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A STUDY ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE ELEMENTS OF CITY BRAND IMAGE IN CITY BRANDING PROCESS: THE EXAMPLE OF KONYA¹

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Abstract

The main aim of study is to evaluate the roles of factors that affect the city image in branding process. Survey method was used in this study. The application was implemented in the province of Konya, hypotheses were tested by having the results analyzed with the help of SPSS 21.0 software. It is identified that there are positive and significant relationships among the sub-dimensions of the qualification variable of Konya city image elements which are urban infrastructure and activities, urban services and public attitude, historical and cultural heritage with the variable of Konya city brand value perception. It is not reached that there is a significant relationship between tourist guides and introduction dimension and Konya city brand value. A number of proposals have been developed in the light of the findings.

Keywords: Brand, City Image, City Branding

1. Introduction

Globalization phenomenon which is often mentioned recently changes the competitive structure of every sector (automotive, food, textile, service industry etc.). Industries competing by different product types have started to make an attempt on repositioning their competitive asset in the global economy through the rapidly arising globalization process. Significant improvements in information technologies field have accelerated globalization more. As a result of this, like companies, cities or countries find themselves in a competition in the global markets dominated by the competition afore-mentioned.

There have been many changes in the cities with globalization. On one hand cities continue their studies to keep up with the changes, on the other hand they have to develop strategies (will attract visitors, tourist, investor etc.) which enable to differ from their rivals in the fiercely competitive market. In this process in question, city image and brand are regarded as the factors of competition (Zeinalpour et al., 2013: 318). At this point, creating a city brand which will

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provide being competitively effective in international arena and developing in an urban and regional aspects becomes a significant topical issue.

Through this information, the main aim of the study is to reveal the role of factors affecting the city image in the city branding process. To achieve this goal the application has been employed in order to test hypotheses developed from literature. Data has been tested with SPSS 21.0 and the accuracy of hypotheses is evaluated.

2. Literature Review

In recent years, it has been stated that there has been an increase in the number of studies conducted on city branding. With this increase in the number of the studies in this field, city planning researches turn to social and economic activities which can be effective in the city branding process. Companies, products, assets and resources in a city or country can also become a subject for the studies as well as the branding process in cities or countries. In this respect, (country, city, destination, etc.) the significant role of many features of places in branding process among the branding practices has been emphasized (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009: 8).

2.1. Brand and City Brand Image

Brand functions as an interface which eases the circulation between production and consumption (Clegg and Kornberger, 2010:7). Many things helping us choose a product can be given within the concept of brand. In other words, brand is a term broad in scope. Brand is described as as a sign, symbol, figure or a combination of these (Kotler, 2000: 404) which serve to introduce the product of manufacturer or final seller and to separate the product from others (Mucuk, 1984: 121). In short, brand reflects an authenticity for a product or company (Kelley and Jegenheimer, 2004: 3).

Globalized markets, fierce competition conditions, increasing customer demands and technological improvements force companies to be different. In today's conditions of competition, brand is the most significant factor to introduce the product since the explicit and physical difference between products and service (Cop and Bekmezci, 2005: 73). Brand when examined in a broad scope, is a crucial competition factor for both manufacturers (product and service producing companies) and consumers in broad markets having intense global trading activities (Akpınar, 2011). Brand and product are evaluated according to the image perceived by consumers. At this point, brand image becomes the fundamental component of the brand (Yavuz, 2007: 45). Brand image is a concept which is based on meaning and isolated from the observable reality. Brand image can be described as the set of thoughts and beliefs related to name and signs in the mind of buyers (Anholt, 2010: 7).

What has to be known is that it is more difficult to become a brand for a place than for a thing. It is emphasized that everywhere has a historical heritage which affects the image of that place. Anywhere (a region, city, town, etc.) has to have an aim to be an attraction for tourist or a peaceful place for its residents (Kotler, 2004: 12). Urban places have to be accessible and attractive for all of the residents of a city (Banister, 2005: 9). As the success targeted to become a brand for a place can be achieved by the communication between the sharers and the quality of service offered to them (Hankinson, 2004: 116).

A place can differ from other places in terms of local, national and international activities and obtain a better position. For an effective image positioning, the power of communication and the characteristics of a place which enable differentiation from other places have a significant

role (Kotler etc., 1999: 170). Brand image can be shaped by many factors. These factors are handled as “natural resources, general substructure, tourism substructure, entertainment places, culture-history-art, political-economic factors, natural environment, social environment, city atmosphere” by Beerli and Martin (2004) (Beerli and Martin, 2004: 659).

2.2. City Branding

Competition among places becomes a global dimension through globalization concept. Not only cities but also national or transnational regions, provinces, urban places, countries, towns, and even villages find themselves in a competition like products and people. Products, services, and people in these mentioned settlements are in competition with their rivals from outside of their national borders in order to attract the attention of consumers and the media (Anholt, 2010: 3). In such an environment, cities aiming to gain competitive advantage try to determine their distinctive values and features which will make them a city brand and they benefit from these (Ozdemir and Karaca, 2009: 114). Every city has its own strengths (both physical and spiritual) which are unique to them (Herstein, 2012: 150). However, these assets and differences cannot contribute to the process of creating a city image in a positive way. Since city branding and brand value is a demanding and long term process. Therefore cities choose the way to benefit from city branding to use their sources more effectively, to create a habitable environment and to gain temptation (Cevher, 2012: 106).

City branding is a strategy that changes people’s point of view to the regions or cities and demonstrates how a place (country, region, city) is perceived by their eyes (Içyer, 2010: 67). It is also conceptualized as a new study field which claims that what is learned about brand strategy and communication should be used for the development of a city to facilitate measurable economic, social and cultural values. In addition to this, it can be stated as a process that aims to form means spreading the powerful, positive sides and characteristic qualities to the large masses (Zeren, 2012: 97). From these statements, city branding means briefly the manner of applying the branding techniques on a geographic region (EURIB, 2009: 2).

When (city, destination) place branding is examined in terms of literature, it is stated that there have been many factors shaping it such as economics, services, transportation, tourism, trade (Balakrishnan, 2009), sports activities (K. N. Jensen, 2012), public sector sharers, private sector shareholders (Morgan et al., 2003), education, culture, media, life quality, business skills (Zeinalpour et al., 2013), museums (Peker, 2006), city view, city experiences of people and their beliefs in the city (Pfefferkorn, 2005), existing superstructures, malls, entertainment centers, restaurants (Kırgız, 2011), natural beauties, local dishes, historical places and richness, cultural diversity (Celebi, 2014), environmental factors (Banister, 2005), sheltering, health services, recreational areas, field situation and quality, fresh air, waste water treatment systems, landscaping etc. (Seisdedos and Vaggione, 2005).

3. A Study on the Effects of City Image Factors on City Branding

In this part, findings gathered from the research conducted in Konya will be evaluated to measure the effects of city image factors on city branding process.

3.1. The Purpose and Significance of the Study

Main aim of this study is to assess the role of factors effecting the city image in city branding process. Besides, it is targeted to develop suggestions for the situation of city after city branding process and to contribute useful data to the further studies.

In recent years, it is known that many studies have been published about destination and place marketing but relatively a few of them focus on the brand and branding topics (Jarvisalo, 2012: 1). Kavaratzis (2007) emphasizes that there have been many studies on city marketing but that city branding literature is scarce and he has also stated that application failings should be overcome in city marketing and branding areas (Kavaratzis, 2007: 695).

It is suggested that branding literature has begun in 1940s. Although branding has an old history, due to the fact that there is no study on branding of spaces for a long time (Pike, 2009: 857) and that applications of city branding and studies carried out on this subject are in limited number in the meaning of contribution to the literature (Kavaratzis, 2009: 26), the importance of this study is revealed. For the sake of removing deficiencies in the area of city marking, from the aspect of making contribution to the literature and presenting information to the administrators of city in the province Konya, where the study has been carried out, it is thought of that this study is important.

3.2. Conceptual Model and Hypotheses of the Study

In the study, in order to evaluate the effects of the elements image on the process of brand developing, a conceptual model has been developed (See, Figure 1). In the relevant model, the adequacy level of the elements of the image of the city Konya about the brand of the city Konya consist of 4 sub-dimensions and 19 judgements as *urban infrastructure and activities* (6 items), *urban services and public attitude* (6 items), *historical and cultural legacy* (4 items), and *tourism guidance and publicity* (3 items).

In the conceptual model developed in the framework of the subject and aim of the study, intervariable relationships were symbolized and hypotheses established were given. In the framework if the aim of above mentioned study, the established hypotheses belonging to the study are given below.

H₁: *The dimension of urban infrastructure and activity, among the dimensions of adequacy perception of the elements of the brand image of the city Konya, positively affects the brand value of the city Konya.*

H₂: *The dimension of urban services and public attitude, among the dimensions of adequacy perception of the elements of the brand image of the city Konya, positively affects the brand value of the city Konya.*

H₃: *The dimension of historical and cultural legacy, among the dimensions of adequacy perception of the elements of the brand image of the city Konya, positively affects the brand value of the city Konya.*

H₄: *The dimension of tourism guidance and publicity, among the dimensions of adequacy perception of the elements of the brand image of the city Konya, positively affects the brand value of the city Konya.*

In the following Table 1, the studies utilized in developing study hypotheses are presented.

Table-1: The Studies Utilized In Developing Study Hypotheses

	Relevant Literature
<i>H₁ Hypothesis</i>	(Mihalıs, 2005; Kırgız, 2011; K. N. Jensen, 2012)
<i>H₂ Hypothesis</i>	(Seiseddos and Vaggione, 2005; Pfefferkorn, 2005; Peker, 2006; Balakrishnan, 2009)
<i>H₃ Hypothesis</i>	(Peker, 2006; Bıcakcı, 2012; Ozkul and Demirer, 2012; Zeinalpour vd., 2013; Celebi, 2014)
<i>H₄ Hypothesis</i>	(Morgan vd., 2003; Yıldırım and Karahmet, 2013; Zeinalpour et al., 2013)

3.3. Study Method

In order to reach the aims determined in the study, the method followed becomes important. In this study, in the framework of testing the aims and hypotheses, the information about the determination of method of data collecting, determination of study universe and sample, administration of questionnaire, coding, arranging and analyzing the data, reliability of aim to collect data, and carrying out statistical analyses is given place.

- Structure of Questionnaire.

In the study, questionnaire was used as instrument of data collecting. The domestic and foreign literature on city branding and, with adaptation of the information obtained as a result of literature review, the scale was formed. In forming the questionnaire in this way, the studies of Goutal, 2003; A Market Pulse Research Report, 2005; Doganlı, 2006; Yaralı, 2007; Yavuz, 2007; M. W. Jensen, 2009; Yarar, 2010; Sahiner, 2012; Ozdemir, 2013” were utilized.

As a result of examinations from the domestic and foreign literature, it was aimed to form a new scale on the area of city branding by shaping the questionnaire, used in the study, through information drawn from all of these scales provided. Therefore, after arranging the questionnaire, in order to correct the errors and test scale reliability, taking the views of specialist persons, pilot study was applied. As a consequence of pilot study applied, the reliability level of the scale turned out high and decision was made to continue with this scale.

The content of questionnaire used in the study consists of three separate parts. In the first part, a total of 14 multiple-choice questions are given place, which measure demographic information and statements regarding Konya. In the second part, Likert scale, in which the main image elements, specified about the city image, and the degrees of importance and adequacy about city branding are measured, and which the statements consisting of 19 questions are used in the same way, are given. In the part measuring the degree of importance, the participants were asked to give answers to the questions in the form of “***1: definitely unimportant***”, ***5: definitely important***” and in the part measuring the degree of adequacy in the form of ***1: definitely inadequate***, ***5: definitely adequate***. In the third part, Likert scale was used, in which the judgement statements on the elements of city brand take place and which consists of 12 questions. The participants were asked to reply these statements in the form of “***1: I definitely disagree with 5: I definitely agree with***”.

-Sample of Study

The sample of the study consists of 165 citizens from foreign countries, who visited Konya in May 2014, and to whom were reached by means of simple random sampling method. The

citizens from foreign country realizing the visit were asked whether or not they spoke English and, according to the answers obtained, questionnaires were distributed.

- Administration and Assessment of Questionnaire

In the framework of study sample, 165 citizens from foreign countries visiting Konya in May 2014 were reached by means of face to face survey. 165 questionnaires obtained were assessed. As a result of assessment, it was identified that 5 questionnaires are missing or faulty and analyses were continued with 160 questionnaires.

-Using data and determining statistical tests to be used

In the study carried out to identify the role of the elements of image of Konya city in the perception of the city brand of Konya, coding the data obtained from questionnaires presented to the participants, they were transferred to the computer media and subjected to analysis by means of SPSS 21.0 package program. Regression analysis toward identifying the interaction between the adequacy perception of elements of the brand image of city and perception of the brand value of city were carried out.

-Reliability of Data Collecting Instrument

In calculating internal consistencies of factors, the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient was utilized. This coefficient, depending on the correlation between questions, is compliance value. The value of Cronbach's alpha shows the reliability value of questions under factors in total. In Table 2 given below, the results of reliability analysis regarding the variable of adequacy elements of city image and the variable of elements of brand value of city are presented.

Table-2: Reliability Analysis Regarding Adequacies of City Image and Elements of Brand Value of City

Scale	Dimensions	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
($\alpha=0.911$) Adequacy perception of elements of city image ($\alpha=0.911$)	Urban infrastructure and Activities	6	0.874
	Urban Services and Public Attitude	6	0.851
	Historical and Cultural Legacy	4	0.812
	Tourism Guidance and Publicity	3	0.741
Perception of brand value of city ($\alpha=0.921$)	General Infrastructure and Centrality	7	0.891
	Urban Attraction	5	0.858

When Table 2 above is examined, since the value of Cronbach's alpha regarding the dimensions of adequacy scale of elements of city image and general reliability of the scale is generally above 70%, and the values of Cronbach's alpha regarding the dimensions of the scale of elements of brand value of city and general reliability of the scale is generally above 70%, it can be said that the items under the dimensions is reliable in accounting for the factor (Altunışık et al., 2012: 126)

- Introductory Information Regarding the Sample

In the direction of survey results obtained, analyses were realized and the data belonging to the demographic characteristics of 160 participants participating in the study were made public. 35% of respondents participating in the survey consist of females and 65%, males. It was

identified that 36% of the participants were in the group of age 25 and less, 29% in the group of ages 26-35, 16% in the group of ages 36-45, 11% in the group of ages 46-55, and 8% in the group of age 56 and over. It was also identified that 49% of participants were from the continent Europe, 40% from the continent Asia, 6% from the continent America, and 5% from the continent Africa.

3.4. Factor Analysis

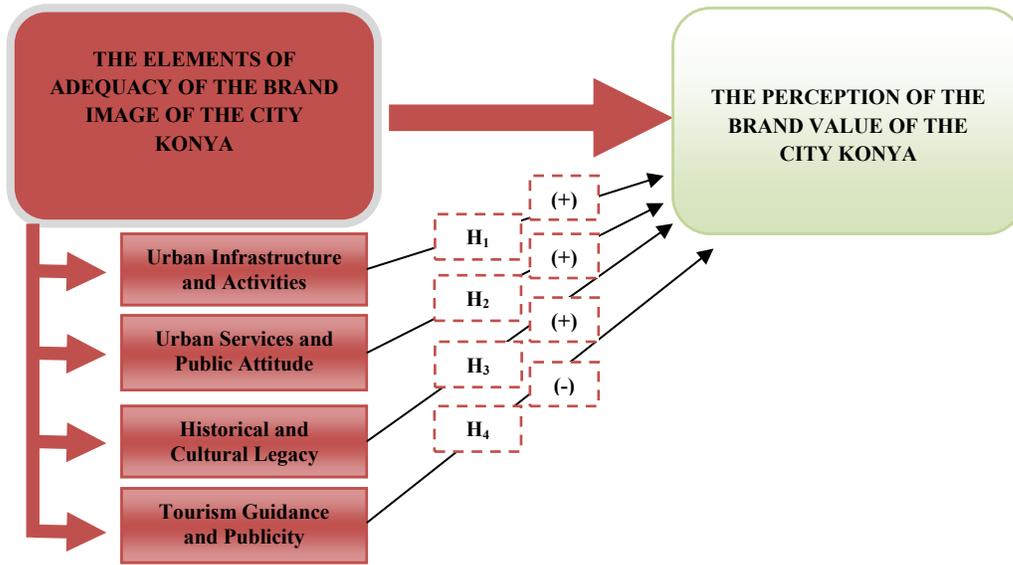
In order to identify that the scale regarding adequacies of elements of city image in branding of the city Konya are perceived by the participants in how many different dimensions, factor analysis was carried out. For testing the compliance of dataset to factor analysis, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test of sample adequacy and Bartlett test of sphericity were applied. As a result of analyses carried out, it was identified that the value KMO was above 0.50 with 0.884; that tail probability of Bartlett test was significant at the significance level of 0.05, and thus, that dataset was in compliance with factor analysis. Analyses were realized by using method of main components and Varimax Rotation Method.

As a result of factor analysis, it was identified that the scale of adequacies of elements of city image in branding of Konya city was perceived by the respondents participating in the survey in four sub-dimensions. These dimensions were called as *urban infrastructure and activities* (6 items), *urban services and public attitude* (6 items), *historical and cultural legacy* (4 items), and *tourism guidance and publicity* (3 items), respectively. A total of variance accounted was found 64.284. When individual contributions of the dimensions regarding this variance accounted were examined, it was seen that they were in the rate of 21.288% for the dimension of *urban infrastructure and activities*; 19.077 for the dimension of *urban services and public attitude*, 13.296% for the dimension of *historical and cultural legacy*, and lastly, 11.163 for the dimension of *tourism guidance and publicity*.

3.5. Regression Analysis

In this section, the dimension of the relationships between the sub-dimension of the variable of adequacies of elements of the image of the city Konya and the variable of perception of brand value of the city Konya was examined. In order to identify the interaction between variables and test hypothesis, regression analysis was applied. The conceptual model regarding the hypotheses discussed and tested in this scope can be summarized as follows:

Figure -1: Conceptual Model of Study and Testing Hypotheses



The hypotheses established to identify the interaction between independent variables and dependent variable was tested by regression analysis.

Table-3: Simple linear regression analysis of the sub-dimensions of the variable adequacy of the elements of the city image and perception of the brand value of city

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standard Coefficients	t	p	R	R ²	ΔR ²	F	p
	B	Standard Error	Beta							
Urban Infrastructure and Activists	0.59	0.05	0.67	11.42	0.00*	0.673	0.452	0.449	130.512	0.00**
Urban Services and Public Attitude	0.54	0.06	0.59	9.22	0.00*	0.591	0.350	0.346	84.979	0.00**
Historical and Cultural Legacy	0.53	0.06	0.61	9.57	0.00*	0.606	0.367	0.363	91.488	0.00**
Tourism Guidance and Publicity	0.051	0.069	0.06	0.734	0.46*	0.058	0.003	-0.003	0.538	0.46**

*Dependent Variable: Brand Value of the City Konya; **p<0,01; *p<0.05*

When Table 1 above is examined, as a result of simple linear regression analysis carried out:

Between the dimension of **urban infrastructure and activities**, among the sub-dimensions of adequacies of the elements of the image of the city Konya and the variable of the brand value of the city Konya, it is seen that there is positive and significant interaction, because $\beta=0.67$, $p=0.00$, and $(F=130.512, p<0.01<0.05)$. In other words, **urban infrastructure and activities**, among the sub-dimensions of adequacies of the elements of the image of the city Konya positively and significantly affect the variable of the brand value of the city Konya. In the direction of these data, ($p<0.05$), **H_1 hypothesis** was accepted. This result shows similarities with the statements of Mihalıs (2005), Kırğız (2011) and K. N. Jensen (2012). In addition, the rate of accounting for the variable of the brand value perception of the city Konya of the dimension **urban infrastructure and activities** was identified as approx. 45% ($\Delta R^2=0.449$).

Between the dimension of **urban services and public attitude**, among the sub-dimensions of adequacies of the elements of the image of the city Konya, and the variable of the brand value of the city Konya, it is seen that there is a positive and significant interaction, because ($\beta=0.59$, $p=0.00$) and $(F=84.979, p<0.01<0.05)$. In other words, **urban services and public attitude**, among the sub-dimensions of adequacies of the elements of the image of the city Konya, positively and significantly affect the variable of brand value of the city Konya. In the direction of these data, ($p<0.05$), **H_2 hypothesis** was accepted. This result shows similarities with the statements of Seiseddos and Vaggione (2005), Pfefferkorn (2005), Peker (2006) and Balakrishnan (2009). In addition, the rate of accounting for the variable of the brand value perception of the city Konya of the dimension **urban services and public attitude** was identified as approx. 35% ($\Delta R^2=0.346$).

Between the dimension of **historical and cultural legacy**, among the sub-dimensions of adequacies of the elements of the image of the city Konya, and the variable of the brand value of the city Konya, it is seen that there is a positive and significant interaction, because ($\beta=0.61$, $p=0.00$) and $(F=91.488, p<0.01<0.05)$. In other words, **historical and cultural legacy**, among the sub-dimensions of adequacies of the elements of the image of the city Konya, positively and significantly affect the variable of brand value of the city Konya. In the direction of these data, ($p<0.05$) **H_3 hypothesis** was accepted. This result shows similarities with the statements of Peker (2006), Bıçakcı (2012), Ozkul and Demirer (2012), Zeinalpour et al. (2013) and Celebi (2014). In addition, the rate of accounting for the variable of the brand value perception of the city Konya of the dimension **urban services and public attitude** was identified as approx. 36% ($\Delta R^2=0.363$).

Between the dimension of **tourism guidance and publicity**, among the sub-dimensions of adequacies of the elements of the image of the city Konya, and the variable of the brand value of the city Konya, it is seen that there is no significant interaction between them, because ($\beta=0.06$, $p=0.46$) and $(F=0.538, p>0.05>0.01)$. In other words, **tourism guidance and publicity**, among the sub-dimensions of adequacies of the elements of the image of the city Konya, does not significantly affect the variable of brand value of the city Konya. In the direction of these data, ($p<0.05$), **H_4 hypothesis** was rejected. This result does not show similarity with the statements of Morgan et al. (2003), Yıldırım and Karaahmet (2013) and Zeinalpour et al. (2013).

4. Conclusion and Suggestions

As a result of the effects of the phenomenon globalization, the concept brand gained importance. Today, it is possible to see that there is an effort of branding in every area. As stated by Zeinalpour et al. (2013), brands have become a part of daily life as a result of competition and

globalization. In this point, branding of spaces (country, city destination) gains importance. The brands of country and city are represented by the cultural, social, touristic elements that are present there (Zeinalpour et al., 2013: 323). The cities need many factors to form a successful city brand in branding process. Forming a good brand for a city is provided thanks to its having the elements that can be defined and made different (Pfefferkorn, 2005). City branding provides the city with an image, importance, identity, and important economic values. Primarily, city branding is evaluated as a competitive sort for most city aiming at the development. Many cities increase their investments in this direction to become a brand city. In addition, they attempt to be host city for international fair and organizations. Cities in the process of branding are in the tendency to evaluate the resource they have (Celebi, 2014: 14).

Image is a state, which is shaped as the composition of various elements, and which expresses the perceptions of individuals. City image is shaped as a composition of many natural, human, political, socioeconomic, cultural, touristic, and etc. elements. The positive image is an important factor in strengthening brand. Therefore, in the process of city branding, image can be evaluated as an integrating element of brand.

In the direction of these expressions, what is aimed at the study is to evaluate the role of elements influencing the formation of city image in the process of city branding. The study was supported by the survey and the data obtained were subjected to analysis by means of SPSS 21.0 package program. The findings obtained as a result of analysis are:

As a result of simple linear regression analysis carried out to identify the interaction between independent variables-urban infrastructure and activities, urban services and public attitude, historical and cultural legacy, and tourism guidance and publicity-and dependent variable-perception of brand value of city, it was identified that the variables of “*urban infrastructure and activities*”, “*urban services and public attitude*”, “*historical and cultural legacy*”, positively and significantly affected the variable of brand value of the city Konya. It was not significantly identified that the variable of tourism guidance and publicity did not significantly affect the brand variable of the city Konya. The factor having the most effect in the perception of brand value of city was the variable of *urban infrastructure and activities* (45%) and it is understood that this was followed by *historical and cultural legacy* (36%), *urban services and public attitude* (35%). It was identified that the dimension of *tourism guidance and publicity* did not significantly affected it.

In the study, in the area of city branding, for the future studies, the suggestions were developed. In this study, the relationship of city image and city branding was dealt with. In the next studies to be carried out, it is considered that researching the relationship of sustainability and city branding will make a contribution to the literature. Carrying out the studies regarding the efficiency of publicity activities of Konya in international area, in addition, the studies, in which the effect of these publicity activities on the image Konya will be mentioned about also seems to be important. This study was kept limited with the citizens of foreign countries’ visiting the province Konya. It is suggested that the similar studies should be applied on the domestic tourists. In additions, making comparative studies between domestic and foreign visitors seems to be useful.

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