

DESTINATION IMAGE: THE CASE OF TURKEY

ASLI D. A. TASCI,* SELMA UYGUR MEYDAN,† and S. TAMER CAVUSGIL‡

*School of Tourism and Hotel Management, Mugla University, Kotekli Kampusu, Mugla, Turkey

†Faculty of Commerce and Tourism Education, Gazi University, Incitasi Sok. Golbasi, Ankara, Turkey

‡The Eli Broad Graduate School of Management, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824, USA

Despite ample tourism assets and several decades of tourism development, Turkey still does not have a competitive edge in international tourism. A relatively negative image and/or lack of image are cited as one factor among several others in Turkey's low tourism arrivals and revenues relative to other Mediterranean destinations. Few researchers have measured the image of Turkey and even fewer have done so in the context of international travel. In this study, Turkey's image as an international travel destination was measured using a student population from the US. The findings confirm previous research in terms of Turkey's negative image shaped by stereotypical conceptions rather than factual information. Managerial implications and suggestions for future research are provided.

Key words: Destination image; Image management; Image measurement; Image of Turkey; Image formation

Introduction

Turkey offers natural beauty for all kinds of tourism and sport, as well as unique historical and archeological sites, a steadily improving touristic infrastructure, a tradition of hospitality, competitive prices, and a rich cuisine (Korzay, 1994; Sezer & Harrison, 1994). This vast peninsula of 778,000 km² links Asia to Europe through the Sea of Marmara and the Straits of Istanbul and Canakkale. Surrounded by warm seas on three sides, Turkey has many different natural features, including parallel mountain ranges, extinct volca-

noes, and plateaus marked by valleys and plains. The climate is temperate but varies noticeably from region to region. Therefore, Turkey has some of the richest fauna and flora in Europe and the Middle East. Among its more than 10,000 species of plants, 20% can be found only in Turkey. There are more than 114 species of mammals, about 800 species of aquatic birds, and roughly 400 species of indigenous or migratory birds. Turkey has historic treasures from 13 successive civilizations spanning 10,000 years and dating back to 6500 B.C. The country has a secular, democratic, pluralistic parliamentary system and a free-market econ-

omy. Politically, Turkey has been an active part of the modern world since the late 1940s, including membership in the United Nations, the European Council, and NATO. It has been loyal to allies in such international issues as the Korean War and the Gulf War.

Although Turkish authorities recognized tourism as an important economic activity in the early decades of the 20th century, tourism-related institutions were confined to the private sector until 1949 (Sezer & Harrison, 1994). That year, the First Tourism Advisory Committee met and produced a report that set the basis for national policy (Sezer & Harrison, 1994, p. 80). Until 1963, the so-called preplanned period, the focus was on building awareness about the importance of tourism (Korzay, 1994) rather than planning and implementing well-defined strategies (Sezer & Harrison, 1994).

Starting in 1963, the planned period, tourism was advocated as a tool for economic development (Korzay, 1994) and was included in the first Five-Year Plan objectives and responsibilities for both public and private sectors (Sezer & Harrison, 1994). In the early 1980s, tourism received increased attention from the government, which sought to provide impetus through monetary incentives, "privatization of the public sector, deregulation of industry and services, the liberation of import and export regimes, simplification of investment procedures, and the creation of a contemporary tourism culture based on the modern principles of tourism" (Sezer & Harrison, 1994, p. 80).

Attention to tourism education, including an emphasis on learning foreign languages, along with improvements in infrastructure and superstructure as well as increased research and development activities helped tourism become a major economic activity in Turkey (Korzay, 1994; Sezer & Harrison, 1994). The tourism share of GDP was 1.8% in 1991 and 6% in 2001 (T.C. Turizm Bakanlığı [Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism], 2002). In 1991 the share of tourism in export revenue was 19.5% while its share in the cost of importation was 2.8%, which left a positive balance of payments. The share of tourism revenues in exportation increased to 22.9% in 1995, 27.8% in 2000, and 28.8% in 2001, while the cost of impor-

tation share remained close to that of 1991 (Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2002).

Despite ample tourism assets and efforts, Turkey does not have a competitive edge in international tourism (Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Sonmez & Sirakaya, 2002). Tourist arrivals and revenues are lower than for other Mediterranean destinations. Turkey attracts considerably fewer tourists than do Mediterranean countries with similar attractions, such as Spain, Greece, and Italy (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Korzay, 1994; Ozsoy, 1999; Sezer & Harrison, 1994; Sonmez & Sirakaya, 2002). According to the World Tourism Organization (2004), in 2002 Spain was second from the top in the region, with about 51.7 million foreign visitors, and Italy was fourth with about 39.8 million arrivals; Greece was in 13th place, and Turkey was not in the top 15. In terms of earnings from tourism, Spain and Italy kept their second and fourth positions with \$33.6 billion and \$26.9 billion, respectively, while Greece was 10th, with \$9.7 billion, and Turkey was 12th, with \$9 billion.

Several factors that are also believed to induce a negative image for Turkey have been cited for the country's failure to advance in the international tourism arena. Managerial reasons include missed opportunities and inappropriate tourism development due to the lack of planning, control, appropriate tourism culture, and participation by local people, worsened by the "abuse of political power" and a "get-rich-quick mentality" (Korzay, 1994; Sezer & Harrison, 1994, p. 82). Also mentioned are Turkey's political instability, including military coups in 1960, 1970, and 1980; the Turkish-Greek conflict in Cyprus in the 1970s; the problem of hashish farming in the 1970s, along with the *Midnight Express* movie in 1978; systematic terrorist acts of the PKK, an armed Kurdish terrorist organization, in the 1980s and 1990s; and the earthquake of 1999 (Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Sezer & Harrison, 1994; Sonmez & Sirakaya, 2002). Moreover, events in neighboring countries, such as the Gulf War, the NATO-Serb conflict, and US operations in Iraq have had a dramatic effect on the Turkish tourism industry (Sezer & Harrison, 1994; Sonmez & Sirakaya, 2002).

As destination image is also believed to influence visitation (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Chon, 1991; Milman & Pizam, 1995; Selby & Morgan,

1996), a few studies measure the image of Turkey, but very few involve the context of international travel (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Sonmez & Sirakaya, 2002). Thus, this empirical research is intended to measure the image of Turkey as an international travel destination by applying a multimethod and comprehensive instrument, similar to the one suggested by Echtner and Ritchie (1993), and compare the results with the previous research on the image of Turkey. The following section is a brief review of work on destination image and measurement, followed by a critical discussion of findings and methods in a few studies on the image of Turkey.

Destination Image and Its Measurement

Kotler (1994) defines image as "net results of a person's beliefs, ideas, feelings, expectations and impressions about a place" (p. 223). Crompton's (1979) definition of destination image is widely accepted one: "the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of a destination" (p. 18). Destination image is postulated to comprise both an affective component—feelings toward the destination—and a cognitive component—factual information about the destination (Gartner, 1993). It is argued that destination image can be formed through information sources (Bojanic, 1991; Gartner, 1993) and even in the absence of any commercial information (Alhemoud & Armstrong, 1996; Ger, 1997; Tolunguc, 1999). Destination image can be shaped by commercial information sourcing from the destination, other independent information sources, such as school materials and the media, as well as the personal factors of an individual, such as demographics and previous experience (Gartner, 1993). It is also proposed that the image of a destination depends on the context of the inquiry (Ger, 1997; Hu & Ritchie, 1993).

The image held by current and potential visitors is commonly accepted as an important factor in the overall success of a tourism destination (P. J. Chen & Kerstetter, 1999; Crompton, 1979; Dadgostar & Isotalo, 1992; Hunt, 1975) because of its effect on tourist decision making or travel destination choice (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Bramwell & Rawding, 1996; J. S. Chen & Hsu, 2000; P. J. Chen & Kerstetter, 1999; Dann, 1996; Fakeye &

Crompton, 1991; Fridgen, 1987; Gartner, 1993). Image is also influential in some supply side aspects, including positioning and promotion (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Calantone, Benedetto, Hakam, & Bojanic, 1989; P. J. Chen & Kerstetter, 1999; Fridgen, 1987; Walmsley & Young, 1998).

Destination image is difficult to measure because there are many possible factors influencing destination image (Gartner, 1993). Despite the difficulty, several researchers have used different methods and techniques. Earlier work employed mainly quantitative methods with structured surveys (Calantone et al., 1989; Crompton, 1979; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Gartner, 1989; Goodrich, 1978; Hunt, 1975). Reilly (1990) is one of the few to use solely open-ended questions, an approach that can reveal subject-salient and unique or idiosyncratic responses or lack of responses in a relatively more parsimonious way. Yet the study concludes with cautions about potential bias due to the subjective interpretations of the researcher, hence the lack of reliability and/or validity; however, techniques such as triangulation and interrater reliability, etc., are commonly used in good qualitative research to eliminate bias. Echtner and Ritchie (1993) recommend quantitative methods to measure common characteristics and destination attributes and qualitative methods to identify holistic and psychological impressions about a destination. This multiple approach includes both structured and open-ended questions. Several researchers followed the recommendations and sought free descriptions by respondents (Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001; Dann, 1996; Lubbe, 1998; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997; Murphy, 1999; Selby & Morgan, 1996; Tapachai & Waryszak, 2000; Walmsley & Young, 1998).

The Image of Turkey

Turkish governments have long realized the importance of country image for international relations as well as international tourism. In the late stages of the Ottoman Empire, significant image-building activities were undertaken, such as sending a ship full of important officers overseas to build a good image of the empire (Ozsoy, 1999). Atatürk, founder of the Republic of Turkey after

the Ottoman collapse, continued image maintenance even during the War of Independence in the 1920s (Ozsoy, 1999). Today, considerable funding is spent on promotional activities for image management, but the image of Turkey and its people is still not at the desired level, especially in the Western world; there is either a lack of image or a relatively negative one (Aslantas, 2002; Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Ger, 1991, 1997; Ozsoy, 1999; Sonmez & Sirakaya, 2002; Tolunguc, 1999; Yesiltepe, 2003; Yildirim, 2002).

The contemporary image of Turkey is still shadowed by stereotypes dating from the Ottoman Empire, with connotations of mostly medieval wars and political events, accentuated by cultural and religious differences between Turkey and the Western world (Aslantas, 2002; Ger, 1997; Kircioglu & Nazilli, 1983; Ozsoy, 1999; Tolunguc, 1999; Yesiltepe, 2003; Yildirim, 2002). Possibly due to its Muslim culture, Turkey is associated with Arabic culture and an unpleasant desert climate (Kircioglu & Nazilli, 1983; Tolunguc, 1999). Also, the image of Turkey is tainted by information from the mass media concerning internal problems or conflicts with neighbors (Ger, 1997; Kircioglu & Nazilli, 1983; Ozsoy, 1999; Sonmez & Sirakaya, 2002).

A few studies have measured the image of Turkey held by Western societies. Ger (1991) employed an experimental design with 119 European college students to reveal the image of Turkey in comparison with 10 Mediterranean countries. Her comprehensive set of questions included both open-ended and closed descriptive, evaluative, and comparative items measured on a 7-point similarity scale, a 7-point semantic differential scale, and a 7-point knowledge level scale, as well as questions prompting free responses, favorability, and familiarity. Turkey was associated with European, African, and Middle Eastern countries, including Greece, Yugoslavia, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Israel, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. A content analysis of the free responses to determine reasons for perceived similarities revealed "location, landscape and climate, history, culture and traditions, religion, and people, attitudes and lifestyles" (p. 392) as the possible explanations for these associations. Among these countries, Turkey's evaluative rating

was only higher than that of Algeria. The content analysis also revealed that respondents' thoughts about Turkey were related to "physical characteristics and sights; history and culture; and the economic, political and social situation" (p. 393), 60% of which were judged as positive by the respondents. Yet, Turkey was also perceived to be a non-European country with a Muslim and Arabic culture marked by a mixture of Eastern, Western, North African, and Middle Eastern influences. Ger found that respondents with personal experience and higher levels of knowledge had more thoughts about and better ratings of Turkey. In another study with a quantitative survey design, Ger (1997) employed a similar questionnaire with additional free elicitation items. The 660 Western college students, Americans and Europeans, yielded similar results as well as additional but rather negative descriptions of Turkish people.

As stated before, the image of a country is postulated to be dependent on the context (Ger, 1997; Hu & Ritchie, 1993). Aside from studies of Turkey's general image, a few researchers have attempted to measure its image as a travel destination. Baloglu and Brinberg (1997) asked 60 American college students to compare Turkey with the same 10 Mediterranean countries mentioned previously, except they switched Yugoslavia with Tunisia. They used a predeveloped 7-point bipolar affective evaluation scale with four adjectives (pleasant-unpleasant, relaxing-distressing, arousing-sleepy, and exciting-gloomy). They found that Turkey, along with Israel and Algeria, had a rather unpleasant and distressing affective image.

In another study, Baloglu and McCleary (1999) surveyed 448 potential international pleasure travelers who requested information about Turkey. The comparison was with only three other Mediterranean countries (Italy, Greece, and Egypt), using the 7-point bipolar affective evaluation scale with four adjectives, plus a 5-point Likert scale with 14 image attributes. They found a relatively more positive image of Turkey but cautioned about possible bias, because the incentive offered to increase the participation rate included free package tours to Turkey.

To investigate the role of destination image in decisions of potential tourists, Sonmez and Sirakaya (2002) mailed a self-administered survey to

a random sample of 552 individuals in the US, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands who were either interested or experienced in international travel but had not visited Turkey. Image was measured using a combination of Likert-type and semantic differential scales: 1) 56 cognitive image questions consisting of 6-point Likert-type items (a modified version of the list developed by Echtner & Ritchie, 1993), 2) 26 affective image questions consisting of 7-point semantic differential items (e.g., negative/positive, secure/risky), and 3) the appeal of Turkey as a tourist destination measured by a single 6-point Likert-type item.

All image factors in the Sonmez and Sirakaya (2002) study had grand means around the mid-points of the scales. Cognitive factors ranked between 2.85 (Outdoor recreation opportunities) and 4.12 (Local attractions and hospitality), while affective factors ranked between 3.16 (Authenticity of experience) and 4.65 (General mood and vacation atmosphere). About 46% of the respondents were not at all familiar with Turkey, and only about 3% were highly familiar, which may account for the unappealing perception of Turkey by so many respondents (41%). About 88% of respondents were unlikely to travel to Turkey on their next international vacation. To predict the likelihood of choosing Turkey as the next vacation destination, the researchers used forward multiple regression with 10 image factors, two information source factors, Turkey's overall appeal, familiarity with Turkey, past travel experience, intention for future travel, and demographic variables as independent variables. Found to be significant were Turkey's overall appeal, safe and hospitable environment, general mood and vacation atmosphere, travel experience, relaxing effect, local attractions and hospitality, authenticity of experience, social and personal communication channels, comfort/safety, and tourist facilitation, in that order of importance.

Several researchers believe that population segments with different characteristics will have different images of a country based on their socio-demographics and experiences (Alhemoud & Armstrong, 1996; Baloglu, 2001; P. J. Chen & Kerstetter, 1999; Joppe, Martin, & Waalen, 2001; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 2000). Realizing the influence of travel intermediaries, especially for international destinations, a few researchers have

measured the image of Turkey held by travel agents. Emphasizing the influential role of travel intermediaries as information sources, distribution channels, and image creators, Baloglu and Mangaloglu (2001) repeated Baloglu and McCleary's (1999) study of US-based tour operators and travel agents who did business with any of the study destinations: Turkey, Italy, Greece, and Egypt. In addition to the 7-point bipolar affective evaluation scale and 5-point Likert scale with 14 image attributes, they used an open-ended question asking for free associations with three nouns or adjectives. Turkey's rating was significantly higher than Greece and Italy on the dimension of value for money, higher than Egypt on local cuisine, but lower than Greece on nightlife and entertainment, and lower than Italy on standard hygiene and cleanliness. Responses to the open-ended question revealed that Turkey had associations with ancient ruins, historic, old, and archeology, as well as mystic, intriguing, and mysterious.

Kozak (2003) measured the image of Turkey held by about 350 travel agents in Australia and New Zealand using the image items from Baloglu and Mangaloglu (2001) as well as a few other items offered by practitioners in the Turkish tourism industry. He found that Turkey's historical and cultural amenities are known but not its riches in hot springs, flora, and fauna. Also, the respondents did not have a clear conception of Turkey as a Western country.

Methods

Seventy-one senior and junior marketing students at Michigan State University took part in this study. The use of students is very common in destination image studies, even though they do not represent the target population of international travelers (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; P. J. Chen & Kerstetter, 1999; Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 2000; Tapachai & Waryszak, 2000). Nevertheless, they constitute a valuable segment due to their current and future travel propensity. "Study abroad" programs, as a special segment of international tourism, are likely to both affect and be affected by destination image. Based on their impression of destinations, students will choose those destinations that seem to best suit

their needs and interests. Although the young can be more risk taking than the elderly, it is logical to assume that they will be drawn to destinations with a positive rather than negative image. Upon visiting those destinations, students will confirm or change their previous image depending on their experiences. Because destination image is very resistant to change (Bojanic, 1991; P. J. Chen & Kerstetter, 1999; Crompton, 1979; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Gartner, 1993; Gartner & Shen, 1992; Selby & Morgan, 1996), the image that students form about a country may persist into adulthood. In summary, students are an important research segment for current visit rate, future visit potential, and image development of international destinations. As competition increases in the international travel market, it would be advisable to target student populations and strengthen or modify their destination images before they become entrenched negative impressions.

A mixed mode was used to survey the study population; 49 students used the self-administered paper survey and 22 responded online. The original purpose was to compare the results of these two modes of data collection, using two classes of equal number of students; however, the online mode did not receive the intended amount of responses. The researchers (Turkish, but not known by the subjects to eliminate bias) were present for the self-administered survey, while there was no such incentive for the online mode; the students were invited to participate in the online survey at their own convenience. The survey was programmed as an HTML file and placed on the server of the Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER) at Michigan State University. The nonresponse to the online mode might signal the need for more creative incentives to get subject cooperation in online studies.

The survey instrument contained 21 7-point Likert-type image measurement items including the commonly known touristic attributes of Turkey derived from previous research as well as opinions of the three Turkish academicians. Also, four open-ended questions were included to prompt free descriptions of general images and atmosphere (as suggested by Echtner & Ritchie, 1993) as well as known activities and attractions of Turkey. Specifically, subjects were asked to list the

first three things that come to their mind when they think of Turkey in terms of: 1) general images or characteristics, 2) the atmosphere or mood that they would expect to experience, 3) tourist attractions that are distinctive or unique to Turkey, and 4) popular tourist activities. In addition, one Likert-type item was designed to measure the holistic image of Turkey. The purpose of developing such a comprehensive instrument was to achieve capturing the multicomponent nature of destination image, including cognitive, affective, and conative (Gartner, 1993) as well as common-unique and attribute-holistic components (Echtner & Ritchie 1993). Subjects were informed to answer questions on Turkey as an international travel destination. The questionnaire also contained items to measure the sociodemographic characteristics of the subjects that were postulated to influence destination image in previous studies, including their study major, gender, household income, age, and ethnic origin. Frequencies, descriptive statistics, and exploratory factor analysis were used to analyze these items.

Eighty percent of these students were seniors and 20% were juniors who were majoring mostly in marketing (69%) but also supply chain management (12.7%), general business management (7%), accounting (2.8%), finance (1.4%), and communication (1.4%). There were slightly more females (51.5%) than males (47.1%). The majority (78.5%) reported \$50,000 or more total household income in 2002, followed by \$30,000–\$49,000 (13.8%), less than \$10,000 (4.6%), and \$10,000–\$29,000 (3.1%). Their age, which varied between 18 and 25 years, was 21.10 on average. Respondents' ancestral origin was mainly European (81%), followed by North American (10%), Asian (6%), and African (3%).

Past travel behavior questions such as previous visits to Turkey and other international destinations were also included in the survey. Although 48 of these respondents had traveled abroad for vacation purposes, only one had visited Turkey and 32 reported previous interaction with a Turkish person. Therefore, the image measured using this segment mostly refers to the image induced through information sources (Gartner, 1993). Visits to other international destinations may also be influential on destination image; however, it was

not investigated in this study due to inadequate sample size for statistical comparisons between groups.

Results

Table 1 contains the 21 dimensions that measure the image attributes of Turkey as well as the overall impressions item intended to measure the country's holistic image. The descriptive statistics reveal an image rather on the negative side, although many items received the perfect rating (1 = Excellent) from one or more respondents. Eight items never received the perfect rating, but all items received some level of poor rating (from 5 to 7) from one or more respondents. Mean ratings were approximately between good (3) and poor (5). The rating of the "Safety and security" dimension was the worst (4.51), while that of "Unique culture and customs" was the best (2.54), although even this item was rated somewhere between very good and good, not excellent. Standard deviations were rather high, which indicates a lack of consensus among the respondents regarding the quality of Turkey's image attributes. The arithmetic mean

of the 21 attributes, which was 3.65, could logically be considered as the induced holistic image of Turkey; however, the measured holistic image, "Overall impressions of Turkey," was a little lower, 3.57. Although the difference is very small, it points to another negativity. As a whole, Turkey was evaluated a little more negatively than the sum of its parts.

The correlation matrix for image items is provided in Table 2. As can be seen, there were correlations as high as 0.774 and as low as 0.007. Factor analysis tries to provide the maximum explanation of the original variables with the fewest factors, so a correlation between variables greater than 0.30 is desired (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). Despite the low correlation between some items, the questionnaire seemed to be highly stable, because the Cronbach's alpha for the 21 image measurement items was 0.91.

Exploratory factor analysis was applied to the 21 image measurement items to derive fewer, meaningful, and uncorrelated factors. Principal component analysis was used as the initial method to extract uncorrelated factors, which are organized in

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Image Items

Item No.	Item	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
18	Unique culture/customs	67	1	6	2.54	1.08
6	Amount of cultural/heritage attractions	68	1	5	2.69	1.14
2	Scenic beauty	67	1	7	3.04	1.22
7	Variety of outdoor activities	68	1	6	3.22	1.18
19	Exciting features	67	1	7	3.34	1.27
17	Peoples' friendliness/hospitality	67	1	6	3.37	1.06
11	Cuisine	68	1	7	3.40	1.28
22	Overall impressions of Turkey	68	1	6	3.57	1.03
1	Variety of natural resources	67	2	6	3.60	0.99
5	Quality of restaurants	68	1	7	3.66	1.14
8	Quality of services	67	1	6	3.76	1.13
3	Beaches/water resources	67	1	7	3.76	1.54
9	Value for money	68	1	7	3.79	1.46
20	Nightlife opportunities	67	1	6	3.87	1.19
4	Availability of tourist information	68	1	6	3.96	1.15
10	Local transportation	67	2	7	4.01	1.13
16	Peoples' ability to speak English	68	1	6	4.03	1.04
15	Quality of accommodation facilities	68	2	6	4.09	.88
12	Cleanliness	68	1	7	4.15	1.11
21	Modernity of lifestyle	68	2	7	4.18	1.06
14	Quality of infrastructure	66	2	6	4.20	0.96
13	Safety and security	68	2	7	4.51	1.04

The items are ordered according to ascending mean values. Scale: 1 = Excellent, 2 = Very Good, 3 = Good, 4 = Fair, 5 = Poor, 6 = Very Poor, 7 = Extremely Poor.

Table 2
Correlation Matrix of 21 Image Attributes

Pearson Corr.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
1	1																				
2	0.640	1																			
3	0.000	0.692	1																		
4	0.000	0.000	0.261	1																	
5	0.192	0.045	0.048	0.444	1																
6	0.056	0.001	0.045	0.000	0.418	1															
7	0.093	0.416	0.283	0.440	0.418	1															
8	0.490	0.001	0.031	0.001	0.001	0.492	1														
9	0.432	0.660	0.584	0.242	0.276	0.000	0.266	1													
10	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.067	0.036	0.000	0.012	0.043	0.240	1											
11	0.189	0.449	0.260	0.420	0.455	0.328	0.012	0.043	0.240	0.538	1										
12	0.156	0.000	0.049	0.001	0.000	0.012	0.012	0.015	0.240	0.417	0.307	1									
13	0.314	0.377	0.182	0.283	0.417	0.307	0.487	0.418	0.402	0.402	0.402	0.442	1								
14	0.016	0.004	0.171	0.031	0.001	0.019	0.070	0.000	0.402	0.402	0.402	0.442	0.479	1							
15	0.142	0.253	0.098	0.371	0.286	0.211	0.319	0.491	0.402	0.402	0.402	0.442	0.479	0.222	1						
16	0.288	0.055	0.464	0.004	0.030	0.112	0.015	0.000	0.002	0.002	0.000	0.002	0.002	0.660	0.660	1					
17	0.254	0.403	0.327	0.339	0.738	0.463	0.487	0.418	0.442	0.442	0.442	0.479	0.222	0.543	0.543	0.567	1				
18	-0.032	0.040	0.047	0.146	0.131	0.018	0.037	0.357	0.069	0.207	0.222	0.222	0.222	0.660	0.660	0.660	0.660	1			
19	-0.125	0.043	0.059	0.106	-0.086	0.070	-0.016	0.256	0.028	0.095	-0.081	0.660	0.660	0.660	0.660	0.660	0.660	0.660	0.660	1	
20	0.350	0.751	0.662	0.426	0.520	0.603	0.907	0.052	0.837	0.477	0.543	0.543	0.543	0.543	0.543	0.543	0.543	0.543	0.543	0.543	1
21	0.230	0.372	0.286	0.264	0.234	0.197	0.216	0.466	0.417	0.231	0.096	0.395	0.395	0.395	0.395	0.395	0.395	0.395	0.395	0.395	0.395
	0.082	0.004	0.030	0.045	0.077	0.138	0.103	0.000	0.001	0.081	0.473	0.002	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	0.275	0.000	0.333	0.312	0.335	0.386	0.422	0.580	0.351	0.390	0.355	0.425	0.455	0.455	0.455	0.455	0.455	0.455	0.455	0.455	0.455
	0.162	0.095	0.105	0.369	0.080	0.197	0.214	0.252	0.104	0.359	0.131	0.372	0.268	0.268	0.268	0.268	0.268	0.268	0.268	0.268	0.268
	0.224	0.476	0.433	0.004	0.552	0.139	0.106	0.056	0.436	0.006	0.327	0.004	0.042	0.001	0.004	0.042	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	-0.057	0.173	0.212	0.153	0.275	0.358	0.330	0.458	0.098	0.359	0.285	0.309	0.203	0.203	0.203	0.203	0.203	0.203	0.203	0.203	0.203
	0.672	0.194	0.110	0.252	0.037	0.006	0.011	0.000	0.465	0.006	0.030	0.018	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.126
	0.247	0.425	0.297	0.057	0.227	0.660	0.475	0.276	0.278	0.121	0.332	-0.013	-0.055	0.240	0.390	0.074	0.319	0.319	0.319	0.319	0.319
	0.062	0.001	0.023	0.671	0.086	0.000	0.000	0.036	0.034	0.367	0.011	0.923	0.682	0.070	0.002	0.582	0.400	0.573	0.573	0.573	0.573
	0.350	0.626	0.539	0.250	0.406	0.496	0.599	0.550	0.519	0.231	0.458	0.155	0.007	0.445	0.564	0.202	0.400	0.573	0.573	0.573	0.573
	0.007	0.000	0.000	0.058	0.002	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.081	0.000	0.244	0.961	0.000	0.000	0.128	0.002	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	0.296	0.495	0.627	0.398	0.373	0.384	0.585	0.434	0.255	0.280	0.512	0.153	0.064	0.286	0.470	0.322	0.372	0.332	0.332	0.332	0.332
	0.024	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.004	0.003	0.000	0.001	0.054	0.033	0.000	0.251	0.633	0.030	0.000	0.014	0.004	0.011	0.000	0.000	0.000
	0.257	0.483	0.502	0.333	0.363	0.267	0.491	0.633	0.314	0.365	0.314	0.350	0.315	0.619	0.678	0.388	0.510	0.314	0.314	0.314	0.314
	0.052	0.000	0.000	0.011	0.005	0.042	0.000	0.000	0.016	0.005	0.016	0.007	0.016	0.000	0.000	0.003	0.000	0.016	0.000	0.000	0.000

Note: Listwise deleted, N = 58. Significance test (two-tailed). Correlations in bold are significant at 0.05 or 0.01 level.

order of decreasing explained variances. Factors with eigenvalues exceeding 1 were kept, because those represent the variance equal to or more than that of the average original variable. The initial factors were rotated using Varimax. Items are rotated orthogonally and thus are more meaningful, because they are forced to approach the limits of 0 and +1 (Hair et al., 1998). Variables with loadings closer to 1 have good correlation with the factor on which they load (Hair et al., 1998). Variables with substantial loadings, equal to or greater than 0.5, are considered as practically significant (Hair et al., 1998) and thus are used to represent the factors.

The results of the first factor analysis revealed five factors, with the "Value for money" item solely loading onto a separate factor with a score of 0.664. Because at least three items are needed to load onto a factor for it to be considered as a meaningful sum of individual dimensions (Hair et al., 1998), the factor analysis was repeated after dropping the "Value for money" dimension. The results of this second analysis are provided in Table 3. As can be seen, four factors were extracted with substantial loadings of 20 image dimensions with no cross-loadings. The factors explain 65.70% of the original variables. The computation for internal stability revealed high values of Cronbach's alpha coefficient: $\alpha = 0.88$ for Factor I, $\alpha = 0.83$ for Factor II, $\alpha = 0.79$ for Factor III, and $\alpha = 0.75$ for Factor IV. Because a Cronbach's alpha of 0.70 is considered substantially stable (Hair et al., 1998), these high coefficients indicate that factors were stable with substantially high internal consistencies. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.777. KMO scores close to or above 0.7 are considered a good indication that correlation patterns are relatively compact, and factor analysis should yield distinct and reliable factors.

Variable loadings of greater than 0.50 are considered as practically significant enough to be kept in a factor (Hair et al., 1998). Individual image dimensions showed good correlation with the extracted factors, and they were readily interpretable. A close examination of the factor dimensions reveals that Factor I includes features that people usually want in tourist destinations, and thus the label "Attractions." Factor II has dimensions related

to basic human needs, especially for a foreign tourist destination, and thus the name "Basics." With subtle differences, Factor III is composed of dimensions that refer to comforts and conveniences that tourists usually want on a trip, and so the term "Comfort." Finally, Factor IV dimensions are cultural in content, and thus the label "Culture." All factors except III include both cognitive attributes, which refer to factual knowledge about a destination, and affective attributes, which refer to feelings and attitudes toward a destination.

The grand means were 3.49 for Factor I, 4.18 for Factor II, 3.76 for Factor III, and 2.89 for Factor IV. These were rather low ratings on the 7-point scale (1 = Excellent, 7 = Extremely poor). The ranking of quality perception was: Culture, Attractions, Comfort, and Basics. In other words, although Turkey was rated average on all factors, perceptions of Basics and Comfort were worse than for Attractions and Culture. As a travel destination, Turkey has some level of attraction but does not look safe and comfortable enough for respondents.

Open-ended questions asked respondents to list what comes to mind in terms of general images or characteristics, the atmosphere or mood that they would expect to experience, tourist attractions that are distinctive or unique to Turkey, and popular tourist activities. There were up to three response spaces. The results are provided in Table 4. Although there were many unique and idiosyncratic responses to all open-ended questions, a reply provided by 5% or more respondents was considered to be common, which was the standard applied by Ger (1991) and Reilly (1990). This process revealed the five most frequent responses for each of the three response choices in each open-ended question.

Frequent responses given to the open-ended questions clearly showed a lack of image about Turkey in the minds of this segment. For each open-ended question, the "no response" category was the most frequent, especially for tourist attractions and activities. Also, question mark (?) and "no idea" responses were provided for attractions and activities, respectively. Thus, low ratings of touristic attributes could be the effect of stereotypical conceptions about Turkey when factual information is lacking. As is realized by Reilly (1990)

Table 3
Summary of Factor Analysis Results

Image Dimensions & Factors	Factor Loadings	% of Variance Explained	Cumulative % of Variance Explained	Factor Grand Mean	Cronbach's Alpha Value
Factor I: Attractions		18.48	18.48	3.49	0.88
Scenic beauty (C)	0.822				
Beaches/water resources (C)	0.804				
Variety of natural resources (C)	0.802				
Variety of outdoor activities (C)	0.621				
Exciting features (A)	0.574				
Nightlife opportunities (C)	0.550				
Factor II: Basics		18.39	36.87	4.18	0.83
Safety and security (A)	0.823				
Quality of infrastructure (C)	0.759				
Cleanliness (C)	0.742				
Quality of accommodation facilities (C)	0.698				
Modernity of lifestyle (C)	0.596				
Peoples' ability to speak English (C)	0.584				
Factor III: Comfort		14.82	51.69	3.76	0.79
Cuisine (C)	0.758				
Quality of restaurants (C)	0.747				
Availability of tourist information (C)	0.677				
Local transportation (C)	0.661				
Quality of services (C)	0.505				
Factor IV: Culture		14.01	65.70	2.89	0.75
Unique culture/customs (C)	0.830				
Amount of cultural/heritage attractions (C)	0.750				
Peoples' friendliness/hospitality (A)	0.564				

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization. Rotation converged in six iterations. Items ordered by the size of loadings. Bartlett's test of sphericity = 0.000.
(C): cognitive image attribute. (A): affective image attribute.

and Baloglu and Mangaloglu (2001), this result would not have been revealed by instruments with predetermined rating scales only.

There were positive as well as negative responses to general images and atmosphere questions. As reported in the literature, students associate Turkey with such terms as Middle Eastern, Muslim, and Arabic and thus a desert climate. Similar to the free association responses in Baloglu and Mangaloglu's (2001) research, this study also reveals references to culture, history, and heritage in relation to both general images and tourist attractions.

Limitations

This research is limited by the small size and homogeneity of the sample. For a more realistic measurement of image, larger and heterogeneous samples are needed. Future work can be conducted with such samples by using the same survey in-

strument. This study provides evidence of high reliability for the instrument. Also, the open-ended questions proved useful in identifying the image salient to the subjects rather than to the researchers. The instrument measures Turkey's image comprehensively, and repeating this study would help monitor Turkey's image across different populations and any changes over time.

This study measures solely the image of Turkey rather than in comparison with its competitors. Given the trust of this article is that the image of Turkey is worse than some of its competitors, it would have been useful to see how the same respondent population rated some of the competitors using the same scale. Perhaps the other countries would have received means at a similar or even lower level. Therefore, the readers need to be careful about the results given that image is probably relative to that of competitors. As poorer image compared to competitors is commonly assumed to

Table 4
Top Five Responses to the Open-Ended Questions

	No. Mentioned First	No. Mentioned Second	No. Mentioned Third	Total No. Mentioned
General images or characteristics				
No response given	9	19	36	64
Middle eastern/Muslim/Arabic	7	4	3	14
Culture/history/heritage	6	5	2	13
Desert/hot/dry	6	6	7	19
Beauty/scenery/landscape	4	4	5	13
The atmosphere or mood expected to experience				
No response given	13	32	46	91
Calm/peaceful/relaxing	10	5	2	17
Friendly/nice	9	2	1	12
Fun/happy	4	2	1	7
Depressing/dark	4	0	0	4
Tourist attractions unique to Turkey				
No response given	25	49	57	131
Istanbul	12	1	0	13
Water resources	7	1	0	8
?	5	2	1	8
Historical buildings & sites	4	3	4	11
Popular tourist activities				
No response given	25	47	56	128
Sightseeing	10	7	1	18
Water activities	9	4	2	15
Dining	8	4	1	13
No idea	4	0	0	4

Note: Due to the small sample size, counts instead of percentages are provided. Responses generated by at least 5% of the sample were considered common. The columns add up to more than the sample size because each respondent could provide up to three responses.

lead to fewer tourists, the ratings of Turkey would have to be compared to the ratings of competitors, which can be investigated in future studies.

Implications and Recommendations

Using a comprehensive measurement technique, this study provides findings confirming the results of previous studies. It restates a known problem: Turkey has a negative image or none at all as an international travel destination. The study results revealed an image of Turkey rather on the negative side, with mean ratings approximately between good (3) and poor (5). The rating of the "Safety and security" dimension was the worst (4.51), while that of "Unique culture and customs" was the best (2.54). Four factors were revealed through factor analysis: 1) Attractions (including features that people usually want in tourist destinations), 2) Basics (including dimensions related to basic human needs, especially for a foreign tourist destination), 3) Comfort (including dimen-

sions that refer to comforts and conveniences that tourists usually want on a trip), and 4) Culture (including dimensions are cultural in content). The grand means were 3.49, 4.18, 3.76, and 2.89, respectively, which were rather low ratings on the 7-point scale (1 = Excellent, 7 = Extremely poor), with the ranking of quality perception as Culture, Attractions, Comfort, and Basics. In other words, although Turkey was rated average on all factors, perceptions of Culture and Attractions were better than for Basics and Comfort. As a travel destination, Turkey has some level of attraction but does not look safe and comfortable enough for respondents. Frequent responses given to the open-ended questions showed a lack of image or a stereotypical image as was also revealed by Ger (1991, 1997); students associate Turkey with Middle Eastern, Muslim, and Arabic and thus a desert climate. Similar to the findings of Baloglu and Mangalolu (2001), this study also revealed references to culture, history, and heritage in relation to both general images and tourist attractions.

Although the study subjects had never been to Turkey, they were aware that it is rich in tourist attractions, especially cultural and historical, which was also the case for US-based travel intermediaries (Baloglu & Mangalolu, 2001). Therefore, there is evidence that Turkey's historical riches may provide a competitive edge in the international travel market. This dimension needs to be emphasized consistently in the promotional efforts of destination marketing organizations (DMOs) in Turkey. Responses to the open-ended questions indicated that Istanbul is a very important tourism asset. Considering that Paris is a major factor in drawing millions of tourists to France, it might benefit Turkey to develop a similar association with Istanbul.

The subjects of this study believed that Turkey may not meet their standards in terms of facilities and services for basic human needs and comfort and convenience, as was revealed by answers to the closed (7-point Likert scale) questions. These negative perceptions may be due to media reports about Turkey in connection with religious and political unrest in the Middle East. This image needs to be taken seriously by those who market Turkey as a travel destination, and efforts should be made to counteract it.

Responses to the closed questions manifest an approach-avoidance attitude: positive perceptions of Turkey's attractions and negative views about tourism basics. The open-ended questions revealed a similar conflict, although the high rate of nonresponse suggests a clear image of Turkey is lacking. This is a relatively positive outcome, because it should be easier to develop a new image for a destination than to change a negative one, which is a long and difficult process (Gartner, 1993). As is emphasized by Baloglu and Mangalolu (2001), travel intermediaries are very important agents in image formation, especially for international destinations. Turkish marketers need to focus on forming and strengthening a positive image in the minds of these agents, who in turn influence potential travelers.

The Ministry of Tourism needs to initiate campaigns that emphasize the attractions of Turkey, especially cultural and historical riches, and improve the perception of comforts, facilities, and

services for tourists. This could be achieved through promotional texts and images that induce trust, such as testimonial advertising by celebrities about their personal experiences in Turkey. At the same time, actions should be taken to evaluate the tourism infrastructure and eliminate problems. The Ministry of Tourism needs to play a unifying role for tourism organizations at all levels. Planning and implementing a uniform promotional strategy and improving facilities and services are of utmost importance to enhance Turkey's image as a travel destination. Travel writers in distant markets (Milo & Yoder, 1991) and special events (Westerbeek, Turner, & Ingerson, 2002) also could be part of the strategy. As mentioned earlier, study abroad programs could be used effectively to form and improve the image of Turkey in the Western world. This would require cooperation between tourism marketers and universities in Turkey.

A strategic move would be differentiated branding of Turkey as a travel destination in different markets (i.e., focus on a few strong aspects that have functional and emotional value for the target market). Turkey shares touristic attributes with several other countries, especially in the Mediterranean region (Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Morgan, Pritchard, & Piggott, 2002). To assure or boost the quality of its touristic products, Turkey can engage in joint branding (Rao & Ruekert, 1994) or cooperative destination branding (Cai, 2002). This could be done with different levels of operators in the service delivery channel, such as airlines, hotels, and restaurants. Successful franchises in the international arena, such as Hilton, Sheraton, Club Med, and McDonald's, which are also considered successful service brands (Kotler, Bowen, & Makens, 2003, p. 312), can be pursued in this type of joint branding. Also, joint branding of destinations within the country as well as with neighbors could be possible.

Turkey's positive unique characteristics, especially its cultural heritage, even if idiosyncratic, should not be stifled, because tourists sometimes seek unexpected and spontaneous experiences (Buhalis, 2000). A branding strategy will require marketing research, especially a comprehensive image assessment (Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Morgan et al., 2002). Also, perceived benefits and con-

straints (or facilitators and inhibitors) of Turkey as a travel destination need to be evaluated, because positive perceptions on some attributes may just not be enough to draw people (for details on these concepts, see Botha, Crompton, & Kim, 1999; Shu, Crompton, & Witt, 1996; Um & Crompton, 1990, 1992; Zins, 1998).

The lack of a clear image of Turkey, especially its East–West identity problem, is also rooted in international business and political organizations. Turkey is considered to be a European country by the World Tourism Organization and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), but it is viewed as Asian or Middle Eastern by the United Nations (Sonmez & Sirakaya, 2002). This issue needs to be addressed through strategic political actions by the Turkish government. The country's geographic and political position, and thus its image, would be stabilized and strengthened if Turkey were a member of the European Union (Sonmez & Sirakaya, 2002).

Because the study results are based on a student population, suggestions provided above might be considered relevant to the student market only. However, because the study results are commensurate with the findings of previous studies on the image of Turkey (Baloglu & Mangalolu, 2001; Ger, 1991, 1997; Sonmez & Sirakaya, 2002), the findings of this study might provide insights when dealing with other market segments too. Thus, whether or not students rely heavily on travel agents, whether or not they respond to testimonials from celebrities, or whether or not they are responsive to hotel or restaurant brands may be irrelevant for these suggestions to make sense in light of different market segments. Besides, the student market of today is a potential adult market segment of the near future, potentially when the changes in policies and marketing activities would take affect. However, a viable subject for future studies would be the type of celebrities and brands that would be appropriate in attracting different segments considering the strong culture feature of Turkey's image. Besides, future studies can investigate what Turkey is currently doing in terms of advertising so that interested parties can understand how suggestions for change provided in this text challenge the traditional applications.

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