming a brand in order to be able to compete with the other destinations in the world. In the early 1980's the written down count of tourists traveling around the world was 285 million and the total income was 92 million dollars. According to WTO's expectations, this number will increase up to 1,5 billion tourists and 2 trillion dollars in the year of 2020. These numbers are somehow forcing tourism destinations to compete with each other in order to maintain their own market, trying to be a brand.

In comparison to other western countries, Turkey realized the importance of tourism a little too late and always considered it as a “saving“ sector once the economy landed in a bottleneck. After the 1950's the promoting of the sector started but studies addressing tourism firstly just started to take place in the mid 1980's. In 1991 the count of tourists visiting Turkey (based on information given from the T.R. Ministry of Culture and Central Bank) was 5.517.897 and the tourism incomes were 2.7 billion dollars. In the year of 2005 the numbers changed into 21.122.798 tourists and an income of about 14 billion dollars. Regarding these data, tourism is put in a position of an industry without a chimney. But to maintain the integrity of this industry without a chimney it is important to perceive the work on branding and to achieve a strong brand position. The same process has to be repeated in Turkey as its has in other destinations successfully keeping their brands in a good position, in order to assure a continuous economic income from tourism. Turkey, bearing the potential of fulfilling the requests of a certain variety of tourist profiles while a four season tourism is possible as well, can only then profit economic wise if it keeps the important elements for branding in its structure and completes the tasks for it. In this case Turkey might start taking other worldwide prominent destinations as a role model. Rome, Paris, Venice, Mallorca, Barcelona, Dubai, Las Vegas, Prague, these are just a couple of them. Turkey is accommodating all the requests of tourists in the 21st century looking for different options. While it is just a random country in the Mediterranean when it comes to sea, sun and sand, Turkey has a lot more to offer nature wise, historically, culturally, art wise, gastronomically and also people that are warm hearted and welcoming. In addition to that Turkey can serve to a variety of religions and its geography and all the other facts coming together provide this country a unique superiority. But because Turkey's destinations mostly lie heavy on „coast tourism“ it turns into a tourism destination that can only live for 3-4 months a year. This

needs to be improved and coast tourism needs to also be supported with other sectors as well, for instance like sports tourism, congress tourism, winter tourism, health and spa tourism, eco tourism and civilization and religion tourism. In this way the concentration on only one tourism section will be reduced by increasing the foci on other industries leading to a continuous tourism rush throughout the year concerning several tourism sectors instead. A serious, conscious and scientifically supported effort is requested when it comes to bringing together Turkey's potentials and the advantages of branding in tourism. In tourism more competitive power, more income, fast expansion and more confluence are also going through branding. During the process of becoming a brand it is a necessity to have a qualitative product. Negativities regarding infra- and superstructure and the destroyed and cemented image of nature need to be resolved. Public relations, publicity and advertising needs to be more in the focus. After enhancing the quality of products and branding, Turkey's destinations will claim their respective place in the worldwide market. Publicity as in promotions need to be performed in a short- and long term, while campaigns should last for at least 4-5 years containing the same style and wording in the means of maintaining an integrity of the image. Tourism promotion campaigns should be consistent. In some promotions the arabic flair, mystic flair and oriental flair are not supporting the image tried to be presented, if not harming it, even.

The subject of this study was not chosen by accident. The objective is to determine the position of Antalya during its branding process, performed to ensure a permanent readline and a customer dependence, as a destination. Consisting out of four parts, the first part of the study contains following topics: the concept of tourism worldwide and in Turkey, historical development and the importance of it, new trends in tourism, world's and Turkey's tourism data and lastly Turkey's tourism's SWOT analysis and strategies that can be based on it. In the second section the concept of branding is explained to its fullest extent given by the definition of a brand: the importance of the brand as in management and country, its advantages, working on being a brand and its difficulties, the elements of brand identity, brand components, brand positioning strategies, strong brands and lastly brand dependencies. The third part has its focus on the concept and importance of a brand in tourism, the concept of a destination brand, reasons of visiting a destination repeatedly, the concept of being and developing a strong brand as a destination. These principles were prepared considering countries from abroad who completed their branding process successfully, based on destination. Last but not least, the fourth part covers a practice performed to be able to determine the position of Turkey's branding process as a destination brand. The example of Antalya is taking place here: a survey, prepared in English, German and Russian, was handed out to 520 tourists who completed their stay in Antalya and were about to leave for their home country. The results demonstrate that the tourist count for Antalya as a destination has increased but the brand values have not changed. For this to happen, the tourist arriving in his own home country, comparing other travel destinations with each other, has to have a feeling or emotional values that he can associate with Turkey, Antalya. For instance, a tourist who is traveling by an airline will firstly see the airport once he arrives. This is why everything starting from the airport until his final destination where he is going to spend his vacation has to be non-disturbing instead enhancing his will to go out and explore the area. Unfortunately the crooked urbanization in Turkey is more and more getting in front of a green nature leading to a cemented and faded destination image. In cities where infra-and superstructure are still in process, no tourist will leave his own surrounding and choose that place as a destination. And if they do, they will book all inclusive trips, not leaving the property of the hotel once and then return to their own country without indeed experiencing anything of the visited country. But in reality, the expectation of a qualitative destination is one to be cleared out of all the previous mentioned problems and make the tourist realize the privileges of it. This furthermore leads to the conclusion that the most striking feature of a strong brand

is the principle of diversity. The options have to be so strong that no other destination can imitate this feature. For instance: Rome's romanticism, Vegas known as the city of gamble and further on. The destination has to be settled in the memories as a unique place. Antalya, on the negative side, has no striking special feature but only the mutual triad of several destinations „sea, sand, sun“, which at the same time is performed under better circumstances in the other destinations.

Brand components as in symbols are for instance the Eiffel Tower in Paris and the Burj El Arab in Dubai. If we think about the symbol of Antalya which is the “orange“ we have to ask the question if the orange represents the image of the town correctly? Is it a city brand in tourism or is it a citrus city? The goal of a brand is to achieve a positive brand image and create an emotional bond between its consumer thus increasing repetitive sales. It is a well known fact that strong brands have created a positive brand image amongst their consumers. So, to establish a new image in the minds of the target groups, an effective publicity and marketing has to be performed by increasing the budget. Furthermore there was no equivalent found for Antalya as in the desired brand personality. While during the branding process permanence is obtained through public relations, once successfully established a brand, maintaining it with advertisements to keep the position on the market. The aim of all this is to create an inseparable bond between customer and destination thus carrying out brand dependency. Turkey's tourism might seem as it has a good output but researches and applied studies show that this is only because of a low price policy. Instead of a brand dependency the reason of repetitive tourists is more because of a price dependency. All inclusive hotels seem to be more affordable and much cheaper. This is why the tiniest change in price might cause the tourists to decide to go to a travel destination other than Turkey because the customer is not depending on the brand but the price, whereas strong brands can randomly set their desired price. The due tasks of Antalya and Turkey's other destinations is to change their products into a strong brand thus being able to perform an independent quotation.

Our recommendations to Turkish tourism can be summed up as following:

The government and local governments, civil and private establishments have to work together in a coordinated manner and direct their branding efforts in mutual positioning ideas. This is what is put into effect in other worldwide examples. Weight has to be put on the invisible side of a brand more than the side we see (slogan, logo, symbol..) A qualitative product has to have a unique side to it as in brand identity, brand spirit and unlimited customer satisfaction guarantee. By convincing Hollywood producers, joint projects have to be developed, heroic stories and comic films characterizing our destinations may be produced. Further on Best Seller potential-bearing books may be written to arouse interest on our destinations like for instance Antalya. Worldwide famous authors and authorities may emphasize the features of our destinations in reviews and shoot promotion videos. While all this is taking place, the deficits in infra- and superstructure should be repaired, alternative activities and options should be created where tourists can choose amongst to explore and experience the city to its fullest.

Moreover one should participate in tourism expos and festivals worldwide to promote the destinations. Also to facilitate the options for travelers there should be access to different transportation possibilities to hop between destinations. At this point, support from the government is essential since transportation is not a factor that a destination can solve on its own. Railway, highway, sea transportation and airway options have to be improved and increased in number. Additionally advantage should be taken of the world wide web thus low price policy and other negativities can be prevented and positive news and innovations can be announced immediately. As a long term goal it is important to increase the quality of the tourist profile and to create an appropriate promotion of Turkey's tourism resembling the rich varieties and potentials that Turkey is carrying.

By its current position, Antalya does not have a certain perceived image. With the effect of a low price policy in qualitative facilities, the sea-sand-sun triad only

saves the day while day by day the presence of other competitive destinations increases. The potential of China to perform a quick entrance in this field as well as it previously did in other sectors too, poses a threat and while possibly Egypt, India and other Far East destinations can compete, Antalya and Turkey's other destinations have to meet the requests of the market as soon as possible. As a result of this study, we clearly understand that this process has to undergo branding and that it is a topic of expertise in itself.

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