

İSTANBUL BILGI UNIVERSITY
SOCIAL SCIENCE INSTITUTE
MARKETING COMMUNICATION MASTER PROGRAM

A RESEARCH ON THE PLACE BRANDING: İSTANBUL CASE

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İSTANBUL

2020

A Research On Place Branding: Istanbul Case

Kent Markası Hakkında Bir Araştırma: İstanbul Örneği

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Tezin Onaylandığı Tarih : 15.01.2020

Toplam Sayfa Sayısı : 94

Anahtar Kelimeler (İngilizce)

- 1) Place Brand
- 2) Destination Brand
- 3) Brand Image
- 4) Brand Loyalty
- 5) Brand Equity

Anahtar Kelimeler (Türkçe)

- 1) Kent Markası
- 2) Destinasyon Markası
- 3) Marka İmajı
- 4) Marka Sadakati
- 5) Marka Değerli

PREFACE/ ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Tezimde danışmanım olmayı kabul eden Gresi Sanje Hocama,

İflah olmayan öğrenci ruhumun kaybolmaması için gösterdiğim çabada beni destekleyen Yağmur Ceylan Korkut'a teşekkür ederim.

Ama en çok da sürekli tezim, sisteme olan eleştirilerim ve isyanlarım hakkında sıkılıp bunalmadan beni dinleyen, bana hep destek olan; danışmaktan, tartışmaktan büyük keyif aldığım Adnan Hepvar ve Gizem Hüroğlu'na teşekkür ederim.

Tezi ve süreci anlamlı kılan sizlerdiniz...

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B2B : Business to Business

CBBE : Customer-Based Brand Equity

NGOs : Non-governmental Organizations

PCA : Principal Components Analysis

KMO : The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin

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ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the attitudes of foreign nationals about the brand value of Istanbul. In this context, during the research, it is desired to examine the contribution of the four constructs (Brand Awareness, Brand Image, Brand Association, and Brand Loyalty) that constitute the city's brand equity on this Istanbul specific research. To investigate the research subject, primary data were used which was obtained by questionnaire technique from quantitative research methods. The results of this research were analysed in SPSS version 21 and MS Excel 2016. The study indicated that, the largest contribution to Overall Brand Equity of Istanbul comes from Brand Loyalty and Brand Image components of place brand. On the other hand, an increase in Brand Awareness regarding Istanbul predicted an effect on its brand in a negative way. The study has a potential to contribute the city's branding process by providing a scientific approach enhancing its brand equity.

Keywords: Place Brand, Destination Brand, Brand Image, Brand Loyalty, Brand Equity.

ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, yabancı uyruklu kişilerin İstanbul'un marka değeri konusundaki tutumlarını incelemektir. Bu bağlamda, araştırma sırasında, marka değerini oluşturan dört temel bileşenin (Marka Bilinirliği, Marka İmajı, Marka Çağrışımları ve Marka Sadakati) etki derecelerinin bir marka şehir olarak İstanbul özelinde incelenmesi planlanmıştır. Araştırma nicel araştırma yöntemlerinden anket tekniği ile elde edilen birincil verilerin analiz edilmesi temelinde kurgulanmıştır. Elde edilen veriler, istatistiksel olarak anlamlandırılmak üzere SPSS'in 21. sürümü ve MS Excel 2016'da analiz edilmişlerdir. Çalışma sonuçları, İstanbul'un marka değerine en büyük katkının Marka Sadakati ve Marka İmajı bileşenlerinden geldiğine dikkat çekmektedir. Öte yandan, İstanbul'a yönelik Marka Bilinirliğindeki artışın, İstanbul markası üzerine olumsuz yönde bir etkisi yordandırmıştır. Yapılan bu çalışma sonucunda elde edilen veriler, İstanbul markasının güçlendirilmesi hususuna bilimsel bir yaklaşımla katkı sağlama potansiyeline sahiptir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kent Markası, Destinasyon Markası, Marka İmaj, Marka Sadakati, Marka Değeri.

INTRODUCTION

Marketing and branding concepts are no longer related only to products or services; institutions, individuals, different geographic levels such as countries, cities are also considered as a subject of these studies. The concepts of city brand and city marketing are inspired by the applications of companies in the private sector. Cities, just like brands in the private sector, have started work to raise brand value in the eyes of potential investors, visitors, people living in the city, to make the city attractive.

The goal of this thesis is to examine how Istanbul performs as a city brand. To investigate its performance, thoughts of foreign nationals about the brand value of Istanbul are taken into account. The research is planned to assess the impact of the four main structures which are Brand Awareness, Brand Image, Brand Association, and Brand Loyalty on Istanbul's Brand Equity.

To investigate the research subject, the method was determined as quantitative research. To reach the data to assess the research hypothesis, primary data were used which are collected by questionnaire technique. Obtained data were analysed via SPSS version 21.

The study is composed of four chapters. The first chapter discusses conceptual issues of place branding: the evolution of the concept, place branding elements, models, and motivations and success factors behind the branding in different geographic levels.

In the second chapter, Customer Based Brand Equity (CBBE) concept is on the focus. The components of CBBE are explained to understand the importance and elements of each component which are used to analysed research hypothesis.

The third chapter is reserved to explanation of methodology. In this section, purpose of the study, research methodology, research model and hypothesis, and sampling and data collection are tried to be described in detail.

In the last part of the study, the fourth chapter, the analysis of hypotheses and research results are discussed. The information taken into account composes of participants' demographics, their experience in Istanbul, their motivations and purpose of visiting the city, and the discussion related to components of Istanbul's CBBE.

Finally, the conclusion, summarizes the topics previously discussed and explains research results. In this part, it is also pointed out that some of the results that were not anticipated and thus not accounted for in the data obtaining stage, and some questions that might be a subject for later researches.

CHAPTER 1

PLACE BRANDING

In order to express the importance of branding, it seems useful to briefly explore the historical journey of marketing, which is entangled with branding itself. Since marketing has been applied to various subjects, there are various definitions of marketing. Some are very narrow; others are wide-ranging because the concept of marketing is used in different terms from person to person and from institution to institution. However, as a general definition, marketing can be explained as an understanding of customers' needs and expectations and planning how services can be designed and offered in this context (Walter, 1992, p. V).

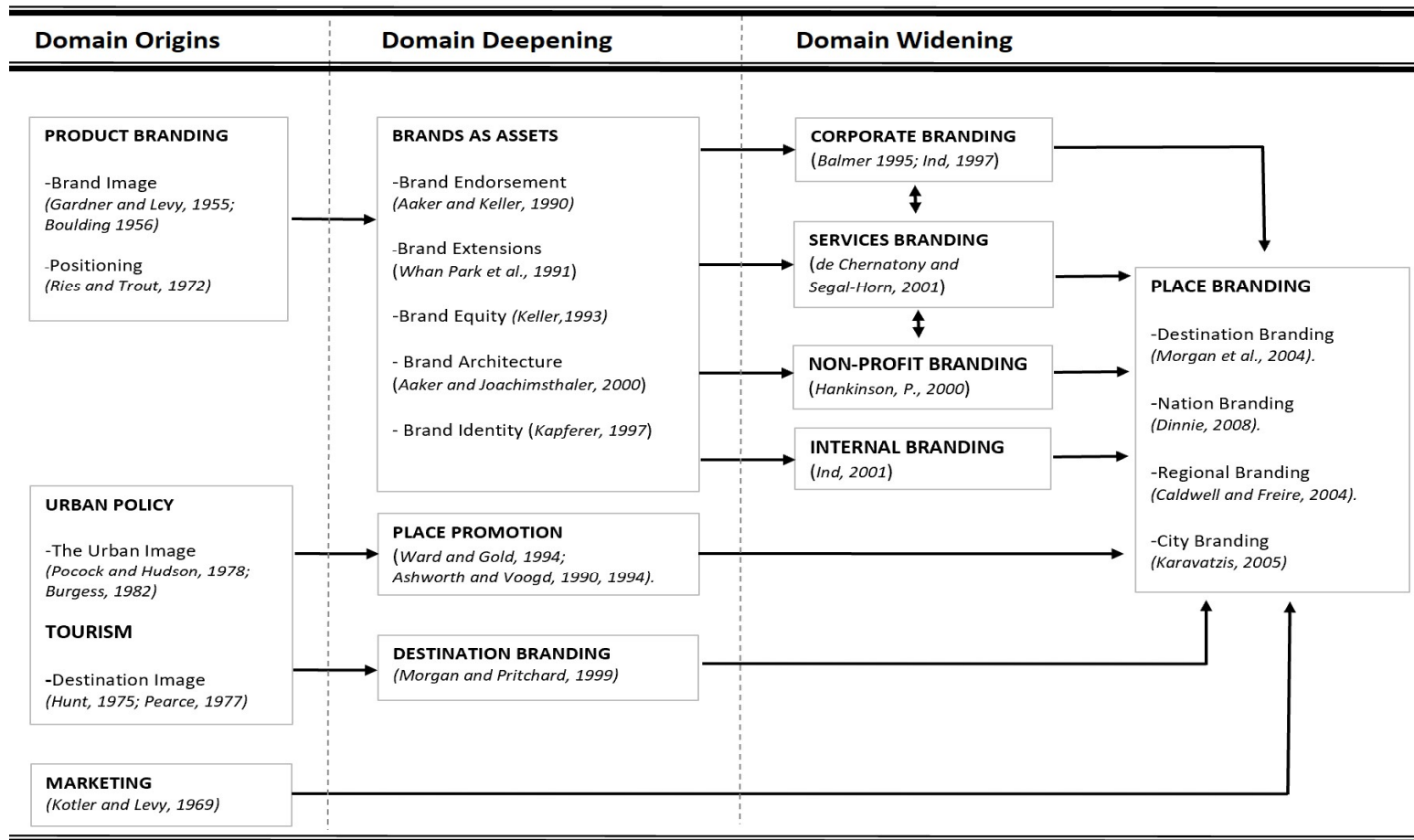
The notion of marketing is a fairly new scientific discipline that emerged in America in the early 1900s (Bartels, 1862). Especially, the Industrial Revolution that began in 19th century and the mass production that followed have influenced the birth of marketing and branding. As a result of the Industrial Revolution, the relationship between producer and consumer has diverged. For consumers who are accustomed to handmade products, it was difficult to trust products of mass production. Therefore, manufacturers had put brands on the packaging in order to build trust and convince customers as the fabricated products have a quality as good as the previous products. In the course of time, by development of division of labour and increasing industrialisation affected the adoption of marketing and branding even more. Moreover, urbanisation of population which effected the transformation of the social structure from a self-sufficient to a socioeconomic order has been effective in gaining the current structure of these two concepts (Gümüş, 2017, p. 810).

Even though, the scope of marketing is changing and expanding day by day due to today's rapidly developing world environment, in the beginning, marketing, which is based on economic science and economic understanding, was examined within the

scope of exchange and shopping. Over time, the effect of human factors and human characteristics on these exchanges began to come to light. Because considering the characteristics of individuals on exchange was the way to increase the sales and to achieve sustainable profit. Therefore, marketing has been adopted as a sub-branch by business science. Moreover, the attention being paid to marketing has increased as the increasing competition became an important criterion for companies' success. The brand has actually emerged as the most important intermediate to get the upper hand in the competitive environment.

A definition of a brand was originally provided by the American Marketing Association as *“a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of these intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or a group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors”* (Kotler et al., 2002, p. 469). The concept of branding, which began to be used for the first time within the context of customer products in the 1950s, was started to be known with branded companies in the 1990s with their products. By expanding the scope of time, the concept that started to rise in more complex areas such as institutions, service sector, non-profit organizations, in parallel with the implementation of new areas, has caused a deepening of the understanding of branding (Hankinson, 2015, p.15). Hankinson (2010) in *“Place branding research: A cross-disciplinary agenda and the views of practitioners”*, prepared a chronological diagram of place branding including domains' development process and mutual relations (Figure 1.1). His study provides an important opportunity to advance the understanding of domain development.

Figure 1.1: The Development Of Mainstream and Place Branding Domains —A Timeline



Source: Hankinson, *Place Branding Research: A Cross-Disciplinary Agenda and The Views of Practitioners*, 2010, p. 302.

In the last few decades, the concept of place branding with its different levels such as region, nation, and city has been attracted a great deal of attention with rapidly increasing global competition. The main goals of all this branding process and marketing activities is to increase the revenue gained from tourism activities and inward investments; also, to attract new residents – especially skilled workforce – and new business areas. In other words, place marketing is not only increasing the tourist movements in the region but also contributes to regional and urban development. This development with all marketing practices, play an important role on international positioning of the place. As a result, a successful positioning provides sustainable growth and further development in the future.

As a part of place branding, country branding may basically be described as “*the total sum of all perceptions of a nation in the minds of international stakeholders*” (Fan, 2009, p. 98). The brand of a country is also related to its image which is about how it is perceived by other parties (individuals, countries, enterprises etc.), the perception created in a global context, its reputation, the support it can get in its global activities or affairs, and the sympathy it can create in other actors. In addition, it has been emphasized that the image of the country is as important as the economic, social and military powers of a country (Gültekin, 2005, p. 127). This situation puts countries with strong image ahead of other countries and can provide great advantages in the economic context.

Of course, it is not right to oversimplify the most fundamental purpose of country branding to solely economic development. As a matter of fact, countries are not only interested in marketing to attract investors, but also to raise their reputation, to have a voice in the international political arena and the network of relations. Kotler and Gertner (2002), in their theoretical articles named “*Country as brand, product, and beyond: A place marketing and brand management perspective*” specifically addressed the image of the Republic of Turkey. By comparing Greece and Turkey in terms of tourist preferences, they reveal how important image of countries are. According to the

argument, most of the vacationists who want to experience antiquities or enjoy with sun and sea in Mediterranean region choose Greece instead of Turkey. Turkey is dissatisfied with it and seeks to reverse this situation by working to reposition the country. As stated by Turkey, there are longer coastlines, clear water resources and richer archaeological sites in their geography. With these features, Turkey would be able to attract more tourists than Greece. Considering that tourism is one of the main industries of Turkey, which has the greatest contribution to its economy, they have worked with the public relation firm to emphasize the structure of democracy in the country to change and improve the image of the country, which has been spreading around the world years ago by the movie of Midnight Express. Thus, Turkey brand would be able to approach Greece's position (p. 254).

The city brand, which is seen as another sub-branch of place branding, in its simplest definition, is the application of product branding strategies on the city. It is a relatively new discipline that applies what it is learned from brand strategy and brand communication into the development of the city in order to create measurable economic, social, and cultural values that the city contains. It is a holistic and comprehensive process which aims to create powerful tools to spread the strengths and positive aspects or characteristics of the city to the targeted groups. City branding at the professional level requires the combined expertise of the disciplines of planning

City branding primarily includes efforts to increase the attractiveness of the city, promote historical and touristic sites, and introduce local products and services. In parallel with these activities, the quality of life in the city is getting changed, urban planning is carried out, and with the efforts to create a brand image and publicity, the face of the city begins to change in a way that will be positive for the people (Akçi and Uluşık, 2016, p. 356). Once a place is getting promoted under the tourism activities, the studies favour examining it as a destination brand. Likewise, Leiper (1995) explains destination as a perceived attraction, somewhere to travel and stay temporarily with the purpose of seeing its attributes and trying activities it has to offer (p. 87).

There are some features a city must have in order to become a tourist destination. These features include; cultural, physical and social characteristics related to regional identity, tourism infrastructure to support development of regional tourism, tourist attractions to attract tourists to the region, and institutions and organizations that will lead tourism planning by supporting developments in the region (Ciritlioğlu and Öksüz, 2016, pp. 272-273).

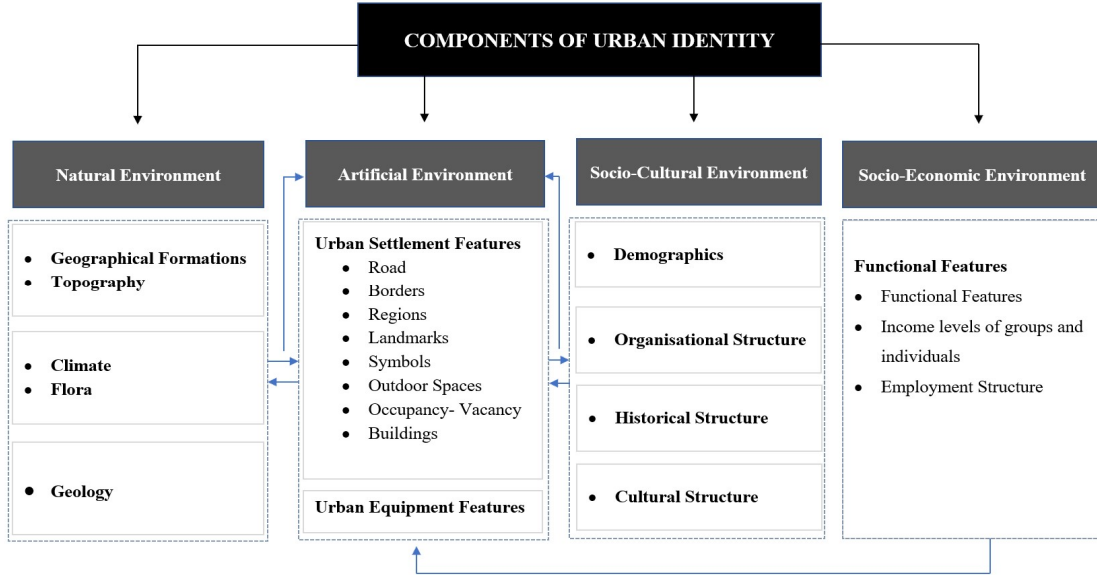
1.1. Place Branding Elements

Just like product, service or corporate brand concepts, there are several elements that influence the place branding process and build the brand itself. Understanding the process of creating a city brand correctly, would be possible by examining the factors that create it in detail. In this section, the concepts related to the place brand and the process of place brand building are examined through these elements.

1.1.1. Place Brand Identity

City identity refers to how stakeholders who manage the city brand define how the city should be perceived. In other words, urban identity is defined by the characteristics of a city or a place such as its natural and artificial elements, and its socio-cultural features. Since urban identity is a broad concept, it can be divided into various categories such as physical identity, historical identity, cultural identity, social identity, formal identity, and the identity of urban functions (Çöl, 1998). Therefore, a city could be examined under one of these categories. However, if the subject is about the overall identity of a city, all sub-categories should be evaluated together. To illustrate the big picture, Topçu (2011) proposed a model to show the urban identity components which are classified based on a result of the literature research conducted within the scope of her study. These components, which are considered as urban identity elements, can come to the fore as different values in different cities.

Figure 1.2: Components of Urban Identity



Source: Adapted from Topçu, Kent Kimliği Üzerine Bir Araştırma: Konya Örneği. *Uluslararası İnsan Bilimleri Dergisi*, 8 (2), 2011, p. 1053.

Lastly, it is noteworthy that the city identity is a key factor in creating city image and city positioning. To construct an effective city brand identity, shareholders should destinate selected components of a country’s national identity. Trying to aggregate every component of a national identity result in an unmanageable branding process which most probably causes a failure or restricts the positive outcome that could have been achieved.

1.1.2. Place Brand Image

According to Kapferer (2008), while brand identity represents the sender’s side, brand image is characterized the receiver’s side. The image is the way that how a certain group perceives all the messages sending from the brand (p. 174). Subjective feature of image mostly depends on stereotypes. Since stereotypes are deep-rooted, redefining the image in the mind of the target prospects is usually difficult due to people having a

tendency to “*pay attention to information that confirms their expectations*” (Kotler and Gertner 2002, p. 251).

The image of places, whether countries or cities, is formed by the combination of many elements. For instance, for Denmark, the Vikings (ancestors), Andersen (fairy-tale author), Lego (toys); for Germany, beer, seriousness, Berlin, and Goethe are associated with their images. On the other hand, almost everyone in the world will list features such as Great Wall of China, Forbidden City, tea ceremony, crowd, substandard product as elements of image when it comes to China (Can and Başaran, 2014, p. 31). First five image associations for some of the countries are presented below.

Table 1.1: The First Five Images of the Countries

Country	First Five Images
Belgium	Chocolates, Brussels, Tintin, capital of Europe, beer
Denmark	Vikings, Hans Christian Andersen, Copenhagen, Lego, football
Germany	Beer, Berlin, Goethe, motorways, serious
Spain	Barcelona, paella, bullfighting, art, Juan Carlos
France	Paris, wine, Gérard Depardieu, food, fashion
Ireland	Green, the Irish pub, James Joyce, Celtic design, U2
Italy	Rome, pasta, art, shoes, Pavarotti
Luxembourg	Castles, banks, small court of justice, the Echternach dancing
The Netherlands	Van Gogh, tulips, drugs, Amsterdam, flat
Austria	Vienna, Mozart, Klimt, skiing, Sissi
Portugal	Port wine, Lisbon, the cock of Barcelos, explorers, Algarve
Finland	Lapland, Santa Claus, saunas, forests, telecommunication

Sweden	Blondes, Nobel prize, cold, Ingmar Bergman, Pippi Longstocking
United Kingdom	Shakespeare, London, BBC, The Royals, Beatles

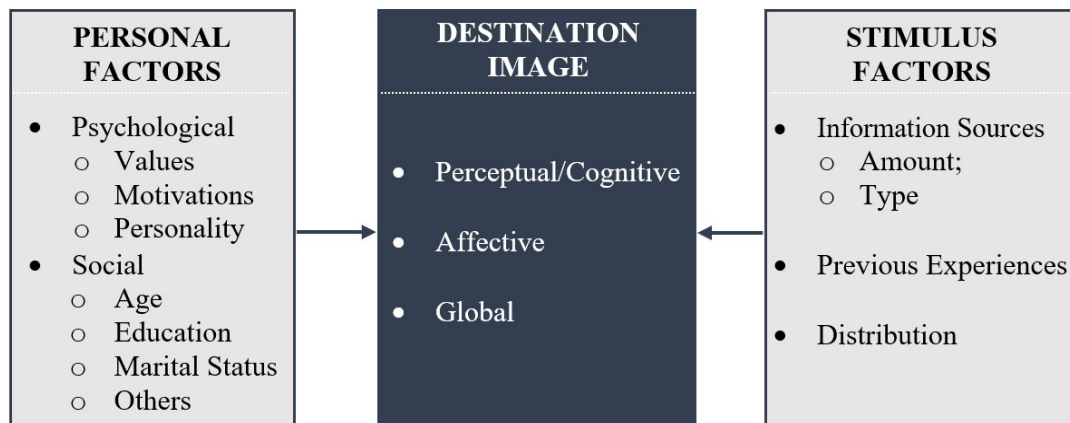
Source: Rainisto, Success Factors of Place Marketing: A Study of Place Marketing Practices in Northern Europe and the United States. Doctoral Dissertations, *Helsinki University of Technology, Institute of Strategy and International Business*, 2003, p. 51.

Image has a great significance for both countries and cities. Since images in people's minds have a decisive effect on attitudes and behaviors (Özenç, 2002, p. 38), the image of a country, a region or a city has the ability to influence people's decisions to invest, shop, settle, work, and travel. For the country level brand, some of the elements that constitute the country's image are the country's attractiveness, government's policies, investment opportunities within the country, the risk of terrorism, the impression of people who have visited the country before, and many others. At this point, it should be considered that city image is tight-knit with country image.

In the process of branding a city, just like in countries, the image of the city has a strategic importance. The image of the city is the sum of the visitor's impressions, feelings, thoughts, and associations about that city. Visitors prefer to involve with a city based on its image, which is affected by impressions, prior opinions, expectations, thoughts of others, the image that is acquired through online and offline communication channels. Necessity of dealing with such a complex interactive relation brings value of image to light. At this point it is needed to open a bracket and remind that when the brand is considered as a topic, the first thing that is mentioned is how unique that product or service is. Considering it, in fact, each city is a brand of its own because it has distinguishing features and differences from each other. What makes it a strong brand is the effect of its image. Therefore, it is important to recognize these distinctive points, highlight the right ones and ensure that the reflections of the target audience is positive.

If image and its creation is crucial for any level of geographical hierarchy, which kind of elements impact its construction takes interest of various researchers in several fields and disciplines. To find the answer, Baloğlu and McCleary (1999) proposed a model after examining previous studies. Based on their review, three major determinants are revealed: motivations for touristic intention, socio demographics, and a variety of information sources; all of which formed without any previous experience or visit. While tourism motivation and socio demographics represent the consumer characteristics, in the second place they put information sources, previous experiences, and distribution as stimulus variables (p. 870).

Figure 1.3: General Framework of Destination Image Formation



Source: Adopted from, Baloğlu, and McCleary. A model of destination image formation. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26(4), 1999, p. 870.

The concept of the image has commonly recognized as a formation related to attitudes which is composed of a person's perceptual interpretation of knowledge (beliefs), emotions, and global impression regarding a destination. There is an agreement among researchers that the construction of the image is the sum of affective and cognitive evaluations. Attachment and feeling toward the branded subject stand up for affective

evaluation, while knowledge and beliefs about a place are part of the cognitive/perceptual evaluation (Baloğlu and McCleary, 1999, p. 870).

1.1.3. Place Brand Positioning

Brand management, which has been named since the mid-1980s, is a long-term, continuous and versatile process. In this regard, all the elements attributed to the brand are taken in a series of strategic decisions so that consumers can get a superior place in their attitudes and behaviours towards that brand. According to Duane E. Knapp, in the past, it was sufficient to have customer's awareness of the products or services, but today not only brand awareness but also its positioning in the customer's mind is the lifeblood of any branding activity. On top of that the brand must have a superior position compared to its competitors in the minds of the audiences (2000). This superior positioning in the customers mind ensures the brand's power in the market for many years.

City brand concept cannot be evaluated independently of brand positioning concepts. The concept of brand positioning was first quoted in 1972 in an article written by Al Ries and Jack Trout in Advertising Age. According to them, brand positioning starts with the product, but it is not something to do with the product, it relates to how the product is placed in prospect's mind (Ries ve Trout, 2001, p. 3). In other words, rather than what and how they are represented, positioning is more about how product takes place in the perception of the consumer. The only element that differentiates and identifies a brand is the perceived form in the consumer's mind (Arnold, 1992, p. 90).

Ries and Trout (2001) also stressed another important subject about positioning in their article named "Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind". It is stated that, a completely new and different feature is not created on the basis of positioning, but the product is highlighted by linking the intended image of the product with the concepts that are already in the consumer's mind (p. 3). Since reliability and consistency of the provided

product are keys for long-term success in branding, brands cannot make a false statement about their products. Therefore, by keeping in the mind that, even the main features of the product or services will not change, by focusing on positioning, brands can shape how they desire that truth to be perceived by their target customers. In this context, there are four fundamental questions in the brand positioning process. These questions are as follows (Kapferer, 2008, p. 175):

1. A brand for what benefit? Referring to the benefit of a brand and represents a brand promise.
2. A brand for whom? It refers to whom the brand is addressing.
3. Reason? Referring to subjective elements or actual facts which support the promised benefits.
4. A brand against whom? This question determines brand's main competitors.

Brand positioning is done by responding to these questions. The basis of these questions is getting to know the market, the competitors, and the target audiences. While positioning the city, special positions on the city are attempted to be created in compliance with the mind of potential customers who could and/or desired to visit the city. In this regard, branding strategies are assessed based on lifestyles, preferences, demands, and expectations of the target audiences. Thus, whole brand communication should be prepared and put into practice accordingly.

1.1.4. Target Group

Once it is figured out that, marketing is reciprocal in terms of communication, to build a successful place brand, branding the place should be involved in developing the place that people desire. This could be achieved by thinking with a demand-driven orientation (Eshuis, Braun & Klijn, 2013, p. 508). Therefore, to start and maintain the marketing activities for the place brand, all actions should be taken by considering the different interests, needs, and demands of various target markets. It is quite important

to identify and group target audiences when making strategic planning for city marketing. Since planning strategies for targets vary according to the characteristics of the city, it is necessary to bring forward certain features for specific audience group.

Table 1.2: Kotler’s Place Marketing Target Markets

TARGET MARKETS	
VISITORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business purposed visitors; • Non-business visitors.
RESIDENTS & EMPLOYEES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionals (Doctors, scientists, etc.); • Skilled employees; • Teleworkers; • Investors; • Wealthy individuals; • Entrepreneurs; • Unskilled workers.
BUSINESS & INDUSTRY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy industry; • ‘Clean’ industry assembly, high-tech, service companies, etc.; • Entrepreneurs.
EXPORT MARKETS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other localities within the domestic markets; • International Markets.

Source: Rainisto, 2003, p. 35.

According to Kotler, the target markets of place branding consist of four main groups. In the first group, while business visitors represent the ones who visit the place for commercial purposes or to attend a business or a convention; travellers and tourists whose intention does not have any business relations represent the non-business visitors. These visitors stay in that place for a short time period. Second group includes workers, professionals, investors who locate in the place for a long time. They are either residents or employees who have moved to the place to work. As the third group, business and industry segmentation refer to the business in financial investment

category; other localities within the domestic markets and international markets are combined into the segment of export market, as the last one.

An important factor to note at first is that although the target audiences are divided into distinct groups, groups may be permeable among each other. Moreover, they might affect each other in marketing of the places. Rainisto states that application of cross-marketing practices in place marketing is beneficial in this term. To him, the transition to different target identities might be achieved by marketing the place's other images or functions that are different than what these audiences pay attention to in the first place. For example, visitors should not only be considered as tourists, since they are also prospective contacts for investors or firms in their home areas (Rainisto, 2003, pp. 41-42).

1.1.5. Place Branding Actors

Answering the question of who the stakeholders in the profit-oriented organizations that are come to the fore in cases where the brand concept serves a product or service can be relative and variant, it will still be easier than defining the stakeholders of local government. As a part of non-profit organizations, for local governments, "Stakeholder Theory" sheds light on the question of who should be considered as actors in creating a brand and marketing strategy. According to this theory, the stakeholder is described as *"persons or groups that are affected by the success of the organization and/or influence the organization's success"* (Freeman et al., 2010, pp. 46-48).

The subject of who are the stakeholders in the urban management can be examined under two groups. In the first place, when we look at the issue from the perspective of local government, the stakeholders are central and local administrations, associations, NGOs, city council, development agency, universities, professional chambers, private sector organizations, media etc. In the second place, if the city administration is considered as a brand strategy, the stakeholders are defined as all persons and

institutions involved in the functioning of the city. It is obvious that the stakeholder groups for city marketing have a much-complicated structure compared to profit-oriented organisations, considering that former stakeholders are much more numerous and lack clear boundaries for whom to be considered among them (Bayrakdaroğlu and Kömürcüoğlu, 2015, p. 855).

In general, the common ground of the opinions of those who specialize in this matter is that the place branding is eligible to be handled by the administration, but it should not mean an absolute authority, it is necessary to provide a certain autonomy for the place branding. Since, branding of any place level is co-produced by a wide array of actors, the brand managers or administrators are indeed, interdependent with those actors (Klijn, Eshuis and Braun, 2012, p. 5). Therefore, to build a successful brand and have an effective marketing strategy, the cooperation of all participants and stakeholders of a city is essential. According to the Kotler, the key actors who are a part of place marketing process might be found at different levels of spatial hierarchy. He divided those actors into four groups which are based on their spatial level: local, regional, national, and international. Organizations and people belonging to each level can be viewed in detail on Table 1.3:

Table 1.3: Kotler’s Major Actors in Place Marketing Process

MAJOR ACTORS IN PLACE MARKETING PROCESS	
LOCAL ACTORS	<p><u>Public Sector Actors:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor and/or City Manager; • Business Development Department in the Community; • Urban Planning Department of the Community (transport, education, sanitation, etc.); • Tourist Bureau; • Public Information Bureau.

	<p><u>Private Sector Actors:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Citizens; • Leading Enterprises; • Real Estate Developers and Agents • Financial Institutions (banks, insurance companies); • Electricity and Gas Utilities, Telecommunication Companies; • Chamber of Commerce and Other Local Business Organizations; • Hospitality and Retail Industries (hotels, restaurants, department stores, other retailers, exhibition and conventions centres); • Travel Agencies; • Labour Market Organizations; • Architects; • Transport Companies (taxi, railway, airline); • Media (Newspaper, radio, TV)
REGIONAL ACTORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Economic Development Agencies; • Local and State Governments; • Regional Tourist Boards.
NATIONAL ACTORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political Heads of Government; • Inward Investment Agencies; • National Tourist Boards.
INTERNATIONAL ACTORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embassies and Consulates; • Inward Investment Agencies; • Economic Development Agencies with a Specific Link to a Region or A City; • International Enterprises with a Paperbound Link.

Source: Rainisto, 2003, p. 41.

1.2. Place Branding Models

Just like a branding of goods or services, a place branding process, as well as strengthening an existing brand, also involves a complicated interaction of many factors. Thus, it is crucial to keep that interactions in mind and follow a structured process for achieving a successful branding. In this section, place branding models which are proposed separately by Aaker and Anholt will be examined.

Figure 1.4: Kotler's Levels of Place Marketing Model



Source: Adapted from, Kotler et. al. *Marketing Asian Places: Attracting Investment, Industry, and Tourism to Cities, States, and Nations*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2002, p. 46.

Philip Kotler's "Levels of Place Marketing Model" is a comprehensive and descriptive model which has been used in several studies to understand the general outline of a city brand marketing strategy. The model created within the framework of the three main groups is divided into target markets, marketing factors, and planning groups. The group that is in the outermost layer of the model and forms the main frame of the strategy is called the target market. The selection of right target group, which is one of the cornerstones of marketing – aims to determine the target market for the country or the city, which will enable efficient and effective results to be achieved in this direction. Even though, tourists are the first group that comes to mind when the subject is city marketing, other groups such as investors, producers, business centres, new residents, and importers are needed to be focused on the branding process. Thus, increased and diversified investment opportunities will greatly contribute to the development of the city and its economy, in terms of both quantity and quality.

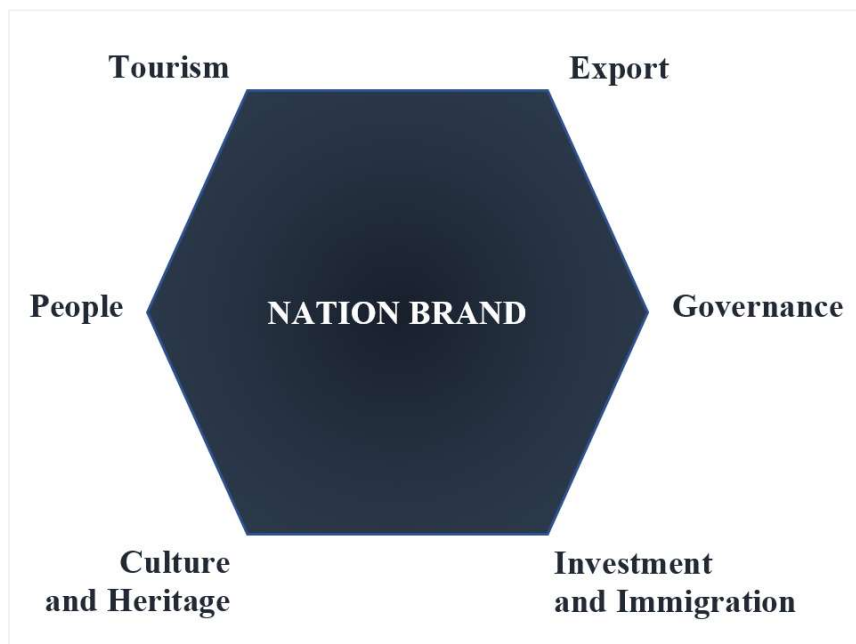
In the marketing factors layer, the development of the infrastructure of the city is primarily important for those who live in that city, and then tourists who will prefer the city. To be able to market the city, a positive city image must be built so that the city could become appealing to different actors. The importance of adopting planned studies by including urban residents in the marketing strategy is emphasized in the planning group which takes center in the model. Indeed, as residents of the city include local administrations and other stakeholders, developing cooperation -for attracting inward investment to the city and other development opportunities- is critical to implement the vision.

Anholt And Hildreth Model, coupled with the decline in the cost of international travel and the increasing purchasing power of the growing international middle class, also with their ongoing search for unusual experiences, places started to concentrate on destination marketing. At the same time, together with the threat of product parity among these countries, it became a necessity to create clear, distinctive, and

economically sustainable branding strategy in order to compete in the international market (Anholt, 2005a, p. 120).

Another frequently used multidimensional model is Brand Hexagon Model which was developed by Anholt (2005b). To measure world's nation brands, Simon Anholt developed the first analytical ranking called Nation Brands Index (NBI). The NBI aims to measure appeal and the power of a nation's brand image. NBI is designed to questionnaire consumers from different countries on their perceptions regarding the political, cultural, tourism appeal, commercial assets, human resources, and investment potential of both developing and developed countries. As a result of this study two outcomes revealed: clear understanding of nations' brand power and a unique barometer of global opinion (p. 296).

Figure 1.5: Anholt's Nation Brand Hexagon



Source: Adapted from Anholt, Editorial. *Place Branding*, 1(4), 2005, p. 334.

Anholt's nation brand hexagon model consists of six dimensions and each corner represents a vital component of the country brand. The sum of the effects created by the components of "hexagon" constitutes the brand of a country. The most obviously promoted parts of the nation brand is Tourism component. Participants' desire to visit a country is examined to analyse touristic values of the nations in this dimension. In this aspect, visitors are consumers, destinations are positioned as a product. The second one, Export dimension, focuses on country-of-origin effect which illustrates label affect and the reality of the products produced in each country. In this dimension value and export volume of the country's products and services are measured.

For Governance component, the main subject of this dimension is divided into two groups. The first one is domestic policy which concentrates on a country's competency and how fairly it is governed. The second one is foreign policy which examines how far they can be trusted to make decisions that are responsible for ensuring international peace and security. In other words, in this part, opinion, satisfaction and concerns of the public about a state governance are considered. Investment and Immigration refers to the Business-to-business (B2B) part of the nation brand which is being investigated under investment by analysing current social and economic conditions of a country. Immigration section determines the influential power of a country to attract other countries' citizens to live, study or work in their country. Additionally, it tries to measure the perception of people regarding the most suitable location for them to setting up an overseas branch of their company.

The public's view of the country's heritage, their stance on other countries' citizens, and the value they give to modern culture of their country are taken into account in culture and heritage section. With evolving technology, the world has narrowed the boundaries and has become a single market place. Thus, the local cultures gained importance in marketing studies. By this means, it is understood clearly that countries are the place of goods, services and information exchange, are also a location of cultural exchange and interaction of the countries. Lastly, in People component, human capital

of each country is analysed by focusing on two different scopes: business and non-business. The population's perceived images and qualities for their competence, openness, friendliness, tolerance etc. are assessed.

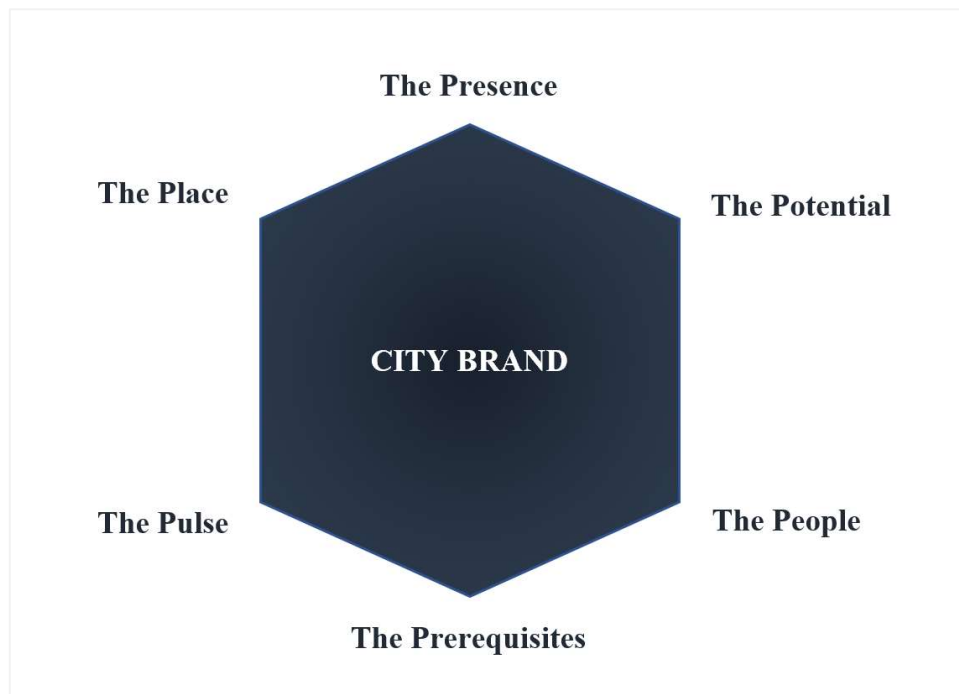
Anholt stated in his article "Anholt Nation Brands Index: How Does the World See America?" that in 2005, study conducted to 10,000 participants in 10 countries to measure brand power of 25 developing and developed countries. It seems that the interest in the survey has increased over years. Today the figure of 2005 is almost doubled. 2017 version of the study – 2017 Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Study - measured the image of 50 states in 20 major countries which play significant roles in the global arena in the fields of trade, international relations, business flow, cultural and tourism activities. By paying strict attention to has at least 1,000 participants from each country, 20,185 interviews were conducted in 2017(placebrandobserver.com, 2017).

Even though, the most well-known model of Anholt is his National Brand Hexagon, he also proposed a model for city branding. He claims that in this model, which is based on the perceptions of the city by individuals, the branded cities are evaluated according to the following criteria:

- The Presence (international awareness for the city and its contribution to global arena in different subjects such as cultural, scientific and governance);
- The Place (people's perception of the physical characteristics of the city, such as climate, environmental cleanliness, the beauty of buildings and parks, etc.);
- The Potential (a general perception that the city is a favourable place to trade, to have business opportunities, to find jobs, to study);
- The Pulse (events that is provided by the city or ease of finding interesting and exciting activities or lifestyle in the city);
- The People (Warmness and friendliness of the city's inhabitants);

- The Prerequisites (the existence of satisfactory and economically affordable accommodation and basic public services - schools, hospitals, transportation, etc. in the city) (Anholt, 2006, pp. 19-20).

Figure 1.6: Anholt's City Brand Hexagon



Source: Adapted from, Anholt, The Anholt-GMI city brands index: how the world sees the world's cities. *Place Branding*, 2(1), 2006, p. 19.

As a summary, those factors that make up the city brand hexagon are evaluated within the scope of the richness of the city based on its cultural features, natural and historical heritage, human capital, services and products offered. At the same time the physical structure of the city and its service structures such as airports, stations, museums, etc. are also considered for this evaluation.

1.3. Motivation and Success Factors of Place Branding

According to Rainisto and Kotler (2007), the importance of the city brand was triggered by the fact that the cities wanted to get involved in globalization and become the centre of the cities at the local and global level. Marketing strategies needed to be updated and defined according to this new age. The brand concept, which brings together these strategic elements as a formula for success, has been at the heart of current marketing. The idea has emerged that the living spaces can be branded by increasing its attractiveness, such as branding goods and services in geographical areas. The main purpose of the branding of cities is to make people notice those branded cities and then increase the attractiveness of that city.

The main goals of all this branding process and marketing activities are to increase the revenue gained from tourism activities and inward investments; also, to attract new residents – especially skilled workforce – and new business areas. In other words, place marketing is not only increasing the tourist movements/involvement in the region but also contributes to regional and urban development. This development with all marketing practices, play an important role on international positioning of the place. As a result, the successful positioning provides sustainable growth and further development in the future.

Kotler and his colleagues have argued that there are six strategic reasons for the cities' branding. The first reason is to attract tourists and visitors; besides, we can take it as the main reason for urban branding. Secondly, it is to attract business from other cities and increase investment in the city. The third is to ensure that existing investments are continuing while making new investments. Thus, while the investment in the city is preserved, new investment potentials will occur and increase the value of the city. Fourth, it is aimed to launch new businesses while promoting small ones. The fifth important reason is to increase the exports of businesses and thereby raise investments.

Lastly, cities are branded to increase their population and to provide a change in distribution within itself (Kotler et al. as cited in Deffner and Liorius, 2005, p. 4).

CHAPTER 2

BRAND EQUITY CONCEPT

2.1. Customer Based Brand Equity

The importance of the brand is spreading rapidly due to the increase in product options offered by globalization and the free market economy. Difficulty of competition, increasing research habits of consumers, and ever-changing consumer preferences are some of the influential factors which result in a serious inclination towards intangible assets for companies to keep their market share, or better yet, achieve expansion. The other side of the coin with brand equity is that it's not just about the market, but also company's own existence in business environment is an asset to be utilized as a strong tool to seize business opportunities such as mergers and acquisitions or entrance into stock market. However, while financial aspects of brand equity will be excluded since the subject of this study is individuals, the concept of brand equity is going to be examined based on Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE).

According to Aaker brand equity may be defined as '*a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm's customers*' (1991, p. 15). It is an intangible asset that provides psychological and financial value to the company (Kotler and Keller, 2006, p. 276). Having a strong brand equity provides many benefits to a business in the form of customer loyalty, positive customer response to price differences, higher dividends (share of profits) and greater flexibility especially during the time of crisis, licensing or brand expansion. Brand value is the perception that occurs in the minds of customers and this perception affects consumers' purchasing attitude (Alsu and Palta, 2017, p. 176).

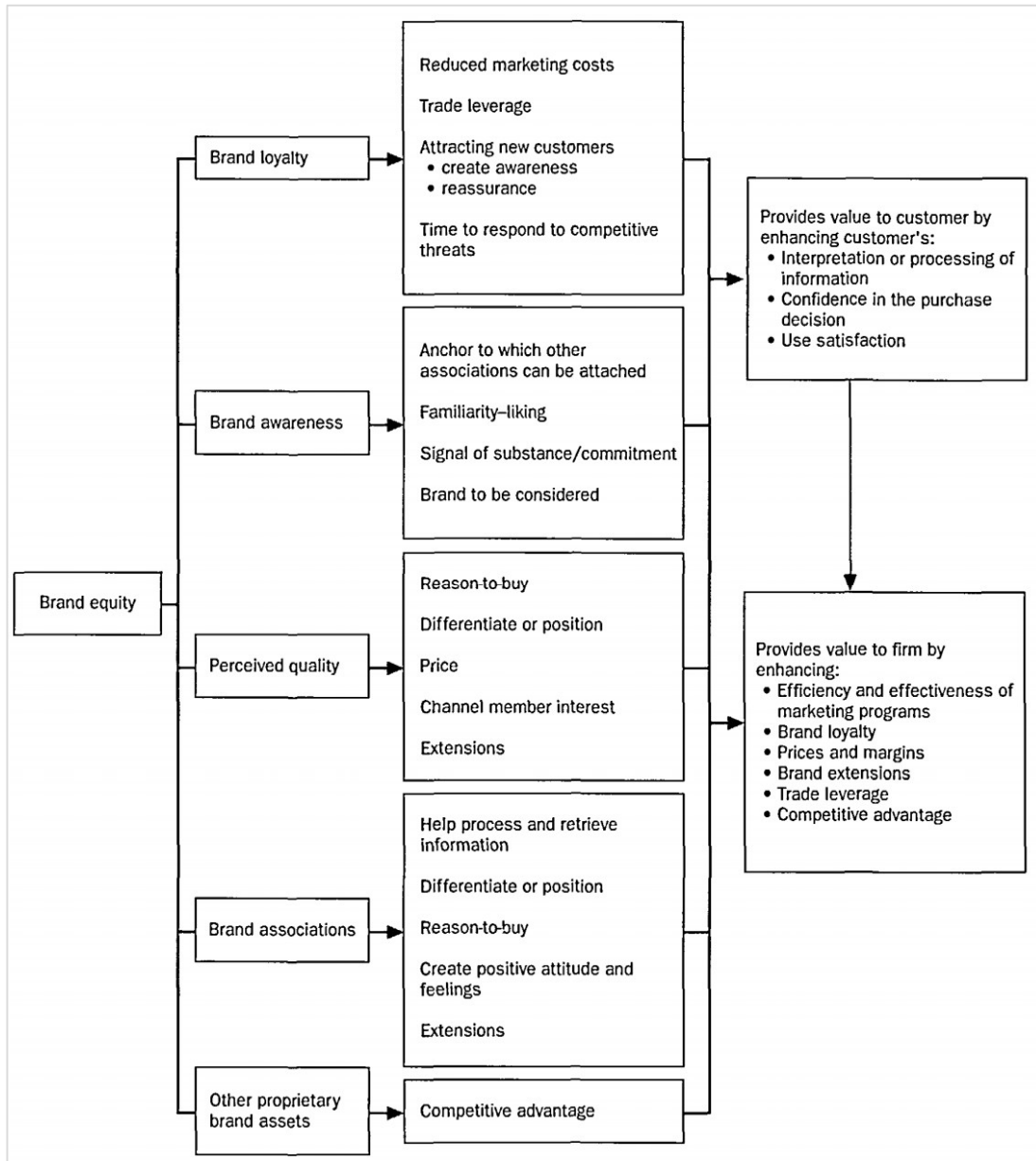
Measuring brand equity is an issue that is getting even more important over time. Especially, when the value of the brand and its other non-physical assets exceeds the value of its physical assets (such as land, buildings, machinery, equipment...), it is

necessary to know the brand value in order to realistically calculate the power of institutions and organizations (İlgüner, 2009, p. 173). To measure the value of a brand, two different aspects arose: Aaker's (1991) and Keller's (2013) consumer behaviour-based calculation; Simon and Sullivan's (1993) and Ambler's (2008) financial-based measurement.

However, how to create brand equity is a concept first introduced by Aaker in 1991 through his book named "Managing Brand Equity". In this book, he published a model to illustrate a valuation scale which consists of five main dimensions. Those dimensions represent the five assets of brand equity which are the source of the value creation process for brand authorities.

The first dimension, brand loyalty is a customer attitude toward paying a higher price to a particular brand of choice in a certain product group and recommending the preferred brand to the people around them. The second dimension, brand awareness is the consumer's ability to recognize or recall the brand under different conditions. The third dimension, perceived quality refers to a consumer's perception on the overall quality of a product or service. That also builds a superiority for the product or services over other alternatives. The fourth dimension, brand association is anything and everything that is formed in memory about the brand. Among those five assets, brand image or brand association is probably the most recognized part of brand equity. On the other hand, other proprietary brand assets which is the last main dimension is included in the model to form completeness/create a completeness. Therefore, it is likely to have less importance than other categories (Aaker, 2002, p. 28).

Figure 2.1: How Brand Equity Generates Value

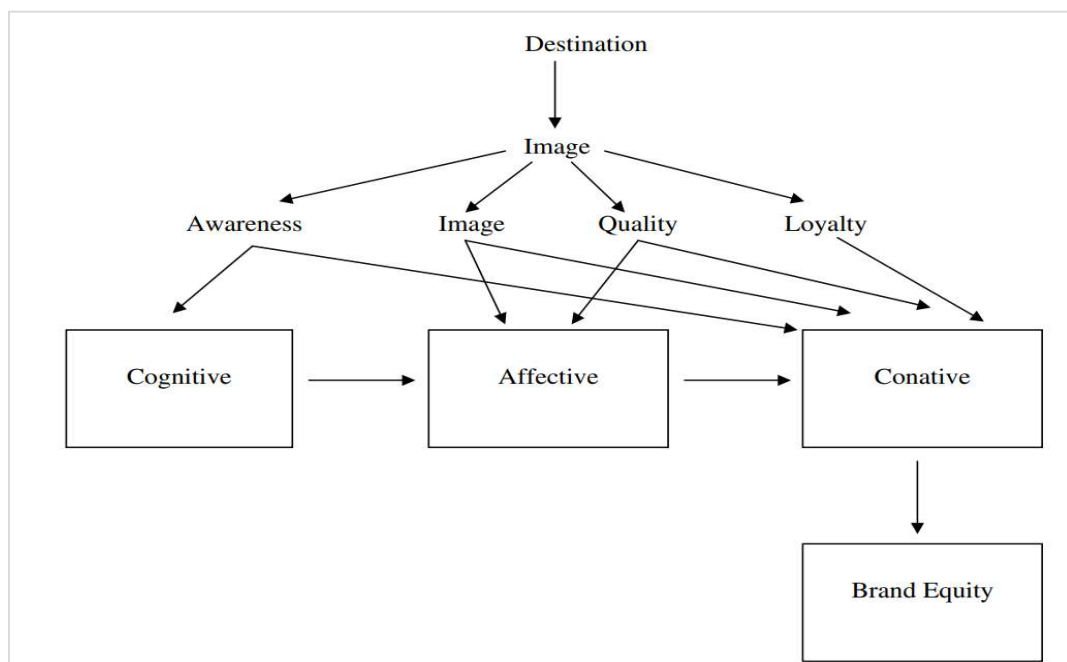


Source: Aaker, *Managing Brand Equity: Capitalizing on The Value of A Brand Name*, USA: The Free Press, 1991, p. 29.

2.2. Place Brand Equity

As branding spread to the places, application of brand equity into a destination took interest of various practitioners and researchers. In 2007, Konecnik and Gartner attempted to measure CBBE of Slovenia and Croatia which were two famous tourism destinations. They took the brand awareness, brand image, perceived quality for services, and brand loyalty as the measurement variables in their study. Additionally, they also applied three main elements of image researches (cognitive, affective, and conative) as an overriding model to guide the study. The cognitive element refers to a person's knowledge or thought about a destination which creates awareness. While, the affective element is the feeling towards this knowledge, the conative element refers to an action of the individuals regarding the destination (Konecnik and Gartner, 2007, p. 403).

Figure 2.2: Konecnik and Gartner's Creation of Brand Equity for a Destination Brand

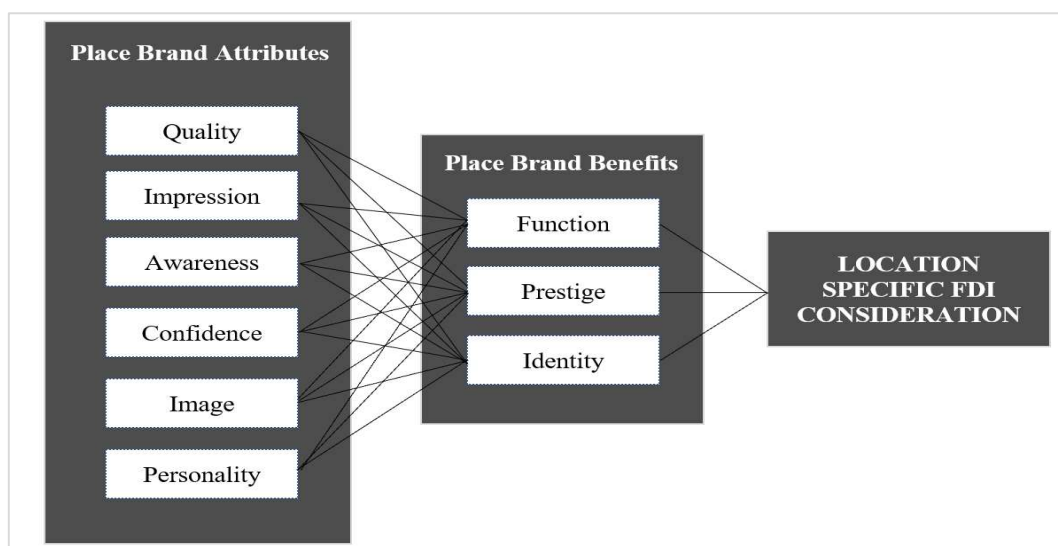


Source: Adopted from Konecnik and Gartner, Customer-Based Brand Equity for A Destination. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 34(2), 2007, p. 403.

Even though, in the beginning of their study, the brand image was taken as the main factor in destination's brand equity due to the fact that previous studies always crowned brand image as the most important component; at the end, it is revealed that other three factors have close degree of importance in CBBE for destinations. Four dimensions that were applied to the place brand equity model first time in Konecnik and Gartner, are widely accepted in the later researches.

Three years later, in 2010, Björn P. Jacobsen conducted a study to examine a place equity based on investors' behaviours. He took the Keller's widely accepted model as the basis of his study. With his investor-based place brand equity model (IPE), he figured it out that behaviour-oriented brand equity components and structures which is applied to a product is also applicable for the places. Since his model is not only addressing tourists, but also residents and investors, he highlighted the importance of formulation of benefits and attributes according to the target group. With this way, effectiveness of a place brand may be analysed more efficiently (pp. 267-268).

Figure 2.3: Jacobsen's Validated Investor-Based Place Brand Equity Model



Source: Adopted from Jacobsen, Place Brand Equity: A Model for Establishing the Effectiveness of Place Brands. *Journal of Place Management and Development*, 5(3), 2012, p. 263

2.3. Component of Customer Based Brand Equity

2.3.1. Brand Awareness

Brand awareness relates to the what extend the sign, brand promises, logos, etc., which are defined as brand identities, has a certain association in consumers' memory. As we already mentioned, brand awareness points out the consumer's ability to recall or recognize the brand under different conditions. It is a significant aspect for the consumer to create a clear image of the brand. Brand awareness has two main dimensions. While "*How easily consumers can recall or recognize the brand*" refers to the depth of brand awareness; "*the range of purchase and consumption situations in which the brand comes to mind*" refers to the breadth of brand awareness. In an ideal situation, the brand would have these two dimensions of brand awareness together (Hoeffler and Keller, 2002, p. 79).

Brand awareness could be seen in different levels. The higher a consumer has awareness toward a brand, the attachment between the customer and the brand gets stronger. David Aaker (1991) tried to explain the level of awareness in the awareness pyramid model which is developed by himself. He labelled the top level as "Top of Mind" which refers to the situation when the brand is the first thing comes to the mind when any product group or any industry name is given to the customer. Brand recall in the second step of the pyramid of brand awareness is related to the likelihood that the brand will come to mind of when relevant product class or similar clue is given to the customer. The lowest level of brand awareness, brand recognition, is about if the brand is being heard before. In brand recognition, it is not necessary to know where the brand was encountered before, why it was different from the others, or even the product class of the brand. Lastly, bottom level represents to the situation when a customer is unaware of the brand.

Figure 2.4: Aaker's Awareness Pyramid



Source: Adapted from Aaker, 1991, p. 62.

Brand awareness is shown as one of the most significant dimensions that determines brand value due to positive correlation between each other. If a brand gains more awareness, the value of the brand would follow it; and if a brand is to lose awareness the opposite would apply as a loss of value for the brand. The positive effect of awareness applies to sales, as well. Any consumer who is in need of a product or service, would most likely gravitate to a brand that is etched into their minds. That inclination is about the ease of decision making that comes with the acquaintance of that brand. Consumers tend to purchase a brand that they are somewhat familiar rather than one that they have never heard about before.

2.3.2. Brand Image

The concept of brand image is introduced for the first time by Gartner and Levy in 1955 with the study named "The Product and the Brand". The paper, which is published in Harvard Business Review, examined the concept of image based on its relationship with psychology and social subjects. By considering the customers' motivations, logics, feelings, and attitudes, they come up with the idea of consumers are not purchasing the products only for its technical attributes, but also the meaning that the product contained within itself (Harris, 2007, p. 9). In the process of time, impact of image on decision of purchase captured the attention due to the support of empirical research and the findings which show the outstanding relationship between brand preferences and brand image.

Kotler defined image as "*the set of beliefs, ideas, and impression that a person holds regarding an object*" (2001, p. 273). However, throughout the time, researchers had been assigned different meanings to the image or studied it from various perspectives. Some of them identified personal characteristics with the brand; some of them focused on the message that brand carries; others generalized it without limiting the perspective of brand image. Yi Zhang (2015) prepared how brand image is contextualize in the earlier literature. According to him, the researchers looked at image through four key holes: cognitive or psychological elements, personification, meanings and message, blanket definitions (p. 59).

Table 2.1: Definitions of Brand Image

Perspectives	Sources	Definition of Brand Image
Blanket definitions	Herzog (1963)	Consumers' general perception and impression of a brand
	Newman (1985)	Consumers' perception of a product's total attributes
	Dichter (1985)	Consumers' general impression of the product or service
Meanings and messages	Noth (1988)	The symbolic meaning embedded in the product or service
	Sommers (1964)	Consumers' perception and recognition of a product's symbolic attribute
	Levy (1973)	The symbolic meaning of purchasing the product or service
Personification	Martineau (1957)	Brand image reflects consumers' characteristics, and they purchase the brand to express themselves
	Bettinger (1979)	The personification of a product, which can be manifested as "adult" and "children"
	Sirgy (1985)	Image of the brand resembles human personality
Cognitive or psychological elements	Gardner & Levy (1955)	Brand image is consisted of consumers' opinion, attitude and emotion toward a brand, which reflects the cognitive or psychological elements of the brand
	Levy (1978)	Consumers' overall impression about a brand or product, which includes recognition, feeling and attitude toward it
	Bullmore (1984)	Consumers' general perception and opinion of a brand's total attributes
	Kapferer (1994)	Consumers' general perception about the brand feature's association

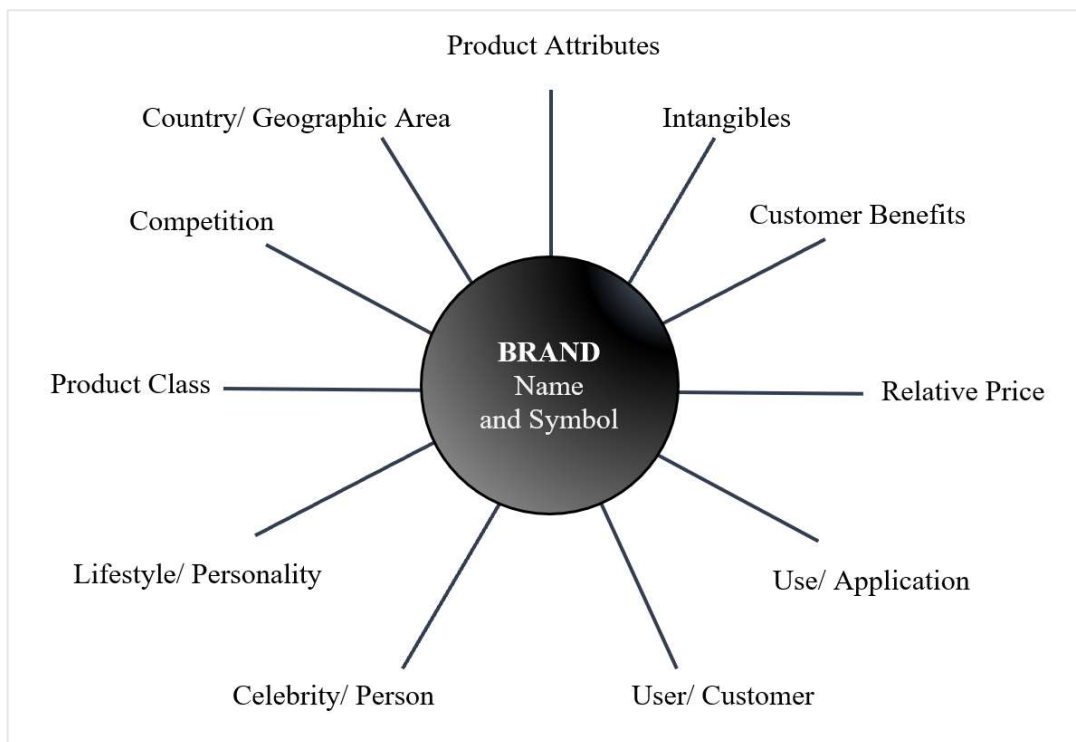
Source: Zhang, The impact of brand image on consumer behaviour: a literature review. *Open Journal of Business and Management*, 3, 2015, p. 59.

No matter how different meanings are attached to the brand image, its feature that everyone meets at some point is that the brand image is all about the consumer perception. Consumers evaluate products and brands based on the image created. Therefore, they buy the image, not the product. Hence, the brand image is formed in the consumer's mind with perceptions about the brand reflected by keeping the brand associations in memory.

2.3.3. Brand Association

Aaker has defined brand associations as anything that occurs in the memory of individuals about the brand. The associations in the mind of consumers could raise feelings such as dynamic, friendly, prestigious, or performance associated features such as high quality, durable, high performance etc. A unique and strong brand association is the most important factor affecting the formation of brand value since brand associations are used to determine the brand's position within the market, to support the reason for the purchase of the brand and to use the brand name in different product/service groups as a form of brand extension (Aaker, 1991, pp. 101-103). As it can be seen on the Figure 2.5, Aaker's brand association consists of eleven elements.

Figure 2.5: Aaker's Brand Association

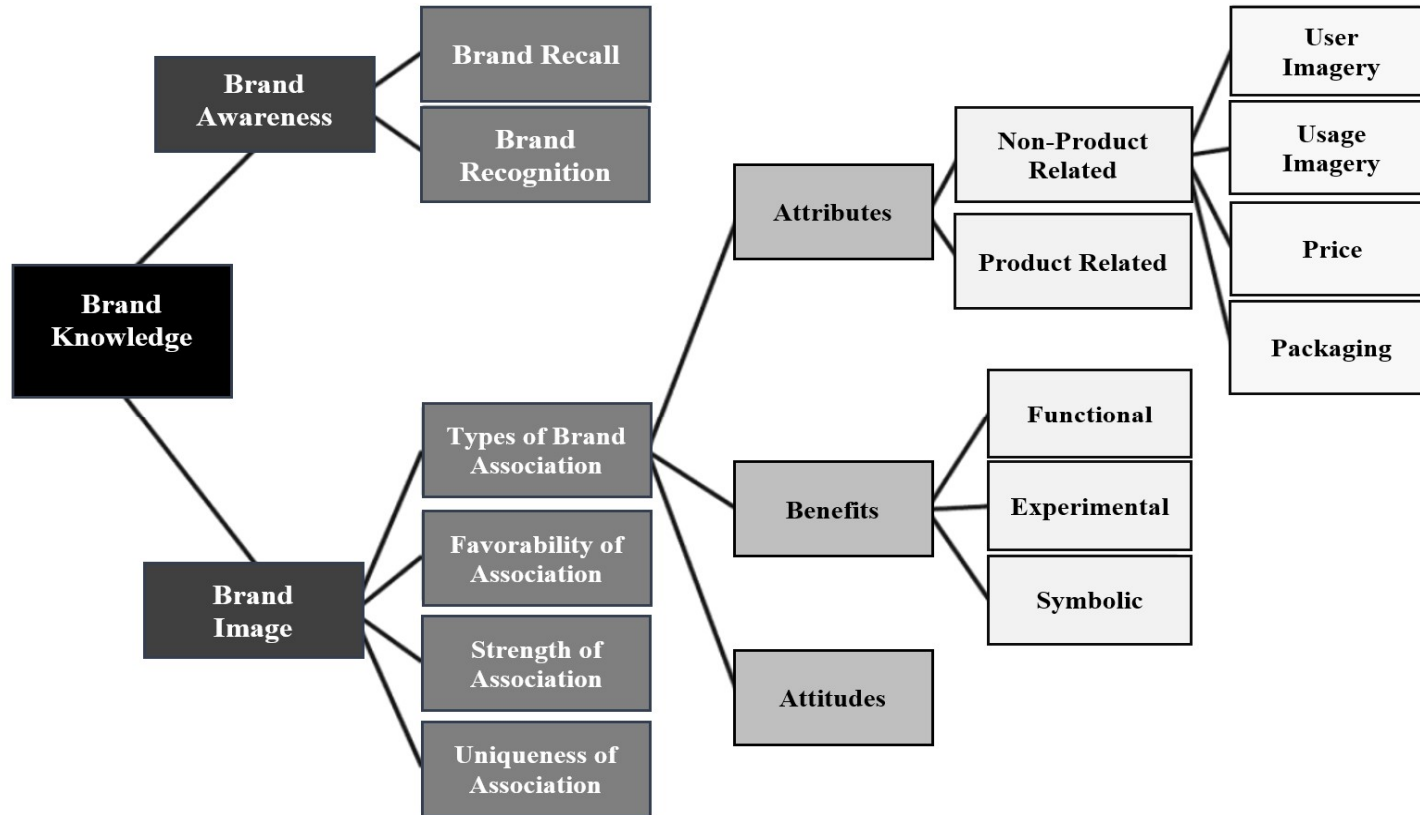


Source: Adopted from Aaker, 1991, p. 115.

Another name who is referenced while working on brand association is Kevin Lane Keller. Keller examines brand associations within his brand knowledge structure model, under the title of brand image. Brand association, in this model, has been collected in three main categories as attributes, benefits and attitudes. Attributes are what consumers define a product with, whatever they think the product or service comes with and brings about; anything that distinguishes the brand from its competitors in the eyes of the customer. Attributes are divided into two groups: product-related and non-product-related. The attributes associated with the product refer to the characteristics of the product or service. Attributes which are not related to the product are expressed in terms of price, user imagery, usage imagery, and packaging which are related to purchase and/or consumption (Keller, 1993, p. 4).

The second main type of association is the benefits. Benefits are the idea of what products and services can do for consumers and what they represent in a broad context, in terms of personal values and attitudes that consumers add to the particular products or services. According to Keller, the benefits can be examined in three sub-headings: functional, experimental, and symbolic. Together, they play a vital role on developing the value proposition (Schultz et al., 2009, p. 320). Lastly, the overall evaluations of customers about a brand is defined as the brand attitude which often shape the consumer behaviour such as brand choice (Keller, 1993, p. 4).

Figure 2.6: Keller's Dimensions of Brand Knowledge



Source: Adopted from Keller, *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity*, 4th Edition, England: Pearson Education Limited, 2013, p. 54.

2.3.4. Brand Loyalty

The brand loyalty is the hearth of the brand equity. Basically, it refers to the consumer's trust and belief in the brand. For instance, for the situation in which customers do not have a concern about brand name, instead make their choice based on the product's price and features, we cannot speak of a high brand value. On the other hand, if the consumers persist to pay for the products of particular brand, even if the competitors provide similar product with a cheaper price or superior feature, it means that the brand has a substantial equity.

In other words, brand loyalty is a measure of how susceptible a brand is to competition. It tells us the possibility of the customer pool to deviate to a similar product or service. That is so particularly in the face of some sort of change; it might be pricing of the product or its competition, traits of the product or its competition, etc. Therefore, brand loyalty is also the defining factor of brand preferences and brand behaviour in future periods, more general expression, it is a positive message of repeated purchases of the product (Aktuğlu, 2004, p. 37). Clearly that also translates into future earnings, as well.

The levels of brand loyalty were explained by Aaker (1991) with the Pyramid of Loyalty. At the bottom most step, he illustrates the level of loyalty of consumers who are price sensitive and tend to change the brand in a possible price change; for some an increase and some a decrease (indicating a loss of quality). The level of loyalty of customers who have not had any negative thoughts or at least satisfied with the product or service are represented in the second step. Those customers have become accustomed to the brand but still vulnerable to competitors' better offer. The customers who are in the third stage, are satisfied with the brand and will also bear various costs as a result of the change. Convincing this type of customers to change the brand they use requires some effort, such as taking care of the termination costs or refunding it in a form of bonus.

Figure 2.7: Loyalty Pyramid



Source: Aaker, 1991, p. 45.

The fourth step defines the level of loyalty of customers who like the brand and see the brand as a friend. As the reasons for the emotions or thoughts described as “to like” are usually ambiguous, these buyers are less likely to be lured by the competitors offers. Lastly, at the top of the pyramid, Aaker locates committed customers. These consumers develop a feeling of pride as a user of the brand. They either pay importance to the brand because of its functionality or consider the brand as a reflection of who they are.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Purpose of the Research

The main purpose of this research is to measure the attitudes of foreign nationals about the brand value of Istanbul. Considering that Istanbul is one of the most visited cities in the world¹, it is useful to examine the brand value in the eyes of foreigners. In this context, during the research, it is desired to examine the four structures that constitute the brand value of a city. The aim of this approach is to examine the degree to which the structures that constitute the brand value contribute to Istanbul as a destination brand.

3.2. Research Methodology

In this study, the research was conducted as a quantitative research. Quantitative research is built upon the positivist approach which argues that the social and physical world can be examined in the same way, thus, social phenomena should be examined with the same tools used in natural sciences. Quantitative research examines social phenomena through statistical analysis of quantitatively measurable data and aims to explore the laws of social order by revealing the cause and effect relationships between these phenomena.

To investigate the research subject, primary data were used which was obtained by questionnaire technique from quantitative research methods. The survey was consisted of three different parts. In the first part, the respondents were given likert scale questions to understand their attitudes towards each of the five constructs of CBBE of

¹ Istanbul is the eighth most visited city in world in 2018 based on the research Mastercard Global Destination Cities Index 2019 (businessinsider.com).

Istanbul. The scales were selected from the study prepared by Im et al. (2012). The reason behind choosing these particular set of scales was that it was already used in previous studies. Secondly, compared to other scales encountered during research, the sub-questions of this particular scale set were consistent with, and comprehensive of the elements that stood out in the prior research and reading.

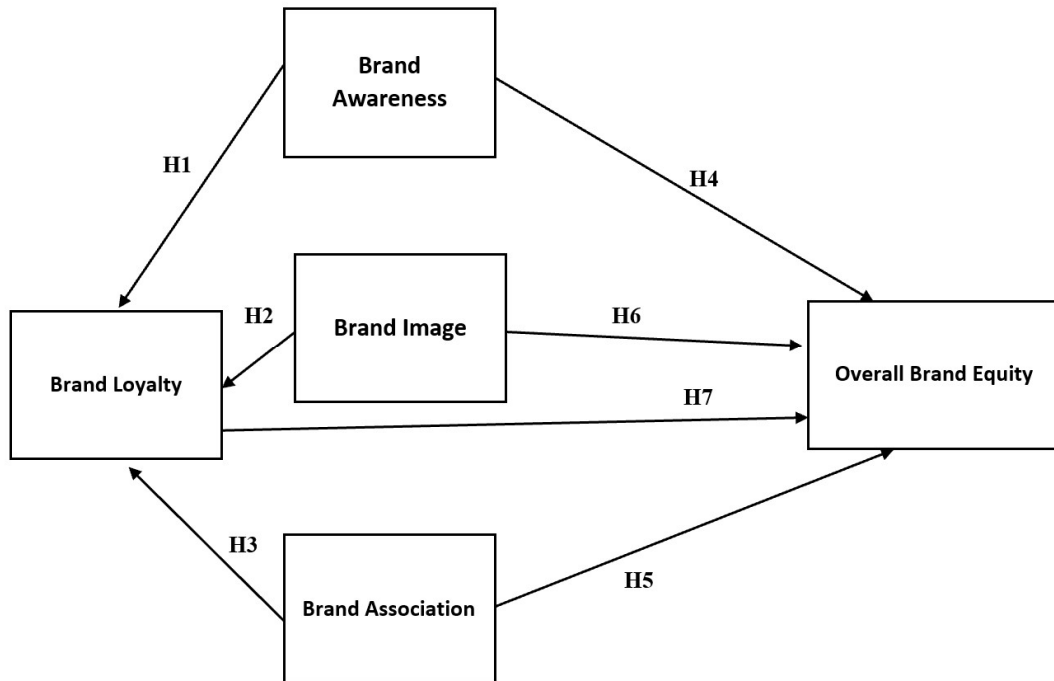
In the second part of the survey, people's interaction with Istanbul and their motivation and purpose of visits were examined. This section was developed from multiple-choice questions. Lastly, as a third part, demographic questions were asked to the survey participant to have insight about their overall distribution and have a sense of representative quality of the sample.

The results of this research were analysed in SPSS version 21 and MS Excel 2016. The basic statistics and tables were mainly processed and prepared via Excel. The main analysis of the study is conducted by application of SPSS which is used for calculating reliability of the scale, significance of the research subjects and questioned relations among the CBBE components.

3.3. Research Model and Hypothesis

Empirical research aims to assess whether some hypotheses derived from a theory fit in the world we live in or not. With the intention of having a successful empirical research, the development of research model is significant since it allows researcher to complete their research in a predetermined direction without distraction and in a calculated manner. In this study, CBBE components will be examined withing the context of Istanbul place brand. To achieve the aim of this research, following model and hypotheses will be used:

Figure 3.1: Research Model



H₁: A city's Brand Awareness contributes to the city's Brand Loyalty.

H₂: Image of a city contributes to the city's Brand Loyalty.

H₃: Brand Association of a city contributes to the city's Brand Loyalty.

H₄: Brand Awareness of a city contributes to the city's Overall Brand Equity.

H₅: A city's Brand Associations contribute to the city's Overall Brand Equity.

H₆: A city's Brand Image contributes to the city's Overall Brand Equity.

H₇: A city's Brand Loyalty contributes to the city's Overall Brand Equity.

3.4. Sampling and Data Collection

As the interest of this research is global, it's tried to include a wide range of nationalities and cultures. By doing so it is tried to probe the global opinion towards Istanbul City rather than a particular culture or group of people. To allow flexibility and leave room for deeper analyses, some demographic information, such as nationality, age etc., were also collected from the sample. Since the sample features interested are so wide, the only limitations for participating the survey were (1) being an adult, i.e. above 18 years of age and (2) being foreign, i.e. not being a Turkish citizen.

After selection of sample characteristics, as a second step, its size was tried to be determined, considering the sample selection is related to the sample's ability to represent target group of the research. The size of the sample indicates its adequacy. A proper sample must represent both the universe and be sufficient. If the selected sample is sufficient, it means that it is large enough to give confidence that its properties are stable. In other words, the sample should be large enough to allow us to trust that similar features can be repeated in countless samples of the same size that can be taken from the universe. However, in all samples, there is a lower and an upper size limit necessary for the data to be accurate. Enlarging the sample after reaching the optimal size will not yield significant gains (Sencer and Sencer, 1978: 487- 495).

There are two criteria used to calculate the sample size: margin of error and confidence level. Margin of error represents the ability of one's sample size to reflect the true population value of the sample universe. In other words, it is the difference between the actual value to be found and the value obtained from the sample if a full count is performed. The rate of 5% is frequently accepted as margin of error percentage. The other criterion is the confidence level, which is used to ensure that the same results will be obtained when the research is repeated again. It indicates the degree of confidence

in characteristic of the stability of the results obtained from the sample. The rate frequently assigned for confidence level is 95% (Singh and Masuka, 2014).

Table 3.1: Sample Size for $\pm 5\%$ and $\pm 10\%$ Precision Levels Where Confidence Level is 95% and $P=0.5$

Size of Population	Sample Size (n) for precision (e)	
	$\pm 5\%$	$\pm 10\%$
500	222	83
1,000	286	91
2,000	333	95
3,000	353	97
4,000	364	98
5,000	370	98
7,000	378	99
9,000	383	99
10,000	385	99
15,000	390	99
20,000	392	100
25,000	394	100
50,000	397	100
100,000	398	100
>100,000	400	100

Source: Singh and Masuku, Sampling techniques & determination of sample size in applied statistics research: An overview. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*, 2(11), 2014, p. 11.

Based on the information and the table above, the sample size for this study could determined 400 with 5% margin of error and 95% confidence level. More statistical measurement, the sample size of a research is calculated using the formula preferred for wide and quantitative interest of research universes ($N > 10,000$), which is $n = \sigma^2 \cdot Z_{\alpha}^2 / d^2$ (Özdamar, 2003, p. 116–118). Among the components of the formula these assumptions were made standard deviation $\sigma = 1$, effect size $d = 0.10$ and $\alpha = 0.05$, Z

$0.05 = 1.96$. Based on these assumptions, the base size of the sample calculated to be 385 participants which would provide us with stability even if the sample size falls short to some extent.

From the distribution tool of the questionnaire, the survey was conducted in tech assisted manners. As the first step, access links to the survey was distributed to foreigners accessible in Turkey; it was distributed to international relations offices of various universities, embassies, and branches of multinational companies. It's then uploaded to online survey distribution channels. Then, to increase participation, social media platforms of expat groups and Exchange groups were contacted, and the survey was distributed in that channels, as well. As the participation inspected in the collection stage, it was discovered that the sample was heavily skewed towards students, thus personal contacts of the researcher was utilised in order to compensate for the skewness and represent more people from business environment.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

4.1. Demographics Findings

Since the interest of the study is on the foreigners' perception of Istanbul City, participants who cannot be confirmed as foreigners were excluded from the study. To this end, an open-ended question among the demographic information section was used asking for participants' residence or country of origin. Those who reported being from any country, but Turkey were included. For those who left the question blank, IP addresses were checked and IP's indicating a location in Turkey (and didn't report being from any other country) were excluded. 65 participants were excluded in total, leaving behind a sample size of 381 people.

Frequency Analysis of the participants' demographic information shows that 56.6% of the participants were female, 84.91% were under 35 years old, 50.81% being under 25, 45.7% had a bachelor's degree, totalling 79,2 with a bachelor's degree or higher education, 57.4% were students and 33.1% in total were occupied in various positions.

Sample demographics for this study was mostly appropriate. Although the gender distribution is somewhat skewed, it's close enough to normal distribution to be considered representative. Age distribution can be considered young, a large majority being adults under 35, which can be considered useful as their access to information technologies may allow them to reach unbiased information about foreign countries freely. They may also be considered better available for abroad interactions, such as, tourism, education, business, etc. In accordance with the age distribution, majority of the respondents are students, to which the advantages of the age distribution apply. In addition, occupation distribution also has a good representation of different occupation positions. The distribution is found to be normal. All in all, sample distribution can be a good representation of the population and deemed appropriate for the aim of this study.

Table 4.1: Distribution of Participants' Demographics

Variable	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	153	39.0
	Female	222	56.6
	Other	6	1.5
Age	18 - 24	195	49.7
	25 - 34	130	33.2
	35 - 44	38	9.7
	45 - 54	7	1.8
	55 +	11	2.8
Education	Less than High School	6	1.5
	High School	57	14.5
	Bachelor's	179	45.7
	Master's	110	28.1
	Doctorate	21	5.4
	Others	8	2.0
Occupation	Senior Executive	16	4.1
	Employer	22	5.6
	Employee	88	22.4
	Unemployed	9	2.3
	Student	225	57.4

	Retired	2	0.5
	Other	19	4.8
Total		381	

Information about the participant country of origin is provided on the Table 4.2. Based on the frequency analysis, majority of the participant were from Europe, MENA, and North America respectively. While, these three regions make up the 76.6% of the total valid respondents, Sub-Saharan Africa, South America, and South East Asia with Oceania are the less represented regions.

Table 4.2: Distribution of Participants by Their Home Region.

Regions	Frequency	Percent
East Asia	16	4.1
Europe	212	54.1
MENA	72	18.4
North America	43	11
Oceania	7	1.8
South America	6	1.5
South Asia	14	3.6
South East Asia	7	1.8
Sub-Saharan Africa	4	0.8

4.2. Motivation and Purpose of the Visitors

The research indicated that the most stated purpose of visiting Istanbul among survey participants is tourism activities (289/n=381). It is followed by educational and shopping purposes. On the other hand, even though the rate of answering option ‘other’ had relatively high rate (97/n=381), most of the respondents did not provide detail about this option. Therefore, the chance of having a deeper insight about their purpose was missed. Among respondents who specified their ‘other’ purpose, the most frequent three were: cuisine, architecture, and culture.

Table 4.3: Motivation and purpose of visit for Istanbul

	Statement	Count*
Purpose of Visit	Tourist Attraction	289
	Business Trip	47
	Education	105
	Shopping	75
	Healthcare & Beauty Treatment	17
	Sports	21
	Other	97
Motivation of Visit	Want to know About Istanbul	305
	Close Distance	85
	Cheap Travel Cost	125
	Recommendations	114
	Business Opportunities	30
	High Quality Schools	51

* Multiple choice is allowed for this question.

The participants stated that the most motivating feature of Istanbul is an interest to know about the city. Second most chosen option points to the opinion of respondents regarding Istanbul as a cheap travel destination. The motivation sources follow as recommendation, close proximity to their country of residence, high quality schools, and business opportunities in that order.

4.3. Impact of Experiencing Istanbul

The participants were requested to answer how their thoughts changed after their visit to Istanbul, if they had. The reason behind this question was to evaluate to what direction engagement of the city affect the attitude of visitors. Impact of visitors' experience in the city appeared in this research as 36.7 % in a positive way, 6.6% in a negative way, and 16.9% neutral.

Table 4.4: Answers regarding Istanbul city experience

Statement	Frequency	Percent
It has changed in a positive way.	140	36.7
It has changed in a negative way.	22	6.6
It has not changed.	62	16.9
I have not been Istanbul before.	156	39.8
Total	381	100

4.4. Performance of Istanbul as a Brand

To assess the respondents' perceptions regarding performance of Istanbul in each brand construct, they were requested to rate their opinion. The questions were constructed as 5-point Likert scale; 1 meaning 'strongly disagree' and 5 meaning 'strongly agree'. The table below lists the average scores each construct had across all the sample answers.

Table 4.5: Descriptive Statistics of Variables

	n	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
BA ¹ average	381	1	5	3.9536	0.86815
BI ² average	381	1	5	3.6732	0.48601
BAS ³ average	381	1	5	3.9228	0.70861
BL ⁴ average	381	1	5	3.252	0.99595
BE ⁵ average	381	1	5	3.0394	0.92982

¹: Brand Awareness; ²:Brand Image; ³: Brand Association; ⁴: Brand Loyalty; ⁵: Brand Equity

The table depicts that Istanbul performs its best score in the Brand Awareness and Brand Association constructs of brand. Contrarily, in Overall Brand Equity of the city shows relatively poor performance compared to the other elements.

4.5. Validity and Reliability of the Measurement Tools

According to Im, Kim, Elliot and Han (2012), the scales have good internal consistency, with a Cronbach alpha scores of brand awareness, brand image, brand association, brand loyalty, and brand equity scales were .70, .71, .81, .80, and .85 respectively. In the current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficients were .69 (3 items), .88 (23 items), .86 (5 items), .91 (4 items), and .92 (4 items) in that order. Therefore, reliability values are acceptable and even within very high limits. This shows that the scales used in the research meet the reliability and validity criteria.

4.5.1. Examination of Brand Awareness Scale

The 3 items of the City Brand Awareness Scale put through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) via SPSS version 21. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value was .647, above

the recommended value of .6 (Kaiser, 1974) and Bartlett's Test (Bartlett, 1954) value reached statistical significance ($p=.000$), thus factor analysis is appropriate.

Table 4.6: Exploratory Factor Analysis of Brand Awareness Scale and It's Reliability

Construct	Items	Statements	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha
Brand Awareness	BA1	I know what Istanbul looks like	.731	.686
	BA2	I am aware of Istanbul	.800	
	BA3	I recognize Istanbul as a travel destination among other cities	.842	
Total Variance Explained		62,777		
KMO: 0.647 Bartlett's Test: $p<.001$ Oblimin Rotation				

In this scale, while the total variance explained was found as 62.7%, Cronbach's alpha value was found as .689 which is slightly lower than the recommended value (.7). However, considering the number of items (3 items) this result could be tolerable since the Cronbach alpha value depends on the number of items in the scale (Pallant, 2011). In such situation, calculation of mean inter-item correlation for each item is recommended and this correlation should be between .2 and .4 (Briggs & Cheek 1986). Therefore, to ensure the coherence of the items, the inter-item correlation procedure was applied. The results indicated that, there is no problem that affect the reliability of the scale since the r value for all items were above .3.

Table 4.7: Inter Item Correlation Matrix of Brand Awareness Scale

	BA1	BA2	BA3
BA1	1.000	.352	.432
BA2	.352	1.000	.534
BA3	.432	.534	1.000

4.5.2. Examination of Brand Image Scale

The 23 items of the City Brand Image Scale put through EFA. The KMO value of the scale was .885, above the recommended value of .6 (Kaiser, 1974) and Bartlett's Test (Bartlett, 1954) value reached statistical significance ($p=.000$), thus factor analysis is appropriate. In this scale, the total variance explained with the rate of 37.8%. Based on its Cronbach's alpha value (.883), the scale can be accepted as reliable.

Table 4.8: Exploratory Factor Analysis of Brand Image Scale and Its Reliability

Construct	Items	Statements	Factor Loading		Cronbach's Alpha
			1	2	
Brand Image	BI1	Advanced technology and economy	.319		.883
	BI2	High quality of infrastructure (i.e., transport, roads, airport, technology, etc.)	.431		
	BI3	Good shopping facilities	.516		
	BI4	Interesting cultural events/festivals	.483		
	BI5	Availability to visit featured destination of movies or TV dramas	.342		

BI6	Interesting sightseeing opportunities	.427	
BI7	Accessibility of Muslim prayer service and space		-.792
BI8	Familiar Islamic culture & religion		-.752
BI9	Convenient location of mosques		-.788
BI10	A wide choice of “Halal” restaurants		-.684
BI11	Safe and secure environment	.517	
BI12	Beautiful natural attractions/scenery	.532	
BI13	Interesting cultural/historical attractions	.487	
BI14	Friendly local people	.598	
BI15	Availability of outdoor recreation activities	.516	
BI16	A wide variety of entertainment and nightlife	.618	
BI17	A wide choice of accommodations	.665	
BI18	Less communication (language) barrier	.237	
BI19	Acceptable cost of accommodations	.507	
BI20	Standard hygiene and cleanliness	.510	
BI21	Good weather and climate	.523	
BI22	Availability of water sports (beaches/sailing)	.433	
BI23	Appealing local cuisine	.483	

Total Variance Explained	37,794			
KMO: 0.885 Bartlett's Test: p<.001				

EFA revealed the presence of five components with eigenvalues exceeding 1, explaining 26.68%, 6.79%, 6.0%, 2.96% and 2.23% of the variance respectively. An inspection of the screeplot revealed a clear break after the third component.

Moreover, when looking at factor loads, it was determined that the substances were mixed together and at the same time less than 3 substances were loaded on to some factors. Moreover, inspecting the factor loadings revealed that some factors were loaded with less than 3 items while one factor being heavily loaded with a mixed variety of components. Thus, the analysis is repeated with limiting the number of factors all the way down to 2 factors. While limiting the factors to 5 to 3 output similar results, only using a fixed number of 2 factors revealed meaningful results for the brand image construct. Those 2 factors were distinguished as 'Access to Muslim Culture' and rest of the Brand Image domains. This result might be explained by the mixed features of participants' cultural and religious backgrounds, since all the former studies were conducted on Muslim majority and 'monocultural' samples. As this survey was conducted on a sample with greatly various countries and cultures, domain relating to Muslim culture accessibility may be veiling the factoring of the other domains and causing them to appear as a single block. Furthermore, this study, like the previous others, is not interested in the lower domains of the image construct, thus it's deemed reasonable to ignore the domains of this construct and treat it as a uniform construct like the rest.

4.5.3. Examination of Brand Association Scale

EFA was performed on the 5 items of the City Brand Association Scale. The KMO value was .826, exceeding the accepted value of .6. Bartlett's Test reached statistical significance ($p=.000$), therefore factor analysis is appropriate. For the next step, to examine the reliability of the scale, the Cronbach alpha value is investigated, and it is found as .864 which is exceeding the recommending value (.7); making the scale reliable for use. With its 5 items, the scale's total variance explained was found as 64.8%.

Table 4.9: Exploratory Factor Analysis of Brand Association Scale and Its Reliability

Construct	Items	Statements	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha
Brand Association	BAS1	Istanbul provides high quality tourist attractions	.775	.864
	BAS2	The overall quality of Istanbul as a travel destination is high	.834	
	BAS3	I like Istanbul	.841	
	BAS4	Istanbul provides high quality services	.737	
	BAS5	My overall attitude toward Istanbul is favourable	.835	
Total Variance Explained		64,865		
KMO: 0.826 Bartlett's Test: $p<.001$ Oblimin Rotation				

4.5.4. Examination of Brand Loyalty Scale

The 5 items of the City Brand Loyalty Scale put through EFA. The KMO value of the scale was .874, above the recommended value of .6 (Kaiser, 1974) and Bartlett's Test (Bartlett, 1954) value reached statistical significance ($p=.000$), thus factor analysis is appropriate. In this scale, the total variance explained with the rate of 69.2%. Based on its Cronbach's alpha value (.888), the scale can be accepted as reliable.

Table 4.10: Exploratory Factor Analysis of Brand Loyalty Scale and Its Reliability

Construct	Items	Statements	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha
Brand Loyalty	BL1	Istanbul will be my first choice if I have an opportunity to travel overseas	.813	.888
	BL2	I would intend to travel to Istanbul in the next 5 years	.798	
	BL3	I would strongly recommend Istanbul to someone who seeks my advice	.865	
	BL4	I would still consider a trip to Istanbul even if the travel cost increased	.816	
	BL5	I am loyal to Istanbul	.855	
Total Variance Explained		69,217		
KMO: 0.874 Bartlett's Test: $p<.001$ Oblimin Rotation				

4.5.5. Examination of Overall Brand Equity Scale

EFA was performed on the 4 items of the City's Overall Brand Equity Scale. The KMO value was .835, which is over the accepted value of .6. Bartlett's Test reached statistical significance ($p=.000$), therefore factor analysis is appropriate. For the next step, to examine the reliability of the scale, the value of Cronbach alpha is investigated, and it is found as .919 which is exceeding the recommended value (.7); making the scale reliable for use. With its 54 items, the scale's total variance explained was found as 80.5%.

Table 4.11: Exploratory Factor Analysis of Brand Loyalty Scale and Its Reliability

Construct	Items	Statements	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha
Overall Brand Equity	BE1	Even if another city had the same features as Istanbul, I would prefer to travel to Istanbul.	.888	.919
	BE2	If there is another city as good as Istanbul, I prefer to travel to Istanbul	.906	
	BE3	If another city is not different from Istanbul in any way, it seems smarter to travel to Istanbul.	.897	
	BE4	It makes sense to travel to Istanbul instead of any other cities, even if they are the same	.899	
Total Variance Explained		80,539		
KMO: 0.835 Bartlett's Test: $p<.001$ Oblimin Rotation				

4.6 Examination of Inter-variables Relations

Correlation analysis was applied to investigate the relationship of research variables to each other. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) is used to detect and describe the relationship between pairs of continuous variables by providing information about the strength and direction of their relationship. The correlation coefficient varies between -1 and +1. On the other side, a correlation of 0 value reveals there is no relationship between the two variables. When the correlation coefficient is calculated, values close to zero indicate the existence of a linear and weak relationship between the two variables, and values close to -1 and +1 indicate a linear and strong relationship between the two variables. The sign out the front of the value shows the correlation whether a positive or negative. If it is in positive value, the relationship between two variables is the same direction, while negative value indicates in verse direction. (Pallant, 2011).

The Pearson correlation coefficients obtained as a result of correlation analysis applied to analyze the relationships between the scales used in the study are provided in the Table 4.12. For the following paragraph, the relationship between each pairs of variables will be explained.

Table 4.12: Inter-variables Relations

	BAsum	BLsum	BIsum	BASsum	BEsum
BAsum	1				
BLsum	.505**	1			
BIsum	.526**	.580**	1		
BASsum	.590**	.726**	.759**	1	
BEsum	.281**	.697**	.507**	.565**	1
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.					

Based on the data, there was a strong, positive correlation between the brand awareness of the city and the city's loyalty ($r = .50$, $n = 381$, $p < .001$), with high levels of city's brand awareness affiliated with higher levels of city's brand loyalty. The relationship between the city's brand image and its brand loyalty indicates that there was a strong, positive correlation between the two variables ($r = .58$, $n = 381$, $p < .001$), with high levels of city's image associated with higher levels of city's brand loyalty. There was a strong, positive correlation between the city's brand awareness and its brand loyalty ($r = .726$, $n = 381$, $p < .001$), with high levels of city's brand associations correlated with higher levels of city's brand loyalty.

The relationship between brand awareness of the city and its overall brand equity shows that there was a weak, yet positive correlation between these two variables ($r = .281$, $n = 381$, $p < .001$), with high levels of city awareness interrelated with higher levels of city's overall brand equity. There was a strong, positive correlation between the brand association of the city and its overall brand equity ($r = .565$, $n = 381$, $p < .001$), with high levels of city's brand association correlated with higher levels of city's overall brand equity. The relationship between the city's brand image and its overall brand equity indicates that there was a strong, positive correlation between these two variables ($r = .507$, $n = 381$, $p < .001$), with high levels of city's image affiliated with higher levels of city's overall brand equity. Lastly, there was a strong, positive correlation between the city's brand loyalty and its overall brand equity ($r = .697$, $n = 381$, $p < .01$), with high levels of city's brand loyalty associated with higher levels of city's overall brand equity.

4.7. Evaluation of Hypotheses

Multiple linear regression analysis is the method used to explain the causality, i.e. cause and effect relations among two or more independent variables that affect a dependent variable and to determine the impact levels of these independent variables. This method is used mostly to assist the prediction of a particular outcome which is affected

by a set of variables. Therefore, to test the research hypotheses and the research model, application of the multiple regression analysis is selected. Moreover, by using this analysis, the most meaningful variables which contribute to a better adherence of the model is planned to be detected. The results are illustrated on the table 4.13 and explained in the following paragraph.

Table 4.13: Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis		Standard Beta	Standard Error	T value	P Value	Result
H1	Brand Awareness → Brand Loyalty	.112	0.050	2.551	.011	Supported
H2	Brand Image → Brand Loyalty	.049	.111	.892	.373	Not Supported
H3	Brand Association → Brand Loyalty	.623	.081	10.871	.000	Supported
H4	Brand Awareness → Overall Brand Equity	-.106	.056	-2.014	.045	Supported
H5	Brand Association → Overall Brand Equity	.204	.124	3.139	.002	Supported
H6	Brand Image → Overall Brand Equity	.473	.090	6.915	.000	Supported
H7	Brand Loyalty → Overall Brand Equity	.697	.034	18,900	.000	Supported

*p < .05; **p < .001.

Results derived from regression analyses, which can be viewed in the Table 4.13, above, show that five of the seven hypotheses are supported by the data collected. In H1 it was claimed that Brand Awareness would have an influence on Brand Loyalty; with the results in hand (H1: std. beta = .112, $t = 2,551$, sig. = .011) predicts an influence of Brand Awareness on Brand Loyalty. In H2 it was claimed that Brand Image would have an influence on Brand Loyalty. This is the first hypothesis that was not supported by the evidence (H2: std. beta = .049, $t = .892$, sig. = .373) collected from the sample of this study since the p value of any effect calculated to be insignificant. H3 claimed that Brand Association would have an influence on Brand Loyalty; analysis of the data (H3: std. beta = .623, $t = 10.871$, sig. = .000) supports the claim H3 hypothesizes. H4 hypothesized that Brand Awareness would have an influence on Overall Brand Equity of a city; results in hand (H4: std. beta = -.106, $t = -2.014$, sig. = .045) suggest an influence can be claimed, therefore the hypothesis is supported. However, the influence of Brand awareness on Overall Brand Equity is on the negative direction, meaning that the influence is inverted. H5 hypothesized that Brand Image would have an influence on the Overall Brand Equity; which is supported by the data (H5: std. beta = .204, $t = 3.139$, sig. = .002) collected. In H6 it was claimed that Brand Association would have an influence on Overall Brand Equity; that claim is also compatible with the results (H6: std. beta = .473, $t = 6.915$, sig. = .000) in hand. Lastly, H7 claimed that Brand Loyalty would have an influence on Overall Brand Equity; results of the analysis (H7: std. beta = .697, $t = 18.900$, sig. = .000) supported the hypothesis of H7.

4.8. Discussion

As stated in the related sections, the demographics of the research sample are representative of the population. One note to add here might be that, majority of participants' regions of origins are realised as Europe, MENA, and North America. These proportions might look skewed at the first glance considering world population distribution. However, once Istanbul's international visitor traffic -which is published

periodically by Istanbul Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism- is considered, these frequencies match the inbound international tourist profile quite closely.

Another interesting evaluation might be drawn from the additional questions included in the survey. As demonstrated in Table 4.4, respondents who rated their experience as positively influential, are 36,7% of the sample. When respondents who have never been to Istanbul are excluded, that proportion amounts to approximately 61% of the visitor sample. This might be interpreted as Istanbul City cannot represent its attractiveness accurately enough to potential individuals who might interact with the city, as tourists, investors, students, etc.

The main question of this study, however, was the relations and effects of the individual constructs of CBBE to the Overall Brand Equity of Istanbul City. The results derived utilising regression analysis method are discussed in the following paragraphs. As shown in the Table 4.13, in detail, the most influential of the relations based on the standardized beta values is Brand Loyalty's influence on Overall Brand Equity. Next most prominent effect supported by the analysis is Brand Association on Brand Loyalty, with 1 unit of change in Brand Association being linked to 0.623-unit change in Brand Loyalty (H7 std. beta = .623). Third most important role is Brand Image's on Overall Brand Equity. All of these three values are backed with a confidence level of under one in a thousand (H3, H6, H7: sig. =.000).

Fourth and Fifth most prominent influence predicted are Brand Association on Overall Brand Equity and Brand Awareness on Brand Loyalty. They respectively explain approximately one fifth and one ninth of the associated changes (H5: std. beta = .204, H1: std. beta = .112) and are supported by an acceptable confidence of under 5 percent. Brand Image doesn't show any significant influence on the Brand Loyalty, as its significance calculated to be .373. Brand Awareness' effect on Overall Brand Equity, perhaps most interestingly, is inverted; it suggests a negative effect of Brand Awareness on Overall Brand Equity with a statistically significant p value of under 5 percent.

When Brand Value is under the scope, Brand Equity is the main and most comprehensive measurable indicator at hand. Since the interest of this study is on the Brand of Istanbul City, our focus will be on the Overall Brand Equity. The results predict that largest contribution to Overall Brand Equity of Istanbul comes from Brand Loyalty. Among the three other constructs measured for this study Brand Association seems to be the most basic contributor, as it seems to have the largest contribution to Brand Loyalty, as well as its direct effect on Overall Brand Equity. Similarly, Brand Image calculated to be second in contribution to the Overall Brand Equity.

The other interesting note, as mentioned above, is that Brand Awareness' negative contribution almost seems to "harm" the brand. One potential explanation to that effect might be that the brand increasingly seems more "mainstream" and start to imply a place more crowded and lacking quality. Another potential explanation might be sought within the international coverage of Istanbul and Turkey in the news media, which are illustrated with political turmoil and terrorist attacks in the recent years. Since people's opinions, who are not deeply aware of Turkey and Istanbul or even heard of them for the first time via such media coverage, would be shaped by that exposure, it reveals a topic worth studying. However, the reason behind the results found with this research cannot be explained merely with these possibilities as there is no evidence from the data that could be used to study such claims. Therefore, to bring out the underlying justifications, further research is surely needed.

One comprehensive suggestion to combine and make use of all of this data in hand might be as follows. To improve Istanbul's Overall Brand Equity and, as one of the interests, attract more potential visitors, investors and such, Brand Loyalty and Brand Image could be put under focus. To do so, it could be expected to associate the Istanbul Image with a quality experience; as frequencies in Table 4.3 regarding their motivation depict, the second most common motivation for visiting Istanbul is that it is perceived as a cheap travel destination. Additionally, it could be beneficial to try create loyalty towards the city, which is realised as repeated visits, or –if not revisited- distribute

positive opinion by word of mouth (Bianchi and Pike, 2010, p. 6). In fact, participants' responses as to what the motivation towards preferring Istanbul is shows that recommendation was the third most frequent response guiding them towards the city. In order to enhance Brand Loyalty, it seems most useful to enhance Brand Associations in people's minds, such as logos, celebrities, landmarks etc. At the same time, it could be wise, based on the data, to cut back on the strategies aiming to improve Brand Awareness.

CONCLUSION

The curiosity driving the researcher toward this topic was to explore the factors which contribute to the Istanbul Brand most directly and most extensively. Additionally, it was also interesting if the most frequently mentioned elements, which are thought to influence the brand value in first glance, were statistically effective in the world we live in. If those elements were actually contributing to the brand, support the investments more confidently, both in terms of money and effort; and if not, direct the limited sources to the effective endeavours to gain more benefit.

To this end, it is tried to measure the four main instruments of brand which are commonly addressed among academics and practitioners as Brand Awareness, Brand Image, Brand Associations, Brand Loyalty and compare them against Overall Brand Equity within the scope of Place branding. The subject of the research is determined as Istanbul since it is one of the most visited cities on the globe. To investigate the research subject, primary data were utilised which were obtained by survey-based tool under the umbrella of quantitative research methods. The results of this research were analysed in SPSS version 21 and visualized via MS Excel 2016.

In regard to Istanbul specifically, the largest impact to Overall Brand Equity of Istanbul identified to come from Brand Loyalty and Brand Image components of CBBE for place. Therefore, it would not be wrong to state that channelling the sources toward facilitating stronger Brand Loyalty and Brand Image. Brand Associations also stood forward as the largest contributor to Brand Loyalty as well as its direct effect on Overall Brand Equity. To the contrary, Brand Awareness appeared to have a negative impact on Overall Brand Equity. This came across as a striking result and deserves further research to bring out the underlying reasons.

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APPENDIX

This research is carried out by Ayşe Aybike Baykal for the master's thesis in marketing communication department of Istanbul Bilgi University.

- The aim of the research is to examine the brand performance of Istanbul.
- The survey consists of 4 pages in total.
- You will be asked to answer the following questions which will take approximately 5-10 minutes.

It's not required that you have been to Istanbul or Turkey before to answer this survey.

The answers will be used for scientific research exclusively.

If you would like more information about the study, please contact the researcher at aybikebaykal@sabanciuniv.edu.

1. The following are questions about the components of brand equity of Istanbul as a tourist destination (Brand awareness, and brand image).

Please choose (x) the most appropriate box that represents your opinion.

(1 = Strongly disagree & 5 = Strongly agree)

	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	Neutral	Agree	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
BRAND AWARENESS					
I know what İstanbul looks like					
I am aware of İstanbul					
I recognize İstanbul as a travel destination among other cities					
BRAND IMAGE (Istanbul has..)					
Advanced technology and economy					
High quality of infrastructure (i.e., transport, roads, airport, technology, etc.)					
Good shopping facilities					
Interesting cultural events/festivals					
Availability to visit featured destination of movies or TV dramas					
Interesting sightseeing opportunities					
Accessibility of Muslim prayer service and space					
Familiar Islamic culture & religion					
Convenient location of mosques					
A wide choice of “Halal” restaurants					

Safe and secure environment					
Beautiful natural attractions/scenery					
Interesting cultural/historical attractions					
Friendly local people					
Availability of outdoor recreation activities					
A wide variety of entertainment and nightlife					
A wide choice of accommodations					
Less communication (language) barrier					
Acceptable cost of accommodations					
Standard hygiene and cleanliness					
Good weather and climate					
Availability of water sports (beaches/sailing)					
Appealing local cuisine					

2. The following are questions on brand association, brand loyalty and overall brand equity of Istanbul as a tourist destination.

Please choose (x) the most appropriate box that represents your opinion.

(1 = Strongly disagree & 5 = Strongly agree)

	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
BRAND ASSOCIATIONS					
Istanbul provides high quality tourist attractions					
The overall quality of Istanbul as a travel destination is high					
I like Istanbul					
Istanbul provides high quality services					
My overall attitude toward Istanbul is favourable					
BRAND LOYALTY					
Istanbul will be my first choice if I have an opportunity to travel overseas					
I would intend to travel to Istanbul in the next 5 years					
I would strongly recommend Istanbul to someone who seeks my advice					
I would still consider a trip to Istanbul even if the travel cost increased					
I am loyal to Istanbul					

OVERALL BRAND EQUITY					
Even if another city had the same features as Istanbul, I would prefer to travel to Istanbul.					
If there is another city as good as Istanbul, I prefer to travel to Istanbul					
If another city is not different from Istanbul in any way, it seems smarter to travel to Istanbul.					
It makes sense to travel to Istanbul instead of any other cities, even if they are the same					

3. Which of the following option describe your engagement with Istanbul?

- A) I have not been to Istanbul before
- B) I have been to Istanbul
- C) I am living in Istanbul

The following are information on your visit to Istanbul.

If you have not been in Istanbul before, please indicate your intention to choose Istanbul to visit. (*You can select multiple items*)

4. Purpose of Visiting Istanbul

- A) Tourist Attraction
- B) Business Trip
- C) Education
- D) Shopping

- E) Healthcare & Beauty Treatment
- E) Sports
- F) Other (Please state).....

5. Motivation to Visit

- A) Interest in Istanbul
- B) Close distance
- C) Low travel cost
- D) Recommendations
- E) Business opportunities
- F) Education quality

The following are information on demographics.

6. Gender

- A) Male
- B) Female
- C) Other (you may specify.....)
- D) Prefer not to disclose

7. Age

- A) Under 18
- B) 18-24
- C) 25-34
- D) 35-44
- E) 45- 54
- F) Over 55

8. Education

- A) Less than high school diploma
- B) High school degree or equivalent
- C) Bachelor's degree
- D) Master's degree
- E) Doctorate
- F) Other.....

9. How would you describe your occupation?

- A) Senior Executive
- B) Employer
- C) Employee
- D) Unemployed
- E) Student
- F) Other (please state).....

10. Country of Residence:.....
(If Turkey, please state country of origin)

**ETİK KURUL DEĞERLENDİRME SONUCU/RESULT OF EVALUATION BY
THE ETHICS COMMITTEE**

(Bu bölüm İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurul tarafından doldurulacaktır /This section to be completed by the Committee on Ethics in research on Humans)

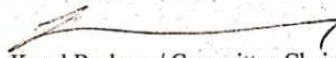
Başvuru Sahibi / Applicant: Ayşe Aybike Baykal

Proje Başlığı / Project Title: A Research on Place Branding: Istanbul Case

Proje No. / Project Number: 2019-20672-155

1.	Herhangi bir değişikliğe gerek yoktur / There is no need for revision	XX
2.	Ret/ Application Rejected Reddin gerekçesi / Reason for Rejection	

Değerlendirme Tarihi / Date of Evaluation: 5 Kasım 2019


Kurul Başkanı / Committee Chair

Doç. Dr. İtur Erhart

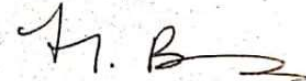

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