The Measurement of Brand Personality in the City Brand: a Case of Kayseri

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Abstract

Cities all over the world use several conduits to promote themselves to relevant audiences such as investors, visitors and residents and in their efforts they commonly include striking logos and captivating slogans that feature in welcoming websites and advertising campaigns in national and international media. Because of those, city branding has in recent years become a prevailing activity within city management. Also brand personality component is major component of city brand identity.

In this context, the main subject of the study is to evaluate brand peronality dimentions of Kayseri city. This paper first describes the rise of city branding and the essentials of brand personality of city brand. Afterwards developed brand personality scale for products and service has been adapted to city branding. Sample of the study has been conducted at the universities in Kayseri. Data were collected via an online survey and face to face survey. Findings have been analyzed by using SPSS 16 Program.

Keywords: City Brand, Place Marketing, Brand Personality, Brand Identity.

1. Introduction

Branding has become one of the most powerful tools in marketing strategy. Classical theories of brand management generally focus on how companies can build strong consumer brands that differentiate one seller from another (**Aaker, 1996; Kapferer, 1997**). Traditionally brands have been considered as the means of establishing a desired position in the minds of the customers that through perceived added values (**Brown, Shivashanker, and Brucker, 1989**) could attract loyal customers that willingly pay a price premium for the product or service (**de Chernatony and McDonald, 2003**). The majority of contemporary branding theories have been developed with an eye to consumer markets.

A city's brand is increasingly considered an important asset for urban development and an effective tool for cities to distinguish themselves and improve their positioning (**Ashworth and Kavaratzis, 2009: 520**). City branding has in recent years become a prevailing activity within city management. Cities all over the world use several tools to promote themselves to relevant audiences such as investors, visitors and residents and in their efforts they commonly include striking logos and captivating slogans that feature in welcoming websites and advertising campaigns in national and international media.

There has been a general agreement among academics and practitioners that places can be branded in the same way as consumer goods and services. Place or Destination branding is

a relatively new concept, however, and there is a lack of empirical academic research on the topic. This is in contrast to the increasing evidence in the press that branding, at least as a concept, is increasingly being applied to locations'. Place branding, like place marketing in general, is impossible because places are not products, governments are not producers and users are not consumers.

LiteratureReview

Global Cities have endeavored differentiate themselves from each other, to assert their individuality in pursuit of various economic, political or socio-psychological objectives **(Kavaratzis and Ashoworth, 2005: 506).**In recent years cities are in search for new ways to promote themselves. Due to fast changes in technology and the shift from local to a globalized environment, cities are forced to compete with each other in order to be an attractive tourist destination, workplace, cultural rich place and much more (Kotler, 2002). Kavaratzis (2005:1) argues that the rising competition among cities might be seen as one of the effects of the globalization, which is visible in various forms and activity fields. The contemporary city has to be up dated continuously. In that sense cities develop strategies to support, to `sell` and advertise them within the global market. Literature survey reveals that there are mainly three approaches for promoting cities: cultural mega events, restoration and promoting heritage and the construction of iconic buildings (Hankinson, 2006, p.240; Kavaratzis, 2005:1). Among these approaches, construction of iconic buildings has been extensively utilized by many cities in order to get attention and attraction. The main motive behind this attempt is to create an identifiable image.

There have been numerous studies of the promotion of individual and groups of places, since **Burgess' (1982)** pioneering account of promotional media used in UK local authorities. Almost 20 years later **Hankinson (2001)** studied the practice of branding in 12 English cities, discovering that it was both widely used and little understood, which was a not altogether startling or indeed very helpful conclusion but is all too typical of many such investigations. **Trueman***et al.***, (2001: 8–13)** struggled with this problem of transfer of conventional product brand analysis to places, oncluding that it was possible, 'provided sufficient weight is given to different stakeholders'. This is no more than a recognition that places have more varied 'users', 'owners' and 'governors' than do commercial corporations and thus not only are the products more varied, so also are the goals of the producers and the utilities of the consumers. The two intrinsic weaknesses of stakeholder approaches, namely that the list will never be all-inclusive and the weighting between them crude, are so more evident with places than with commercial products as to effectively admit that the conditions can never be met.

De Chernatony&Dall'Olmo Riley (1998) identify 12 perspectives on the definition of the brand found in the literature. After a critical examination of those perspectives, they suggest that 'the brand is a multidimensional construct whereby managers augment products or services with values and this facilitates the process by which consumers confidently recognise and appreciate these values'. The boundaries of the brand construct are, on the one side the activities of the firm and on the other side the perceptions of the consumers. The brand becomes the interface between these two.

A branded product requires a *brand identity*, a *brand differentiation* and a *brandpersonality* (Aaker 1996). These are not so much separate attributes as re-statements of the same feature from different perspectives. Identifying and clarifying the brand

identity, or the *core identity*, is in itself an instrument of differentiation of one product from another and recognising its *brand positioning*, that is its relationship to competing products within a defined competitive arena. The process of *product branding* is both creative initiation and careful maintenance.

Places can be easily assumed to possess the above characteristics of identity, differentiation and personality and can thus be managed to maximise equity, value and awareness. However, whether the terms suffer a significant shift in meaning when applied to place products remains to be considered. The importance of the image for the consumer or user of the place is what connects city branding to cultural geography. It also focuses upon the ever-necessary consumer orientation. We think of the place from the viewpoint of the end user; in terms of the way they sense, understand, use and connect to the place.

All branding tries to endow a product with a specific and more distinctive identity (**Cova, 1996**) and that is, in essence, what most city marketing to do for cities. A place needs to be differentiated through unique brand identity if it wants to be first, recognised as existing, second, perceived in the minds of place customers as possessing qualities superior to those of competitors, and third, consumed in a manner commensurate with the objectives of the place. Thus identity, differentiation, personality and thereby positioning in competitive arenas are all transferable concepts as long as the implications of this transfer are fully understood. By this we mean that we can accept places as brandable products if their intrinsic and distinctive characteristics as place products are understood and a special form of marketing developed which accommodates and utilises these characteristics. Much of the literature from marketing specialists is not encouraging in these respects.

There are at least three different sorts of place branding which are often confused in the literature, but which are really quite different operations conducted by different types of producers for widely different objectives. The first is geographical nomenclature, the second, product-place co-branding and the third, branding as place management. Geographical nomenclature is merely where a physical product is named for a geographical location. The archetype is the sparkling wine 'Champagne'.

City Brand Perssonality

In consumer behavior research, a considerable amount of attention has been given to the construct brand personality, which refers to the set of human characteristics associated with a brand. Researchers have focused on how the personality of brand enables a consumer to Express his or her own self (Belk 1988), an ideal self (Malhotra 1988), or specific dimentions of the self (Kleine, Kleine, and Kernan, 1993) through the use of a brand.

The work of Aaker (1997) inspired the majority of the research on brand personality to date. He meticulously developed a 44 item Brand Personality Scale which encompasses five broad dimensions: Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication, and Ruggedness. The scale has served as a brand personality measure in many studies and its factor structure proved to be robust in several of them (Aaker, 1997; 1999; Aaker, Benet-Martinez, and Garolera, 2001; Kim, Han, and Park, 2001). However, Aaker's scale has recently received criticism on several grounds.

Brand Identity, Brand Image and Brand Personality

Kapferer (2008) defines brand identity as a brand's meaning as put forward by the firm. It is the way a company wants to present its brand to its target groups. Brand image, on the other hand, is the consumers' perception and interpretation of the brand's identity (De Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Van den Bergh, 2007). Academics typically conceptualize brand identity and image as multi-dimensional constructs of which brand personality is an important component. Keller (2008), for example, defines brand image as consisting of (1) user profiles, (2) purchase and usage situations, (3) personality and values, and (4) history, heritage and experiences. Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) organize brand identity elements around four perspectives: (1) the brand as a product, (2) the brand as an organization, (3) the brand as a person, and (4) the brand as a symbol.

Personality in Human Personality Scales

Psychologists define the substance of personality as 'the systematic description of traits' (McCrae and Costa, 1987: 81), where traits are 'relatively enduring styles of thinking, feeling, and acting' (McCrae and Costa, 1997: 509). After decades of research on a taxonomy of human personality, consensus now rests upon five dimensions that provide a complete description of personality: (1) Extraversion or Surgency (talkative, assertive, energetic), (2) Agreeableness (good-natured, cooperative, trustful), (3) Conscientiousness (orderly, responsible, dependable), (4) Emotional Stability versus Neuroticism (calm, not neurotic, easily upset), and (5) Openness or Intellect (intellectual, imaginative, independent-minded) (John &Srivastava, 1999).

The "Big Five" dimensions are a result of analyses of the natural language terms humans use to describe themselves and others (Goldberg, 1993). Although the development of the Big Five was not theory-driven, most important personality constructs as put forward by personality theorists as diverse as Jung, Leary, Guilford, and Eysenk, are integrated in the Big Five structure, which increased trust in the Big Five (Sanz, Gil, Garcia-Vera, and Barrasa, 2008).

One of the cornerstones of marketing thought is undoubtedly consumer orientation; thinking about the product, the company and the way we 'do business' from the consumer's viewpoint. In city marketing and especially in the case of the city's existing residents, consumer's orientation would have to be how the residents encounter the city they live in, how they make sense of it, which physical, symbolic or other elements they evaluate in order to make their assessment of the city. The field of cultural geography has dealt with such matters and has developed an understanding, which is useful at this point.

Empirical study: A Survey In Kayseri

This study has two aims: First, to develop personality items of city brand and to apply over the city of Kayseri, Turkey. Second, to measure brand personality of Kayseri and to share the outputs of the study with municipality and non govermental organizations of Kayseri, such as chamber of Commerce and Industry. Consequently, we will contribute to branding identity of Kayseri.

The city of Kayseri, in middle of Anatolia became the location of four universities; namely Erciyes which was established in 1979, Meliksah (foundation University) which was

established in 2009, NuhNaciYazgan (foundation University) which was established in 2010 and Abdullah Gul (state) which was established in 2011, in the last five years. This development earns a new brand to Kayseri; namely the city of universities. According to YOK's Higher Education data, today approximately fifty thousands students study in these universities. And nearly twenty thousand students come from outside Kayseri. Hence, Kayseri becomes the city of universities. Before that Kayseri brand has known to be the home of the many industrial factories, and pastırma, manti and sucuk.

Subjects, non-native students of Kayseri, were only asked to answer the survey about native people of Kayseri.Basically, We focused on merely native people of Kayseri. Because native people of Kayseri can represent distinctive Kayserian's image very well to non-native students.

In the first part of the questionnaire, brand personality scale of the city of Kayseri was generated using brand personality dimensions and traits developed by Aaker (1999), Mervielde (1982), Saucier (1994), and Costa and McCrae (1992). In the second part, students were asked to tell the first three things which come to their mind when they hear the name of Kayseri. In the fourth part, demographic data regarding students' age, gender, duration of stay in Kayseri, income status, hometown, university and faculty were recorded. 13 variables regarding satisfaction and 16 personality traits were rated according to 5-point Likert scale. Positive or negative perception of each variable were measured through following answers: strongly agree (4 points), agree (3 points), undecided (2 points), disagree (1 point), strongly disagree (0 points).

The mean of each 15 personality traits and its standart deviations were calculated in the range of 0-4 according to the demographic variables . After that, they are compared in Tables.The city of Personality items have been analysed in three groups and commented : Personality items which are rated 3,00 and over (strong perception),those which are rated between 2,00 and 2,99 (unsure perception), and those who are rated below 2,00 (weak perception).

The research was conducted in order to evaluate how the city of Kayseri and the native population of Kayseri are perceived by the non-native students. Taking into account the constraints of time, costs and accessibility, a sample size of 800 participants was thought to be sufficient for the study. This study will form the basis of a larger study in the future. In this first phase of the study, the perceptions of Turkish students (non-notive) from outside Kayseri have been evaluated. In the second part of the research, foreign students' perception of Kayseri will be evaluated and analyzed.

Before the actual survey conducted, questions of the questionnaire was revised through pilot studies; consequently, reliability factor was increased. The survey was conducted at Erciyes University and Meliksah University. In order to gather data, the questionnaire forms were hand-delivered to students, who wanted to participate, at two universities and also a copy of the questionnaire was uploaded at Google Drive so that it was shared using social media by students. The collected data were analysed using SPSS 15.0 program.

Method and Findings

In the study, firstly, frequency distributions of demographic data, which allow us to get to know the students more closely, were analysed. Secondly, data, which was obtained

through brand personality scale, are averaged out of 4.00 and analysed through comparing demographic data. Thirdly, students' level of satisfaction regarding the city of Kayseri were measured and later significant or meaningful differences -if there are any- between the groups were examined. And fourthly, students' open-ended statements about Kayseri were interpreted through content analysis.

1. Sample

There are four universities in Kayseri. 3 of them (one is a state university, two are foundation universities) admit students and continue teaching for the 2012-2013 academic year. There are fifty-thousand students who receive education at the undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate levels at these universities Students coming from outside Kayseri, which form the main body of the study, make up 40% of the total number of university students in Kayseri. Therefore, our research pool consists of approximately 20 thousand students.

Through random sampling, 285 domestic and 79 foreign students have been surveyed. After screening the completed questionnaires, some are regarded as dubious; and at the end, the forms of 267 Turkish students were evaluated. As mentioned earlier, in this study, perceptions of Turkish students from outside Kayseri was evaluated, however perceptions of foreign students who participated in the survey were excluded.

2. Analysis

Students participating in the survey are classified according to their gender, university, accomodation type, population size of the city which they come from and duration of stay in Kayseri. Table 1 shows the frequency distribution of the groups. As seen on the table, among the 267 students, 59% (160) are male and 41% (107) are female. Moreover, 39% (104) of the participants study at Erciyes University while 61% (163) study at Meliksah University.

At the time of the study, there was not enough data collected from NuhNaciYazgan University and Abdullah Gul University had not started admitting students. Consequently, these universities have not been included in the study.

As a methodological approach, based on the brand personality theories, 15 personality traits for Kayseri were identified. After that, the participants were told to think Kayseri as human being and asked to asses the personality traits. These 15 personality traits were rated out of 4, standard deviations were calculated; and according to the demographic variables they are compared in Table 2, Table 3, Table 4 and Table 5.

Table 1. The Frequency distributiution of Demografic Factors.

Demographic Faktors		(n)	(%)
Gender	Male	160	59
	Female	107	41
	Total	267	100
University	Melikşah	163	61
	Erciyes	104	39
	Total	267	100
Accomodation	State Dormitory	27	10,11
	Private Dormitory	132	49,44
	Rent home	108	40,45
	Total	267	89,89
Population of the city (Homeland)	Bigger cities than Kayseri	113	42,33
	Smaller cities than Kayseri	154	57,67
	Total	267	100
Living time in Kayseri	Less then one year	70	26,22
	2-4 year	152	56,93
	Five or more then five year	45	16,85
	Total	267	100

Notable aspects of personality traits could be analysed in three groups: Personality traits which are rated 3,00 and over, those which are rated between 2,00 and 2,99, and those who are rated below 2,00. Among the 15 personality traits, which were rated by the students, only the statement "(The people of Kayseri) like showing off" received a score above 3,00 (strong perception). Throughout all of the demographic variables, students clearly believe the people of Kayseri like showing off. The personality traits, which are rated between 2,00 and 2,99 by the students, are "disciplined", "economical", "hard working", "enterprising", "organized" and "loyal". Among these, the highest rated (2,80) trait is "economical".

Table 2: According to Gender, City of Kayseri Personality Perception of TheStudents

No	Personality Factors	Male		Female	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	People in Kayseri has **discipline** at work.	**2,556**	1,114	**2,664**	0,911
2	**Tolerant** towards different cultures an ideas.	1,763	1,221	1,972	1,014
3	In general, they are **hardworking**.	2,488	1,070	2,794	0,821
4	They don't like **extravagant (sparing)**.	**2,913**	1,184	2,682	1,162
5	They are **enterpreneur** and **pioneer**.	**2,569**	1,164	**2,617**	0,987
6	Çlose to each other and **friendly** to students.	1,775	1,259	1,907	1,095
7	They are **sophisticated** people.	1,850	1,134	2,047	1,085
8	They are **generous** to each other and students.	**1,456**	1,170	**1,579**	1,182
9	They are **modest**.	1,581	1,241	1,897	1,009
10	They are**open to dialog** and adaptable.	1,900	1,204	**2,215**	0,901
11	They are **modern** people.	1,694	1,229	1,897	1,055
12	They are **planned**.	2,356	1,205	2,542	0,924
13	they are **trustworthy**.	1,988	1,264	2,121	0,997
14	They care about **social responsibility**	1,763	1,216	1,916	0,982
15	They like **showing up**.	**3,288**	1,151	**3,402**	0,930

Table 3: According to University, TheCitiy of Kayseri Personality Perception of TheStudents

No	Personality Factors	MelikşahÜniv		ErciyesÜniv	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	People in Kayseri has **discipline** at work.	**2,577**	1,116	**2,635**	0,904
2	**Tolerant** towards different cultures an ideas.	1,779	1,222	1,952	1,009
3	In general, they are hardworking.	2,503	1,068	2,779	0,824
4	They don't like **extravagant**.	**2,908**	1,185	**2,683**	1,160
5	They are **enterpreneur** and **pioneer**.	2,564	1,166	2,625	0,977
6	Çlose to each other and **friendly** to students.	1,791	1,259	1,885	1,091
7	They are **sophisticated** people.	1,871	1,139	2,019	1,079
8	They are **generous** to each other and students.	**1,485**	1,183	**1,538**	1,165
9	They are **modest**.	1,601	1,245	1,875	1,002
10	They are**open to dialog** and adaptable.	1,914	1,204	2,202	0,896
11	They are **modern** people.	1,699	1,238	1,894	1,033
12	They are **planned**.	2,368	1,212	2,529	0,903
13	they are **trustworthy**.	2,006	1,264	2,096	0,990
14	They care about **social responsibility**	1,779	1,217	1,894	0,975
15	They like **showing up**.	**3,301**	1,145	**3,385**	0,938

The personality traits, which are rated below 1,99 by the students are "tolerant", "friendly", "versatile", "generous", "modest-humble", "adaptable", open to change" and "sharing".

Among these traits, the lowest rated (1,46) trait is "generous towards students and the community".

This was followed by statements in the order of; "modest and humble", "open for new experiences and adaptable", "sharing the gains of the society", "closer to each other and to students", and "higly versatile in terms of capabilities".
In the study, the statement "(Kayseriens') like showing off" received the highest point, while the statement "(Kayseriens') are modest and humble" received a low point. The consistency in these two results is a sign that students answered the questions carefully.

Table 4: According to Homeland (Bigger or smaller than Kayseri)The City of Kayseri Personality Perception of TheStudents.

No	Personality Factors	Bigger than Kayseri		Smaller than Kayseri	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	People in Kayseri has**discipline** at work.	2,575	1,076	2,617	1,011
2	**Tolerant** towards different cultures an ideas.	1,708	1,170	1,948	1,119
3	In general, they are **hardworking.**	2,619	0,957	2,604	1,012
4	They don't like **extravagant**.	2,850	1,212	2,799	1,157
5	They are **enterpreneur** and **pioneer**.	2,655	1,084	2,539	1,103
6	Çlose to each other and **friendly** to students.	1,761	1,144	1,877	1,233
7	They are **sophisticated** people.	1,850	1,071	1,987	1,149
8	They are **generous** to each other and students.	1,460	1,195	1,539	1,161
9	They are **modest**.	1,673	1,073	1,734	1,226
10	They are**open to dialog** and adaptable.	1,938	1,136	2,091	1,075
11	They are **modern** people.	1,602	1,177	1,903	1,142
12	They are **planned**.	2,283	1,089	2,539	1,103
13	they are **trustworthy**.	2,088	1,154	2,006	1,174
14	They care about **social responsibility**	1,717	1,138	1,903	1,119
15	They like **showing up.**	**3,301**	1,093	**3,357**	1,052

Table 5: According to Period of Stay, The City of Kayseri Personality Perception of TheStudents

No	Personality Factors	1 year and under / n= 70		2-4 years / n= 153		5 years and over / n= 44	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	People in Kayseri has**discipline** at work.	2,64	1,10	2,59	0,95	2,57	1,23
2	**Tolerant** towards different cultures an ideas.	1,81	1,12	1,83	1,15	1,95	1,18
3	In general, they are hardworking.	2,50	1,07	2,70	0,91	2,48	1,09
4	They don't like **extravagant**.	2,67	1,26	2,86	1,14	2,93	1,19
5	They are **enterpreneur** and **pioneer**.	2,44	1,07	2,61	1,06	2,73	1,23
6	Çlose to each other and **friendly** to students.	1,61	1,22	1,82	1,18	2,18	1,17
7	They are **sophisticated** people.	1,69	1,04	2,05	1,10	1,89	1,24
8	They are **generous** to each other and students.	1,49	1,21	1,50	1,15	1,55	1,21
9	They are **modest**.	1,76	1,21	1,65	1,14	1,82	1,17
10	They are**open to dialog** and adaptable.	1,99	1,08	2,03	1,12	2,07	1,09
11	They are **modern** people.	1,89	1,12	1,73	1,13	1,75	1,35
12	They are **planned**.	2,49	1,10	2,48	1,05	2,18	1,28
13	they are **trustworthy**.	2,09	1,14	1,91	1,13	2,43	1,25
14	They care about **social responsibility**	1,81	1,13	1,77	1,10	2,02	1,23
15	They like **showing up**.	**3,16**	1,12	**3,44**	0,97	**3,23**	1,27

Conclusions

The city of Kayseri, in accordance with the vision of Turkey in 2023, make strides in the areas of industry, tourism and education on national and international levels. For this reason, the city of Kayseri, local government, chambers of commerce and industry and a large number of opinion leaders frequently make assessments of the current situation and take new decisions/resolutions. In this context, this research suggests that all the efforts that put forth for Kayseri should be designed to contribute to a perception of the city brand, and also searches how Kayseri's brand personality is perceived. Since the study covers students who are from outside Kayseri, the results may not reflect the general perception; however, considering their social and economic potentials, university students are regarded as potential ambassadors to Kayseri in the their home cities.

For this reason, the findings of this study are important. One of the most important results that emerged from assessing the findings is that Kayseri is not perceived by students as it is ought to be. For example; generally people of Kayseri are known for their philanthrophy but this trait is little known or recalled by the participant students. Moreover, generosity of the people of Kayseri is called into question and there is a strong perception that the people of Kayseri like showing off. Regarding this issue, it would not be wrong to argue that institutions and organizations of Kayseri have been inefficient in their interaction with the

students. Perhaps the most important recommendation that can be made is for municipality and other non-governmental organizations to establish closer relations with student clubs, to include university students in their activities or to support student activities through sponsorships.

Aiming for socio-economic growth, industrialists and businessmen of Kayseri must develop employability and make institutional reformations in order to reverse the brain drain. Although it is not the subject of this study, it should be noted that the most important reasons for the brain drain are low wage policies and the fact that Kayseri's private sector has no corporate culture.

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