

# **Nation branding – case study of Turkey**

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## **Abstract**

This paper is aimed to find the perception of Turkey as brand image, to discover the unique features of the country and how to preserve the national history. It is very important that country must have attractive, precise, amazing features in large and diverse global marketplace. Nation branding has been considered to be best methods for any countries to achieve sustainable development and to compete in the global market. Nation branding covers the analysis of economics, tourism, culture, and political stability of the particular country. The particular study was completely based on desk research method and accordingly the facts and figures were analyzed. The readers are presented with the tourists' emotional and functional associations such as rich culture and traditions and the history and the monuments of Turkey that excels than rest of the world. In fact, who visits this place will have the imprint pride and satisfaction due to its extraordinary and the living history, monuments and the warm hospitality of the people of Turkey.

## **Keywords**

nation branding, brand Turkey, tourism, images, cultures

## **Introduction**

In today's competitive world it has been an important ideas to carry out Nation branding. Many countries struggle to compete each other in order to draw attention from tourists, investors, consumers, donors and the government of different nations without proper branding of the nations. K. Dinnie [2008], defined the nation-brand as the unique, multi-dimensional blend of elements that provide the nation with culturally grounded differentiation and relevance for all of its target audiences. Turkey is one of the most wonderful country entangled in both Asia and Europe with rich tradition, open culture, beautiful antique places that makes a great country for the traveller to travel and spend days during vacation.

Turkey is a Islam country with the population of 72 million. The capital is Ankara and their currency is Turkish Lira. Turkish is the main language however, Kurdish is also spoken by the people who reside in the east of Turkey. The political system is secular democracy and it has 81 provinces which are further divided into district and the country has 72,454sq kilometers in areas. Among developed countries the Turkish life style, culture and the captivating scenario fascinated us and this is how we chose Turkey to be our country branding. On the other hand, Turkey has black sea region in the north and that areas are well known for their natural beauty and Green hill. The Turkish culture is most welcoming and friendly to the strangers. They give more important to family and friends and the visitor will easily get along with Turkish people whichever destination you visit. Moreover, Turkey has quite unique Turkish culture which comprise of Ottoman, Greek and western influences. Similarly, there are also major cities such as Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara, which are the main commercial hub for the local and international businesses as well as tourism.

Not to forget the famous people in Turkey that actually created the history for the Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk was the founder of the republic of Turkey and he is believed that his dead body was buried under the place now known as Ankara the capital of the country.

### **1. Perception of tourists**

Turkey as a country is being perceived in different ways by different countries that are detailed in the following. According to the results of research carried out by

the Russian research centre, about 47% of respondent in Russia said that the Turkish is the best place for vacation and their association with the Turkish are: Mediterranean sea, friendly, sunny, interesting country. However in lieu of the recent studies, it is found out that 77% of the Russian says the Turkey is not likely to be visited. The reason for this is political disability have almost ruined relationships between the countries. As per Great Britain they perceive Turkey as warm climate and rich culture. 68% of respondent said that it is sunny while 55% said that it has rich history and 48% said rich culture heritage respectively. On the other hand when they were given to rate the scale, 8 people out of 10 gave 7 points which is the positive sign of the tourist. The survey which was based on the 8 million American respondents reveals that half of them want to visit Turkey and they are attracted by their purchasing power of the dollar. French people who have never been to Turkey considered as an Arabic country but some people have negative opinion towards Arabic and Turkish people because of history.

In Switzerland, they see Turkey as interesting and mysteries country while Japanese as friendly with its history and culture. 95% said that they like their trip. 40% of Denmark people could not say anything about Turkey. Holland describe as luxuries, save and tolerant. According to the research company “Barem” 70% of respondents from six countries including Bulgaria, Romania, Austria, Serbia, Czech Republic and Germany see Turkey only as a tourism destination. 30% have positive opinion about Turkey as a place for shopping. 16% choose Turkey as a place to study or work. According to the OECD studies made by S. Anholt (2016), Turkish nation brand is not well developed as Russian. Only tourism is major category because they try to do many things at the same time. According to the Nation Brand Value, Turkey which ranked number 26 in 2016 and 24 in 2017, which is increase by 20%. However, it is hard to consider this information truly valid nowadays, since the situation has been changed rapidly in last three years due to the military revolution, the conflict between the opposition parties of Fethulah Gulen.

UAE considers Turkey as green, sunny, Muslim, European, safe family place to have a rest. Among Austrian people Turkish resorts take second place after Italy and Croatia. 86% said that the Turkey is attractive with beach. For Chinese people Turkish are quite friendly if one lives or studies in Turkey and would feel like they live at home. They also consider that the Turkish kebab are the most delicious one with good price and home taste. When the Chinese people think about a movie related to Turkey is Troy war and they are interested in Turkish culture and art and religious centre. Based on the studies of the Global Fire Power, the Turkish military strength of 2017 ranked 8<sup>th</sup>. According to UK tourist agency and some of the Spanish spoken people the security environment remains potentially volatile and the safety is the

main concern even though the Turkey is always beautiful country. From the perspective of Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan) people who have the similar roots, they consider Turkey as a religious country, place to have vacation. In addition, people from this region go there for shopping. Nonetheless, situation changed as it was mentioned before, and now people are afraid to go there because of terrorism.

Brands of Turkish cities like Istanbul (Constantinople) or Antalya are known for the strong image and it can be for the creating tourism and national branding. Now, the promotion of Eskisehir has been started, since it is the town that represents History and Culture. According to the Nation Brand Value, Turkey ranked number 26 in 2016 and 24 in 2017, which is increase by 20%.Based on the studies of the Global Fire Power, the Turkish military strength of 2017 ranked 8<sup>th</sup> Brands of Turkish cities like Istanbul (Constantinople) or Antalya are known for the strong image and it can be for the creating tourism and national branding.

## **2. Unique features assessment**

Turkey is the top most country visited by tourist every year due to its vibrant culture, famous food and the vast wow history. While its glorious landscape from sun soaked Mediterranean to the mighty mountains are also the highlights for being famous in the world. The people visits the place for beautiful site seeing, to witness the ancient renounced history of Troy wars and for the relaxation since the place really provide the tranquility with its friendly environment.

Turkey is washed by 4 seas: Marble, Black, Mediterranean and Aegean. It is interesting that the Turkish people call the Mediterranean Sea -the White Sea. The magnificent beaches of Turkey occupy the top lines of the ratings of the best beaches in Europe. Followed by Istanbul (the same: Byzantium, Constantinople, Tsar Grad, New Rome) is the only city in the world located on two continents, in Europe and Asia and the only city that was the capital of the 3 great empires: Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman . In 2010 he was known as the cultural capital of Europe. At the same time, in the territory of modern Turkey, there are more ancient Greek cities and ancient monuments than in Greece itself. The legendary cities like Troy, Didim, Prien, Miletus, Ephesus were there. According to the legend, the Homer was born in Izmir (ancient Smyrna), the famous Greek "father of history" Herodotus was born in Bodrum (Halicarnassus), and on the island of Samos (not far from Kusadasi) lived the great mathematician Pythagoras. Unlike other countries people make their trip to Turkey since they can feel the real essence of ancient wars and how people have been so responsible to survive.

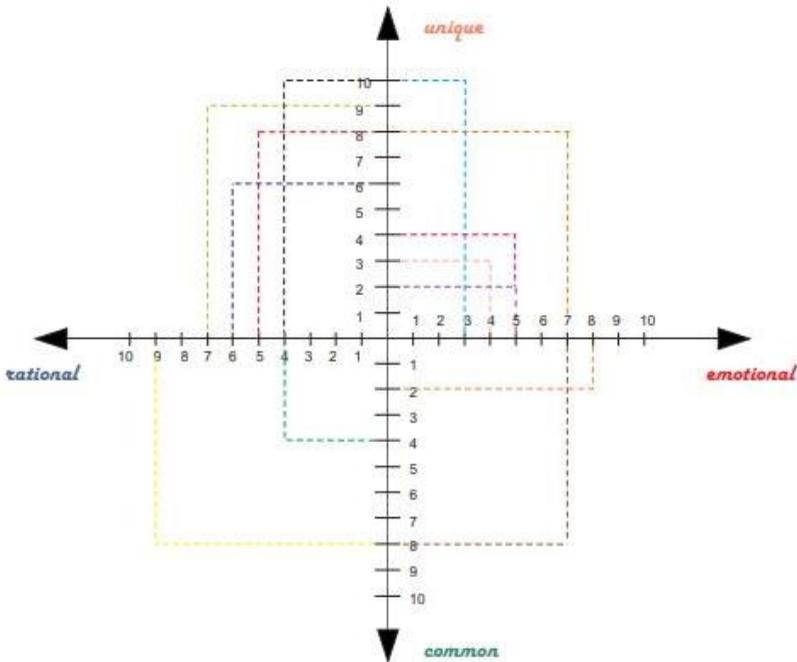
To be more focused, Turkish people respect the Christian shrines, which are many in this country. For example, St. Nicholas (the same one who later became a Santa Claus in the world culture), was born and lived in the city of Demre (Antalya province), and at the present we can see that there is a famous church named after him and it is known as sarcophagus. Conversely one of the Turkey's most famous natural wonders is Mount Pamukkale known as "cotton castle". Snow-white terraces, filled with warm mineral water and looks like a green landscape, providing another reason for the world around to visit the place. It is taken care by UNESCO. Until now, a great connoisseur of the local thermal waters was the queen Cleopatra where everyone can swim in the famous basin of Cleopatra right among the real antique columns of the ancient city of Hierapolis.

The non-existence facts in almost all other tourists visiting Turkey claimed about high level service in restaurants, with its friendly atmosphere. In addition, the service in shops and open markets is high as well, with its unique western cultural features, such as ability to negotiate on prices. Visiting Turkey once in life time equals to being in the 7 wonders of the world. It is due to the fact that 2 out of 7 Wonders of the World are situated in Turkey. They are Temple of Artemis (Artemision) at Ephesus and The Mausoleum of Halicarnassus and these monuments are the country's attractions galore. Moreover, there are a lot of other tourist attractions, such as breathtaking landscapes and beautiful beaches on the north and south parts of the country.

### **3. Country brand identity**

There are some things that have to be taken into consideration, when talking about the brand identity. These values might be emotional and rational, as well as features can be unique or common. Based on the listed features, people will have a certain association with the country's identity. Therefore, the Figure 1 has been developed to show the identity of Turkey in the eyes of tourists.

In the intersection of the first uniqueness, the graph showed that it is rational and unique. It can be explained by the fact that four given seas are a lot, but there are countries with the same amount of seas, and even more. The next fact about this country is about the Istanbul, the only city around the world, which is situated at two continents at the same time. The intersection was in emotional and unique, get points three and ten respectively. One of the most beautiful attractions that Turkey possess is Pamukkale natural "cotton castle".



- 1. Turkey is washed by 4 seas: Marble, Black, Mediterranean and Aegean
- 2. Istanbul – the city in 2 continents and capital of three countries: *Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman*
- 3. Pamukkale, "cotton castle"
- 4. 33400 archaeological monuments and 440000 historical and archaeological sites
- 5. Saint Nicolas is from Turkey
- 6. Martian landscapes of Cappadocia
- 7. More Ancient Greek cities than in Greece itself
- 8. 2 out of 7 Wonders
- 9. The largest Oceanarium in Europe
- 10. Free service like salad and bread
- 11. 2 eye colored Van cats
- 12. Dance of famous rotating dervishes
- 13. Noah's Ark, is located in the east of Turkey.

Fig. 1. Turkey association graph

Source: own compilation.

According to the study, the uniqueness and rational part are connected since people are coming based on their reasoned decisions, which means they understand that there is no analogue in other states. Fourth fact that makes Turkey unique is the

quantity of archaeological monuments and Ancient Greek cities. That indicates rational and unique features. The next thing that tourists may find attractive is tolerance of Turkish people towards other religions. Moreover, The Saint Nicolas was born in the territory of Turkey, despite the fact that many people consider wrong that he is from Finland. In our opinion, this fact is common and emotional. Martian Landscapes of Cappadocia is also the reason why many people want to visit Turkey. It is emotional and common, since you can find this kind of landscapes in other areas as well. The quantity of Ancient Greek cities is actually higher than in Greece itself. We can consider it as rational, and emotional at the same time. For those, who did not know, two out of seven Wonders are in Modern territory of Turkey. It can be emotional and unique attractiveness of the country, since there is no analogue like this in other countries. The largest Oceanarium in the Europe, that is located in Istanbul will be shown as common and rational, due the fact that people can visit similar big places in other parts of the world, but not in European continent. This country is known for the nice service and free bread and water in every restaurants. This factor can be thought as emotional and common. It is good to feel service on the high level and at the same time, it is common because this kind of service can be found in other places too. Another unique fact that country can offer is two-colored eye cats, which live near Van lake. In our minds, its rather common and rational. Many people are still guessing how the dervishes rotate themselves so long in a beautiful dance. It is intersects with unique and emotional. However, it did not get the high marks, since there are some similar dances, like in India. The last is the approximate location of Noah's Ark in the western part of the Turkey. Hence, it was decided that this indicator will have four points in uniqueness, and five points in emotional parts.

To sum up, there are more intersection points in the areas of Uniqueness and Emotional. The reason behind this is that most of the tourists are visiting Turkey to see not only tangible and common tourist places, but also unusual locations with wonderful historical background and beautiful sight-sees.

### **3. The Brand Pyramid**

The Brand Pyramid aims to bind customers and ensure that they choose the same product from the same brand next time. American marketing professor K. L. Keller was the first to write about the 'brand pyramid' in his book 'Strategic Brand Management', published in 1998. The same pyramid can be used for the building the brand image of the country as well. Therefore, the pyramid for the Turkey's brand image has been created.

According to the pyramid, the following were determined:

**Level 1.** The first stage describes the rational benefits one gets, when visiting Turkey.

**Level 2.** The second phase gives the distinct services, provided by the local people.

**Level 3.** This phase states about the emotional benefits associated with the given country.

**Level 4.** At the fourth level, the values gained visiting Turkey are described.

**Level 5.** The last stage give the unique features of the state.



**Fig. 2.** Brand Pyramid

Source: own compilation.

The main advantage having vacation in Turkey - the ratio of price and quality of services provided, as well as its diversity. Tourism in Turkey is able to satisfy the demands of any tourists - families with children, people who prefer a quiet respectable rest. There is a system of all-inclusive development everywhere, when one pays once when you purchase a voucher and do not refuse anything on the spot.

#### **4. Branding strategy**

The Turkish government did few promotions and publicity attempts date back to the early 2000s, when the Ministry of Economy introduced “Turquality” program to the public at 2004. Turquality was defined as a state-supported branding program, providing support for Turkish companies to gain international recognition in the global market. Several campaigns were undertaken with specific slogans such as “Go with the Rhythm, Enjoy Turkey” in 2004, “Turkey Welcomes You” in 2005, “Mediterranean and More” in 2006 and “What a Feeling” in 2007 and “More is Always on the Way” in 2008. The branding campaign introduced a slogan, “Turkey: Discover the Potential” with a new logo and aimed at not only touristic ambitions but also economic and industrial goals of the country. The slogan replaced the expression “Made in Turkey” to be present on products manufactured by Turkish companies and distributed to national/international markets. In his speech at the public ceremony of Turkey’s nation branding campaign, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan declared that the campaign will contribute to the growth of Turkey’s image abroad and will function as the symbol of Turkey’s global power.

The increasing government interest towards nation branding in Turkey in the recent years shows that the government aims to enhance Turkey’s image abroad with certain cultural narratives that aim to generate the global visibility of Turkey’s cultural, industrial and political potentials. According to the Nation Brands report 2015 published by BrandFinance, Turkey ranked 19th and was recognized as a regional power who has the potential to increase its brand recognition due to its growing economy, cultural inheritance and political significance. The ways in which Turkey is imagined, narrated and discursively established within this campaign is significant to point at the cultural manifestations attributed to the nation and the nation brand. Although Turkey’s nation brand value recorded further decrease in 2016, the campaign, nonetheless, managed to govern brand image, as Turkey ranked 25th most valuable nation brand in the world.

## **5. Findings and recommendation**

With the intensive analysis of the available data, it is learned that the country is well perceived by the tourists around the globe. However, based upon the stiff competition in the tourism sector, the group of researchers would like to recommend few points for the betterment of the sector and guidance for the future researchers.

Application of digital marketing strategies is a great way to reach tourists who use the internet before making their travel plans. Travelers today rely on digital technologies for travel inspiration as well as research and booking. They also use different devices for all types of travel activities, from research, travel arrangements, booking and check-in. Search engine optimisation and search engine marketing is the best way to promote tourism online. Digital technologies can add value to the services. Today over one third of all travel bookings are made online. Utilizing online booking and payment provides potential tourist the ease. Offering 24 hour booking and payment online encourages tourist. New technologies like social networking sites enable people to interact, communicate and share ideas on the internet. Social media can be a great way to engage with people and at minimal cost. Turkey can utilize social media for maximizing the benefit from offered tourism promotion.

According to the current market situations the concerned agency should focus on carrying out in-depth research and development about how Turkey can further improve their services and values to sustain their potential customers. Moreover, it is vital for the Turkey to utilize the most powerful medium of communication and more advanced techniques to attract the tourists. The country can continue their warm hospitality service due to which they could have more numbers of tourists visiting repeatedly which is a plus point for them.

At the same time, Turkey has amazing rich history such as monuments, wonderful infrastructure, natural landscape, in which they could focus on preserving them in most traditional ways without altering it. Similarly, the agency should try to provide strong brand image as far as possible and make it more precise.

In contrast, there is country like Russia where they perceive Turkey to be unsafe place to visit as a tourist due to history. For such stereotype beliefs, the tourism agency must come up with strong measures to overcome such mind-set, otherwise it is going to have negative impact on the overall turnover.

## **Conclusions**

This study clearly shows that Turkey has a worldwide brand image and captures quite a good numbers of tourist annually. Turkey has more than just beautiful

beaches and nice weather. Turkey is full of unique differentiating characteristics such as natural landscapes, rich history, and culture that span the great civilization that lived and wandered. There are still some areas where turkey can work upon to attract more tourists and to make a memorable place. It is advisable that tourism companies can provide the package to all visitors. Carrying out such activities would make them visit Turkey every time. It was seen that the country still is far behind in terms of effective advertising strategy, where they can utilize famous celebrities in an advertising campaign in order to stimulate positive feelings of the people around the world. In order to enhance positive feelings of visitors, it is crucial to provide them memorable experiences and in return, these experiences will associate with Turkey in the future.

Turkey, has great potential in terms of rich history, monuments and natural landscape for the tourists to sustain, provided the concerned agency should take in-depth research about the general perceptions of the current situations.

In addition, it was learned that advertisements and marketing communications campaigns are vital in the process of forming and improving the image of a particular country. The position of Turkey in the international area, relations with other countries of economic development, exports and imports status, quality of life, and human rights are important elements that shape Turkey's image internationally. Eventually, there can be seen a significant difference between Turkey a decade ago and Turkey today with the country being safe to travel and due to its hospitality. There is huge potential for the turkey to go down the line making one of the most popular tourist destinations and it is obvious.

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