The Effect of the Cultural Values on the Destination Image: A Search in Eskisehir 2013 Turkish World Capital of Culture

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Extensive Summary

Introduction

Destination image is the mental presentations of the individual’s knowledge, feelings and impressions related to a destination (Crompton, 1979). Previous studies show that the destination images effect the quality of trip, tourists future behavior and purchasing process, their individual perceptions, their destination choices, their satisfaction through the destination and recommend intentions (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Tapachai and Waryszak, 2000; Gallarza et al. 2002; Beerli and Martin, 2004; Ibrahim and Gill, 2005; Chen and Tsai, 2007; Chi and Qu, 2008; Vela, 2009; Qu et al. 2011; Choi et al. 2011). Therefore, the positive perceived destination images are important critically. Aveikurt (2005) divides the destination image into three; (a) the image that was consisted by the main values of the region, (b) evoked image that was created by the sales effort, (c) image based on the knowledge and experience after the visitations. In this context, the attractions of the destinations affect the destination image on the base of the cognitive and the affective dimensions through the destinations before and after the visitations. In the literature it was noted that destination image is a concept that derived from the cognitive and affective interpretation/evaluation (Gartner, 1993; Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Uysal, Chen and Williams, 2000; Baloglu and Mangaloglu, 2001; Hosany, Ekinci ve Uysal, 2006; Martin and Bosque, 2008; Vela, 2009), and these cognitive/affective contents are seen as the indicator of the destination image (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Uysal, Chen and Williams, 2000; Baloglu and Mangaloglu, 2001). While cognitive contents consist of the faith and the knowledge about the physical characteristics of the destinations, affective contents consist of the feelings according to the destination attributes and physical structures (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999). With this new approach, 'natural attractions, cultural heritage, tourist structures and the atmosphere’ consist of the base of the destination image which should be thought as a multi-dimensional phenomenon. In this context, the touristic attractions of destinations firstly affect the cognitive images of
destinations, and then the affective images, and the memorability of the destinations with the holistic approach.

**The Goals and Methodology of the Research**

The aims of this study are to analyze the tourists’ characters and behaviors who direct through the cultural destinations, to identify the information source of the tourist and travel motivations through the cultural destinations and to determine the relationship between cognitive and emotional values and destination image. With these aims, a search was conducted on the tourists who visited Eskisehir, Turkish World Capital of Culture with the scale that was formed by Vela (2009) in order to determine the cognitive and the affective variables in the cultural destinations. The data was taken by the questionnaire and it was composed of the following five parts: socio-demographic items, items for determining the information sources related to Eskisehir, the motivation factors through the cultural destinations, items for determining the cognitive and the affective variables through the cultural destinations and visit intention. Data was statistically analyzed by using the SPSS statistic programme.

The survey was conducted in Eskisehir on tourist who accommodated at least one night. The universe of the search was limited to Eskisehir, because it was chosen the Turkish World Capital of Culture in 2013. The questionnaire was administered between the months of May and September in 2013. Firstly, respondents were asked if they visited Eskisehir before or not and the ones who answered positively were included to the search. At the end of the search time a total of 300 questionnaires were collected, but 282 questionnaires were analyzed after the elimination of the missing ones.

**Findings and Discussion**

From the result of the research that was held to determine the tourists behavior and analyze the effect of the cultural values on the image of the cultural destination, it was seen that majority of the participants were man and between the ages of 45-54. The majority of participants were at the university graduation level and employers. American and German nationality also consisted of the majority. This situation shows us that tourists coming to Eskisehir have high level of education and high income. Moreover, it was founded that majority of the respondents has never been in Eskisehir before. However, almost half of the respondents stated that they want to come back to Eskisehir. The positive intentions of the participants are important to ensure the customer loyalty. For those people, the hotel management could use the frequent user programs application; communicate often in order to invite them again to Eskisehir and Turkey with their family or friends.

It has been determined that the majority of the participants use the internet for the information sources. For this reasons especially, for the advertisement of the Eskişehir the usage of the internet is very important. Cause anyway the newly tourists are looking for the current information from the internet. When it is looked for the distribution of participants' motivation to travel for cultural tourism, it has been determined that the most important travel motivation is "to discover new cultures". However, the "to visit the fashionable places", "exploring new places" "to meet with new friends" and "to go comfortable places" are the other important travel motivation for the participants. For these reasons, it should be emphasized that Eskişehir is an ideal destination that should be visited for exploring new cultures, new places, new friends with high quality of
service and comfortable tourism business in the context of promotion and marketing efforts.

The most important statement in the context of the cognitive value dimension has turned out to be the "well-maintained and clean places". In addition to this, "the friendly and hospitable local people", "places protect the cultural heritage", "the places with cultural and historic buildings open for the public" and "the buildings with beautiful and harmonious architecture" also seems to be important. In the affective value dimension, the most important expressions are "a sense of peace and relaxation" and "the feeling of renewable energy". In addition, "friendly welcoming in the restaurants", "sense of personal and intellectual development" and "not being tricked and using the time appropriately" also seems to be important for the participants. It should be suggested that the statements above must be specially emphasized in the context of the promotion and marketing efforts.

Another finding that was founded in this search is that the cognitive values have important effects on the formation of the affective image. The cognitive and the affective images both have effects on the holistic destination images. These findings were supported by the searches that were held by Gartner (1993), Baloglu and Brinberg (1997), Baloglu and McCleary (1999), Uysal et al. (2000), Baloglu and Mangaloglu (2001), Hosany et al. (2006), Martin and Bosque (2008), Vela (2009). Moreover, it was determined that the motivation factors have positive effects on the destination image. These findings were supported by the searches held by Um and Crompton (1990), Stern and Krakover (1993), Beerli and Martin (2004), Fern and Walls (2012). It was also founded that the information sources and the personal factors have not an important effects on the destination image on the contrary to searches by Gartner (1993), Baloglu and McCleary (1999), Taşçı et al. (2007) and Vela (2009). With these findings, it is the last point that the destination operators should analyze the destination image process.