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Brand personality and destination image of Istanbul: A comparison across nationalities

Safak Sahin
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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BRAND PERSONALITY AND DESTINATION IMAGE OF ISTANBUL:
A COMPARISON ACROSS NATIONALITIES

by

Safak Sahin

Bachelor's Degree in Hotel Administration,
University of Mersin, Turkey
2003

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Master of Science Degree
William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration

Graduate College
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is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science in Hotel Administration

Examination Committee Chair

Dean of the Graduate College
ABSTRACT

Brand Personality and Destination Image of Istanbul: A Comparison across Nationalities

by

Safak Sahin

Dr. Seyhmus Baloglu, Examination Committee Chair
Professor of Hotel Administration
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

This study is intended to measure brand personality and destination image of Istanbul (Istanbul, Turkey) and compare the perceived image and personality across different nationalities. A representative sample of 334 tourists was surveyed while visiting Istanbul and 272 usable surveys were analyzed in SPSS 15. The survey instrument included quantitative and qualitative (open ended) items to better grasp the visitors’ individual perceptions. Respondents were grouped into four segments depending on the geographic and cultural proximity of their nationalities: USA, UK, Europe, and East Asia. Factor analysis was conducted to find underlying image and personality dimensions. Next ANOVA was conducted to identify significant image and personality variations across different nationalities. ANOVA findings showed that there are statistically significant perception differences across different nationalities for cognitive and overall image, as well as for personality perception and behavioral intention to recommend. Practical and theoretical implications are also discussed.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ......................................................................................................................................... iii

LIST OF TABLES ................................................................................................................................... vi

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..................................................................................................................... vii

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION .............................................................................................................. 1
  Problem Statement .................................................................................................................. 4
  Research Questions ............................................................................................................ 4
  Hypotheses ........................................................................................................................... 5
  Importance of the Study ...................................................................................................... 5
  Definition of Terms ............................................................................................................... 6

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW ..................................................................................................... 9
  Overview ....................................................................................................................................... 9
  Background ................................................................................................................................... 9
    Brand, Brand Image, Brand Personality in General Marketing Literature ................. 9
    Destination Image ................................................................................................................ 12
      Cognitive and affective evaluation of image ................................................................. 13
      Overall evaluation of image ......................................................................................... 13
    Application of Brand Personality to Destinations ......................................................... 15
    Empirical Studies of Destination Image and Brand Personality in Practice, 
      with the Focus of Turkey .............................................................................................. 19
    Measurement of Destination Images ............................................................................... 29
      Qualitative Phase of an Image Study to Elicit Population Specific Constructs 29
      Quantitative Phase of an Image Study to Measure the Image ..................................... 30
    The Trend in the Literature .............................................................................................. 34

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY ............................................................................................................. 38
  Questionnaire Development .................................................................................................. 38
  The Measurement ................................................................................................................... 38
  Sample ........................................................................................................................................ 40
  Analysis of the Data ................................................................................................................ 40

CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH RESULTS .................................................................................................... 42
  Demographic Profile of Respondents ............................................................................... 42
  Previous Experience ............................................................................................................. 47
  Trip Characteristics ................................................................................................................ 49
  Information Sources .............................................................................................................. 52
Categorization of Istanbul by visitors ............................................................... 52
Qualitative Perceptions ...................................................................................... 57
    General image or characteristics of Istanbul ................................................ 58
    Expected Atmosphere in Istanbul ................................................................. 59
Tourist Attractions Unique to Istanbul ............................................................... 60
    Popular Tourist Activities in Istanbul .......................................................... 61
    Suggestions for a more Tourist Friendly Istanbul ...................................... 63
Analyses ............................................................................................................... 63
    Image Perception and Behavioral Intension Differences among Different
    Segments ............................................................................................................ 63
Hypothesis Testing .............................................................................................. 69
    Analyses of Overall Mean Scores for Image, and Behavioral Intensions ...... 73
Brand Personality Perception Differences among Different Segments .......... 75
    Analyses of Mean scores for Personality perceptions ............................... 79
Summary of Hypothesis Testing ...................................................................... 84
Reliability and Validity Assessment .................................................................. 85

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS .............................................. 87
    Comments, Implications and Suggestions .................................................... 90
    Limitations of the Study ............................................................................... 95
    Future Research ............................................................................................ 96

REFERENCES ...................................................................................................... 98

APPENDIX A LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS .................................................. 108

APPENDIX B SURVEY ..................................................................................... 110

APPENDIX C NOTIFICATION OF IRB ACTION .......................................... 115

VITA .................................................................................................................. 117
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Comparative Strengths of destinations (Turkey, Greece, and Italy) ...............21
Table 2 Methods used in destination image research: structured versus unstructured
(after Echtner & Ritchie, 1991) ................................................................................32
Table 3 Demographic Profile of the Respondents ..........................................................44
Table 4 Previous visitation to Istanbul .........................................................................48
Table 5 Purpose to visit Istanbul ..................................................................................50
Table 6 Travel companion during the trip in Istanbul ....................................................51
Table 7 Information sources used by respondents ..........................................................53
Table 8 Categorization of Istanbul by respondents .......................................................55
Table 9 Top Ten Open Ended Responses for General Image or Characteristics of
Istanbul .........................................................................................................................58
Table 10 Top Ten Open Ended Responses for Expected Atmosphere in Istanbul .......60
Table 11 Top Ten Open Ended Responses for Tourist Attractions Unique to Istanbul ....61
Table 12 Top Ten Open Ended Responses for Popular Tourist Activities in Istanbul ......62
Table 13 Principal component analysis of perceptual/cognitive items ..............................65
Table 14 One way ANOVA analysis for cognitive image dimensions, affective image
items, overall image and behavioral intensions ...............................................................71
Table 15 Principal component analysis of brand personality items ...............................76
Table 16 One way ANOVA analysis for personality factor dimensions and remaining
personality attributes .................................................................................................81
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The importance of tourism as a means of economic growth (Giles & Perry, 1998; Gokovali & Bahar, 2006) and providing employment opportunities (Lundberg, Stavenga, & Krishnamoorthy, 1995) for both developing and developed countries (Gokovali & Bahar, 2006) has increased greatly over the last couple of decades. Today tourism is the biggest industry in terms of revenue and employment generation according to World Tourism Organization (WTO) (Lundberg et al., 1995).

As the increasing importance of tourism has been understood by more destinations and countries, the fierce competition to get the bigger share out of tourism has become inevitable. Many countries, having understood the economic benefits of tourism such as higher national income and employment, and positive effect on balance of payments (Gokovali & Bahar, 2006), have started to pay special attention to tourism development and marketing. This explains why so many countries have tourism ministers in their governments and why destination management organizations (DMOs) are backed and supported by governments. The increasing tourism revenues worldwide (from 172 billion in 1987 to 691 billion in 2003) (WTO, 1987-2005) followed by the intense competition forced destinations to build favorable destination images to attract more of the potential tourists (Gartner, 1993; Goodall, 1990). To gain and remain a competitive advantage over the others, competing destinations have also needed to differentiate their
image (Aaker & Shansby, 1982; Javalgi, Thomas, & Rao, 1992; Crompton, Fakeye, & Lue, 1992; Ahmed, 1991). Hosany, Ekinci, and Uysal (2006) said that “in today's competitive environment, creating and managing an appropriate destination image (or brand image) and destination personality (or brand personality) have become vital for effective product positioning” (p. 5).

According to WTO (1979):

While it is important to any producer of goods or services, the notion of image is of capital importance to a country. Measuring and mastering it should be placed very high in the order of priorities for planning tourism promotion. (p. 3)

As Jenkins (1999) said, “destination images influence a tourist's travel decision-making, cognition and behavior at a destination as well as satisfaction levels and recollection of the experience” (p. 1). In order to create, manage and differentiate an image properly so that it helps the destination reach its goals, tourist destinations should be aware of the perceived image by the current and potential visitors. The study of current image will show the strengths and weaknesses of any destination. It will also show the degree of the match between the “perceived image” and the “desired image” by that destination depending on what it has to offer with its available resources. With the help of the image and brand study, a desired and fit-to-resources image and brand can be formulated and coded. Then, the next step would be how to build and communicate this intended image.

Istanbul (Istanbul, Turkey), with its rich history and being the biggest city of Turkey, serves as a showcase of Turkey. The fact that one half of Istanbul is laid in Europe and the other in Asia makes this city one of its kinds. More than five million
foreigners visited Istanbul in 2006 ("Governorship of Istanbul", 2007). Istanbul has
hosted many larger scale and internationally important events such as United Nations
(UN) Habitat meeting in 1996, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) meeting in
2004, and International Union of International Architects (UIA) congress in 2005, each
of which was attended by thousands from all around the world. International sport events
such as Formula 1 racing every summer and Union of European Football Associations
(UEFA) champions’ league final in 2005 also attracted ten thousands of spectators to
Istanbul. Moreover, Turkey has been pursuing to win the bid for hosting a future
Olympic Games in Istanbul by emphasizing the theme of one city two continents.

In 2006, 5.4 million foreign visitors left $4.4 billion revenue to the city. Both the
number of foreign visitors and the revenue from them account for 27 % of countrywide
figures in tourism ("Governorship of Istanbul", 2007).

Istanbul has more than 26 thousand rooms and 54 thousand beds capacity licensed
by ministry of tourism, 8.481 rooms and 17.810 beds of which are in 5-star hotels
("Governorship of Istanbul", 2007). Istanbul has Ritz Carlton, Four Seasons, Kempinski,
Sheraton, Marriott, Hilton, Intercontinental, Crowne Plaza and many other brands in her
portfolio of 5-star hotels. Each year, the number of world wide well known hotels,
operating in Istanbul is increasing. With her 54,456 licensed bed capacity, Istanbul can
accommodate 19,876,440 visitors in a year with a % 100 occupancy rate for its licensed
bed capacity.

Istanbul has two international airports both of which can serve any type of
commercial aircrafts including recently launched A 380. Ataturk Airport is working with
50 % and Sabiha Gokcen Airport with 7 % of their capacities (Arkitera, 2005) which
means that much higher volumes can be handled without additional investment. It is
evident from the figures presented above that Istanbul with its current room inventory
and airport capacities can accommodate many more millions of visitors than it actually
and currently does.

Problem Statement

The purpose of this study is to empirically examine the perceived brand image
and destination personality of Istanbul. The study will focus on multiple components of
image stressed out in the literature such as cognitive, affective, and overall image as well
as key constructs found in the brand literature, namely destination brand personality. It
compares the differences and similarities in these concepts and measures across different
nationalities. Beerli and Martin (2004) found that found that country of origin is the most
influential demographic factor over cognitive and affective image. And the image
variations caused by nationality may provide many practical and theoretical implications.
This study also aims to find out the best ways to communicate the desired image of
Istanbul to potential and prospective visitors. It is hoped that findings of this study will
help tourism authorities, both in government and private sector, in defining the
weaknesses and strengths of Istanbul as a tourist destination. Thus, the study will
facilitate the efforts to make Istanbul a more welcoming place, and to formulate a
distinctive and attractive brand image, and to communicate this image most efficiently.

Research Questions

The study aims to respond to following research questions:

1. What are the image and brand characteristics of Istanbul as perceived by
   foreign visitors?
2. How do images of Istanbul (cognitive, affective, and overall) vary by visitors’ nationality?

3. How does perceived brand personality of Istanbul vary by visitors’ nationality?

Hypotheses

This study’s research hypotheses are:

H1: The average cognitive perceptions of Istanbul are different across different nationalities. (Some cognitive perceptions of Istanbul by at least one pair of nationality are different).

H2: The average affective perceptions of Istanbul are different across different nationalities. (Some affective perceptions of Istanbul by at least one pair of nationality are different).

H3: The average overall image of Istanbul is different across different nationalities. (Overall image of Istanbul by at least one pair of nationality is different).

H4: The average brand personality perceptions of Istanbul are different across different nationalities. (Brand personality perceptions of Istanbul by at least one pair of nationality are different).

Importance of the Study

The importance of this study comes from the fact that brand image and destination personality of Istanbul has never been studied before. Istanbul throughout the history served as the capital city of the Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, the Latin Empire, and the Ottoman Empire. Thus it has a myriad of historical and cultural attractions. Istanbul’s uniqueness as lying on two continents, Europe and Asia, and as the
union point of the eastern and western worlds both geographically and culturally makes her even more attractive as a tourist destination. However, Istanbul needs to be aware of her current image and increase its favorability and distinctiveness to its highest in order to get the maximum return on her resources such as tourism investments, history and her unique geographic location.

Moreover, a positive image of Istanbul will leverage the image of Turkey upward; and this will help Turkey on its political relationships with European Union and the rest of the world. In addition to this, a better image will also increase the volume of foreign investments in Turkey.

Definition of Terms

**Destination image:** According to Lawson and Baud-Bovy (1977), destination image is defined as “the expression of all objective knowledge, impressions, prejudice, imaginations, and emotional thoughts an individual or group might have of a particular place”. Destination image has been conceptualized to have two components by most scholars in the field: cognitive and affective images.

**Cognitive image:** Cognitive component of destination image is drawn from the beliefs and knowledge about a destination through a cognitive evaluation process (Baloglu & Brinberg 1997; Burgess 1978; Gartner 1993; Hallbrook 1981; Walmsley & Jenkins 1993; Ward & Russel 1981; Zimmer & Golden 1988).

**Affective image:** Affective component of destination image is drawn from the subjective evaluation of a destination based on the feelings about the destination (Burgess 1978; Hallbrook 1981; Ward & Russel 1981; Zimmer & Golden 1988; Walmsley & Jenkins 1993; Gartner 1993; Baloglu & Brinberg 1997).
Overall image: Cognitive and affective image together form the overall image (Mazursky & Jacoby 1986; Stern & Krakover 1993).

Perception: Mayo and Jarvis (1981, p. 67) define perception as “the process by which an individual receives, selects, organizes and interprets information to create a meaningful picture of the world”.

Brand: According to American Marketing Association, brand is defined as “name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition” (Kotler & Keller, 2006).

Brand image: Keller (1993) defined brand image as “the perceptions about a brand reflected as associations existing in the memory of the consumer”.

Brand personality: Brand personality is defined as “the set of human characteristics associated with a brand” by Aaker (1997, p. 347).

Destination Branding: Blain, Levy and Ritchie (2005) enhanced the definition of Ritchie and Ritchie (1998) and defined destination branding as:

The marketing activities (1) that support the creation of a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that both identifies and differentiates a destination; (2) that convey the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; and (3) that serve to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of the destination experience, all with the intent purpose of creating an image that influences consumers’ decisions to visit the destination in question, as opposed to an alternative one (p. 331).
Destination Personality: Aaker’s (1997) definition of brand personality can be applied to
destination personality such as “the set of human characteristics associated with a”
destination.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Since the purpose of this study is to empirically examine the brand image and destination personality of Istanbul, initial part of literature review section will be devoted to describe these terms and explain how they were initially conceptualized in general marketing literature. Next, several key destination image studies will be reviewed, including some discussion of the measurement of destination image. Finally, the destination brand studies and application in tourism sector and tourism literature will be discussed.

Background

*Brand, Brand Image, Brand Personality in General Marketing Literature*

Although it is fairly new for tourism destinations and there is still need for academic studies in this area, concept of brand and brand image have been widely studied by scholars in the generic marketing field (Hosany, Ekinci, & Uysal, 2006). Brand is defined as “name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition” by the American Marketing Association. Brand image on the other hand is the perceptions of customers or consumers about a brand or a product labeled with that brand. Scholars in marketing field consider brand
image as an important component of powerful brands (Aaker, 1996; Kapferer, 1997). Powerful brands can help products or services gain a competitive advantage (Lim & O'Cass, 2001) amid competition, and can help customers decide on the product and locate it easily (Assael, 1995) amid so many alternatives. While brands can also reduce the risks associated with products (Berthon, Hulbert, & Pitt, 1999), they usually increase the perceived value of the products for customers (Erdem, 1998). Despite their importance in marketing, marketing literature has not provided a definite distinction between brand image and brand personality and there is no known empirical study that identified the relation between the two (Hosany et al., 2006). However brand personality can be considered as the explanation of brand image with the appropriate human personality traits.

Aaker (1997) developed the theoretical framework of brand personality construct and measured its dimensions by introducing a reliable, valid and generalizable scale. In her study, 37 brands were rated by 631 subjects on 114 personality traits. As a result of the study she developed the 42-item Brand Personality Scale and found “five distinct personality dimensions: Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication, and Ruggedness” (Aaker 1997). However she cautioned that this scale may not be a perfect fit for all consumers from different cultural backgrounds. After Aaker’s (1997) development of Brand Personality Scale, many researchers have applied the brand personality concept to various related topics as some of them discussed below.

Siguaw and Mattila (1999) used Aaker’s Brand Personality Scale to measure the level of brand personality established by restaurant brands. Their sample consisted of students and subjects were asked to rate 9 restaurant brands on 42 personality traits only
if they know about the restaurant brand. Nine brands consisted of three quick service
brands (Wendy’s, McDonald’s and Burger King), three casual-dining brands (T.G.I.
Friday’s, Applebee’s and Chili’s) and three upscale brands (Dano’s on Cayuga, John
Thomas Steak House and Reene’s American Bistro). The study found that although quick
service restaurant brands are perceived as being favorably distinctive on many of the
dimensions, it is not true for casual dining and upscale brands. We can conclude that
quick service brands are more successful in developing and communicating an effective
brand personality than casual dining and upscale restaurant brands. The study also found
that “a well-established brand personality has been shown to result in increased
preference and patronage, higher emotional ties to the brand and trust and loyalty”
(Siguaw & Mattila, 1999).

Seeing the gap in the marketing literature regarding the effects of brand
personality, Freling and Forbes (2005) empirically studied the effects of brand
personality on customer behaviors. They found that brand personality positively
influences product evaluations. If the consumers are exposed to strong and positive brand
personality traits of the products or services, then they are more likely to evaluate them
more favorably. A strong and positive brand personality enables consumers to build
greater, more favorable, unique and strong brand associations thus increase the brand
equity (Freling & Forbes, 2005).

Mengxia (2007) studied the impact of brand personality on consumers’ brand
preference, attitude, loyalty, and buying intent. Study subjects in China were asked to
rate Sony (electronic components and equipment) and Nike (sports equipment and
apparel) on 42-itemBrand Personality Scale developed by Aaker (1997). Although the
study found that both brands are good, Sony was rated more positive and exhilarating than Nike. Mengxia (2007) concluded that a positive brand personality has a positive impact on brand preference, attitude, loyalty, and buying intent of the consumers. One other contribution of his study to the brand personality literature is that he confirmed the validity of Aaker’s Brand Personality Scale in Chinese culture.

Da Silva and Alwi (2006) studied the relationship of brand attributes and corporate brand image for online and offline bookstores. They empirically observed that cognitive brand attributes have a positive relationship with company’s affective brand image for both online and offline book stores. In other words, positive brand attributes lead to positive brand image. This finally results in more customer loyalty. Personalization among the attributes of ease of use, security and customer care is found to be the most important factor of brand image for online book store. Personal interaction among product related attributes and physical aspects, is found to be the most important factor of brand image for offline book store.

*Destination Image*

Potential tourists are exposed to many alternative destinations similar to each other and fiercely competing for getting more of the market share. Thus it has been vital for destinations to differentiate themselves from other competing ones and occupy a favorable position in the minds of potential visitors by developing a positive and memorable image (Gnoth, Baloglu, Ekici, & Sirakaya-Turk, 2007).

Destination image studies have started in 1970s and have been a popular tourism research area since then (Hosany et al., 2006). Destination image can be defined as the perception of a person or a group of people regarding a place. This perception is formed
by one's sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions about that place (Crompton, 1979; Hosany et al., 2006). Many scholars in the field consider destination image as a multidimensional construct of two main dimensions (Hosany et al., 2006). These dimensions are cognitive evaluation and affective evaluation of a place and they form the overall image about that place (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999).

Cognitive and affective evaluation of image.

Cognitive evaluation is determined by beliefs and knowledge about a place (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). Affective evaluation on the other hand is all about feelings towards that destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). In cognitive evaluation, tourist evaluates the place in terms of objective attributes of the destination to the best of his/her knowledge. This means that the more a tourist is informed about the positive attributes of a place, the more credible the cognitive evaluation is. In affective evaluation however, he/she evaluates the place by the affective quality of the sum of the attributes of that destination (Genereux, Ward, & Russel, 1983). This means that the more appealing the attributes of the destination to the individual tourist, the better and higher the affective evaluation is. According to Beerli and Martin (2004) there is a theoretical consensus in the literature that cognitive image is an antecedent of affective image.

Overall evaluation of image.

The literature suggests that other than cognitive and affective evaluation, places are also subject to overall evaluation. Beerli and Martin (2004) suggested that affective and cognitive image together leads to an overall image, resulting either in a positive or a negative image about the destination. However, according to some scholars in the field, overall evaluation can be either similar to or different from cognitive and affective
evaluation (Baloglu & Love, 2005; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b; Gartner, 1993). Since overall image and its components (cognitive image and affective image) can be different (Ahmed 1991), it is suggested that each component and overall image should be measured separately to better understand the relationships between them (Baloglu & Love, 2005). Finally in their empirical studies, Stern and Krakover (1993) and Baloglu and McCleary (1999) found that cognitive and affective evaluations have a positive and direct correlation with overall image.

A potential tourist trying to select a destination for a pleasing holiday will be exposed to a myriad of messages and information from a myriad of sources such as from destinations, brochures, friends, books, magazines, news media, etc. Most of the destination based information sources are regarded as biased (Sussmann, Unel, Pizam & Mansfield, 1999). Crompton (1979) indicated that resources from third parties such as news media or friends through word of mouth would be more credible. Thus this kind of information is superior and has a stronger effect in shaping the image.

According to Chon (1990) there are four types of evaluations that a visitor can develop after the visit:

- Positive incongruity: The visitor initially had a negative image about the destination. However after actually visiting and experiencing the destination, visitor develops a very positive image due to an unexpected high satisfaction. Destination performed higher than expected leading to highest level of satisfaction.
• Positive congruity: The visitor initially had a positive image and experienced the expected level of satisfaction at the destination.
  Destination performed well as expected.
• Negative Congruity: Negative image, negative experience. Destination performed poorly as expected.
• Negative Incongruity: Positive image, negative experience. Destination performed unexpectedly poor leading to highest level of disappointment.

Although the first scenario seems to be the best, the problem with this scenario is that destination may not attract the expected number of visitors due to existing poor image.

Beerli and Martin (2004) studied the relationship between internal characteristics of tourists (such as motivation for travel, experience of vacation travel, demographic factors) and perceived destination image. They sampled the visitors on Lanzarote island of Spain. The findings showed that there are significant relationships between internal characteristics of tourists and perceived destination image. Beerli and Martin (2004) concluded that travel motivations affect affective evaluation of the image, past travel experience and demographic characters affect both the cognitive and affective evaluation of image. They also confirmed the suggestion of Baloglu and McCleary (1999a) that the match between tourist’s motivation and the attributes of the destination positively influences the evaluation of affective image.

Application of Brand Personality to Destinations

Destination image has been studied by many scholars. However, application of brand personality to tourism destinations and destination branding has not been studied that often (Gnoth et al., 2007). Aaker (1997) defines brand personality as “the set of
human characteristics associated to a brand” (p. 347). Aaker (1997) developed a Brand Personality Scale (BPS) which consists of five generic dimensions: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness (Hosany et al., 2006). Although there have been similar studies following Aaker’s, very few studies applied BPS to destinations. Adapting Aaker’s (1997) research, Hosany et al., (2006) viewed destination personality as “a multidimensional construct and defined as the set of human characteristics associated to a tourism destination”. By using the measures from previous studies to set up constructs, they operationalised destination image with affective and cognitive components in their study. They captured destination personality with Aaker’s (1997) five dimensional brand personality scale (BPS). 27 of the 42 tested items were retained. They found destination image and destination personality to be related concepts. They also found that Aaker’s (1997) brand personality scale is applicable to places. Aaker’s model had five dimensions; their study however found that destination personality consists of three salient dimensions which are sincerity, excitement and conviviality. Hosany et al., (2006) found evidence that tourists find it useful to describe destinations with personality traits. Thus, DMOs and tourism authorities should not only emphasize on destinations’ cognitive and affective dimensions but also personality dimension as well in their marketing efforts.

Brands were initially developed for products or goods. There are apparent differences between tangible products and intangible services such as perishability, heterogeneity and inseparability. Thus, application of brand personality to the service industry and to the destinations will require different branding strategies and tactics (de Chernatony & Riley, 1999;Ekinci, Sirakaya-Turk & Baloglu, 2007).
Products are evaluated and differentiated based on their tangible attributes. However service brands are evaluated and differentiated based on both their tangible and intangible attributes (Cobb-Walgren, Rubble, & Donthu, 1995). While the functionality is an important factor in evaluation process of tangible products, experiential and emotional elements are also gaining high importance in the evaluation of service brands (Ekinci et al., 2007). Since destinations have both tangible (i.e., physical attractions and infrastructure) and intangible (i.e., hospitality of the locals) dimensions, we conclude that it would be important for destinations to develop and promote tangible and intangible attributes adequately. However it is impossible for a potential tourist to sample tourism destination and its components no matter tangible or not, thus a tourist’s image about the destination becomes a vital part of his/her decision process. (Sussmann et al., 1999).

There are successful branding examples in service industry that differentiates the brands (McDonalds, Burger King, Wendy’s; Marriott, Ritz Carlton, Four Seasons and Hyatt) from each other and competitors (Siguaw & Mattila, 1999; Ekinci et al., 2007). Thus, many destinations tried to adopt the same branding strategies used by service brands as well as product brands (Gnoth et al., 2007). However, destinations are not only different from tangible products but also from intangible service brands mentioned above. Destinations are much more complex and less controllable than the service brands (Ekinci et al., 2007). There are many more factors involved in destinations (i.e., all visitors, all the hospitality enterprises and all supporting sectors) than in service brands, and these factors are more effective and less controllable (i.e., government and past visitors) than in service brands. The high level of diversification among products and services offered by a destination, uncontrollable interaction between visitors and locals,
and local politics to deal with make it a very difficult task to manage the branding of a
destination (Gnoth et al., 2007). The geographic distance between destination and target
markets is another factor which is impossible to control. Thus it takes a longer and a
harder effort to develop and manage a positive and attractive brand personality for
destinations. These efforts would include developing a holistic management approach,
understanding potential and actual visitors, monitoring their perceptions, and creatively
involving local residents in these efforts, combining the efforts of government and
private sectors (Ekinci et al., 2007).

There will still be a need for continuous maintenance, improvements and updates
even after a positive and attractive brand personality is developed and communicated
with target audiences. A well-maintained brand will enable the destination to differentiate
itself from competitors, will reduce the search cost for potential visitors (Lim & O’Cass,
2001), and will even positively affect destination experience before, during and after.

Ekinci and Hosany (2006) studied the application of brand personality to tourism
destinations through two different samples, both consisting of international travelers from
U.K. One sample was approached in U.K. and the other was on the departure lounge of
an airport in a major European destination. Ekinci and Hosany (2006) found that tourists
attribute personality traits to destinations, and destination personality is perceived on
three dimensions: “sincerity, excitement, and conviviality” (p. 135). Sincerity and
excitement were found to be the main factors. Their study also showed evidence that
destination personality has a moderating effect between image and behavioral intentions.
Two points should be kept in mind that their study included only U.K. citizens and they
were surveyed after the travel.
Ekinci et al. (2007) in their study of Host Image and Destination personality confirmed the external validity of the study by Ekinci and Hosany (2006). The findings of both studies were similar in regards to the personality dimensions (sincerity, excitement, and conviviality) and the mediating role of destination personality between image and behavioral intentions such as positive word of mouth and intention to return. Ekinci et al. (2007) found that host image has a positive impact on destination personality, and destination personality has a positive impact on intention to return and recommend. Use of non-probability sampling and sampling only German travelers in only one destination in south coast of Turkey may limit the external validity of the study.

No matter how many studies have been done about destination branding, there is still confusion and lack of consensus about the terms of brand image and destination personality (Aaker & Fournier, 1995; Patterson, 1999; Ekinci et al., 2007). It is often possible to see that terms of destination personality and brand image are interchangeably used in the literature (Patterson, 1999; Ekinci et al., 2007). Although there are some studies intended to clarify the differences between the two terms (Karande, Zinkhan, & Lum, 1997; Patterson, 1999; Plummer, 1984), the rate of success has been fairly low since the confusion still exists due to lack of empirical studies (Hosany et al., 2006; Ekinci et al., 2007).

**Empirical Studies of Destination Image and Brand Personality in Practice, with the Focus of Turkey**

Brand, brand image, brand personality concepts were first studied in generic marketing literature. Later, scholars studied to find whether these concepts would be applicable to places and destinations. Some models and theoretical frameworks have
been developed and tested. Many agreed that destinations have certain images and this could affect travel and selection behavior of travelers. These findings and the increasing importance of tourism in economy has motivated many scholars to study destination images.

Most of the initial studies measuring the image of the destination studied the image of a country or a state or a region. Later studies started to cover cities as destinations. During the evolution of the destination image studies, some scholars such as Baloglu and McCleary (1999) studied U.S. international travelers’ images of Egypt, Greece, Italy and Turkey. This allowed the researchers to make comparisons across competing destinations and find out their strengths and weaknesses relative to each other. They also controlled the previous visitation and this enabled researchers to find out any possible image and perception differences between visitors and non-visitors. Baloglu and McCleary (1999) disaggregated the image into its perceptual/cognitive, affective and overall image components. The authors found significant differences in these image components for both visitors and non-visitors segments, revealing perceived strengths and weaknesses of the destination included in their study (Table 1).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Turkey versus Italy</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visitors</td>
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<td>Turkey’s strengths</td>
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<td>Good value for money</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Great beaches/water sports</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Unpolluted/unspoiled environment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Interesting historical attractions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Interesting and friendly people</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Italy’s strengths</td>
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<td>Quality of infrastructure</td>
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<td>Good nightlife and entertainment</td>
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<td>Suitable accommodations</td>
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<th>Turkey versus Greece</th>
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<td>Visitors</td>
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<td>Turkey’s strengths</td>
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<td>Good value for money</td>
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<td>Beautiful scenery/natural attractions</td>
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<td>Unpolluted/unspoiled environment</td>
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<td>Interesting and friendly people</td>
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<td>Greece’s strengths</td>
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<td>Great beaches/water sports</td>
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<td>Good nightlife and entertainment</td>
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<td>Standard hygiene and cleanliness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-visitors</td>
<td>Greece versus Italy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good value for money</td>
<td>Great beaches/water sports</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good nightlife and entertainment</td>
<td>Appealing local food (cuisine)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard hygiene and cleanliness</td>
<td>Quality of infrastructure</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Pleasant
Exciting
Overall image

Non-visitors
Good value for money | Great beaches/water sports
Good nightlife and entertainment |
Standard hygiene and cleanliness |

Greece versus Italy

Visitors

Greece’s strengths | Italy’s strengths |
Good value for money | Appealing local food (cuisine) |
Great beaches/water sports | Quality of infrastructure |
Pleasant |
Overall image |

Non-visitors
Good value for money | Suitable accommodations |
Great beaches/water sports | Appealing local food (cuisine) |
Unpolluted/unspoiled environment |

Sonmez and Sirakaya (2002) studied the image of Turkey as perceived by potential U.S. citizen international travelers. Their findings indicated that Turkey does not have a favorable image among this group. This finding is contrasting with that of Baloglu and McCleary (1999) who also studied a similar population. One possible reason put forward by Sonmez and Sirakaya was that Turkey was not in the respondents’ consideration set as they did not search and collect information about Turkey. Thus, with the absence of knowledge and cognitive image of Turkey, the respondents were not on the stage of developing any positive affective image towards Turkey. One interesting finding of Sonmez and Sirakaya (2002) was that respondents considered the information through personal and social communication most credible. This reiterated the importance of word of mouth in image development efforts.

Sirakaya, Shephard, and McLelland (1998) mention security and safety as key variables in decision making of travelers. Turkey suffers a lot from safety and security concerns of potential travelers. Turkish government and tourism authorities constantly try to encourage travelers that Turkey is safe for tourists.

Sonmez and Sirakaya (2002) pointed out some key points that have raised security concerns among foreign travelers and thus hindered the expected development of Turkey in tourism: Midnight Express movie in 1978 (depicting a biased and damaging portrait of Turkey against a foreign prisoner), military coups in 1960, 1970 and 1980, terrorist bombings and threats of PKK since 1980s, the conflict in Cyprus, Gulf War in 1990s, the Earthquake in 1999 and the recent turmoil in Iraq and Middle East. These issues are stronger than the claims of authorities (no matter they are true) in shaping the security image of Turkey in minds of travelers. Neither the facts nor the truths shape the
image and thus the behavior, but only the perceptions (MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997). Thus tourism authorities should try to alter the perceptions of potential markets in favor of their destinations. Facts and truths however are necessary, as well, to manage the experience positively once the destination is visited. And this is also very important for retaining visitors and spreading positive word of mouth by happy and satisfied visitors.

Sussmann et al. (1999) implemented a study to monitor the image change of first time British visitors to Turkey. Sample was asked to fill out two questionnaires one before travel and the other after travel. They found that after travel images were slightly more positive than pre-travel images. The age groups 18-25 and 55-64, both being the extreme, showed more negative congruent (negative) image changes than the rest of the age groups in between. Their study had the inherent limitations of a mailed survey such as low response rate (18%), the possibility of premeditated and remembered responses for the post travel questionnaire, unequal gender (f60/m40) ratio, and the homogeneity of the sample since they were all customers of 23 travel agents and were exposed to same aspects of the destination at the same time.

Sonmez and Sirakaya (2002) studied the image of Turkey among potential international travelers in the U.S. They controlled the visitation by excluding the visitors from sample. They found that Turkey did not have a favorable image in this segment probably due to the fact that Turkey was not among the possible options and thus there was no willing effort to collect information about Turkey. Lack of knowledge prevented the formation of affective image. The study also showed that cognitive images are formed before affective images which are probably developed during the willing information search. However the respondents had some organic images through various
sources, the most credible one was personal advice through word of mouth. Thus the study confirms the key importance of positive word of mouth for a destination as emphasized in previous studies. However the study did not intend to establish a casual relationship between image and behavioral intentions to visit.

Baloglu and McCleary (1999b) carried out an empirical study among U.S. international pleasure travelers to compare the images of four Mediterranean destinations (Turkey, Egypt, Greece, and Italy) for visitors and non-visitors. They conceptualized image with three components (cognitive, affective and overall image), this will be mirrored in this study. They found significant differences across four destinations in each image component. Cognitive attributes (such as value for money, accommodations, local cuisine, etc.) were found to be the primary distinguishing attributes among the studied destinations. Affective attributes were found be distinguishing among the visitors. This shows that affective images are gaining importance or being formed after visit if not after a high level of familiarity before visit (Baloglu, 2001). The study also showed the strengths and weaknesses of these competing destinations over each other (see Table 1) as well as revealing some positioning implications and valid ideas for image and product improvements. One limitation of the study is that the sample consisted of the people who requested information from Turkish Tourism Ministry and were already considering Turkey as a willingly designated option. Thus the non-visitor responses might have had some positive biases towards Turkey.

Baloglu (2001), by using the same data from the above mentioned study of Baloglu and McCleary (1999b), studied the relationship between the image of Turkey and familiarity of the visitors among non-visitors, first time visitors and repeat visitors.
His contribution to tourism literature in his study is laid in the way he operationalized familiarity. Although previous studies in tourism operationalized familiarity by only experience, Baloglu (2001) also included the amount of information known to study subjects for determining their level of familiarity. He found significant variations in all image components of Turkey (cognitive, affective and overall) due to subjects’ familiarity level with the destination. Higher familiarity predicted a more positive image or vice versa, since the direction of the relationship has not been empirically tested yet. Baloglu (2001) suggested that Turkey and other destinations should concentrate their marketing efforts to increase familiarity level on both informational and experiential aspects and sales promotions should be given adequate priority by DMOs while allocating the promotional resources.

Yarcan and Inelmen (2006) studied the image of Turkey by U.S. citizen cultural tourists during the vacation in Turkey. Their sample was the customers of two tour operators specialized in culture tourism. They collected data such as source of information, purpose of visit, level of satisfaction, cognitive, affective and overall evaluations, and demographics. They also employed open ended questions as recommended in the past literature. They found that the primary sources of information for this group were not the television commercials, magazines and newspapers that the Ministry of Tourism is often allocating the significant amount of resources to utilize, but were tour brochures, travel agents, books, word of mouth, and internet. The study indicated that destination image of Turkey and Istanbul are different and thus Istanbul should be marketed “as a unique destination and cultural identity” (Yarcan & Inelmen, 2006). Respondents perceived Turkey as an attractive cultural destination and 101 out of
109 indicated the intension to revisit, and all but one expressed to recommend Turkey. This shows the importance of ensuring the satisfaction and increasing destination familiarity by promotions. The limitations of the study is relatively small sample (109 subjects), high homogeneity of the sample since all surveyed subjects were the customers of only two tour operators thus experiencing almost same attributes of Turkey included in the itinerary of the tour. Thus results may not be generalized beyond the customers of these or similar tour operators.

Tasci et al. (2006) measured the image of Turkey among a student population in U.S. The findings confirmed the past studies from the perspective of non-visitors and less familiar tourists by indicating a negative and non-image due to the stereotypical apprehensions rather than facts, and lack of familiarity respectively. Like in the study by Yarcan and Inelmen (2006), open ended responses revealed Istanbul as key point of interest in Turkey. Turkey should be able to use Istanbul to anchor and encourage tourists to visit Turkey and also brand Istanbul distinctively. Small size and homogeneity of the student sampling is limiting the generalizability of the study.

Tasci et al. (2007) measured destination brand bias against Turkey among a student sample in the U.S.A. by using a quasi-experimental design. The sample was divided into three groups:

1. **Movie Only Group:** They were shown a promotional movie prepared by the tourism authority of Turkey but did not know it was depicting Turkey, and movie was censored from mentioning Turkey in it. At the end of the movie they were asked to fill out the survey for the destination that was shown on movie.
2. Movie and Turkey Group: They watched the movie and they were also told that it is depicting Turkey. At the end of the movie they were asked to fill out the survey for Turkey shown on movie.

3. Turkey Only Group: They were only asked to fill out the survey for Turkey without watching the movie.

Movie only group rated 21 of the 22 image dimensions highest (positive) among the three groups. Turkey only group on the other hand rated 20 of the 22 image dimensions lowest (showing bias) among the three groups. The findings of the study, as expected by the researchers and mentioned in other studies about Turkey, showed that Turkey is subject to negative image biases and is also lacking a clear image. This can be attributed both to lack of knowledge and / or some sided movies and news reports intentionally unflattering the image of Turkey.

Aktas, Aksu and Cizel (2007) measured the importance of the attributes for the visitors and the level of satisfaction in Antalya over the course of peak season, the most famous resort province with its famed conglomerate of cities and towns in the south of Turkey, stretching across the Mediterranean coast. The hospitality of the locals were rated 4.98 over 5, confirming the long lasting claim of Turks. The study found that although there are apparent variations across different nations, value for money, variety of attractions, and historical richness were among the most important attributes to predict satisfaction. Ten attributes out of fourteen were rated above 4.5 (5, being the positive extreme of the scale) and the rest four attributes were still rated above 4. The study is original since it is the first study about a specific resort destination of Turkey rather than the whole Turkey as study domain.
Measurement of Destination Images

According to Echtner and Ritchie (1991), the failure in most of the destination image studies was due to the methodologies they used to capture the holistic components of destination image. Most studies in this field tried to test the destination attributes with structured methods such as Likert and semantic differential scales. This involved asking subjects to rate pre-determined attributes from their point of view (Jenkins, 1999).

The inherent problem in this method is that attributes are pre-determined by the researchers. These attributes may not be relevant or descriptive enough for the subjects. Subjects may have much more valid attributes in their minds, but due to the limiting side of the pre-determined attributes they can not express their original and unique views. Timmermans, Heijden, and Westerveld (1982) find this method relatively unreliable. For this reason, researchers need to be very careful in compiling the attributes in surveys. Otherwise it is inevitable that some or all of the attributes will be unimportant to the subjects or some important attributes will be missed (Jenkins, 1999).

Qualitative Phase of an Image Study to Elicit Population Specific Constructs

Jenkins (1999) offer that image studies should start with a qualitative study to elicit constructs specifically from the population being studied (Figure 1). This will decrease the risk of including irrelevant attributes and missing the relevant ones in the surveys. Thus once the correct and relevant dimensions are identified and constructs built, the following quantitative study will yield more valid results. One of the construct elicitation methods for qualitative phase of an image study described by Jenkins (1999) was content analysis. This involves scrutinizing travel and destination related documents and other types of media such as guide books, brochures, promotion videos, billboards,
movies, and magazines, to get a better sense of the projected image before eliciting constructs. Dilley (1986) studied the brochures of 21 countries and categorized them depending on the contents of the brochures. Crompton (1979) and Baloglu and McCleary (1999b) have used it in their studies.

Researchers agree that both quantitative and qualitative data are needed to better understand the concept of image. Therefore, both scale questions and open-ended questions should be used. Table 2 presents brief information about structured and unstructured methods. In free elicitation method, for example, respondents are asked to describe the destination with a few words of their own (Jenkins, 1999). Reilly (1990) used this method while studying the image of Montana. Baloglu and Love (2005) examined association meeting planners’ images of five convention cities. The authors pointed out that both quantitative and qualitative perceptions should be investigated. The qualitative perceptions in their study revealed the unique perceptions that could not be captured by the closed-ended questions, and provided support for internal validity by converging with structured or scale evaluations.

Quantitative Phase of an Image Study to Measure the Image

According to Jenkins (1999), after the constructs and attributes used by the population to be studied are defined, researchers can code the customized measurement tools for the quantitative part of the study. These measures usually ask respondents to rate certain attributes (that are found to be relevant in the qualitative phase of the study) of the destination or to compare two or more destinations on these attributes. Most researchers used seven or five-point Likert or semantic differential scaling techniques.
Qualitative Phase
Purpose: to find constructs used by the study population in their cognition of destination image.

Relevant constructs

Quantitative Phase
Purpose: to measure tourist destination image according to the relevant constructs.

Figure 1. A model for destination image research.

Table 2

Methods used in destination image research: structured versus unstructured (after Echtner & Ritchie, 1991)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structured</th>
<th>Unstructured</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Various common image attributes are specified and incorporated into a standardized instrument and the respondent rates each destination on each of the attributes, resulting in a 'image profile'</td>
<td>The respondent is allowed to freely describe his or her impressions of the destination. Data are gathered from a number of respondents. Sorting and categorization techniques are then used to determine the 'image dimensions'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Techniques</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually a set of semantic differential or Likert type scales</td>
<td>Focus groups, open-ended survey questions, content analysis, repertory grid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advantages</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Easy to administer</td>
<td>1. Conducive to measuring the holistic components of destination image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Simple to code</td>
<td>2. Reduces interviewer bias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Results easy to analyze using sophisticated statistical techniques</td>
<td>3. Reduces likelihood of missing important image dimensions or components</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Facilitates comparisons between destinations</td>
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</table>
### Structured

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Does not incorporate holistic aspects of image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Attribute focused - that is, it forces the respondent to think about the product image in terms of the attributes specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The completeness of structured methods can be variable - it is possible to miss dimensions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Unstructured

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Level of detail provided by respondents is highly variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Statistical analyses of the results are limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Comparative analyses are not facilitated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Although it is very beneficial to combine two methods for more valid results, most researchers failed to do so. Most often, only a quantitative approach was used and the attributes, dimensions and constructs are determined by the researcher after reviewing past studies or consulting some experts in the field. Echtner and Ritchie (1991) and later Jenkins (1999) compiled these attributes in the order of the frequencies that they were used in the past studies. Some of the attributes listed in their studies such as scenery, hospitality of locals, costs, night life, shopping opportunities, cleanliness, historic sites, safety, tourist information facilities, availability of beaches were also used in this study.
The Trend in the Literature

Pike (2002) has reviewed 142 destination image studies between 1973 and 2000. He summarized the studies by outlining the context (type of travel studied), region, the number of the studied destinations, geographic scale of the destination (country, state, city, etc.), number of used attributes as independent variable, method used (structured or unstructured), data analysis technique, and type of sample for each study. Although the use of attribute lists in past studies have often been criticized in the literature (Dann, 1996), no model has yet been accepted to replace it (Pike, 2002). Of the 142 studies outlined by Pike (2002), countries were the most popular type of destination, followed by states, cities, resorts and provinces. Pike (2002) found that effects of visitation, segmentation, and image differences based on demographics were among the popular interests of the past studies respectively.

Kim and Morrison (2005) studied the image of South Korea among Japanese, Mainland Chinese and US visitors after 2002 FIFA World Cup. They found that all the visitors regardless of the nationality developed more positive images of South Korea after the event and concluded that an internationally renowned event can change the image in a short period of time. This explains the efforts of Turkish authorities for hosting Formula One racing, UEFA Championship matches and a future Olympic Games in Istanbul. Kim and Morrison also found that the image changes after the event varied across nations, level of education, age and occupation.

In their study of the relationship between the internal characteristics (motivations, past experiences and demographics) of the visitors and the image, Beerli and Martin (2004) found that perceived image is significantly influenced by the characteristics of the
visitor. They found that country of origin is the most influential demographic factor over cognitive and affective image. In our study for Istanbul, we will also try to measure image differences, if there is any, across similar demographics, such as nationality or geographic location.

Initial destination image studies measured the image of a country (Crompton, 1977, 1979; Kale & Weir, 1986), state (Crompton & Duray, 1985; Reilly, 1990), and a group of countries (Haahti & Yavas, 1983; Pearce, 1982; Richardson & Crompton, 1988). Baloglu and McCleary (1999b) measured the images of several Mediterranean countries: Egypt, Greece, Italy and Turkey, in visitor and non-visitor populations. As a relatively new interest in destination image studies, many researchers have started to study destination image on the basis of city (Dolnicar, Grabler, & Gu, 2004; Fairweather & Swaffield, 2002; Hernández-Lobato, Solis-Radilla, Moliner-Tena, & Sánchez-García, 2006; Schofield, Phillips, & Eliopoulos, 2005; Silvestre & Correia, 2005; Son, 2005).

Fairweather and Swaffield (2002), by using photographs of landscape and the Q Method, studied the destination image of Rotorua in New Zealand seeking to find how experiences vary among different groups. The sample consisting of locals, domestic and international visitors were asked to Q sort the photographs. Factor analysis revealed four types of preferred experiences associated with Rotorua: Sublime Nature, Iconic Tourism, New Zealand Family, and Picturesque Landscape. Fairweather and Swaffield (2002) found that locals, domestic visitors and international visitors showed variations in their expectations as well as experiences in Rotorua.

Dolnicar et al. (2004) introduced city perception analysis (CPA) to better analyze the cities’ destination image after criticizing the typical approach of ignoring inter-
individual differences, computing the mean values of responses, and interpreting them to make claims about the image of a destination. They illustrated the CPA approach with an empirical study of six European cities.

Silvestre and Correia (2005) developed and used a second-order factor analysis model to measure the image of Algarve in Portugal. They found three image factors (first-order) associated with Algarve: sun and sand, infrastructure, and social atmosphere. These factors were found to be shaping the overall image (second-order) as a consequence, sun and sand being the most influential.

Schofield et al. (2005) carried out an exploratory research sampling both visitors and non-visitors in Warrington (a town in Northwest of England) to provide some insights and support the tourism authorities in decision making. They found that visitor images were more positive than non-visitor and higher visitation and familiarity predicted a better image. However the results did not indicate a consensus on the Warrington’s suitability to be a day trip destination.

Son (2005), by applying a sketch map technique, measured the images of two Australian cities, Melbourne and Sydney, among international students on English language programs. Sketch map technique enabled the researcher to see the city in the mind of the respondents, with their own drawings. Respondents put the important attractions that are salient to them on the map. The results of Son’s (2005) study described Sydney as a spatially dominated city, and Melbourne as a path orientated city.

Hernández-Lobato et al. (2006) studied the relationship among image, satisfaction and loyalty for Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo, (a city in south coast of Mexico). They sampled 140 American visitors and the results revealed four image dimensions for Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo:
natural resources, service quality, entertainment and affective image. They also found a significant relationship between affective image and loyalty.

By looking at the previous studies in literature, one can see a trend over the years that the physical scale of the destinations to be studied got smaller. It started with the image of countries, followed by the states, regions and by cities recently. As the scales of the destinations to be studied are getting smaller, the findings of the studies will be much more valid and reliable since variations caused by the big scale of destination will be avoided. In the future studies different parts of a destination city can also be studied since different parts of the city has different attributes salient to different traveler segments. Thus this trend from bigger scales to smaller may continue in the future studies. As the different, smaller and more specific traveler segments are targeted in destination image studies, it is very likely that the number of attributes may increase to address the needs of these specific segments. Judging by the special issues by Journal of Vacation Marketing in 2000, Journal of Brand Management in 2002, and Tourism Analysis in 2007 which were solely devoted to the topic, another recently increasing trend in the field is towards destination branding from destination image (Gnoth et al., 2007).
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study used a survey designed to investigate Istanbul's brand image and destination personality in the minds of foreign visitors. Both close-ended and open-ended questions were used in the survey to gather quantitative and qualitative data about Istanbul's brand image.

Questionnaire Development

The travel brochures and internet sites about Istanbul were content analyzed to identify a set of relevant attributes. After examining the previous research (e.g. Aaker, 1997; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Hosany, Ekinci, & Uysal, 2006; Sonmez & Sirakaya, 2003), the image attributes and destination personality characteristics regarding Istanbul are specified and incorporated into a self administered questionnaire. Dialogs with visitors of Istanbul in which they expressed some positive and negative issues have also been incorporated in the efforts to catch the most relevant dimensions. Finally some scholars in the field have also been consulted.

The Measurement

Respondents are asked to rate Istanbul on each of the attributes and personality traits specified in the survey. Cognitive perceptions are measured by utilizing an evaluative perception rating scale (Jenkins, 1999). A 5-point scale was used, where 1
means poor and 5 means excellent for respondents to rate 24 attributes. Affective images are borrowed from Baloglu and McCleary (1999b) and measured by four 7-point bipolar scales: pleasant – unpleasant, arousing – sleepy, relaxing – distressing, and exciting – gloomy. Overall image of Istanbul and Turkey is separately measured by a 10-point scale where 1 means very negative and 10 means very positive. Behavioral intentions such as recommendation and intention to revisit Turkey after Istanbul experience are also measured by 10 point scale where 1 means not recommend at all and do not intend to visit, 10 means definitely recommend and very likely to visit respectively.

Brand personality items were borrowed from Aaker (1997), Hosany et. al. (2006), to a great extent and complemented by the findings from the content analysis of brochures and the internet sites. A total of 28 brand personality items were measured on a 5-point Likert type scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The author also included some qualitative and demographic questions (age, gender, level of education, country of residence, marital status and household income in US Dollars) in this self-administered survey. Trip related questions regarding how long the visitor had been in Istanbul at the time of interview, their past visits to Istanbul, the purpose of their trip, trip companions were also included. As part of the qualitative questions, respondents were asked to list three words or phrases associated with the general image of Istanbul, expected mood or atmosphere, distinctive or unique to Istanbul tourist attractions, and popular tourist activities.

In order to learn about the behavioral influence of information sources at the pre-travel period, respondents were asked to indicate the most popular information sources
influencing their visit to Istanbul. They were also asked if they met any Turkish person before trip and how the impression was.

Finally they were asked to categorize Istanbul among the alternatives such as Middle Eastern City, European City, Oriental City, Resort Destination, etc. They were also given the opportunity to suggest any ideas for a more tourist friendly Istanbul.

Sample

The target population of the study is only international visitors to Istanbul. A convenience sampling was used. The self administered surveys were distributed in places mostly populated by international visitors such as Sultanahmet Square, St. Sofia, Blue Mosque, Topkapi Palace, Dolmabahce Palace, tourism information kiosks and Ataturk Airport departure terminal. It should be noted that, although not in a systematic way, the visitors were randomly approached and asked to participate in the study. To increase the participation rate, questionnaires were translated to German, Chinese, Spanish and Japanese, after English original. It was observed that availability of surveys in different languages increased the participation and ensured that the questions were easily understood. For their time and cooperation to fill out surveys, they were offered a small traditional gift of Nazar Bonjouk (Blue Glass Evil Eye Bead). This small gift is also observed to increase the rate of participation.

Analysis of the Data

The data are analyzed in several stages. First, data are explored for any error and outlier, and descriptive statistics are reported. Principal component analysis with varimax rotation is applied to cognitive perceptions and brand personality items to identify the underlying dimensions. After assessing the reliabilities by using Cronbach’s
alpha, composite scores for the identified dimensions are computed. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is utilized to examine the differences in brand image and destination personality evaluations with the use of appropriate post-hoc test.
CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH RESULTS

Since this study is intended to find out the possible destination image, behavioral intension, and personality variations as perceived by the visitors from different countries, the respondents were categorized, depending on their geographic origin, under the segments of USA, UK, Europe (including most of the European countries) and East Asia (consisting of Japan, China, South Korea and Taiwan). Thus most of the tables reporting the findings are prepared to depict the results for four geographic origins as well as an overall result to better understand and interpret the results.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic profile of the respondents is presented in Table 3 as separated by four geographic segments and also including the overall results. The majority of visitors from East Asia tend to be youngest of all others (70.2 % between 13 and 35 years), followed by Europeans (53.2 % between 13 and 35 years), and British (44.4 % between 13 and 35 years). Visitors from USA on the other hand, tend to be oldest of all others (52.3 % between 51 and 66+ years) followed by British and Europeans. There is no significant difference among all segments in terms of gender. Female respondents are more than males in all segments; in overall 44.1 % of the respondents are Female and 55.9 % Male. The rate of married respondents is most among visitors from USA (married %70, single %30) followed by British. This high rate of marriage among
visitors from USA can be attributed to their relatively high age. Unlike among visitors from USA and UK, rate of single and married is equal among visitors from Europe (married 45.1 %, single 45.1 % and other 9.8 %) and East Asia (married 48.9 %, single 48.9 % and other 2.1 %). Most of the respondents, regardless of geographical segments, are highly educated (74.8 % with university or higher degrees), visitors from USA being the most educated (91.1 % with university or higher degrees) and East Asia the second (85.4 % with university or higher degrees) followed by Europeans and British.

Regardless of geographic segments, 56.9 % of the respondents reported an annual household income less than $ 59,999. Visitors from UK are found to be the wealthiest of all segments with 58.1 % reporting an annual household income more than $ 90,000. This is followed by USA and East Asia segments.
Table 3

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th>East Asia</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=46</td>
<td>n=37</td>
<td>n=141</td>
<td>n=48</td>
<td>N=272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 13-24 years</td>
<td>5 (11.4%)</td>
<td>8 (22.2%)</td>
<td>19 (13.5%)</td>
<td>6 (12.8%)</td>
<td>38 (14.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 25-35 years</td>
<td>6 (13.6%)</td>
<td>8 (22.2%)</td>
<td>56 (38.7%)</td>
<td>27 (57.4%)</td>
<td>97 (36.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 36-50 years</td>
<td>10 (22.7%)</td>
<td>8 (22.2%)</td>
<td>27 (19.1%)</td>
<td>7 (14.9%)</td>
<td>52 (19.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 51-65 years</td>
<td>15 (34.1%)</td>
<td>11 (30.6%)</td>
<td>34 (24.1%)</td>
<td>5 (10.6%)</td>
<td>65 (24.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 66+ years</td>
<td>8 (18.2%)</td>
<td>1 (2.8%)</td>
<td>5 (3.5%)</td>
<td>2 (4.3%)</td>
<td>16 (6.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44 (100.0%)</td>
<td>36 (100.0%)</td>
<td>141 (100.0%)</td>
<td>47 (100.0%)</td>
<td>268 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>21 (45.7%)</td>
<td>16 (43.2%)</td>
<td>62 (44.0%)</td>
<td>21 (43.8%)</td>
<td>120 (44.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>25 (54.3%)</td>
<td>21 (56.8%)</td>
<td>79 (56.0%)</td>
<td>27 (56.2%)</td>
<td>152 (55.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46 (100.0%)</td>
<td>37 (100.0%)</td>
<td>141 (100.0%)</td>
<td>48 (100.0%)</td>
<td>272 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>East Asia</td>
<td>Overall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=46</td>
<td>n=37</td>
<td>n=141</td>
<td>n=48</td>
<td>N=272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>12 (30.0)</td>
<td>13 (41.9)</td>
<td>55 (45.1)</td>
<td>23 (48.9)</td>
<td>103 (42.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>28 (70.0)</td>
<td>16 (51.6)</td>
<td>55 (45.1)</td>
<td>23 (48.9)</td>
<td>122 (50.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>2 (6.5)</td>
<td>12 (9.8)</td>
<td>1 (2.1)</td>
<td>15 (6.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40 (100.0)</td>
<td>31 (100.0)</td>
<td>122 (100.0)</td>
<td>47 (100.0)</td>
<td>240 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School or less</td>
<td>1 (2.2)</td>
<td>5 (13.5)</td>
<td>23 (16.4)</td>
<td>4 (8.3)</td>
<td>33 (12.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some university</td>
<td>3 (6.7)</td>
<td>6 (16.2)</td>
<td>23 (16.4)</td>
<td>3 (6.3)</td>
<td>35 (13.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>14 (31.1)</td>
<td>18 (48.6)</td>
<td>56 (40.0)</td>
<td>33 (68.8)</td>
<td>121 (44.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master or PhD</td>
<td>27 (60.0)</td>
<td>8 (21.6)</td>
<td>38 (27.1)</td>
<td>8 (16.7)</td>
<td>81 (30.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>45 (100.0)</td>
<td>37 (100.0)</td>
<td>140 (100.0)</td>
<td>48 (100.0)</td>
<td>270 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Household Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $30,000</td>
<td>5 (12.8)</td>
<td>4 (12.9)</td>
<td>31 (25.4)</td>
<td>10 (23.8)</td>
<td>50 (21.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Household Income</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td></td>
<td>UK</td>
<td></td>
<td>Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=46</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n=37</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n=141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000-$59,999</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000-$89,999</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$90,000-$119,999</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$120,000 or more</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Previous Experience

Table 4 shows the past experience of visitors with Istanbul. In overall, 81.9 percent of the respondents reported that this is their first visit to Istanbul, the remaining 18.1 visited Istanbul at least one more time in the past. Visitors from Europe were found to have visited Istanbul more often than other segments. This can be attributed to Europe's relative geographic proximity to Istanbul and to the fact that Turkish tourism has long considered Europe as a major source of tourism market.

Twenty-two percent of the visitors from Europe visited Istanbul at least one more time in the past. This is followed by visitors from USA with 17.4 %, UK 13.9 % and lastly East Asia with 10.4 %. It is interesting that visitors from USA visited Istanbul more often than visitors from UK in spite of the further geographic distance between Istanbul and USA. However this can be explained by the higher popularity of Aegean and Mediterranean destinations (famous for Sea, Sun and Sand) of Turkey among British visitors. It is predictable on the other hand that, visitors from East Asia are the last in previous visitation since Asia is a relatively newer market than Europe and USA for Turkey and Istanbul. Although the percentages show some variations among different segments, it should be noted that Pearson Chi-Square test shows that there is no statistically significant difference among different segments regarding previous visitation.
Table 4

*Previous visitation to Istanbul*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th>East Asia</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=46</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n=37</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n=48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>82.6</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>86.1</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Times</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>48</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=272</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N=272</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Trip Characteristics

The results regarding the purpose of trip to Istanbul are presented in Table 5. The most popular purpose among visitors from UK (58.3 %), USA (51.1 %) and Europe (39.6 %) was “Experience new things”. Relaxation, fun and experience new things responses were almost equally reported among East Asian Segment with relaxation being the most frequent response. These findings indicate the need that Istanbul should code its marketing messages differently for each group of countries. Istanbul should offer different reasons to travel for different segments based on geographic origin. For visitors from USA and Europe, Relaxation and Fun were found to be the second and third popular purposes respectively to visit Istanbul. For British, on the other hand, Fun was the second popular and Relaxation was the least popular purpose to visit Istanbul.

The results regarding the travel companion during the trip in Istanbul can be seen on Table 6. For visitors from UK (59.5 %), Europe (49.3 %) and USA (43.5 %) the most frequently reported travel companion is Family/relatives; and the second was Friends. For the East Asia segment it was the opposite, Friends (36.2 %) being the most frequently reported and Family/relatives (27.7 %) the second. It is also noteworthy that 21.3 % of East Asians reported to be traveling alone. This rate is significantly well above the other segments. Again with significantly higher rates, 19.6 % of the visitors from USA and 12.8 % from East Asia indicated that they are traveling with tour groups.
Table 5

*Purpose to visit Istanbul*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th></th>
<th>UK</th>
<th></th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th></th>
<th>East Asia</th>
<th></th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=46</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n=37</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n=141</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n=48</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N=272</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxation</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience new</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 6
Travel companion during the trip in Istanbul

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>USA</th>
<th></th>
<th>UK</th>
<th></th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th></th>
<th>East Asia</th>
<th></th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=46</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n=37</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n=141</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n=48</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N=272</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/relatives</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>45.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>35.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour Group</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Information Sources

Information sources that visitors utilized before visiting Istanbul are presented in Table 7. These information sources, depending on their priority and frequency to be used by each visitor, can be considered to have had a possibly positive effect in the decision making process and thus it is important for DMO's while selecting the right media of communications. Friends and relatives, Newspapers / magazines / travel books, and Internet are top three information sources for visitors from USA, UK, and Europe. Prior visit along with Newspapers / magazines / travel books and Internet are among the top three information sources for visitors from East Asia. Top information sources should be utilized for a more effective marketing communications with the target audience. The findings indicate that the best source of information for visitors from USA is Newspapers / magazines / travel books (47.8 %), for UK Internet (54.1 %), for Europe Friends and relatives (58.9 %) and for East Asia Internet (37.5 %). The importance of Friends and relatives as a source of information confirms the power of word of mouth one more time. Thus Istanbul like any other destination should make sure that visitors are leaving with happy memories to tell others back at home.

Categorization of Istanbul by visitors

The ways that visitors categorize Istanbul depending on their individual perceptions is presented in Table 8. How visitors categorize Istanbul can provide local tourism authorities with invaluable ideas regarding how to depict and market Istanbul in tourism commercials and other media like discussed in information sources section.
Table 7

*Information sources used by respondents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th>East Asia</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=46</td>
<td>n=37</td>
<td>n=141</td>
<td>n=48</td>
<td>N=272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior visit</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge from school</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movies or TV shows</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel agency</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People from Turkey</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends and relatives</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers / travel books*</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel and tourism fairs</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

53
Note. Since respondents are asked to check all that apply to indicate their popular sources of information, sum of the percentage values of each item in parentheses are more than 100%, thus each item should be evaluated against the total of that column. For example: 17.4% of the visitors from USA indicate prior visit as a source of information.

* Newspapers / magazines / travel books
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th>East Asia</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n=46 %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Eastern city</td>
<td>17 37.0</td>
<td>18 48.6</td>
<td>28 19.9</td>
<td>12 25.0</td>
<td>75 27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European city</td>
<td>18 39.1</td>
<td>12 32.4</td>
<td>34 24.1</td>
<td>13 27.1</td>
<td>77 28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oriental city</td>
<td>5 10.9</td>
<td>7 18.9</td>
<td>47 33.3</td>
<td>5 10.4</td>
<td>64 23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union point of West &amp; East</td>
<td>25 54.3</td>
<td>20 54.1</td>
<td>79 56.0</td>
<td>30 62.5</td>
<td>154 56.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resort destination</td>
<td>2 4.3</td>
<td>1 2.7</td>
<td>21 14.9</td>
<td>6 12.5</td>
<td>30 11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical &amp; cultural capital</td>
<td>30 65.2</td>
<td>29 78.4</td>
<td>97 68.8</td>
<td>33 68.8</td>
<td>189 69.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A little bit of everything</td>
<td>21 45.7</td>
<td>14 37.8</td>
<td>43 30.5</td>
<td>2 4.2</td>
<td>80 29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
<td>1 0.7</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
<td>1 0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note. Since respondents are asked to check all that apply to categorize Istanbul, sum of the percentage values of each in parentheses are more than 100%, thus each item should be evaluated against the total of that column. For example: 37% of the visitors from USA categorize Istanbul as a Middle Eastern City.
Regardless of the geographic origin, Istanbul is most frequently categorized as historical and cultural capital and then secondly as union point of West and East unanimously by all segments. A little bit of everything was also among the top categorizations for USA, UK and Europe segments. For comparison between Istanbul as a European city and Istanbul as a Middle Eastern city, all three segments except for UK rated Istanbul as a more European city rather than Middle Eastern. However, Europeans categorize Istanbul as a more Oriental city rather than a European city; all other segments view Istanbul as a more European than Oriental. The findings confirm that Istanbul can be marketed and depicted as one of the most historical and cultural destinations uniquely harnessing the qualities of west and east, appealing to all segments with little bit of everything to offer, within the comfort of a European city but also preserving the mysticism of an oriental city.

Qualitative Perceptions

Survey respondents were also asked to answer open ended questions about their perceptions of Istanbul as a tourist destination as well as their personal suggestions to make Istanbul a more tourist friendly destination. Open ended questions concentrated on five topics:

1-General image or characteristics of Istanbul
2-The expected atmosphere or mood in Istanbul
3-Tourist attractions unique to Istanbul
4-Popular tourist activities in Istanbul
5-Visitors’ suggestions to make Istanbul a more tourist friendly destination
Table 9

Top Ten Open Ended Responses for General Image or Characteristics of Istanbul

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History/Historical/Historic</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious/Muslim/Islamic</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture/cultural</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting point of East and West</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosques</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosphorus</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Mosque</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For first four topics, respondents were asked to list first three separate words or phrases that come to their mind. For the suggestion part, respondents were provided a free space to write down their suggestions for Istanbul. The results were content analyzed and most frequent ten responses are presented in tables.

*General image or characteristics of Istanbul*

Most frequent ten responses are shown in Table 9. As can be seen from the table, Istanbul is mostly associated with history by 125 responses. This is not a surprising result given the long and rich history of Istanbul easily visible from historic buildings and temples around the city. Second most frequent response was religious/Muslim/Islamic. This result can be attributed to the myriad of mosques all
around the city, some of which are architecturally outstanding in the skyline of Istanbul visible from everywhere with their long minarets (towers) and huge domes. One other contributing factor is probably the calls for prayers (ezan), five times a day, heard from everywhere in the city when it is time for it. The third most frequent response was culture probably due to the fact that Istanbul has been the capital city for different civilizations such as Roman, Byzantine and Ottomans. The fourth most frequent response was meeting point of west and east. This connection probably has geographic and cultural dimensions.

*Expected Atmosphere in Istanbul*

We wanted to learn about respondents’ own and individual perspectives about the mood of Istanbul with this open ended question. We found that most of the brand personality items that we used in the closed ended questions were frequently used to describe the atmosphere of Istanbul by the respondents in this open ended question, showing that attributes, used in the survey instrument were indeed salient to the visitors of Istanbul. Most frequent ten responses are presented in Table 10. Most frequent response was lively/alive (82), followed by friendly (40) and busy (30). Exotic (19), exciting (17), vibrant (13), oriental (10), loudly/noisy (10), joyful (9), and religious (8) were among the top ten responses respectively. Most of the responses are defining Istanbul as a lively, friendly, exciting, and vibrant destination. Although loudly/noisy response, along with busy/hectic, may sound negative, they should be taken into account with the fact that these two responses (supposedly negative) are the natural consequences of other relatively desirable responses such as lively, friendly, vibrant, and exciting.
Table 10

Top Ten Open Ended Responses for Expected Atmosphere in Istanbul

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lively/alive</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Busy/active/bustling/hectic</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exotic</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exciting</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vibrant</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oriental</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loudly/noisy</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joyful</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tourist Attractions Unique to Istanbul

Istanbul has many unique to itself attractions which can provide a competitive edge to the city if they are successfully used as an anchor to attract potential visitors. Thus we asked the respondents to list their top three attractions unique to Istanbul. Results of top ten attractions are presented in Table 11. It was found that eight of the top ten responses are about historical attractions such as temples and palaces while two are about natural attractions, the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn. The most frequently reported attraction is St. Sophia by 107 respondents. St. Sophia, built in 537AD, was the largest cathedral in the world for about a thousand year and still is one the largest.
Table 11

*Top Ten Open Ended Responses for Tourist Attractions Unique to Istanbul*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Attraction</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>St. Sophia</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bosphorus</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Blue Mosque</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Topkapi Palace</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mosques</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Bazaar/Grand Bazaar/Market</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Underground Cistern</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Dolmabahce Palace</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Palaces</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Golden Horn</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second most frequently reported attraction is Bosphorus by 100 respondents, followed by Blue Mosque (96), Topkapi Palace (61), mosques in general (48), old historic bazaars (37), underground cistern (18), Dolmabahce Palace, palaces in general (13), and finally Golden Horn (9).

*Popular Tourist Activities in Istanbul*

Responses for popular tourist activities are more homogeneous than the other open ended responses. The difference between the frequency of the most popular response and the others is the minimum when compared to other open ended responses. Results are presented in Table 12. The most popular activity is Bosphorus tour on boat as reported by 64 respondents.
Table 12

*Top Ten Open Ended Responses for Popular Tourist Activities in Istanbul*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Bosphorus tour/boat trip</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Visiting palaces</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Visiting mosques</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Shopping at Grand Bazaar/Spice market</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Dining/eating Turkish food</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Visiting Blue Mosque</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Visiting St. Sophia</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Visiting Topkapi Palace</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Walking on streets/watching street life</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Shopping</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the Bosphorus is dividing Europe and Asia, and each side is populated with various palaces, mansions and fortresses and other attractions, Bosphorus tour probably gives the visitors the feeling of a once in a life time experience. They are neither in Europe nor in Asia, but right in the middle. The other activities are visiting palaces (53), and mosques (50), shopping at Grand Bazaar and Spice Market (39), dining/eating Turkish food (38), visiting Blue Mosque (35), visiting St. Sophia (34), visiting Topkapi Palace (23), walking on the streets/watching street life (23), and shopping (21).
Suggestions for a more Tourist Friendly Istanbul

Open ended responses for a more tourist friendly Istanbul provided invaluable responses that need to be seriously taken into account by local tourism authorities and acted by all stake holders accordingly. The most frequently reported issue is regarding the insistent and harassing sales people. Visitors perceive this as if they are going to be ripped off by dishonest sales people. About thirty visitors mentioned this issue as a problem area. About twenty visitors mentioned cheating taxi drivers as threat for a tourist friendly Istanbul. Another twenty visitors complained about the cleanliness and hygiene issues. They asked for more disposal cans, a cleaner environment, convenient and clean restrooms. Eighteen visitors asked for lower, clear, and honest pricing practices by vendors, hotels, taxi cabs, and restaurants. About sixteen respondents asked for more traffic and directional signage in international languages as well as English. Many asked for better public transportation, better time tables and route explanations. More English and other languages should be spoken in tourist info bureaus or kiosks, at museums, palaces etc. and the tourist info bureaus should be available on convenient locations and service hours should be extended. Tourists should be provided with free information leaflets and maps in various languages. Some respondents asked for more pedestrian friendly traffic patterns, less traffic congestion, more polite drivers.

Analyses

Image Perception and Behavioral Intention Differences among Different Segments

Principal component analysis with varimax rotation was conducted on 24 cognitive items to reduce data and identify underlying dimensions. After the factor
analysis, 3 items were observed to take similar factor loading values under more than one factor. These 3 items were included in the factors where they got the highest factor loading and where they formed a meaningful factor with the rest of the items included.

The results of Barlett’s Test of Sphericity (p value 0.000, Chi Square 497.562, df 253) showed that there is enough correlation between variables to run factor analyses. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (.829) also showed that sample adequacy is satisfactory. Results of factor analysis for cognitive image are presented in Table 13. As can be seen from Table 13, factor analyses produced six cognitive image dimensions and explained 57.1 percent of the variance. Table 13 also shows that reliability coefficients for each factor dimension were satisfactory.

Cognitive image factor one consisted of “historical attractions, cultural attractions, cultural heritage, variety of attractions, and scenery/natural attractions” Thus it was named as “attractions”. Cognitive image factor two consisted of “quality of restaurants, local cuisine, quality of accommodations, night life/entertainment, and value for money”. Thus it was named as “appealing tourist amenities”. Cognitive image factor three consisted of “foreign language ability of locals, variety of shopping opportunities, people’s friendliness/hospitality, and availability of useful tourist information”. Thus it was named as “tourist friendliness”. Cognitive image factor four consisted of “availability of local festivals, getting around the city, and traffic infrastructure”. Thus it was named as “local fest and getting around”. Cognitive image factor five consisted of “availability of beaches, unpolluted/unspoiled environment, and cleanliness and hygiene standards”. Thus it
was named as “quality of physical environment”. Cognitive image factor six consisted of “taxi cab service, local tours/excursions, and safety and security”. Thus it was named as “the ease of local transportation”.

Overall means of each cognitive image dimension was computed and presented in Table 14. Istanbul was rated highest (4.1 over 5) for cognitive image factor one, attractions dimension. This can be explained by Istanbul’s rich historical and cultural attractions that are dating back to Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman periods. Istanbul’s unique geographic location on two continents and the Bosphorus and Golden Horn also explains this high rating. Istanbul was rated second highest for image factor 3, tourist friendliness dimension. This can be explained by hospitality of Turks that they have long claimed to be good at and availability of shopping alternatives throughout the city, language ability of avid salespeople.
Table 13

*Principal component analysis of perceptual/cognitive items*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Eigenvalue</th>
<th>Explained Variance (%)</th>
<th>Reliability (Cronbach’s Alpha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Image Factor 1:</td>
<td>5.659</td>
<td>24.605</td>
<td>.772</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical attractions</td>
<td>.810</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural attractions</td>
<td>.754</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural heritage</td>
<td>.650</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety of attractions</td>
<td>.593</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenery/natural attractions</td>
<td>.402</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Image Factor 2:</td>
<td>2.202</td>
<td>9.573</td>
<td>.758</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appealing tourist amenities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of restaurants</td>
<td>.791</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local cuisine</td>
<td>.732</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of accommodations</td>
<td>.644</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night life and entertainment</td>
<td>.567</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value for money</td>
<td>.417</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Image Factor 3:</td>
<td>1.707</td>
<td>7.420</td>
<td>.707</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist friendliness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign language ability of locals</td>
<td>.794</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factors</td>
<td>Factor</td>
<td>Eigenvalue</td>
<td>Explained Variance (%)</td>
<td>Reliability (Cronbach’s Alpha)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety of shopping opportunities</td>
<td>.583</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People’s friendliness/hospitality</td>
<td>.543</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of useful tourist information</td>
<td>.483</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Image Factor 4: Local fest and getting around</td>
<td>1.264</td>
<td>5.496</td>
<td>.693</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of local festivals</td>
<td>.726</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting around the city</td>
<td>.616</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic infrastructure</td>
<td>.613</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Image Factor 5: Quality of physical environment</td>
<td>1.230</td>
<td>5.349</td>
<td>.709</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of beaches</td>
<td>.761</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpolluted/unspoiled environment</td>
<td>.759</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleanliness and hygiene standards</td>
<td>.444</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Image Factor 6:</td>
<td>1.083</td>
<td>4.709</td>
<td>.577</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The ease of local transportation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
<th>Eigenvalue</th>
<th>Explained Variance (%)</th>
<th>Reliability (Cronbach’s Alpha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taxi cab service</td>
<td>.668</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local tours/excursions</td>
<td>.653</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety and security</td>
<td>.470</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Variance Explained</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>57.113</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis, Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy .829. Barlett’s Test of Sphericity p value .000 (Chi Square 497.562, df 253). After the factor analysis, 3 items were observed to take similar factor loading values under more than one factor. These 3 items were included in the factors where they got the highest factor loading and where they formed a meaningful factor with the rest of the items included.*
Hypothesis Testing

The results of one way ANOVA analyses are shown in Table 14. The table shows image means for each segment as well as behavioral intentions. ANOVA analyses revealed that there are statistically significant perception differences across different segments (based on geographic origins) for some of the cognitive and overall image variables. This supports the Hypotheses 1 and 3. For attractions factor (historical attractions, cultural attractions, cultural heritage, variety of attractions, and scenery/natural attractions) visitors from USA rated Istanbul significantly higher than visitors from East Asia. This means that the attractions in Istanbul are appreciated most by visitors from USA. For appealing tourist amenities factor (quality of restaurants, local cuisine, quality of accommodations, night life/entertainment, and value for money), visitors from USA rated Istanbul higher than visitors from East Asia. This shows that it is the visitors from USA who enjoys the local cuisine and entertainment more than East Asians and who find the accommodations better. For tourist friendliness factor (foreign language ability of locals, variety of shopping opportunities, people’s friendliness/hospitality, and availability of useful tourist information) visitors from USA rated Istanbul higher than both East Asians and Europeans. This can be due to the fact that the most common foreign language in Turkey is English thus unlike the visitors from USA, East Asians and Europeans may not have the opportunity to communicate with locals in their own languages. For quality of physical environment factor (availability of beaches, unpolluted/unspoiled environment, and cleanliness and hygiene standards), the overall ratings from all
segments were lower than the other factors. This is probably the area that is Istanbul is weak and should find ways to develop itself on this factor.

However the trend that visitors from USA rate Istanbul higher than other segments continues, Americans rated Istanbul significantly higher than Europeans. For the ease of local transportation factor (taxi cab service, local tours/excursions, and safety and security), Americans again rated higher than East Asians. Although ANOVA analyses supported Hypotheses 1 and 3, it did not support the Hypotheses 2 since ANOVA results did not reveal any statistically significant differences across different segments for any of the four affective image variables.

The higher ratings of Americans over the other segments for some cognitive factors also continued for overall image and behavioral variables. For overall image of Istanbul, Americans rated Istanbul higher than Europeans and East Asians. For intension to recommend Istanbul, Americans again rated Istanbul higher than East Asians. For general country image of Turkey Americans rated Turkey higher than Europeans.
### Table 14

**One way ANOVA analysis for cognitive image dimensions, affective image items, overall image and behavioral intensions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>US</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th>East Asia</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>F-value</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attraction</td>
<td>4.4&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.9&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.724</td>
<td>.003*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appealing tourist amenities</td>
<td>3.5&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.0&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.945</td>
<td>.033*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist friendliness</td>
<td>3.7&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.4&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.2&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>5.224</td>
<td>.002*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local fest and getting around</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of physical environment</td>
<td>2.8&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.4&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.183</td>
<td>.006*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ease of local transportation</td>
<td>3.4&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.9&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>4.036</td>
<td>.008*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pleasant-Unpleasant</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>.322</td>
<td>.810</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arousing-Sleepy</td>
<td>5.7</td>
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<td>Relaxing-Distressing</td>
<td>4.5</td>
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<td>Exciting-Gloomy</td>
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<td>Europe</td>
<td>East Asia</td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>F-value</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
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<td>-----------</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n=141</td>
<td>n=48</td>
<td>N=272</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Image Istanbul</td>
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<td>7.9</td>
<td>8.1b</td>
<td>7.7b</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>3.734</td>
<td>.012*</td>
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<td>8.5</td>
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<td>7.9b</td>
<td>8.4</td>
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<td>.050*</td>
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<tr>
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<td>7.2b</td>
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<td>7.5</td>
<td>3.995</td>
<td>.008*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intention to revisit Turkey</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>1.116</td>
<td>.343</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. "*" denotes significance at 0.05 or lower probability level. Higher mean scores indicate more positive perceptions. A post-hoc Scheffe test was conducted when the group variances are equal; Tamhane’s T2 test was conducted when the group variances are not equal. Mean scores with different letters are significantly different at .05 or better probability level. Cognitive image dimensions (attractions, appealing tourist amenities, tourist friendliness, local fest and getting around, quality of physical environment, the ease of local transportation) were measured on 5-point scale, whereas affective images (arousing, pleasant, exciting, relaxing) on 7-point. Overall image Istanbul and general image Turkey and behavioral intensions were measured on 10-point scale (the higher the score the more positive the image).
It is interesting that for all of the significant differences for image and behavioral variables, it was visitors from USA, without any exception, who rated higher than other segments, most often than East Asians and then Europeans. It is also interesting that there was not any significant difference at all, between visitors from USA and UK. This can be explained by the fact that these two countries are culturally similar to each other when compared to other segments and UK stands somewhere between.

*Analyses of Overall Mean Scores for Image, and Behavioral Intentions*

Table 14 also shows the overall mean scores for image and behavioral variables along with ANOVA results. The mean of overall scores for each cognitive image dimension shows Istanbul’s strengths and weaknesses. The higher scores indicate strengths, the lower scores on the other hand indicate weaknesses. Istanbul gets the highest score (4.1 over 5) for attractions factor due to its highly popular historical and cultural attractions such as temples and structures dating back to antique ages and as well as its unique scenery and natural attractions such as Bosphorus and Golden Horn. High score in this dimension indicates a good asset for tourism authorities to capitalize on. There are many practical implications for local authorities to work on. The second highest score (3.4 over 5) comes for tourist friendliness factor, probably due to friendliness and foreign language ability of locals, and shopping opportunities in Istanbul’s various historic and modern markets. The third highest score (3.2 over 5) comes from appealing tourist amenities factor due to local cuisine and quality of restaurants and accommodation facilities as well as value for money. Dining and tasting local dishes was often repeated in open ended
responses, thus supports Istanbul’s strength in local cuisine attribute. Night life, entertainment and 7/24 activity of Istanbul was also repeated in open ended responses. Istanbul was rated 3.2 over 5 for the ease of local transportation factor that harnesses local tours, safety and taxi cab service. For local fest and getting around factor (harnessing the local festivals, getting around the city, and traffic attributes), and for quality of physical environment factor (harnessing beaches, unpolluted environment and cleanliness attributes), Istanbul got relatively low scores, 2.9 and 2.5 over 5 respectively. These two dimensions should be considered as the areas that Istanbul should develop itself.

For affective image components, Istanbul was generally found to be pleasant by getting 5.8 over 7 for pleasant-unpleasant variable. Istanbul got 5.6 for arousing-sleepy, and 5.7 for exciting-gloomy variables. Istanbul got the lowest affective score (4.6) for relaxing-distressing variable which indicates that local tourism authorities should also find ways to provide visitors a more stress free atmosphere in the city.

Overall image of Istanbul was rated as 8.1 over 10, whereas Turkey’s general country image was rated 7.5. This indicates the need that Istanbul should be marketed as a separate destination in order not to be affected by Turkey’s less favorable image.

For behavioral intension to recommend, Istanbul got 8.4 over 10. This indicates that visitors of Istanbul are satisfied with the destination and very likely to recommend it through word of mouth. Although intension to recommend is very high, intention to revisit Turkey on the other hand is relatively lower as 6.0 over 10. This can be attributed to the fact that visitors have certain budgets for travel and thus they probably opt to visit other destinations that they have not seen before.
Principal component analysis with varimax rotation was conducted on 28 brand personality items to reduce data and identify underlying dimensions. The results of Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity (p value 0.000, Chi Square 1100.316, df 153) showed that there is enough correlation between variables to run factor analyses. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (.753) also showed that sample adequacy is satisfactory. Results of factor analysis for brand personality items are presented in Table 15. Factor analyses produced five personality dimensions and explained 58.5 percent of the variance. Table 15 also shows that reliability coefficients for each factor dimension were satisfactory. These five dimensions included 18 of the 28 personality items, excluding the remaining 10 items. However this does not mean that the remaining items are not important, thus we ran ANOVA analysis both on the underlying dimensions and the remaining items.

Personality factor one consisted of “successful, intelligent, upper class, contemporary, and up to date” items. Thus it was named as “competence and modernity”. Personality factor two consisted of “vibrant, alive, original, and unique” items. Thus it was named as “originality and vibrancy”. Personality factor three consisted of “reliable, honest, and outdoorsy” items. Thus it was named as “sincerity”. Personality factor four consisted of “cool and trendy” items. Thus it was named as “cool and trendy”. Personality factor five consisted of “friendly, cheerful, glamorous, and charming” items. Thus it was named as “conviviality”. The remaining items were “exciting, spirited, smooth, masculine, western, tough, exotic, conservative, and entertaining”.

75
Table 15

*Principal component analysis of brand personality items*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
<th>Eigenvalue</th>
<th>Explained Variance (%)</th>
<th>Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personality Factor 1:</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.441</td>
<td>24.670</td>
<td>.714</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competence and modernity</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>.787</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligent</td>
<td>.668</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper class</td>
<td>.571</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary</td>
<td>.565</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to date</td>
<td>.506</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality Factor 2:</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.176</td>
<td>12.091</td>
<td>.694</td>
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<tr>
<td>Originality and vibrancy</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vibrant</td>
<td>.764</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alive</td>
<td>.729</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original</td>
<td>.696</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique</td>
<td>.565</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality Factor 3:</td>
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<td>1.622</td>
<td>9.011</td>
<td>.596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sincerity</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliable</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Honest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.755</td>
</tr>
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</table>

76
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
<th>Eigenvvalue</th>
<th>Explained Variance (%)</th>
<th>Reliability (Cronbach’s Alpha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outdoorsy</td>
<td></td>
<td>.480</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality Factor 4:</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cool and trendy</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cool</td>
<td>.770</td>
<td>1.187</td>
<td>6.596</td>
<td>.628</td>
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<td>Trendy</td>
<td>.715</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality Factor 5:</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conviviality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td>.673</td>
<td>1.097</td>
<td>6.094</td>
<td>.625</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheerful</td>
<td>.645</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glamorous</td>
<td>.601</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charming</td>
<td>.460</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Total Variance Explained</td>
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<td>58.463</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis, Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy: .753. Barlett’s Test of Sphericity p value .000 (Chi Square: 1100.316, df 153). After the factor analysis, 6 items were observed to take similar factor loading values under more than one factor. These 6 items were included in the factors where they got the highest factor loading.
Results of ANOVA showed that there were statistically significant differences in the personality perceptions of visitors from different segments. As shown in Table 16 three personality dimensions and two individual personality items were perceived statistically different by different segments. For competence and modernity factor (successful, intelligent, upper class, contemporary, and up to date) visitors from USA rated Istanbul significantly higher than visitors from UK and East Asia. For the first and last time in this study, visitors from USA and UK had significantly different perceptions.

The higher ratings by visitors from USA in general both for image and personality dimensions could be attributed to the fact that Turkey’s image is not very favorable in USA, as documented by past studies (Tasci, Gartner & Cavusgil, 2007; Sonmez, & Sirakaya, 2002). However the possibly poor expectations are overmet once the destination is visited and enjoyed, thus leading to a higher satisfaction with positive incongruity.

For originality and vibrancy factor (harnessing vibrant, alive, original, and unique) visitors from USA, UK and Europe rated higher than East Asians. This can be due the fact that there are many unique and vibrant destinations in East Asia which increases the benchmark for Istanbul and thus results in lower ratings than other segments. However the strictly obeyed regulations and the expected and normal flow of life in western countries poses a contrast situation than hectic, little bit chaotic, 7/24 in the move state of Istanbul. Thus it is understandable that western visitors rate Istanbul higher for this dimension.
For conviviality factor (harnessing friendly, cheerful, glamorous, and charming), visitors from East Asia scored higher than British and Europeans. Friendliness of locals and their cheerful attitude towards tourists may have been enjoyed more by visitors from East Asia because of cultural differences. It may also be due to the fact Europe, UK and Turkey have shared a relatively similar history when compared to East Asia. Thus the historic monuments and temples may sound more charming to visitors from East Asia.

For personality item “down to earth” visitors from UK and East Asia rated higher than Europeans. For personality item “western” visitors from East Asia rated higher than visitors from UK and Europe. This response is very understandable since Turkey is relatively western (culturally and geographically) compared to East Asia and relatively eastern or less western when compared to UK and Europe.

**Analyses of Mean scores for Personality perceptions**

Analyses of mean scores for personality perceptions are shown in Table 16. Originality and vibrancy factor (consisting of vibrant, alive, original, and unique) got the highest score, 4.2 over 5, confirming the unique and vibrant character of Istanbul. The high rating of these positive characters provide tourism authorities with some implications for communication and marketing. Second highest score, 3.9 over 5, comes for conviviality factor (consisting of friendly, cheerful, glamorous, and charming). This can be attributed to friendliness of locals, and to the charm of the historic atmosphere. Third highest score, 3.3 over 5, is shared by competence and modernity factor (consisting of successful, intelligent, upper class, contemporary, up
to date) and sincerity factor (reliable, honest, and outdoorsy). Cool and trendy factor (cool and trendy) is lowest rated dimension, 3.2 over 5.
Table 16

One way ANOVA analysis for personality factor dimensions and remaining personality attributes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>US</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th>East Asia</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>F-value</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n=46</td>
<td>n=37</td>
<td>n=141</td>
<td>n=48</td>
<td>N=272</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence and modernity</td>
<td>3.6(^a)</td>
<td>3.2(^b)</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.2(^b)</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4.135</td>
<td>.007*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Originality and vibrancy</td>
<td>4.3(^a)</td>
<td>4.3(^a)</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.9(^b)</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>7.474</td>
<td>.000*</td>
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<td>Sincerity</td>
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<td>3.1</td>
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<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.565</td>
<td>.055</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cool and trendy</td>
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<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.366</td>
<td>.254</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conviviality</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.8(^a)</td>
<td>3.8(^a)</td>
<td>4.0(^b)</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.720</td>
<td>.012*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down to earth</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.8(^a)</td>
<td>3.5(^b)</td>
<td>3.9(^a)</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.758</td>
<td>.003*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exciting</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>1.741</td>
<td>.159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirited</td>
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<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.836</td>
<td>.475</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smooth</td>
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<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.585</td>
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<td>Masculine</td>
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<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>.746</td>
<td>.526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factors</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>East Asia</td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>F-value</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=46</td>
<td>n=37</td>
<td>n=141</td>
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<td>Western</td>
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<td>2.9a</td>
<td>3.4b</td>
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<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.202</td>
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<td>Exotic</td>
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<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
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<td>.480</td>
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<td>Conservative</td>
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<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.024</td>
<td>.111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertaining</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>1.356</td>
<td>.257</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* "**" denotes significance at 0.05 or lower probability level. Personality variables including the dimensions (first five variables) and remaining personality attributes (last ten variables) were measured on 5-point scale (the higher the score the more positive the personality perception). A post-hoc Scheffe test was conducted when the group variances are equal; Tamhane's T2 test was conducted when the group variances are not equal. Mean scores with different letters are significantly different at .05 or better probability level.
Of the ten personality items that were not included in the dimensions after factor analysis, the highly rated ones are exciting (4.1), entertaining (4.1), spirited (4.0), and exotic (3.9). Tourism authorities should also incorporate these highly rated positive characters to communication and marketing efforts of Istanbul. The low rated ones are western (3.0), smooth (3.1), tough (3.2), and conservative (3.3). A further study to find out whether these low rated items are negatively affecting the satisfaction and behavioral intentions of visitors may provide valuable information.

Anova analysis of six cognitive image dimensions showed that for four of them there were statistically significant perception differences across studied segments based on nationality. And without exception, visitors from USA rated all of the four dimensions higher. For attractions dimension, visitors from USA rated Istanbul 4.4, whereas visitors from East Asia rated 3.9, thus indicating a statistically significant difference in the perception. For appealing tourist amenities dimension, it was the same, visitors from USA rated Istanbul significantly higher (3.5) than visitors from East Asia (3.0). For tourist friendliness dimension, visitors from USA rated Istanbul 3.7, which is statistically and significantly higher than visitors from Europe (3.4) and East Asia (3.2). For quality of physical environment dimension, visitors from USA (2.8) rated Istanbul statistically and significantly higher than visitors from Europe (2.4). For the ease of local transportation dimension, visitors from USA (3.4) rated Istanbul statistically and significantly higher than visitors from East Asia (2.9). ANOVA analyses did not find any statistically significant difference for four of the affective image items across studied segments. For overall image of Istanbul on the other hand, visitors from USA (8.7) rated significantly higher than visitors from Europe (8.1) and East Asia (7.7). For intension to
recommend Istanbul, visitors from USA (8.9) like in often cases, rated significantly higher than visitors from East Asia (7.9), thus indicating a more likelihood of positive word of mouth in USA. For general image of Turkey, visitors from USA (8.2) rated significantly higher than visitors from Europe (7.2).

For three of the five personality dimensions, there were significant differences of perceptions across studied segments. For personality dimension one, visitors from USA (3.6) rated significantly higher than visitors from UK (3.2) and East Asia (3.2). For personality dimension two, visitors from USA (4.3), UK (4.3), and Europe (4.3) rated significantly higher than visitors from East Asia (3.9). For personality dimension five, visitors from East Asia (4.0) rated significantly higher than visitors from UK (3.8), and Europe (3.8). ANOVA analyses indicated that two of the ten personality attributes that were not included by the factor analysis dimensions were perceived significantly different by studied segments. One is down to earth, which was rated significantly higher by East Asians and British than Europeans. The other one is western, which was rated significantly higher by East Asians than Europeans and British.

Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1– There will be differences for the average cognitive perceptions of Istanbul across different nationalities. (Some cognitive perceptions of Istanbul by at least one pair of nationality are different).

Results-For five of the six cognitive image dimensions, there were significant perception differences across some of the studied segments based on nationality. Hypothesis is accepted.
Hypothesis 2- There will be differences for the average affective perceptions of Istanbul across different nationalities. (Some affective perceptions of Istanbul by at least one pair of nationality are different).

Results-This study has not found any significant perception differences for any of the four affective image variables across studied segments. Hypothesis is thus rejected.

Hypothesis 3- There will be differences for the average overall image of Istanbul across different nationalities. (Overall image of Istanbul by at least one pair of nationality is different).

Results-This study found that there are significant differences for the overall image perception of Istanbul and general image perception of Turkey across some of the studied segments. Hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 4- There will be differences for the average brand personality perceptions of Istanbul across different nationalities. (Brand personality perceptions of Istanbul by at least one pair of nationality are different).

Results-For three of the five personality dimensions, there were significant perception differences across studied segments. And there were significant differences for two of the remaining ten items (those not included in any personality dimension) across studied segments. Hypothesis is accepted.

Reliability and Validity Assessment

The Cronbach’s Alpha scores overall showed satisfactory reliability. The significant correlations among cognitive image and overall image and behavioral intentions provided some evidence for predictive and concurrent validity. In addition, the
fact that findings from qualitative and quantitative responses converged provided additional support for both reliability and face validity of the items included in the study.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to measure the image and destination personality of Istanbul as a tourist destination and find the perception differences between different nationalities. By measuring the image and personality, we tried to identify strengths and weaknesses of Istanbul thus providing a feedback to local tourism authorities and all the stake holders so that they can try to improve weaknesses while purposely benefiting from the strengths. By finding the perception differences across different segments based on nationality, we hope to provide clues to tourism marketers so that they can customize their products and marketing communication efforts and offer products, services and promotions attractive and salient to the specific market segments.

This study focused on the actual visitors of Istanbul. Since they were visiting Istanbul at the time of the data collection we thought that their perceptions and feelings would be most strong and best in accuracy thus help us find the most accurate results. Findings show that Istanbul is visited mainly for the purposes of new experiences, relaxation, and fun. More than 80% of visitors travel with their family/relatives or friends. Eighteen percent of the surveyed visitors had already visited Istanbul before. Newspapers/magazines/travel books, friends/relatives, and internet are found to be the most influential information sources for decision making. Seventy percent of the visitors see Istanbul as a "historical and cultural capital" and 57% see as "union point of west and
east”. Only these two nominations will provide an invaluable competitive edge for a tourist destination if the destination is managed and marketed professionally.

Open ended responses provided valuable information about Istanbul from the perspective of actual visitors. The image of Istanbul is most often associated with history, religion, culture and meeting point of east and west. The atmosphere in Istanbul is described as lively, friendly, busy and exotic by most of the respondents. St. Sophia, Bosphorus, Blue Mosque and Topkapi Palace were among the most popular tourist attractions. Taking a boat trip in Bosphorus, visiting palaces and mosques, and shopping in old bazaars were among the most popular tourist activities.

This study separated image into three components. Cognitive image, affective image and overall Image, each component were measured separately. Along with these image components we also measured behavioral intensions such as intension to recommend and revisit.

Factor analysis of cognitive image items produced 6 dimensions: attractions (consists of historical attractions, cultural attractions, cultural heritage, variety of attractions, and scenery/natural attractions), appealing tourist amenities (consists of quality of restaurants, local cuisine, quality of accommodations, night life/entertainment, and value for money), tourist friendliness (consists of foreign language ability of locals, variety of shopping opportunities, people’s friendliness/hospitality, and availability of useful tourist information), local fest and getting around (consists of availability of local festivals, getting around the city, and traffic infrastructure), quality of physical environment (consists of availability of beaches, unpolluted/unspoiled environment, and
cleanliness and hygiene standards), and the ease of local transportation (consists of taxi cab service, local tours/excursions, and safety and security).

Istanbul was rated highest for “attractions”, “tourist friendliness”, “appealing tourist amenities” and “ease of travel within the city” dimensions respectively. “Quality of physical environment” and “local fest and getting around” dimensions however were rated lowest. These high and low scores provide many important implications for tourism authorities and stake holders that have an interest in Istanbul.

For “attractions” and “appealing tourist amenities” dimensions, visitors from USA rated significantly higher than East Asians. For “tourist friendliness” dimension, visitors from USA rated significantly higher than Europeans and East Asians. For “quality of physical environment” dimension, visitors from USA rated significantly higher than Europeans. For “the ease of local transportation” dimension, visitors from USA rated significantly higher than East Asians.

This study has not found any significant differences among the perception of studied segments for four of the affective image items. However there were significant differences for overall image and intension to recommend. For overall image of Istanbul, visitors from USA rated significantly higher than Europeans and East Asians. For intension to recommend, visitors from USA rated significantly higher than East Asians. For general image of Turkey, visitors from USA rated significantly higher than Europeans. The image perception differences found in this study provide clues for customization of marketing and communication efforts as well as product and service development.
This study found some perception differences for destination personality variables across studied segments. For competence and modernity factor (successful, intelligent, upper class, contemporary, and up to date) visitors from USA rated Istanbul significantly higher than visitors from UK and East Asia. For originality and vibrancy factor (harnessing vibrant, alive, original, and unique) visitors from USA, UK and Europe rated higher than East Asians. For conviviality factor (harnessing friendly, cheerful, glamorous, and charming), visitors from East Asia scored higher than British and Europeans. For personality item “down to earth” visitors from UK and East Asia rated higher than Europeans. For personality item “western” visitors from East Asia rated higher than visitors from UK and Europe.

This study employed both structured and unstructured questions to enhance and support the findings. It was observed that findings of both methods converged. Thus the findings of this study were confirmed in itself since qualitative findings from open ended questions matched with quantitative findings. For example Istanbul was rated highest for “attractions” and “tourist friendliness” dimensions in close ended questions. Open ended responses provided similar since Bosphorus tour, historical attractions, lively, and friendly were among the most frequent responses.

Comments, Implications and Suggestions

The findings of this research have both practical and theoretical implications. This study documented the demographic profile of the respondents as well as their trip purpose and trip characteristics, their information sources and the way that they see Istanbul. Results showed Istanbul’s strengths and weaknesses. On the theoretical part, this study showed that utilizing both structured and unstructured items in the survey is
crucial to get more accurate results. Most of the open ended responses were already
addressed in the structured questions and this showed that the attributes in the survey
were salient to the sample. Thus this study avoids the criticism of using unsalient
attributes.

The findings of the study provide invaluable feedback for tourism authorities,
government and other stake holders. The strengths of Istanbul such as its unique
historical, cultural, and natural attractions, friendliness of locals, lively and exotic
atmosphere can be coded into promotion and marketing materials. Turkish government
can lobby to depict these attributes in the media such as news, newspapers, magazines,
travel books and documentary movies. The weaknesses on the other hand such as
disturbingly insistent salespeople, poor physical environment, cheating taxi drivers, bad
traffic, poor public transportation, discrepancy in prices, low hygiene and sanitary
standards, language inability of tourism information staff, poor availability of tourism
information bureaus in convenient locations, poor signage of street names, unavailability
of information boards in foreign languages, unavailability of local tourist information
leaflets should immediately be improved.

Education, training, legislative correction and capital investment would be the
best cure for all these problems in the long run. For the short run however, one solution
to taxi cab issues could be teaming new taxi cab fleets exclusively for foreign visitors.
There should be visible signs on those taxi cabs or they should be painted with a certain
color so that tourists can distinguish and purposely use those cabs. Drivers in those
tourist friendly cabs should be selected among foreign language speakers or at least be
well trained so that they can comfortably communicate with visitors from different
countries. The languages that the cab driver speaks should be visible from outside. Visitors should be enabled to easily report any poor service from taxi cabs.

Information kiosks that are able to provide information about public transportation (routes, times and how to purchase tickets), tourist attractions, museums, finding an address, etc. should be deployed around the city. They should be enabled to provide service in multi languages. They can also be employed to report mistreatment. Such reports should be followed up and visitor should be informed about the corrective action. Policies and practices to identify mistreatments such as visitor reports, secret shoppers, and unexpected inspections should be developed and maintained. Tourism authorities, local governments and other stake holders should closely work together to improve cleanliness and hygiene standards, solve traffic problem, touch up the physical environment at least between airport and city, and around tourist attractions. Awareness of local stake holders should be increased to get better results. Satisfaction or visitor feedback surveys should be regularly implemented to track improvements and to further identify the areas to improve.

A pictured tourist card which enables the visitor access museums and palaces, use public transportation, use the kiosks and even do shopping like a credit card should be developed and marketed to visitors. Cards could be loaded for certain periods like a day pass or week pass for public transportation and museum entrances. Money could also be credited into cards to spend in shopping. Such a card would increase the security of the visitors and the efficiency of the public services available to them. It would also be easier to track and identify any mistreatment with the help of this card system.
Tourism authorities should make sure that tourist information personnel and tourism police can adequately communicate in major foreign languages. Maps and information leaflets should be available in major languages. Traffic and street signs should be increased and be in multi languages. Volunteers or government employees to help visitors around tourist attractions can be utilized.

Since this study proved that there are significant perception differences across different countries, marketing communications and promotions should be customized for each specific segment. Even product and service developments can be customized specifically for each segment.

Since originality and vibrancy factor, consisting of vibrant, alive, original, and unique, was rated highest by three segments, USA, UK and Europe, these characters should be depicted in marketing materials for these countries in order to attract right audiences and to form right expectations in the minds of potential visitors thus preventing any negative incongruity probabilities due to unrealistic expectations. For East Asia segment on the other hand conviviality factor, consisting of friendly, cheerful, glamorous, and charming, should be depicted in marketing materials. Istanbul may also be marketed as a western destination in East Asia and Eastern destination for other segments.

The results regarding the travel companion during the trip in Istanbul can be seen on Table 4. For visitors from UK (59.5 %), Europe (49.3 %) and USA (43.5 %) the most frequently reported travel companion is Family/relatives; and the second was Friends. Pictures of such travel companions can be used in travel ads and documents to attract potential visitors. For the East Asia segment it was the opposite, Friends (36.2 %) being
the most frequently reported and Family/relatives (27.7%) the second. It is also noteworthy that 21.3% of East Asians reported to be traveling alone.

Istanbul generally got favorable scores from all of the segments. But past studies showed that Turkey usually lacks a favorable image among non visitors. This means that if Turkish tourism authorities can encourage potential tourists to visit Istanbul, it is very likely that visitors will enjoy the experience and spread the positive word of mouth. And one can even suggest that the fact that a destination lacks a favorable image is going to benefit the destination at the end of the visit. Since the visitor will visit the destination with low expectations, it will be easier for destination to satisfy the visitor with positive incongruity. This fact may probably explain why visitors from USA, where Turkey lacks a favorable image (Tasci, Gartner & Cavusgil, 2007; Sonmez & Sirakaya, 2002), rated Istanbul higher than other segments. But the problem is encouraging the potential tourist to visit a destination which lacks a favorable image.

This study found that different nationalities travel for different purposes. Table 3 presents these results. For example while more than 30% of European and Asian visitors visit Istanbul for relaxation, only 2.8% of British and 17.8% of US visitors do so. And while 33.3% percent of British visitors visit Istanbul for fun, only 15.6 of US and 15.1 of Europeans visitors do so. Thus it is practical to offer different reasons for visitors from different segments to encourage them to visit Istanbul.

For theoretical implications, the survey used in this study has successfully combined structured and unstructured items. This survey can be applied to other competing destinations and results can be compared. If a uniform survey is developed
and used in all destinations, this would allow for precise comparisons between destinations.

Limitations of the Study

The study focuses on the visitors of Istanbul and therefore the results may not be generalizable to those who have not visited Istanbul. The study did not measure the respondents' pre-trip images and perceived brand personality, but surveyed them during the experience. For the time and financial constraints, this study did not aim to survey the sample based on the real proportions of the nationalities and other demographic characters of the actual visitors of Istanbul. The sample was surveyed during the fall of 2007, thus for more generalizable results it is advisable that sample is surveyed throughout the whole year in order to prevent any possible seasonal bias, and nationalities and demographic characteristics of the sample should represent those of the actual visitors.

The most significant limitation of this study is that findings can not be generalizable to all visitors of Turkey. Since the number of responses from visitors of other countries, except for USA and UK, was very few to run the statistical analysis, we had to group many countries in one segment such as Spain, Germany, France, and many European countries in Europe segment. Likewise, we had to group Japan, China, South Korea and Taiwan in East Asia segment. There might be significant differences even across the countries in the same segment. Grouping different countries in one segment and assuming that they are similar is a major limitation of this study. An ideal study would have sampled visitors from all nations that visit Istanbul and samples for each nation should have been proportionate with the actual visitor numbers from those nations.
Open ended questions in the survey were placed after close ended questions. Thus respondents may have been influenced by the attributes listed in the initial stages of the survey. This possible influence should also be taken into consideration while interpreting the results.

Like in most studies, we could sample the visitors that had the time, and were kind enough to fill out our surveys. We approached them in as many places as possible such as museums, palaces, airport and streets. We did not have the opportunity and permission to sample in hotels, restaurants, etc. And the surveys were filled out from September until December in 2007. Thus the sample may not represent the visitors all year round. From the nature of surveying technique (approach and ask to participate), it was impossible to check for non-response bias. Since the sample would be broken into too smaller groups an thus make it impossible to run the statistical analyses properly, we did not control the purpose of visit, the number of days that the respondents have spent in Istanbul, and the number of past visits to Istanbul. There might have been some perception differences depending on these three variables.

Future Research

A future research replicating this exact study but with a bigger sample for each country may identify more differences in terms of perceptual differences across different nations. Purpose to visit Istanbul, the number of past visits to Istanbul, and the number of days spent in Istanbul can also be studied in a future study with a bigger sample size. The same study could be carried out within the same nations but among the non visitors as well to see how and how much the perception changes between visitors and non-visitors.
Further studies are crucially necessary to explain the reasons and processes of perceptional differences across different demographics such as nation. Only these studies can provide the necessary information so that destinations may try to manipulate the processes and manage the perception of image positively.

It would be interesting to see future studies replicating this study for other destinations with the same or similar segments. They would be very beneficial to compare destinations among each other and see which destination is superior to the rest, and which segments prefer which destinations.
REFERENCES


98


Hello and thank you for visiting Istanbul and participating in this survey. My name is Safak Sahin and I am a graduate student working on my Masters in Hotel Administration at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Purpose of the Study
You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of the study is to gain insight into how visitors of Istanbul perceive Istanbul’s brand image and destination personality. Your truthful responses will help the tourism authorities of Istanbul and Turkey to better understand your perceptions and experiences and to serve you better. The data obtained from this research will be used to complete a thesis project at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Participants
You are being asked to participate in the study because you have visited Istanbul and your responses to the questions are of vital importance for the success of the study.

Procedures
If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following: Give approximately 15-20 minutes of your time to answer some destination image and brand personality questions regarding Istanbul.

Benefits of Participation
There may be no direct benefits to you as a participant in this study. However, we hope to evaluate Istanbul’s brand image and destination personality in order to provide a “feedback for tourism and local authorities of Istanbul” and to aid them in designing and managing “a more tourist friendly Istanbul”.

Risks of Participation
There are risks involved in all research studies. This study may include only minimal risks. You may become uncomfortable when answering some questions.

Cost / Compensation
There will be no financial cost to you to participate in this study. The study will take 15-20 minutes of your time. You will be compensated for your time with a gift of tiny Nazar Bonjuk, which is a Turkish good-luck “evil eye” charm. The University of Nevada, Las Vegas may not provide compensation or free medical care for an unanticipated injury sustained as a result of participating in this study.

Contact Information
If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you may contact Dr. Seyhmus Baloglu at 00-1-702-895-3932.

For questions regarding the rights of research subjects, any complaints or comments regarding the manner in which the study is being conducted you may contact the UNLV Office for the Protection of Research Subjects at 00-1-702- 895-2794.

If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact my faculty advisor Dr. Seyhmus Baloglu at seyhmus.baloglu@unlv.edu or myself at sahins@unlv.nevada.edu.

Voluntary Participation
Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or in any part of this study. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice to your relations with the university. You are encouraged to ask questions about this study at the beginning or any time during the research study.

Confidentiality
All information gathered in this study will be kept completely confidential. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you to this study. All records will be stored in a locked facility at UNLV for at least 3 years after completion of the study. After the storage time the information gathered in will be destroyed.

Should you want a copy of the results of the survey, please feel free to send a separate e-mail to sahins@unlv.nevada.edu.

Thank you for your time and cooperation!
TO BE FILLED OUT ONLY BY FOREIGN VISITORS TO ISTANBUL

1. How long have you been in Istanbul? .................... days.

2. Is this your first visit to Istanbul? □Yes □No, I visited Istanbul …… time(s) before. (number)

3. What is the main purpose of your trip on this occasion?
   a) Relaxation   b) Fun/Excitement   c) Experience new things   d) Business
   e) Other ________________

4. With whom are you traveling on this trip?
   a) Travel alone   b) Family/relatives   c) Friend(s)   d) Tour group
   e) Other _______________________

5. We would like you to think Istanbul as if it were a person. This may sound unusual, but think of a set of human characteristics you associate with this destination. We are interested in finding out which personality traits or human characteristics come to mind when you think of Istanbul. Please check the appropriate box for each personality trait.

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<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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</table>
6. When you think of Istanbul, please list what comes to your mind first in terms of:

General image or characteristics (historical city, etc.)
1) ______________________ 2) ______________________ 3) ____________

The atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience (lively, etc.)
1) ______________________ 2) ______________________ 3) ____________

Tourist attractions, those are distinctive or unique to Istanbul (Bosphorus, etc.)
1) ______________________ 2) ______________________ 3) ____________

Popular tourist activities (visiting palaces, etc)
1) ______________________ 2) ______________________ 3) ____________

7. Listed below are some attributes that determine the quality of a tourist destination. Using the scale below, where “1” means “Poor” and “5” means “Excellent,” please rate these attributes for Istanbul by circling the appropriate number.

RATING SCALE from 1 to 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>poor</th>
<th>fair</th>
<th>good</th>
<th>very good</th>
<th>excellent</th>
<th>don’t know</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Value for money spent
Scenery/natural attractions
Historical attractions
Cultural attractions
Quality of restaurants
Quality of accommodations
Local cuisine
Availability of beaches
Unpolluted/unspoiled environment
Night life and entertainment
Getting around the city
Availability of local festivals
Variety of attractions
Cultural heritage
Traffic infrastructure
Safety and security
Cleanliness and hygiene standards
Foreign language ability of the people
Variety of shopping opportunities
People’s friendliness/hospitality
Availability of useful tourist information
Taxi cab service
Local tours/excursions
Public transportation
8. YOUR FEELINGS
Below is a list of scales that can be used to describe your feelings towards places. Evaluate Istanbul as a tourist destination on each word set by checking the appropriate box.

Pleasant
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unpleasant
Arousing
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Sleepy
Relaxing
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Distressing
Exciting
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Gloomy

9. YOUR OVERALL IMAGE AND INTENTIONS
A) Please rate your overall image of Istanbul as a vacation destination on a scale from 1 to 10, where
1=Very negative 10=Very positive
B) Please indicate if you would recommend Istanbul to your friends and relatives on a scale from 1 to 10, where
1=Not Recommend at all 10=Definitely recommend
C) How would you rate the general country image of TURKEY on a scale from 1 to 10, where
1=Very negative 10=Very positive
D) Please rate the level of your intention to visit TURKEY for vacation purposes over the next two years. Please use a scale from 1 to 10, where
1= Do not intend to visit 10=Very likely to visit

10. Please identify your most popular information sources in influencing your visit to Istanbul.
Check all that apply.

___ Prior visit
___ General knowledge from school
___ Movies or TV shows
___ Travel agency
___ People from Turkey
___ Friends, colleagues and relatives
___ Newspapers / magazines / travel books
___ Internet
___ Travel and tourism fairs
___ Other (Please explain)

11. Have you ever interacted with (had an opportunity to get to know) a Turkish person before?
□ YES... what kind of impressions did this interaction leave on you?
□ NO
12. How would you categorize Istanbul like? Please check all that apply.
   — Middle Eastern City
   — European City
   — Oriental city
   — Union point of West and East
   — Resort destination
   — Historical and cultural capital
   — A little bit of everything
   — Other (please specify) .................................................................

13. Which suggestion, if any, would you advise most for a more tourist friendly Istanbul? Please write below.

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14. Some demographics about you?

Age: ............... The country of residence: .........................

Gender:  _____ Male  _____ Female  Marital Status:  _____ Single  _____ Married
   _____ Other

Education:  _____ High School or less  _____ Some University  _____ University  _____ Master or PhD

Household income in US Dollars:
   _____ Less than $30,000  _____ $30,000-$59,999  _____ $60,000-$89,999
   _____ $90,000-$119,999  _____ $120,000 or more
APPENDIX C

NOTIFICATION OF IRB ACTION
Social/Behavioral IRB – Exempt Review
Approved as Exempt

DATE: September 20, 2007

TO: Dr. Seyhmus Baloglu, Tourism and Convention Administration

FROM: Office for the Protection of Research Subjects

RE: Notification of IRB Action by Dr. J. Michael Stitt, Chair
Protocol Title: Empirical Study of Istanbul's Brand and Destination Personality
OPRS# 0708-2425

This memorandum is notification that the project referenced above has been reviewed by the UNLV Social/Behavioral Institutional Review Board (IRB) as indicated in Federal regulatory statutes 45CFR46.

PLEASE NOTE:
Attached to this approval notice is the official Informed Consent/Assent (IC/IA) Form for this study. The IC/IA contains an official approval stamp. Only copies of this official IC/IA form may be used when obtaining consent. Please keep the original for your records.

The protocol has been reviewed and deemed exempt from IRB review. It is not in need of further review or approval by the IRB.

Any changes to the exempt protocol may cause this project to require a different level of IRB review. Should any changes need to be made, please submit a Modification Form.

If you have questions or require any assistance, please contact the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects at OPRSHumanSubjects@unlv.edu or call 895-2794.
VITA

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Safak Sahin

Local Address:
4050 Pacific Harbors Dr.
Apt: 215
Las Vegas, NV, 89121

Degree:
Bachelor’s Degree in Hotel Administration, 2003
University of Mersin, Turkey

Thesis Title:
Brand Personality and Destination Image of Istanbul:
A Comparison across Nationalities

Thesis Examination Committee:
Chairperson, Dr. Seyhmust Baloglu, Ph.D.
Committee Member, Dr. Billy Bai, Ph.D.
Committee Member, Dr. Curtis Love, Ph.D.
Graduate Faculty Representative, Dr. Michael S. LaTour, Ph.D.