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Image of Gökçeada as a Tourism Destination*

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Abstract

This study aims to develop a destination image model to explain the influence of personal factors on cognitive and affective components of the overall image and how it affects revisiting intention. A survey has been conducted among visitors who completed their Gökçeada holiday between 23 – 27 August 2019 and have been traveling back home on Gökçeada - Kabatepe ferry. Exploratory factor analysis has been conducted to find the underlying cognitive image dimensions and the construct validity of cognitive image has been performed by confirmatory factor analysis. ANOVA analysis and t-test have been used to determine the relationship between the different components of the perceived image and sociodemographic characteristics. One of the major findings of the study is that a destination image is formed by visitors' characteristics except for the income variable. The results show that there are statistically significant differences across different sociodemographic characteristics for cognitive and affective components of the overall image. Besides that, only having visited the Island previously affects the intention of revisiting.

Keywords: Destination image, tourism destination, revisit intention, Gökçeada.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most important elements for presenting a product is the positioning and positioning takes place with a well-constructed image. The fundamental purpose is to create a positive perception in the minds of the target group through the image. Creating and managing a suitable image has a critical importance for effective positioning and marketing strategy (Ecthner & Ritchie, 1993). Image is the set of meanings wherein the consumers define and remember a production, and associate themselves with it (Chon, 1990:4). The image occurs as a result of the interaction between the thoughts and value judgments of the majority of the target group concerning that product (Aaker & Keller, 1990; Vatan & Zengin, 2019), their beliefs, feelings, expectations, and impressions (Yüce & Samsa, 2019; Chon, 1990). Therefore, the same image does not form in the mind of every consumer about a product. While a positive image forms in the mind of some consumers about a product, this image is negative for some consumers. This situation is also valid for destinations. With a quite simple definition, a destination is a place where people opted to spend their money, where they previously visited and return for a revisit, or where they will newly experience (Kenyon & Bodet, 2018).

The fact that the destinations are a touristic product demonstrate that the image is important and required. It has become necessary to create a destination image that is strong, different, and standing out, to create the intention of visiting in the potential visitors or of revisiting in the existing visitors and to compete with other destinations. It cannot be expected that all the visitors who choose a destination have the same image of the destination. For example, Gökçeada is a destination that includes many features. It has many attractive elements such as sea, air, bays, goats, thyme, and water sports. While the image of the Island will be positive for a visitor who comes to the Island for seaside activities, the image of the Island will be negative for a visitor who expects lively nightlife. Therefore, the people who will be marketing the destination should know the target group very well and carry out a promotional activity that will reveal the attraction elements of the destination.

In terms of destination marketing, creating a good destination image is a very important issue. Because destination image has an impact on the supply and demand sides of marketing. Therefore, it constitutes an important part of tourism development (Molina et al., 2010). Additionally, destination image creates reasons for visitors to choose and/or revisit the destination, creates anticipation about the destination, improves destination loyalty, and influences the visitor's

recommendation to other people and their satisfaction level (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Govers & Kumar, 2007; Choi, Tkachenko & Sil, 2011; Qu et al., 2011; Kim, et al., 2012; Pandza Bajs, 2013; Zhang et al., 2014; Tosun et al., 2015; Melo et al., 2017).

The main objective of this study is to examine the destination image of Gökçeada as a tourism destination and revisit the intention of tourists. Specifically, this study aims (1) to examine the characteristics of Gökçeada and (2) to determine the influence of personal factors on cognitive and affective components of the overall image, and (3) to examine how personal factors affect the intention to revisit. This research proposes an empirical study that aims at developing and validating a model for identifying factors affecting destination image and revisit intention. In the first part of this study, conceptual information related to the destination image is given. In the remainder of this study, the empirical results are presented and then the findings are discussed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gökçeada as a Tourism Destination

Gökçeada, which is frequently mentioned in the mythology, is a Northern Aegean Island that has hosted the oldest civilizations of the world where different cultures and religions meet. Being the biggest island of Turkey, Gökçeada is also located in the farthest west of Turkey. Transportation to the Island is carried out only by sea. The number of ferries that board from Kabatepe Port increases in the summer months depending on the number of visitors. There is an airport which is not been in service since 2015 (Gökçeada Municipality, 2020).

There are ten villages on the island, apart from the city center. In some of these villages mostly the citizens of Greek origin reside. Since the Island has had a multi-cultural structure throughout history, various praying places belong to different religions within its body. Mosques, churches, and monasteries are visited by travelers. Each year between 14 – 16 August, Greek citizens organize Mother Marry Fair, and entertainment is held in Tepeköy on the 15th of August. Both Turkish and Greek visitors rush to the Island, particularly on these dates. In addition to temples, the places where travelers visit include the sepulchers, laundries, Scythians Forest, Yeni Bademli Tumulus. Gökçeada is an attractive destination not only for its historical places but also for its natural beauties. Natural beauties such as Salt Lake, Kaşkaval Foreland, Marmaros Waterfall are frequently visited by visitors who arrive on the Island. Besides, Gökçeada Underwater Park, which hosts rich fish beds as well

as many sea organisms including the Mediterranean Seal, and which has entrances of underwater caves inside, is the first and only underwater park of Turkey (Gökçeada Municipality, 2020). The Island, which is the top destination for those who like camping, is also an important destination for local and foreign visitors who are interested in water sports. Aydıncık (Kefalos) Beach, which receives intense winds due to its geographical location, is a place frequently visited by Bulgarian surfers. Windsurf, kitesurf and diving are among the most favorite sports of the island. There are 5 surface water sports parkour areas and 10 underwater sports areas situated in Gökçeada (Çanakkale Directorate of Culture and Tourism, 2021b).

According to the data for the year 2020 in Gökçeada, the number of accommodation facilities with a municipality certificate is a total of 62. The 18 of those are hotels and 44 of them are hostels. As for the facilities with a tourism operation certificate, there are 12 of them in total. Out of all these facilities, 6 of them are hostels, 5 of them are 3-star hotels and 1 of them is specially certified. In table 1, the entry and overnight stay data of domestic and foreign tourists to those facilities with tourism operation certificate is shown. (Çanakkale Directorate of Culture and Tourism, 2021a).

Table 1. Entrance and Overnight Stay Data of Facilities with Tourism Operating License (2020)

	Entrance	Overnight Stay
Domestic Tourist	7.534	10.567
Foreign Tourist	704	1.824
Total	8.238	12.391

Source. Çanakkale Directorate of Culture and Tourism (2021a)

Gökçeada received the title of Cittaslow in 2011 (Cittaslow Turkey, 2011). Gökçeada is characterized as being the first Cittaslow Island in the world due to its characteristics such as being the center of organic agriculture, hosting a multi-cultural life on it, having an undistorted nature, and eco-gastronomic richness (Bucak & Turan, 2016). Within the context of organic farming activities on the island, animal breeding, honey breeding, olive growing, winemaking, and grape growing are carried out (Andarabi & Tunç Hassan, 2017).

Destination Image

The destination selection process of tourists has a very complex structure because some factors such as budget, leisure time, season, and image affect the choice of the destination (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005; Bornhorst, Ritchie & Sheehan, 2010; Melo et al., 2017). Within the context of travel and tourism, the sum of beliefs, opinions, impressions, and expectations that

a visitor has about a tourism destination constitutes the destination image (Ecthner & Ritchie, 1993). A destination image could not only be constituted by previous experiences and visits, but also by various information resources including advertisement and promotion, travel agencies, airline companies, tour operators, news resources, magazines, books, films, e-mails, social media, and interviews with other people. For example, whereas the number of those who visited the Wallace Memorial (Scotland) increased by 300% after the showing of the film Braveheart, there was an increase of 40% in the number of American visitors who visited Normandie (France) after the film "Saving Private Ryan". The increase of demand towards these destinations affected their image (Şahbaz & Kılıçlar, 2009). In addition to these, the personal characteristics of the individual could also create the destination image. For example, demographic characteristics such as the age and sex of the individual, educational level, social class, belief, political trends, and other demographic characteristics could also affect the destination image (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Severt & Hahm, 2020). The political conflicts in the region could also affect the destination image. For example, it is known that the clashes that broke out on Tiananmen Square where the killing of thousands of civilians in 1989 was protested, leading to a significant fall in the tourism of People's Republic of China, and also affected the destination image negatively. A similar case is observed in Jerusalem, which is known as one of the oldest and religious cities in the world. Jerusalem is the main subject of the Israel – Palestine conflict. Despite being a tourism destination for many people, the terror threat is a part of the daily life in the city and for that reason, tourism activities and its image have been affected negatively in the region (Severt & Hahm, 2020). The motivation of tourists is one of the most important factors that affect the destination image. Motivations also effect the destination's image before and after the visit. Besides, the image occurs concerning the motivations, either consciously or unconsciously, in the process of selecting the destination. For example, Mayo and Jarvis (1981) indicated in a study they have conducted that the psychological motivations affected the destination image.

Destination image occurs in two forms, being organic and induced. Whereas organic image occurs through real visits, the induced image occurs before the real visit takes place (transmitted from Gunn (1972) by Severt & Halm, 2020). Organic image stems from the general knowledge about a place and usually, it can't be controlled by target marketers. An induced image is a modified image based on the organic image. It's a result of being exposed to advertisements and guidebooks related to the destination. (Wang et al., 2014).

Many authors in the literature have embraced a two-dimensional model of destination image that includes cognitive and affective image components (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990). Yet according to some researchers, this model neglects the overall evaluation of a destination and therefore they preferred a three-dimensional approach consisting of cognitive, sensorial, and overall image (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martín, 2004; Stern & Krakover, 1993). Baloglu & McCleary (1999) have addressed the destination image as a structure consisting of an individual's mental representation of knowledge (beliefs), emotions, and worldwide impressions about a destination. According to Baloglu & McCleary (1999), researchers from various disciplines and fields agree that the structure of an image has both cognitive and emotional evaluations. Whereas cognitive image refers to beliefs and knowledge on the characteristics of a destination, the affective image means the feelings against a destination. Cognitive image is based on the tangible features of the destination. Cognitive image is all the knowledge, perceptions, and beliefs which potential travelers have about a destination. It's a sign of one's intention to strengthen one's relationship with a destination and an important source of information for one's possible future behavior. Affective image refers to the emotional reaction of a person toward a destination. Affective image is the first stage of the reaction to a destination and this reaction influences the subsequent behavior towards the destination. The cognitive image includes the quality of factors such as experience (cleanliness, quality of infrastructure, suitable accommodations), attractions (cultural, historical, natural), and value/environment (value for money, unpolluted environment). The affective image consists of senses such as excitement, boredom, pleasure, relaxation, etc. The overall image of a place occurs as a result of both cognitive and emotional evaluations about that place (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Hosany et al., 2007; Tosun et al., 2015; Suharanto et al., 2018).

As an alternative to these approaches, Gartner (1994) argues that destination image is a three-dimensional concept that is completely different from each other but hierarchically related: cognitive, emotional, and conative. Since the conative image component is the active component, it is also called behavioral intentions. Actions include an individual's actual behavior or intention to revisit, recommend the destination to others, or spread positive word of mouth (WOM). Conative image depends on the image developed in the cognitive stage and evaluated in the affective stage (Basaran, 2016; Gartner, 1994).

Whereas the destination image has an effect on the purchasing decision of the tourist before the travel,

the time and experience enjoyed at the destination are considered to effect on the post-travel behavior of the tourist as well as the revisit intention (Chen & Tsai, 2007). Destination marketers should give the image which they intend to revive in the eyes of the group who are targeted to visit the destination through correct communication tools used at the correct time and correct place. This ensures establishing effective communication with the target group (Vatan & Zengin, 2019). There are studies in the literature which have analyzed the relationship between the destination image and visit intention. Yang et al. (2009) have interviewed people living in Chongqing (China) to analyze the role of similarity/familiarity in the decision-making process in tourism as well as the effect of cognitive and affective image on the intention of visiting, and their opinions have been learned by means of questionnaire method. It has been examined how their familiarity with Shanghai affects their perception of the destination. Results demonstrate that there is a positive relationship between destination image and visiting and that there is a positive relationship between destination image and the intention to visit. Xu et al. (2018) has interviewed 213 people living in Hong Kong in their work to determine the destination image of Taiwan. Whereas it has been revealed that the affective image is stronger compared to the cognitive image, it has been seen that the affective image plays a mediatory role in the relationship between cognitive image and behavioral intention. The authors have indicated that affective image is an important element of quality for the destinations.

It is a well-known fact that the destination image has an effect on the choice and perception of tourists about the destination. The image affects the selecting process of the destination of tourists, the post-selection evaluation of the destination, and whether they will prefer the destination in the future or not. The destination image also affects tourists' behavioral intentions (Chi & Qu, 2008). According to Tasci and Gartner (2007), the image of a destination plays an effective role in consumer behaviors such as revisit intention and recommendation. Dick & Basu (1994) state that the destination image has a positive effect on consumers' attitudes and thus creates loyalty. The positive image formed as a result of the previous visits encourages individuals to want to visit a destination again and therefore overall destination image has a positive effect on tourist behavior, including choice of a destination and intention to revisit (Shafiee et al., 2016). For this reason, behavioral intentions have become a key strategic measure for evaluating the success of a tourism destination (Wang & Hsu, 2010).

Destination image affects all stages of tourists' consumer behavior. For this reason, the destination

image has convincing power. This power affects consumer behaviors not only during the selection of the destination, but also affects consumer behaviors at the destination and after leaving the destination. Accordingly, the researchers assert that the image affects the satisfaction level of tourists, their intention of visiting/revisiting the destinations, and their intention of recommending the destination to their relatives and friends (Kim, Hallab & Kim, 2012; Pandza Bajs, 2013; Zhang, Xiaoxiao, Cai & Lu, 2014; Munhurrun et al., 2015; Melo et al., 2017).

Different dimensions of the destination image are influenced by three main determinants that exist in the absence of actual visits or previous experience. Baloglu & McCleary (1999) suggest that the three factors are composed of psychological factors (eg, values, motivations, and personality), social factors (eg, age, education, marital status, and others), and stimulative factors (eg, amount or type of information sources, previous experience, and channels of distribution).

of the socio-demographic characteristics of tourists on the process of creating a destination image in an online environment on the web. They have found that some socio-demographic characteristics influence the perception of destination image in an online environment.

H₁: Gender significantly influences the cognitive and affective components of the overall image.

H₂: Age significantly influences the cognitive and affective components of the overall image.

H₃: Education levels significantly influence the cognitive and affective components of the overall image.

H₄: Occupation significantly influences the cognitive and affective components of the overall image.

H₅: Income significantly influences the cognitive and affective components of the overall image.

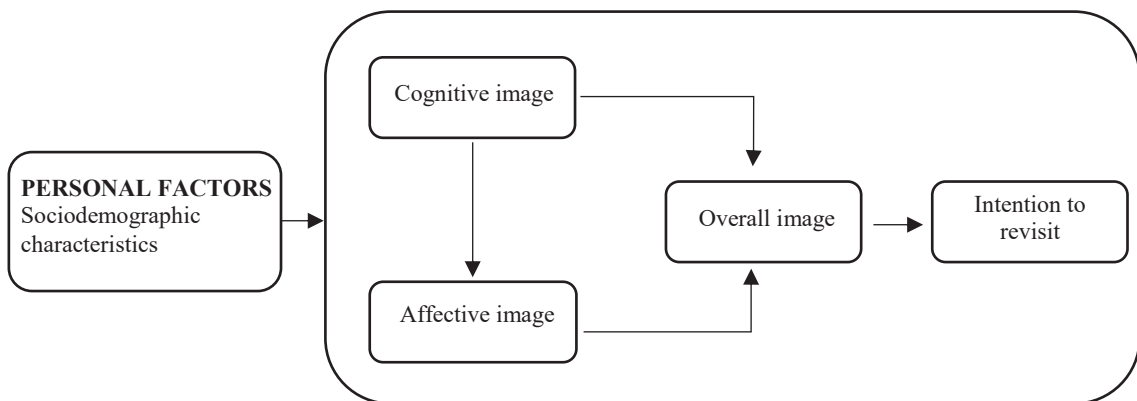


Figure 1. Research Model

Figure 1; the research model is shown there are many studies in the marketing and tourism literature on the effect of socio-demographic characteristics on the destination image. Baloglu (1997) has examined whether there are destination image differences for socio-demographic variables in the study with German tourists. In the study, it has been found that there is no significant difference between gender, income, and education groups but there are significant differences between marital status, age and occupation groups. Dündar & Güçer (2015) have examined the effect of socio-demographic characteristics on the destination image. For this purpose, they have chosen two socio-demographic characteristics; gender and nationality variables. The surveys that they have conducted with visitors from other countries at the airport show that nationality has a significant effect on the perceived image, whereas the gender variable has no effect. Rafael & Almedia (2018) have investigated the effect

H₆: Having previously visited Gökçeada significantly influences cognitive and affective components of the overall image.

Revisit Intention

The revisiting of tourists creates many advantages for businesses and destinations. Revisit's by tourists is considered the key to destination marketing. Revisits reduce the marketing and promotion costs of businesses or destinations. Less is spent on a returning tourist than the effort and cost involved in retaining a newcomer. It is also important in terms of contributing to the profitability of businesses. Therefore, for a competitive cost advantage, tourists need to show revisit intention after visiting a place (Chiu et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2013; Loi et al., 2017; Stylos et al., 2017; Alves et al., 2019; Abbasi et al., 2020).

There is a relationship between the tourist's intention to revisit and the destination's natural, cultural and physical potentials, infrastructure and superstructure conditions (accommodation, transportation, touristic activities, shopping centers, attraction centers, etc.), regional conditions, transportation options, diversity of information and communication resources, climatic conditions, etc. (Celik, 2019).

In the study which examines the effect of demographic characteristics of visitors on revisit intention, Celik (2019) has found that gender affects revisit intention. On the other hand, the researcher has found that demographic factors such as age, education, occupation, and income don't affect revisit intention. Leh et al. (2020) have found that the income of visitors has a significant impact on the intention of revisiting.

H₇: Gender significantly influences the revisit intention.

H₈: Age significantly influences the revisit intention.

H₉: Education level significantly influences the revisit intention.

H₁₀: Occupation status significantly influences the revisit intention.

H₁₁: Income significantly influences the revisit intention.

Shafiee et al., (2016), in their study which has been conducted with 165 people, have found that the overall image has a significant and positive effect on satisfaction, revisit, and word of mouth. Melo et al. (2017) have found that the overall image affects the visitors' satisfaction, the intention of recommending the destination, and the revisit intention. Ozturk and Sahbaz (2019) have interviewed the visitors who have participated in the recreative activities in Ilgaz Mountain National Park. As a result of the study, it has demonstrated that there is a positive relationship between the perceived quality of service and the destination image, and also that the destination image has a significant impact on the intention to revisit and recommend. Sacli et al. (2019), as a result of the study on the individuals who have participated in the Orange Blossom Carnival, demonstrated that the destination image perception has a significant positive impact on the revisit intention. In a study which has been conducted by Yuce and Samsa (2019) to determine the impact of destination image on revisiting, the destination image has been analyzed in five sub-dimensions such as comfort/ safety, interest/ adventure, natural condition, cultural facilitation, and cultural similarity. As a result of the study, it is determined that comfort/ safety, interest/ adventure, and natural structure have a

positive impact on the revisit intention of the visitors; that the cultural dimension has a negative impact on the revisit intention of the visitors; and the cultural similarity dimension does not have any impact on the revisit intention of the visitors.

H₁₂: Having previously visited Gökçeada significantly influences the revisit intention.

METHOD

The questionnaire consisted of five main parts. In the first part, there were questions related to travel behavior and the type of information sources. The second part included open-ended questions proposed by Echtner & Ritchie (1993). Through these questions, it was aimed to specify the overall image of the destination which is formed in the minds of people without being exposed to any influence, and draw attention to the important features of Gökçeada.

The third part was developed to assess the destination image of Gökçeada based on three components (cognitive, affective, and overall image). The questionnaire consists of fourteen items regarding cognitive image and 5-point Likert type scales were used in the measurement (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree) (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). The affective component of destination image was measured using semantic differentials "unpleasant-pleasant", "sleepy-arousing", "distressing-relaxing", "gloomy-exciting" (Russel et al., 1981). In addition, the scale of overall image measurement was adopted from Stern & Krakover (1993). The respondents were asked to rate their perception of the overall destination image of Gökçeada on a single 7-point scale with 1 being very negative and with 7 being very positive.

A positive overall assessment of the image of a tourism destination has an impact on revisit intentions (Shafiee et al.,2016). Revisit intention scale was used as a part of the behavioral intention component with a single 5-point Likert-type scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree). The final section was devoted to collect socio-demographic information about the respondents.

The analysis of data consisted of five stages. The first socio-demographic characteristics of the participants had been put forward through descriptive statistics. Second, the destination image of Gökçeada in views of the visitors and the most important factors that affect the destination image were determined in terms of three open-ended questions. Third, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to identify the underlying dimensions of the cognitive image scale. Fourteen image items were factor analyzed using the

principal components factoring with a promax rotation procedure to identify the underlying dimensions of the cognitive image. The following criteria were used for factor analysis: factors that had an eigenvalue greater than one and factor loadings greater than 0.40 were included in each factor group. Items that loaded substantially on two or more factors were removed if the loadings were weak (<0.40). One item did not meet the 0.40 cut-off point so that was removed from the analysis. Two items were cross-loaded with low factor loadings so they were also deleted from the further analysis. Cronbach's alpha was used to generate the reliability of the identified image factors for twelve items. As a result of the reliability analysis of the scale, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found to be 0.831 which is highly reliable (Hair et al., 2010). In the fourth stage of the study, the construct validity of cognitive image was tested by confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The factor structure of the scores obtained from the cognitive image scale was tested through the use of confirmatory factor analysis. In the last stage, the effects of socio-demographic variables on perceived destination image and revisit intention were revealed. For this purpose, t-test and ANOVA were used to determine if significant differences exist among different groups of sociodemographic variables with the use of an appropriate posthoc test. The analyses were performed on 522 questionnaires collected through the face-to-face survey method. Exploratory factor analysis, reliability analyses, t-test and, ANOVA analysis were conducted using SPSS 20, confirmatory factor analysis was performed using AMOS 24.

The data collection process in this study was completed between 23-27 August 2019. Higher Education Council TR Index Ethics Committee Criteria were announced on 1 January 2020.

RESULTS

This study focused on destination image and revisit intention of tourists. To determine the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants their gender, age, educational status, occupation, income status, whether they have visited the Island before, the number of visits, and type of information sources were revealed. Detailed socio-demographic characteristics of the 522 participants were obtained as follows. The gender of the participants was almost evenly distributed with 53.3% women and 46.7% men. The majority of the participants were aged between 25 - 34 with 25.7% and followed by the 35 - 44 age group with 24.9%. Only 3.8% belonged to the 65 years old and older. It was seen that most of the participants were highly educated, 41.4% were at the undergraduate educational level. While 10.7% of the respondents stated that they were

unemployed, 17% were students, 19.5% were public sector employees, 29.9% were private-sector employees, 13.8% were self-employed and 9% were stated that they are retired. Almost %30 of participants reported their monthly average income to be 5000 TL and above. More than half of the participants who have visited Gökçeada previously live in İstanbul (54.6%) and it was followed by Çanakkale with 11.7%. While 57.9% of the participants had visited Gökçeada previously, 42.1% came for the first time. 53% of the participants who have previously visited Gökçeada stated that they came to the Island 1-3 times, 12.9% 4-6 times, and 34.1% 7 times and more. In addition, 55.9% of the information sources that direct people to Gökçeada visit were determined as family and 19.7% as the internet.

General characteristics of Gökçeada

Three open-ended questions aimed at measuring the destination image were evaluated. Considering the responses given to the question "What features of the Island come to your mind when you think of Gökçeada as a holiday destination?", 49.6% of the respondents answered "sea and bays", 26.8% mentioned "Calmness of the Island", 26.2% "natural beauties", and 10.9% mentioned "Greek villages". The participants mostly stated that they felt "good" (34.1%) and "peaceful" (30.1%) after their visit to Gökçeada. Greek villages (19%), clean and beautiful seas (13%), goats roaming freely on the Island (12%) and Greek houses (11%) come to the fore as characteristics specific to the Island. In addition to this 16% of respondents did not specify any features specific to Gökçeada.

Assessing the Cognitive Image, Affective Image, Overall Image, and Revisit Intention

Descriptive statistics for cognitive image, affective image, overall image and revisit intention were presented in Table 2. When the mean scores of cognitive image items were examined, Gökçeada stands out as being a safe place (4.26), having different cultures (4.18) and natural beauties (4.17). Participants rated Gökçeada's insufficiency lacking nightlife (2.40) and touristic opportunities (3.02). Affective evaluations of Gökçeada were pleasant and arousing with positive ratings, distressing and gloomy with negative ratings. Overall impression and willingness to revisit Gökçeada were found to be positive.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis of Cognitive, Affective, Overall Image and Revisit Intention

	Scale	Mean (SD)	Median
COGNITIVE			
Gökçeada has convenient accommodation opportunities	(1-5)	3.43 (1.21)	4.00
Gökçeada has standard hygiene and cleanliness conditions.	(1-5)	3.10 (1.19)	3.00
Gökçeada has sufficient touristic opportunities.	(1-5)	3.02 (1.29)	3.00
The people of Gökçeada are friendly and warm.	(1-5)	3.77 (1.15)	4.00
Gökçeada has good weather conditions for holiday.	(1-5)	4.10 (1.05)	4.00
Gökçeada is an affordable city.	(1-5)	3.35 (1.23)	4.00
Gökçeada has an untouched/clean environment.	(1-5)	4.08 (1.03)	4.00
Gökçeada has sufficient natural beauties.	(1-5)	4.17 (0.99)	4.00
Gökçeada hosts interesting cultural events.	(1-5)	3.39 (1.23)	3.00
Gökçeada has interesting historical places.	(1-5)	3.69 (1.14)	4.00
Gökçeada is generally a safe city.	(1-5)	4.26 (0.99)	5.00
Gökçeada has appealing local food.	(1-5)	3.60 (1.15)	4.00
Gökçeada has an attractive nightlife.	(1-5)	2.40 (1.25)	2.00
Gökçeada hosts different cultures.	(1-5)	4.18 (1.00)	4.00
AFFECTIVE			
Unpleasant-Pleasant	(1-7)	4.61 (2.36)	6.00
Sleepy-Arousing	(1-7)	4.41 (2.23)	5.00
Distressing-Relaxing	(1-7)	3.94 (2.25)	4.00
Gloomy-Exciting	(1-7)	3.82 (1.93)	4.00
OVERALL IMAGE			
	(1-7)	5.64 (1.32)	6.00
REVISIT INTENTION			
	(1-5)	3.98 (1.22)	4.00

Cognitive Image: (1= Strongly Disagree - 5 = Strongly Agree)
 Revisit Intention: (1= Strongly Disagree - 5 = Strongly Agree)
 Overall Image: (1= Very Negative 7= Very Positive)

Before checking the hypothesis, exploratory factor analysis was conducted with 14 cognitive image items to identify the underlying dimensions of the cognitive image. Principal component and promax rotation procedures were used to identify factor dimensions. Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin (KMO) adequacy of sample size was found 0.858 which was acceptable for exploratory

factor analysis (Kaiser, 1974). Barlett's test of sphericity results showed that there was enough correlation between the variables ($\chi^2 = 1443.474$, $df = 55$, $p = 0.000$). The reliability was confirmed for each factor dimension, ranging from 0.72 to 0.67 (Hair et al., 2010).

As a result of the factor analysis, item 6 - "I think the prices of the products in Gökçeada are suitable

Table 3. Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis for Cognitive Image Scale

	Factor Loadings	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained ^a	Reliability ^b
Factor 1: Quality Of Experience				
		3.99	36.4%	.72
Gökçeada is a safe place to travel.	.837			
Gökçeada has good weather conditions for holiday.	.773			
Gökçeada has appealing local food.	.585			
Gökçeada hosts different cultures.	.561			
The people of Gökçeada are friendly and warm.	.490			
Factor 2 : Facilities				
		1.20	10.9%	.74
Gökçeada has standard hygiene and cleanliness conditions.	.845			
Gökçeada has sufficient touristic opportunities.	.765			
Gökçeada has convenient accommodation opportunities	.713			
Factor 3 : Attractions				
		1.15	10.5%	.67
Gökçeada hosts interesting cultural events.	.888			
Gökçeada has interesting historical places.	.777			
Gökçeada has sufficient natural beauties.	.482			

^aTotal variance explained=57.8%

^bCronbach's Alpha.

KMO Measure of sampling adequacy= .858

Barlett's test of sphericity $\chi^2 = 1443.474$, $df = 55$, $p = 0.000$

for me.” - was removed from the analysis because the factor loading was under .40 cut-off point. Factor loadings equal to or greater than 0.40 are considered significant and large enough to warrant interpretation for the sample size of 522 (Hair et al., 2010). In addition, item 13 - “I think Gökçeada has a fast nightlife and entertainment environment.” and item 7 “I think Gökçeada has an untouched nature and a clean environment.” - cross-loaded on three factors with relatively low factor loadings. The specified expressions have been removed from further analysis. EFA results were obtained with 12 items and three factors were produced in the ideal solution. The factors were labeled as “Quality of experience”, “Facilities” and “Attractions”. The individual items retained in the model and factor loadings were presented in Table 3.

Following exploratory factor analysis confirmed that the cognitive image has three distinctive factors such as quality of experience (QOE), facilities (FA), and attractions (AT) confirmatory factor analysis was conducted (Brown, 2015). According to the confirmatory factor analysis results, it was seen that the 3-dimensional cognitive image model was acceptable and the results of the CFA supported the factor structure of the cognitive image scores established in EFA. The goodness of fit indices confirmed that the fit between the model and observed data was accepted. Fit statistics, where $\chi^2(df=24) = 71.043$; $\chi^2/df=2.96$; normed fit index NFI=.900; goodness of fit index GFI = .972; comparative fit index CFI = .956; Tucker-Lewis index TLI = .967; root mean square error of approximation RMSEA = .061; all indicated acceptable fit for the model as shown in Table 4 (Williams & Vaske, 2003).

For the cognitive image scale, t values for all the standardized factor loadings exceed the critical value

(1.96) and they were found statistically significant at the $p<.05$ level as shown in Table 4. After confirmation of the measurement model with CFA, convergent validity of the measurement scale was examined. For the convergent validity, the composite reliability (CR) and the average variance extracted (AVE) were calculated to assess whether the indicators were representative of the related construct. As presented in Table 3, all AVE values were greater than the cut-off value of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) and all CR values exceed 0.60 except attractions (AT) construct (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988).

Table 5. Discriminant Validity

	Construct		
	QOE	FA	AT
QOE	(0.744)		
FA	0.501	(0.781)	
AT	0.468	0.408	(0.718)

Notes: The diagonal elements in parenthesis show the square root of the average variance extracted.

Discriminant validity of the cognitive image measurement scale was examined by comparing the square roots of AVE with correlations of each construct. As represented in Table 5 the square roots of AVE were all greater than the off-diagonal elements. Thus, it was concluded that the discriminant validity of each of the constructs involved in the model was convenient (Hair et al., 2010).

Estimating the influence of socio-demographic factors on the component of destination image and revisit intention

Table 4. Confirmatory Factor and Reliability Analysis of Cognitive Image Scale

Constructs	Factor Loading (λ)	t-value	
Factor 1: Quality of Experience			
Gökçeada is a safe place to travel.	0.640	9.57	
Gökçeada has good weather conditions for holiday.	0.562	8.91	CR=0.72
Gökçeada has appealing local food.	0.605	9.29	AVE=0.55
Gökçeada hosts different cultures.	0.608	9.32	
The people of Gökçeada are friendly and warm.	0.519	8.95	
Factor 2 : Facilities			
Gökçeada has standard hygiene and cleanliness conditions.	0.702	12.73	CR=0.74
Gökçeada has sufficient touristic opportunities.	0.654	12.19	AVE=0.61
Gökçeada has convenient accommodation opportunities	0.741	11.34	
Factor 3 : Attractions			
Gökçeada hosts interesting cultural events.	0.503	8.15	CR=0.59
Gökçeada has interesting historical places.	0.516	8.54	AVE=0.51
Gökçeada has sufficient natural beauties.	0.699	8.46	
Model Fit Statistics ($\chi^2=71.043$ $df=24$; CFI = .956, NFI=.900, CFI = .956, TLI = .967, RMSEA = .061).			
C.R. =Composite Reliability			
AVE =Average Variance Extracted			

The influence of socio-demographic characteristics on components of destination image (cognitive, affective, and overall image) and revisit intention were revealed. As presented in Table 6, t-test and ANOVA were performed for independent samples.

Gender

With respect to the relationship between gender and cognitive image, there was a statistically significant relationship between gender and the factor of the

Table 6. Influence of Sociodemographic Characteristics on Components of Destination Image and Revisit Intention

	Quality of experience	Facilities	Attractions	Unpleasant-Pleasant	Sleepy-Arousing	Distressing-Relaxing	Gloomy-Exciting	Overall Image	Revisit Intention
Gender									
Female	4.08	3.20	3.85	4.72	4.54	3.78	3.82	5.76	3.99
Male	4.06	3.17	3.64	4.50	4.26	4.13	3.82	5.49	3.96
Overall	4.07	3.18	3.75	4.61	4.41	3.94	3.82	5.64	3.98
<i>t-value</i>	0.39	0.30	2.69	1.07	1.44	-1.80	0.02	2.34	0.28
<i>Sig.</i>	0.70	0.77	0.007*	0.29	0.15	0.07	0.98	0.020*	0.78
Age									
18-24	4.01	3.14	3.65	4.79	4.18	4.15	4.10	5.41	3.79
25-34	4.09	3.22	3.73	4.54	4.49	3.99	3.75	5.51	3.91
35-44	4.17	3.20	3.90	4.83	4.58	3.99	3.84	5.94	4.19
45-54	4.04	3.15	3.74	4.51	4.21	3.48	3.75	5.73	4.08
55-64	3.90	2.94	3.47	4.61	4.89	3.70	3.67	5.46	3.80
65 +	4.31	3.86	4.17	3.15	3.70	4.70	3.30	5.80	4.05
Overall	4.07	3.18	3.75	4.61	4.41	3.94	3.82	5.64	3.98
<i>F</i>	1.58	2.55	3.03	1.96	1.39	1.49	0.85	2.60	1.74
<i>Sig.</i>	0.16	0.027*	0.011*	0.08	0.23	0.19	0.51	0.024*	0.13
Education									
Primary	3.85	3.19	4.14	3.43	4.43	2.57	3.26	5.00	3.74
High school	4.03	3.22	3.68	4.07	4.56	3.84	4.51	5.59	3.92
Associate degree	3.88	3.41	3.73	3.65	4.17	3.54	4.26	5.26	3.81
Under-graduate	4.09	3.07	3.73	4.59	3.81	3.83	4.70	5.74	3.97
Post-graduate	4.27	3.23	3.80	5.14	3.12	4.24	5.09	5.83	4.23
Overall	4.07	3.18	3.75	4.41	3.94	3.82	4.61	5.64	3.98
<i>F</i>	3.23	1.44	1.54	5.56	6.50	3.93	3.35	3.36	1.57
<i>Sig.</i>	0.012*	0.22	0.19	0.000*	0.000*	0.004*	0.010*	0.010*	0.18
Occupation									
Unemployed	4.01	3.18	3.98	4.50	4.02	3.96	3.61	5.68	4.00
Student	4.01	3.06	3.54	4.61	4.01	4.13	4.00	5.36	3.71
Public sector	4.13	3.21	3.80	4.40	4.39	3.97	3.77	5.61	3.96
Private sector	4.20	3.28	3.84	4.90	4.67	3.81	3.93	5.82	4.19
Self-employed	3.90	3.13	3.65	4.64	4.71	3.86	3.81	5.69	3.93
Retired	3.99	3.11	3.63	4.21	4.32	4.04	3.51	5.47	3.89
Overall	4.07	3.18	3.75	4.61	4.41	3.94	3.82	5.64	3.98
<i>F</i>	2.26	0.65	2.67	0.94	1.63	0.27	0.64	1.59	1.85
<i>Sig.</i>	0.048*	0.67	0.021*	0.46	0.15	0.93	0.67	0.16	0.10
Having Visited Gökçeada Previously									
Yes	4.08	3.20	3.85	4.72	4.54	3.78	3.82	5.76	4.10
No	4.06	3.17	3.64	4.50	4.26	4.13	3.82	5.49	3.82
Overall	4.07	3.18	3.75	4.61	4.41	3.94	3.82	5.64	3.98
<i>t-value</i>	0.39	0.30	2.69	1.07	1.44	-1.80	0.02	2.34	2.57
<i>Sig.</i>	0.70	0.77	0.007*	0.29	0.15	0.07	0.98	0.020*	0.010*

*Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

cognitive image related to the attractions. Females value this cognitive factor more than males and pay more attention to historical and cultural events. There was also a significant relationship with the overall image in terms of gender and females assessed overall image more positively than males. No statistically significant relationship was found between gender and affective image. Thus, Hypothesis 1 which states that gender significantly influences the cognitive, affective, and overall image, can only be partially accepted. There was no statistically significant difference for revisit intention in terms of gender, therefore Hypothesis 7 cannot be confirmed.

Age

According to the age variable, there was a statistically significant difference between age and the dimensions of the cognitive image related to the facilities and attractions. Older participants have a more positive evaluation of the cognitive image, in particular the dimensions of facilities and attractions. Age also influences overall image evaluations of destinations. Overall image evaluations of Gökçeada for the older people were more positive than the young ones. No statistically significant relationship was found between age and affective image; therefore, Hypothesis 2 was partially confirmed. Besides, age had no influence on revisit intention, so Hypothesis 8 was not confirmed.

Education Level

Education level significantly influences the cognitive image related to the quality of experience dimension, affective image, and overall image. Results reveal that higher levels of education are reflected by higher evaluations of cognitive image related to the quality of experience dimension, affective image, and overall image. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was partially confirmed. There was no statistically significant difference between revisit intention and education level, therefore Hypothesis 9 was not confirmed.

Occupation Level

There was a statistically significant relationship between occupation level and the factors of the cognitive image related to the quality of experience and attractions. Participants working in the public sector evaluated the cognitive image more positively than students, self-employed, and retired participants. So, Hypothesis 3 was partially confirmed. Hypothesis 10 which states that occupation status significantly influences the revisit intention, was not confirmed.

Income

There were no statistically significant differences between income and the items related to the destination image and revisit intention. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 and Hypothesis 11 were not confirmed.

Having previously visited Gökçeada

Having previously visited Gökçeada significantly influence the cognitive image related to the attractions dimension. People who came to the Island before, value this cognitive factor more than those who did not. This means that they pay more attention to historical and cultural events. Overall image differs in terms of visiting Gökçeada previously. Participants who have visited Gökçeada before having positive evaluations of the overall image of the destination. Thus, Hypothesis 6 was partially confirmed. The intention to revisit differs only in terms of visiting Gökçeada before. Participants who came to Gökçeada previously think more positively about revisiting the Island, so Hypothesis 12 was confirmed.

CONCLUSION

This research is aimed to reveal how Gökçeada is perceived as a tourist destination by visitors. In addition, it has great importance as it is the first study to determine the destination image of Gökçeada which is Turkey's largest island. In the study, the destination image of the Island and its prominent features are determined through the eye of visitors coming to Gökçeada.

According to the research, it is seen that the visitors are mostly in the 25-44 age group and graduate degree, they work in the private sector, they have an income of 5000 TL and above, and they live in Istanbul. The number of visitors who visited the Island before is more than people visiting it for the first time. It is very important for the image of the destination that a person who has previously visited Gökçeada prefers the Island as a tourist destination again. This result is consistent with previous studies. Many researchers who have studied the image of the destination consider that a real experience within a destination has a positive effect on the image of the destination (Konecnik, 2002; Phillips & Jang, 2010; Sharifpour, Walters, et al., 2014; Saçlı et al., 2019; Severt & Hahm, 2020). The fact that sources that direct visitors to the Island trip are mostly family and the internet show that the promotion of the Island is mostly spread by word of mouth. This result reveals that there are some deficiencies in promoting Gökçeada as a tourist destination and announcing it to people who want to visit the Island-specific values. The first features of Gökçeada that come to mind are its

clean sea, bays, calmness, and natural beauties. Goats that roam freely in Gökçeada, known for free animal husbandry, are one of the remarkable features of the Island. The historic stone houses and Greek villages, the intense feeling of Greek culture on the Island makes Gökçeada attractive as a tourist destination. In addition, although Gökçeada is famous for its windy weather which is suitable for surfing, it seems that surfing is not very effective in creating the destination image. Turkey's first and only underwater park is located on the island of Gökçeada but we can say that this important value is inadequate in terms of touristic charm.

Visitors feel good, peaceful, happy, and rested upon their return to Gökçeada visits. Especially considering that most of the visitors come from Istanbul; the calm life and slowness of the Island is a very attractive destination choice for escaping from tough city life and avoiding daily troubles. People's feelings as a result of their visits also support this result.

In this study, it is seen that socio-demographic factors have a significant effect on cognitive and affective components of the overall image. Gender, age, education level, occupation level, and visiting the Island before having an influence on destination image. Income has no impact on destination image.

Cognitive image is largely influenced by age, gender, education, and occupation level. Likewise visiting the Island before influencing the cognitive image. Females generally rated the attractions factor of cognitive image higher than males. Older people have a higher cognitive image than the young ones related to the facilities and attractions factor. Visitors working in the public sector have a higher cognitive image than students, self-employed, and retired participants. People who visited the Island before having higher cognitive images. Affective image is only influenced by education level. Higher levels of education are reflected by higher evaluations of affective image. The overall image is influenced by age, gender, and education level. Female's overall image of Gökçeada is more positive contrary to males and older people assess overall image more positively than young ones. Likewise, people who visited the Island before have a higher overall image. Besides that, none of the socio-demographic factors affect the intention to revisit, except visiting the Island before. Participants who came to Gökçeada before think more positively about revisiting the Island. These results are in line with the findings of Celik (2019). Celik has found that socio-demographic factors other than gender did not effect revisit intentions. Nonetheless, it contradicts the studies carried out by Leh et al. (2020) and Solomon (2019). Solomon has found a positive

relationship between socio-demographic factors, destination choice, and revisit intentions. Leh et al. on the other hand, have determined that other socio-demographic factors, especially income, affect the intention to revisit. This nonresemblance in the results is thought to be related to the time of the study and the destination.

Gökçeada, which is the subject of this research, is a destination with very important values in terms of tourism. It is important for the visitors coming to the destination to leave satisfactorily, to ensure that they revisit. The study shows that in terms of destination image, visitors mostly focus on certain topics such as the Island's history, Greek culture, stone houses, and the bays of the Island. On the other hand, Gökçeada; although it is a very rich region in terms of tourism such as water sports, diving, fishing, and gastronomy, cannot come to the fore with these features. A limited number of destinations in Turkey and the world have all of these features. Both the results of the study and the interviews made with the participants reveals that these characteristics of Gökçeada are not known. This shows that the promotion of the island is not enough. This deficiency will be eliminated by the joined efforts of local governments, island people, institutions related to tourism, and non-governmental organizations. People from different cultures living on the island need to create a common island culture. Efficient usage of the 1.5-hour time spent on the ferry to arrive on the island and carrying out activities related to the promotion of the island will be both informative and interesting for those who come to the island. In addition, focusing on the promotion of the island on online platforms, which are the most effective promotional medium today, will contribute to increasing the number of tourists and it will also provide more conscious tourists to come to the island.

There are many previous studies on Gökçeada. The majority of these studies are related to water sciences. Studies on tourism are also related to cittaslow, slow food and gastronomy (Çakıcı & Aksu, 2006; Akdemir et al., 2008; Erkul et al., 2014; Bucak & Turan, 2016; Farhadi Andarabi & Tunç Hassan, 2017). For this reason, this study is important in terms of being one of the first studies to determine the destination image of Gökçeada. For future research, it may be suggested to measure the expectations of the visitors before their visit to Gökçeada and their satisfaction after the visit.

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