

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PLACE ATTACHMENT AND EVENT
SATISFACTION: A STUDY ON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

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Abstract

The aim of the study is to reveal the dimensions of place attachment and to analyze the relationship between event satisfaction and place attachment dimensions. The study involved a quantitative research methodology employing a questionnaire and convenience sampling with a total sample of 300 Anadolu University's students within Eskişehir of the middle region in Turkey. The first part of the questionnaire contained 16 statements related to place attachment. Second part was related to the scale of event satisfaction, with 4 items. The last part was designed to collect demographic characteristics of respondents. The results of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) reveal three valid dimensions titled as place identity, social bonding, and place dependence, respectively. The reliability coefficients for the total scale and three dimensions indicated high satisfactory levels. The regression analysis also indicates significant relationship between satisfaction with events within the scope of Eskişehir as Turkish World's Culture Capital and place attachment dimensions. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that governors, mayors and other city managers should pay more attention to the aspects of city attachment, satisfaction and loyalty.

Keywords: Place attachment, city attachment, satisfaction, leisure, recreation

INTRODUCTION

Today, the number of the studies carried out into the places related to leisure is highly excessive. When assessed in this context, natural parks, theme parks, recreational places, destinations and cities are among the places attractive in terms of leisure. Human beings have a feeling of loyalty to the places they live in, like and adopt. So the fact that people attach themselves to somewhere by having different feelings is characterized as place attachment. Place attachment has also gained much attention in leisure (Budruk, 2010) and recreation behavior studies (Kyle, Mowen and Tarrant, 2004). When a place is mentioned in the leisure of context, only some parts of parks and touristic destinations do not come to one's mind. The cities of a country can also be assessed in the scope of this topic. People can tend to be attached to where they live. A phenomenon of attaching oneself to the places where nice experiences were had and which have a certain identity and image may appear.

In this respect, attachment to the cities constitutes a significant issue. Eskişehir, where this study was carried out, has a dominant identity and image all across Turkey. Eskişehir is one of the most modern and industrializing mid-size cities in of the Central Anatolia Region in Turkey. The population of the city in the years 2007 and 2013 was 724849 and 799724, respectively (www.tuik.gov.tr). Eskişehir as a city of university ranks among the first five cities in Turkey that are livable. Comfort and independence are other characteristics of Eskişehir compared to other cities. According to Hakala and Ozturk (2013), Eskişehir is characterized as a European city in Turkey. Eskişehir, which attracts especially with its young population in university is among the places most people want to live. Particularly those who spent the years of university education in this city yearn for living there. There is such an irony respecting the attachment to this city: "One who drank *Kalabak Water* cannot leave this city." This city which has a leading feature in Turkey with its two state universities, cinemas, theatres, ballet, sport centers and art centers, is assessed more differently than other cities. All these characteristics reflect the attachment to this city.

Although previous literature has investigated place attachment in terms of national and local natural parks, theme parks, touristic destination, etc. Few studies have explored the association between place attachment and satisfaction with events. Especially the number of studies focusing on city attachment and the relationship between the level of commitment to the city and satisfaction with cultural event is extremely limited. Hence, the academic researches and publications on relationship between place attachment and cultural event

satisfaction are still limited. Thus, in this study, the researchers investigate scale items and dimensions related to place attachment. Also, the researchers investigate the relationship between the dimensions of the attachment and event satisfaction.

Literature Review

Place Attachment

Relph, (1976, p. 29) defines place as “a combination of setting, landscape, ritual, other people, personal experiences, care and concern for home, and in the context of other places” (cited in Budruk et al., 2008, p. 530). This definition has revealed that the concept of “place” has a meaning beyond a geographic one and involves many areas of life. The meanings associated by people with places have become a subject of research in various disciplines. One of those disciplines is leisure, too. Thus, place attachment has gained much attention in leisure literature (Budruk, 2010; Moore and Graefe, 1994; Smith, Siderelis and Moore, 2010; Williams et al., 1992). Place attachment is a broad concept and associated with emotional and effective connections of place (Smith, Siderelis and Moore, 2010). In the literature, the researchers can find many different terms about place attachment (Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001). In other words, the term of place attachment often used interchangeably with related concepts such as place sense, place identity, place dependence, place satisfaction (Alam, 2011). Currently, it can be stated that there are a certain consensus in the use of the term ‘place attachment’ (Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001). Place attachment is an affective and emotional bonding between an individual and a specific environment such as a building, home, neighborhood, or city (Johnson et al., 2015; Lee and Shen, 2013). Place attachment reflects a result of the experiences that individuals obtained in a complicated way from a place with the help of an emotional relationship they established with that place (Lee and Shen, 2013).

Specifically, the concept of place attachment is often described as bonds humans form with places, and results from the meaning associates with places (Budruk, 2010) such as cities, parks, touristic destination etc. In recreation and leisure, place attachment contains the emotions and feeling associates with a recreational place (Lee, 2011). Place attachment contains many issues at various levels. For this reason, people may be attached to different features of the same place. In other words, people bonds the features, images, meanings and psychological aspects associated with places (Budruk, 2010). In this sense, “place attachment

represents an emotional or affective bond between a person and a particular place” (Kyle et al., 2003, p.251).

As indicated above, place attachment is connected with how much a person feels attached to a place. In other words, the possibility of a person to attach himself to a place where many people do a lot of activities, have experiences, and find recreational and cultural opportunities may be higher. On a habitual base, preferring a place to the alternatives also characterizes place attachment. In order to talk about place attachment, the phenomena of “my place” and “favorite place” must come into prominence. (Oh, Lyu and Hammitt, 2012). In order for the topics of “my place” and “favorite place” to come to the forefront, people must have an experience in a physical place, establish some social relationships and must have some feelings and thoughts (Alam, 2011).

Research indicates that several individual socio-demographics factors associates with place attachment (Kimpton, Wickes and Corcoran, 2014). These factors could be divided as ethnicity, age group, social tie, language in a foreign country. The matters that an individual in a society or a country was born in that city, he is a foreigner or how old he is may separately affect place attachment. Similarly, social factors also gain importance. It is more likely for a person whose social environment is broad or who has good experiences to attach the place in question. Place attachment in the leisure literature has been conceptualized as a multi-dimensional construct consisting of place identity, place dependence (Moore and Graefe, 1994; Lee, Kyle and Scott, 2012), and social bonding (Budruk, 2010; Budruk et al., 2011).

Place identity

Place identity, refers to the extent to which place contributes to individuals’ self-identities (Smith, Siderelis and Moore, 2010, p.625). According to Proshansky, Fabian and Kaminoff, (1983), place identity may be evaluated as sub concept of self-identity. The individuals’ attitudes, values, thoughts, beliefs and behavioral tendencies are related to place identity (Proshansky, Fabian and Kaminoff, 1983). All places, parks or cities have a distinctive identity. In fact, this identity is related to brand image at some point. For example, that Las Vegas is notable for gambling casino, Orlando is for Disneyland, Los Angeles is for Universal Studio and Paris is associated with Eifel is related to identity. There may be a relation between the identity of a person and the identity of the city that person would like to get attached to. Therefore, a person’s sense of self is partially contained the emotional and symbolic values attached to special places (Smith, Siderelis and Moore, 2010; Williams et al.,

1992). In other words, the fact that along with his own image, the person views himself as a part of the city can be evaluated in this context. The higher the level of distinctiveness of the place is, the more the phenomenon of attachment is. Although there may be contrary situations as an exception, the fact that the place's image is strong may bring about attachment. Especially the attachment to the cities is assessed in this context. In the same way, the fact that a person attributes his experiences to the place can be taken into account in this context. For instance, the place where he got married or engaged is evaluated in the context of place identity (Johnson et al., 2015).

Place dependence

The second dimension of place attachment is titled as place dependence. Place dependence characterizes the situation that individuals are associated with a place in comparison to similar places. In the leisure literature, place dependence symbolizes how the facility is good and ready to achieve the people goals (Jorgensen and Stedman, 2001). Individuals feel loyalty to the place that best meets their needs related to functional, social (Smith, Siderelis and Moore, 2010), physical, cultural and psychological. Recreational potential and economic benefits of a place are related to place dependence dimension (Hunt, 2008). Budruk (2010), states that there are more functional needs regarding place dependence, and this cannot be transferred to another location.

Social bonding

In addition to place identity and dependence, social bonding has been evaluated as major dimensions in the place attachment context. Social bonding dimensions has been included by several authors in the environmental psychology literature (Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001; Kyle Graefe and Manning, 2005). At some point, social bonding is connected to the levels of social relations that are established. The memories of a person belonging to a city or a place, the relationships with the people there and past social experiences make up social bonding (Budruk, 2010). If strong relations can be established in a city and those relations can be kept there, this city or place will provide similar meanings and experiences for people (Kyle, Graefe and Manning, 2005). As a result of these relationships and experiences, a state of socially attachment will appear. For example, if there are close ties between neighbors or friends, those ties may attach them to the condition or the place in question.

Relationship between Event Satisfaction and Place Attachment

Previous researches of the relationship between event satisfaction and place attachment have been limited for several reasons. However, limited number of investigations indicates that there are meaningful relationships between satisfaction with event or festival and place attachment (Lee, Kyle and Scott, 2012). According to Iso-Ahola (1980), a well-organized special place where individuals experience their recreations and leisure activities are one of the most important factors in the satisfaction of those doing recreations. Similarly, Kyle, Graefe and Manning (2004) indicated that the two dimensions of place attachment comprised place identity and place dependence were significant predictor of individual perceptions. While talking about event satisfaction, we had better take event involvement into account. As the people's level of interest in the events held in the city increases, their attachment to that city is likely to increase. For example, an increase in the attachment to Istanbul can be seen in individuals whose level of involvement in Jazz Festivals is high. It is possible to show these situations as an example for many cultural activities, which are identified with the city. Thus, Kyle et al. (2003) points out that there are significant relationship between leisure activity involvement and place attachment. This relationship confirms the majority of previous research findings (e.g. Gross and Brown, 2008; Hwang, Lee and Chen, 2005). In tourism context, the satisfaction has been closely linked to place choice, consumption of product and services, and decision to return (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000; Lee, Kyle and Scott, 2012). Additionally, satisfaction and well-being are interrelated. Khozaei et al. (2012) stated that place attachment influence citizens' well-being. Psychologically well-being may emerge as a consequence of satisfaction. In this respect, socio-cultural events that are held in a city have an impact on place attachment.

Method

Measures

The aim of the study is to reveal the dimensions of place attachment and to analyze the relationship between place attachment dimensions on event satisfaction. The study involved a quantitative research methodology employing a questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire contained 16 statements related to place attachment. The items in the first part were developed and adapted from existing literature (Budruk, 2010; Budruk et al., 2011; Casakin, Hernandez and Ruiz, 2015; Lee, Kyle and Scott, 2012; Raymond, Brown and Weber, 2010). The second part of the questionnaire was related to satisfaction with the events

within the scope of Turkish World's Culture Capital. The scale of event satisfaction (four items) in the second part was adapted from Lee, Kyle and Scott, (2012). All of the statements in first and second part were thus presented, and respondents were asked to indicate their opinions on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "5=strongly agree" to "1=strongly disagree". The last part was designed to collect demographic characteristics of respondents.

Sample

The study comprised a convenience sampling with a sample of Anadolu University's students within Eskişehir in Turkey. Data for this study were collected through a self-administrated questionnaire during the period March through June 2013. Questionnaires were answered at class of academic departments and canteens. The researchers first briefly explained the research purpose, and then gave the questionnaires to willing participants. The time to explain the study and complete the questionnaire was approximately 15 minutes. A total of 420 questionnaires were distributed, 300 of which were completely answered, resulting in a return rate of 71.4 percent. The students' demographics include gender, age, income, academic department and classes. The respondent (N=300) for this study consisted of 182 (60.7%) men and 118 (39.3%) women. Respondents' ages were grouped as 18 to 19 (58%), 20 to 23 (37.7%), and over 24 (4.3%). As average monthly household income showed a wide distribution: about 56% had \$869–1304, 33% had less than \$869, and about 11% had more than \$1304. With regard to the academic programs, the majority of the sample (86.3%) was faculty students at the university. The distributions of respondents by their current year of study are as follows: junior students constituted the largest student cohort by 36.3%, followed by seniors by 23%, and the sophomores by 20.7%, the last group was third rate class by the rate of 20%.

Results

Dimensions of Place Attachment and Event Satisfaction

Normality test was applied before being applied factor analysis. Univariate non-normality was tested using skew and kurtosis. The extreme among all the variables in the scale was -0.912 for kurtosis and 0.756 for skewness for one variable, which was within the acceptable limits (Kline, 1998). In this dataset multivariate non-normality was not observed. After the normality test, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted in order to gain a better understanding of the underlying structure of the data related to place attachment. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) amounted to 0.818, which indicated that the sample was adequate for

factor analysis. BTS was 2389.228 ($p < 0.01$), indicating that the hypothesis variance and covariance matrix of variables as an identity matrix was rejected; therefore the factor analysis was appropriate.

Table 1. Dimensions and Items Related to Place Attachment

<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Std.</i>			<i>Construct reliability</i>
	<i>Loadings</i>	<i>M*</i>	<i>S.D.</i> *	
<i>Place Identity</i>				0.94
This city means a lot to me	0.93	2.32	1.07	
This city is very special to me	0.86	2.31	1.03	
I identify strongly with this city	0.89	2.40	1.10	
I am very attached to this city	0.68	2.40	1.05	
I feel a strong sense of belonging to this city	0.66	2.58	1.18	
My family and friends prefer this city than any other city	0.70	2.44	1.14	
I feel commitment to the city's image	0.93	2.32	1.07	
I am very attached to cultural activities in this city	0.86	2.31	1.03	
I feel my personal values are reflected in this town	0.89	2.40	1.10	
<i>Social Bonding</i>				0.87
I am attached to this city because I have many friends in this city	0.77	2.33	1.05	
I'm having a good experiences with my friends in this city	0.81	2.43	1.02	
This city is ideal because you can perform many things here	0.81	2.45	1.22	
I prefer to have fun here rather than other cities	0.83	2.35	1.07	
<i>Place Dependence</i>				0.78
For the leisure activities that I enjoy, this city is the best	0.56	2.42	1.18	
I prefer this city over other places for recreation/leisure activities that I enjoy	0.74	2.69	1.25	
This place is the best place for what I like to do	0.71	2.54	1.07	

*5= Strongly Agree....1= Strongly Disagree, SD= Standard Deviation, M= Mean

EFA with varimax rotation was employed on the data regarding place attachment. A varimax rotation in EFA is particularly useful for checking the unique (explained) and error (unexplained) variance of a specific variable (Hair et al., 2006). The communalities ranged from 0.480 to 0.886 suggesting that the variance of the original values was fairly explained by the common factors. In terms of place attachment, the results of EFA reveal three valid dimensions titled as 'place identity', 'social bonding', and 'place dependence', respectively. A total of three factors emerged, which together explained 72.560% (39.336%, 21.151%, and 12.073%, respectively) of the total variance. Factor 1 included 9 items with regard to issues

on place identity, which resulted in a high Cronbach’s alpha of 0.94. Four items in relation to social bonding issue made up the second factor, with a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.87, while the last factor included three items concerning place dependence, with a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.78 (see Table 1). The reliability coefficients for the total scale and three dimensions indicated high satisfactory levels for cut-off point 0.70 described by Nunnally (1978).

Table 2 exhibits the results of EFA about satisfaction with events within the scope of Turkish World’s Culture Capital. Similarly, EFA was also conducted with the 4 items about event satisfaction. For the event satisfaction dimension, Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) was 0.796 and (BTS) was 611.825 ($p < 0.01$). Thus, these results of the KMO and Bartlett’s tests indicated satisfactory levels. This results pointed out uni dimensional structure about event satisfaction. This uni-dimensional factorial structure of event satisfaction explained a total of 71.273 percent of the variance. The reliability value of satisfaction with event was 0.86, indicating high value in terms of cut-off point 0.7 as suggested by Nunnally (1978).

Table 2. Event Satisfaction Dimension and Items

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Std.</i>			<i>Construct reliability</i>
	<i>Loadings</i>	<i>M*</i>	<i>S.D.*</i>	
<i>Event Satisfaction</i>				0.86
I am satisfied with the events within the scope of Turkish World’s Culture Capital	0.72	2.32	0.96	
I like the events within the scope of Turkish World’s Culture Capital	0.89	2.48	0.96	
I enjoyed from participating in events within the scope of Turkish World’s Culture Capital	0.87	2.60	1.09	
Events within scope of Turkish World’s Culture Capital met my expectations	0.88	2.56	1.09	

*5= Strongly Agree....1= Strongly Disagree, SD= Standard Deviation, M= Mean

By running descriptive statistics, mean and standard deviation were found for the each factor. According to the descriptive statistics, place dependence factor had a higher mean score ($M=2.55$; $SD= 0.97$) compared to the remaining three constructs. Construct-based scales were generated by summing the relevant items. The bi-variate relationships revealed that all of the variables significantly correlated (0.27-0.64). All four factors were moderately correlated with one another. The largest factor correlation observed was between social bonding and place dependence ($r =0.64$). Additionally, the relationships between place

identity and social bonding and place identity and place dependence were equal ($r=0.27$). The factor correlation matrix and means are included in Table 3.

Table 3. Correlation matrix and descriptive statistics

<i>Constructs</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Place Identity</i>	1.00		
<i>Social Bonding</i>	0.27*	1.00	
<i>Place Dependence</i>	0.27*	0.64*	1.00
M	2.39	2.39	2.55
SD	0.90	0.93	0.97
*p < 0.01			

Relationship Between Event Satisfaction and Place Attachment

Three multiple regression analyses were applied to reveal the event satisfaction on the dimensions of place attachment comprised place identity, social bonding and place dependence. there was no presence of multicollinearity problems. Factor score from the factor analysis was used as the input variable. The multiple correlation coefficient (R), coefficient of determination (R^2), and F-ratio were examined to predict the goodness-of-fit for the following regression models. Table 4 displays three regression models. The first model in the table explains the relationship between event satisfaction and place identity, the second one reveals relations between satisfaction and social bonding ; whereas the last model expounds the relationship between the satisfaction and place dependence as a dimension of place attachment.

Table 4. Regression Results on Place Attachment

	Dependent Variables							
	Place Identity (PI)		Social Bonding (SB)		Place Dependence (PD)		Place Attachment (PI+SB+PD)	
	Std. β	t	Std. β	t	Std. β	t	Std. β	t
Event Satisfaction	0.330	6.010*	0.461	8.919*	0.562	11.664*	0.593	12.650*
Constant		48.411*		50.156*		54.612*		73.208*
	$R^2=0.109$ Adj. $R^2=0.106$ F= 36.121*		$R^2=0.212$ Adj. $R^2=0.210$ F= 79.545*		$R^2=0.316$ Adj. $R^2=0.313$ F= 136.058*		$R^2=0.352$ Adj. $R^2=0.349$ F= 160.020*	
*p < 0.01								

As displayed in Table 4, the results of the regression models indicated that the regression models were statistically significant ($F = 36.121$; $p < 0.01$, for model two $F = 79.545$; $p < 0.01$, $F = 136.058$; $p < 0.01$, and $F = 160.020$; $p < 0.01$, respectively). Approximately 10% of the overall place identity, 21% of the overall social bonding and approximately 31% of the overall place dependence was explained by the event satisfaction. Furthermore, approximately 35% of the overall place attachment containing place identity (PI), social bonding (SB) and place dependence (PD) was also explained by satisfaction after events arranged by Turkish World's Culture Capital. The regression coefficients of models indicated that satisfaction with socio-cultural events exerted the strongest influence ($\beta = 0.562$; $p < 0.01$) on the place dependence in terms of place attachment's factors. Similarly, as for the model, first and third dependence variables' columns in the Table 4, the factor of event satisfaction indicated a statistically significant relationship with the social bonding ($\beta = 0.461$; $p < 0.01$) and place identity ($\beta = 0.330$; $p < 0.01$).

Discussion and Conclusion

The primarily purpose of this research was to reveal the dimensions related to place attachment using a sample of university students in Turkey. The second purpose of this research was also to examine the relationship between city attachment and satisfaction with cultural events in Eskişehir. Exploratory factor analysis revealed three factors. The first factor, "place identity" focuses on specialties and means of a city. The second factor, "social bonding," captures socializing and communicating with friends through the city. And the last factor, "place dependence" comprises the directions to the forefront of the city compared to other alternatives. Therefore, this study emphasized results as previous studies that indicated multi-dimensional structure of place attachment phenomenon (e.g. Budruk, 2010; Budruk et al., 2011; Lee, Kyle and Scott, 2012; Moore and Graefe, 1994).

The theoretical expectation that event satisfaction is an antecedent of place attachment was confirmed by these data. Thus, the regression analysis also indicate significant relationship between event satisfaction within scope of Eskişehir Capital Culture and place attachment dimensions. The research indicated that satisfaction after cultural events had a significant relationship to all of the factors (place identity, social bonding and place dependence) related to place attachment. The strongest effect of satisfaction was on place dependence. This effect can be interpreted as a sign of that people feel loyalty to the city if they are satisfy from cultural activities arranged in the city. The participation to socio-cultural

events can be regarded as a sign of commitment of specific city. Thus, many activities within the scope of Eskişehir as Turkish World's Culture Capital were arranged between the years 2013-2014.

In conclusion, this study builds on previous studies examining relationship between satisfaction and attachment. This study results reveal that the relationship found between dependence and satisfaction may be attributed to living in same city and attend socio-cultural events in the city. Consistent with previous studies, there are significant relationship between leisure activity involvement and place attachment (Gross and Brown, 2008; Hwang, Lee and Chen, 2005). As regression analysis arise, satisfaction with the events within the scope of Eskişehir as Turkish World's Culture Capital was have a positive effects on city attachment. This result in line with previous studies (e.g. Iso-Ahola, 1980, Khozaei et al., 2012).

Based on the finding, it can be concluded that governors, mayors and other city managers should pay more attention to the aspects of city attachment, satisfaction and loyalty. Additionally, the findings of study have several implications for governors and mayors and private sector managers in cities. From the mayors and governors, the advantage of determining factors of place attachment are enormous. In terms of private sector of the city having a good image, place attachment means comprehensive opportunities in terms of visitors and income. This aspects of city attachment issue is particularly important in the Turkey, because many people from different area in the country want to see cities having a different image. It can be stated that visitors who has positive experience on the city make positive word-of-mouth communication. Moreover, the study uncovered some interesting signs about the city residents and visitors to be loyal to specific city. In particular, the results shows that satisfaction with cultural and social activities in cities have a positive and significant impact on place identity, social relationship, and place dependence. It is therefore important to outline the perception for place loyalty of individual and its derives. This understanding can help guide city and environment planning and place branding initiatives.

Limitations and Future Studies

This study has a few limitations that need to be noted when generalizing the findings across Turkey and beyond. The main limitation was student based sample. Thus, the sample consisted of a small group were students, which may limit the generalizability of the results. Additionally, this study was limited to Eskişehir in middle region of the Turkey and could be replicated in other parts of the country to observe the similarities and differences among the

people's opinions on place attachment. Future research on place attachment could be extended to include a wider demographic base, both geographically and internationally, to further explore the extent to which the findings are generalizable. Further researches may apply to famous and less well-known cities in different countries. Additionally, type of events such as sport and culture may be compare in future studies. This effort would provide a great helpful insight to clarify experiential features of different cities. Furthermore, future research is needed to further examine relationship among place attachment and, place involvement, life and leisure satisfaction, well-being. These factors might be influencing the dimensions of the place attachment.

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