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# Corporate Identity Structure in Hotels: An Exploratory Study*

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*Abstract*

Corporate identity is regarded as a critical element of competitiveness in a dynamic business environment. Effective management of corporate identity is vital to demonstrate the strengths of the company to internal and external stakeholders. It is therefore necessary to define and clarify corporate identity and to reveal its dimensions, and more so for hotels operating in a highly competitive international market. The paper aims to find out which dimensions construct the corporate identity in hotel establishments, through a holistic and multidisciplinary approach. Hence, the main aim of this study is to explore and conceptualize the dimensions of a holistic corporate identity structure in hotels via an exploratory method and a multidisciplinary approach based on the conceptual corporate identity dimensions put forward in the light of different disciplines and different paradigms existing in relevant literature. Research sample consists of the managers of 5-star hotels operating in İzmir. The research was designed with a qualitative approach, a field research has been conducted and semi-structured, in depth interviews were used to gather data. Research findings point out 8 dimensions that make up the corporate identity structure in hotels. Considering the themes and codes that were revealed according to the content analysis, the dimensions that constitute the corporate identity in hotels are determined as corporate culture, corporate structure, corporate strategy, corporate design, corporate communication, corporate behaviour, destination identity and industrial identity. Based on the emerging dimensions, the definition of corporate identity has been developed in the conclusion section.

# INTRODUCTION

Although identity is not a new concept, it is still filled with uncertainty. The concept of identity is used in many disciplines, but there is no holistic approach to what it is, how it develops and how it works (Lawler, 2008). Especially it has been studied after the 1940s in the field of psychology, and after the 1980s in the field of sociology and politics and it is seen that in the literature, it is generally categorised as subjective or objective. The origin of the word 'identity' and 'identical' comes from 'idem' in Latin, meaning 'same'. In this case, the meaning of identity is seen as the most basic similarity (Lawler, 2008). According to Mead (1913) this similarity in identity is defined as 'I' in subjective approach and 'me' in objective approach (Mead, 1913: 1-2).

Subjective identity, which is regarded as the essence of a person that does not change despite the changes in its surroundings, gives importance to the inner structure of the person, and has been criticized over time. Since the human being is a social phenomenon, objective identifications have begun to be defined. Objective Identity is not just the internal structure of the individual, but also the result of mutual interactions with the external environment with "uniqueness, solidarity, autonomy, continuity over time, and the discreteness of the person" in individuals (From van Tonder, 1987, van Tonder & Lessing, 2003: 21). Objective identity is defined as a set of identity that is formed for the categorization of the community and the external expectations (Mead, 1913: 1-2).

The most important theories of the objectivist approach are Psychodynamic and Sociological theories. According to sociological theories, human being is a social entity before all else, and in the reveal of identity, social dynamics as well as internal dynamics have a decisive influence. Social Identity theory develops situations that are both "I" and "me (with other moles)" by linking them with interactions, relationships and communications, language and representation. (Aşkın, 2007). Identity covers all the same and different characteristics of the individual. It is both about how one sees himself and how he is seen by society. The relationship with the external environment of the individual and the interaction with the society it is in is also an open dynamic structure (Lawler, 2008). The concept of identity has a multi-dimensional structure that symbolizes lifestyles such as beliefs, attitudes and values that encompass the cultural spheres of individuals and social positions and statutes status in the environments they live in. Identity is an indisputable fact, it exists in groups, societies and businesses as it exists in individuals (Güvenç, 1993).

There are the uncertainties in the definition of identity not only for individuals but also for businesses. It is indisputable that, just as individuals have an identity, so do companies. The abstract and ambiguous nature of the concept has been addressed in various studies and has led to different definitions of identity and different dimensions. This uncertainty continues from personal identity to corporate identity.

Today, it is a well-accepted approach to formulate corporate identity to sustain competitive advantage (Balmer & Wilson, 1998). Effective management of corporate identity is an effective tool to demonstrate the strengths of the company to internal and external stakeholders. It is important to clarify the corporate identity concept and to reveal its dimensions in order to increase their rate of preferability by revealing the existences in the hotels that are a high substitution and to getting a share from the international market operating in a highly competitive environment (van Riel, 1995; van Riel & Balmer, 1997).

In this research, corporate identity is examined within the scope of hotels. Although corporate identity studies have increased in the last 50 years, and different dimensions have come to the fore in different disciplines, and more conceptual and empirical studies have not resulted in a holistic corporate identity structure (Balmer, 2001a; Otubanjo & Melewar, 2007). Alessandri (2001), as the basis for the inability of the problems of corporate identity to evolve adequately in the academic field and the inability to establish a common conceptual model, explains that the nature of corporate identity cannot be understood and that few scholars have combined practice with conceptual explanations to support the power of corporate identity. This situation reveals the necessity of this study in terms of creating a holistic corporate identity structure oriented to implementation based on conceptual structures in hotels. In addition, the scarcity of studies on corporate identity dimensions within the scope of hotels in the literature emphasizes the importance of this study.

The paper aims to find out which dimension forms the corporate identity in hotel establishments, through a holistic and multidisciplinary approach. This study, based on the assumption that every business has an identity, focuses on exploring the dimensions of the corporate identity at the same distance from all stakeholders, instead of the corporate identity only for internal stakeholders (what the employees make sense of) or tangible identity structures aimed to introducing itself only for external stakeholders.

It requires an exploratory research design in qualitative method that is based on the creation of a theory in order to explore the existing or new dimensions of a holistic corporate identity through in-depth examination and prioritize understanding of social phenomena in the environment (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005). Hence, the main aim of this study is to reveal dimensions explaining the components of the corporate identity structure in hotels via exploratory method. Research sample consists of the managers of 5-star hotels operating in İzmir province. In this

study designed with a qualitative approach, semi-structured in-depth interviews used as data collection techniques in field research. The obtained data is coded thematically, after being subjected to qualitative content analysis. The encoded data that have been collected were classified under specific themes. Based on the emerging dimensions, the definition of corporate identity has been developed in the conclusion section.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1. Corporate Identity

It is known that maintaining competition advantage is one of the most important goals of corporate management (Ülgen & Mirze, 2010). Scientists and many experts, managers and consultants who are name as practitioners, believe that sustainable competitive advantage and corporate success are achieved by formulating the identity of businesses (Balmer & Wilson, 1998).

Identity creates the perceptions of internal and external stakeholders about the business by presenting a personality that creates the image of the business (Markwick & Fill, 1997). Corporate identity is used in revealing the differences, establishing the foundations of corporate branding and creating various opportunities in the field of marketing. It is thought that the use of corporate identity for marketing and advertising purposes will contribute to the recognition of businesses and to be preferred in the long term. And spread of the vision, mission and goals determined within the framework of the corporate identity to the employees increase organizational commitment (Motion & Leitch, 2002; Lyamabo et al., 2013).

Corporate identity refers to the identity of an institution or business in a corporate structure. Businesses need to reveal their differences, be remembered and create a positive image. Among the most important objectives of management are the ability of businesses to reveal their superiority over others, to achieve corporate success and to gain competitive advantage (Balmer & Wilson, 1998). With the positive corporate reputation to be achieved by formulating the identity in corporate businesses and managing the corporate identity that expresses "what the enterprise is", it is aimed that the businesses increase their performance and gain competitive advantage (Baker & Balmer, 1997; Pardo, 2014).

In the last 50 years, the corporate identity concept has attracted attention in both scientific studies and practical field. It has been observed that the corporate identity was first studied by various consultants called practitioners, and later it has been studied more common by scholars in scientific field to guide this group over time. However, over time, different dimensions have been revealed in different branches of science and an unclear and incomprehensible concept of corporate identity started to form as a result of handling the subject in different disciplines (Melewar, 2003; Otubanjo & Melewar, 2007). This situation caused confusion in the point of view, application and management of the businesses regarding this concept (Melewar, 2003; Otubanjo & Melewar, 2007). When studies on a corporate identity structure are examined, it is seen that conceptual studies are more weighted than empirical studies. The lack of studies in which the conceptual models have been tested in practice and their restriction on their own purposes have raised questions about the identity of different businesses, how it is perceived and how it is formulated. This situation creates a gap and uncertainty in the perception of the concept by scholars and firms who work on this subject (Otubanjo & Melewar, 2007).

There are many definitions in the literature of corporate identity. While some definitions are broader and include the multidimensional nature of the concept, some definitions are narrowly focused on specific disciplines. The studies in the different disciplines has also led to the absence of an accepted universal definition of the concept (Alessandri, 2001; Melewar, 2003; Otubanjo & Melewar, 2007).

The corporate identity, which is expressed as the sum of the specific characteristics of the business and which reveals what the business is in the most general sense, has been studied in many studies from the 1970s and has taken place in many models. However, these studies on the concept (Stuart, 1998, 1999; Balmer, 1996; Markwick & Fill, 1997; Alessandri, 2001; Balmer, 1995; van Riel & Balmer, 1997; Although Balmer, 2005, Moingeon & Ramanantsoa, 1997) developed terminology, different disciplines have turned the concept into an increasingly complex structure, making it unclear and uncertain.

When looking at the corporate identity literature, it is seen that the first and predominant working group is practitioners, while scientific research s is started to work on approached the subject as a strategic management tool in the 1990s. researchers (Balmer, 1995, 1998; Schmitt et al., 1995; Balmer & Soenen, 1997, 1999; Balmer & Wilson, 1998; Gray & Balmer, 1998) and practitioners (Margulies, 1977; Ackerman, 1988, 1990; Siegel, 1988, 1994) have discussed and interpreted the concept in different ways. Table 1 includes the various authors (practitioners and scholars - scientific researches) examined in this study together with their years of study. When the practitioner literature is examined, it is seen that corporate identity is mostly addressed in areas such as graphic design, advertising and public relations and focusing on visual elements such as names, logos and slogans of the enterprises. It is seen that scientific studies mostly address corporate identity in the fields of marketing and management. While it is seen that

researches in the field of marketing focus on external stakeholders in terms of graphic design, corporate personality and corporate communication, it is observed that researches in the field of organizational behaviour and management focus on internal stakeholders in terms of corporate culture, corporate behaviour (Balmer & Wilson, 1998).

**Table 1: Authors (Practitioners and Scientific Researchers) of Corporate Identity**

| Practitioners | Researchers (Scholars) |
|---|---|
| Pilditch, 1970 | Olins, 1978 |
| Selame & Selame, 1971 | Birkight & Stadler, 1980 |
| Selame & Selame, 1975 | Topalian, 1984 |
| Margulies, 1977 | Portugal & Halloran, 1986 |
| Anspach, 1983 | Birkight & Stadler, 1986 |
| Downey, 1986 | Albert and Whetten, 1985 |
| Carls, 1989 | Abratt, 1989 |
| Lambert, 1989 | Olins, 1989 |
| Acherman, 1988 | Schmitt, Simonson & Marcus, 1995 |
| | Balmer, 1998 |
| | Balmer and Soenen, 1999 |
| | Leuthesser & Kohli, 1997 |
| | Markwick & Fill, 1997 |
| | van Rekom, 1997 |
| | van Riel and Balmer, 1997 |
| | Gray & Balmer, 1998 |
| | Leitch, 1999 |
| | Gioia, Schultz & Corley, 2000 |
| | Balmer & Greyser, 2002 |

**Source:(Compiled by the author)**

In addition to different definitions of corporate identity, management studies define corporate identity as the basic and central characteristics that differentiate organisations and make them special (Abratt, 1989; Moingeon & Ramanantsoa, 1997; van Rekom, 1997). Scholars in the field of marketing, on the other hand, tend to define identity as a tool that institutions express themselves to their stakeholders (van Riel C., 1995; Schmitt, Simonson, & Marcus, 1995; van Rekom, 1997). With this differentiation, the fact that a common description could not be reached in the studies conducted in different disciplines in the field of corporate identity has revealed the necessity of focusing on the multidimensional structure of corporate identity with a multidisciplinary approach over time. Today, the multidisciplinary approach that combines marketing and management areas is seem to be adopted more (Balmer & Greyser, 2002).

Starting from the corporate identity definitions of two groups given in Table 1, which focuses on different dimensions and descriptors, the multidisciplinary studies have carried out over time where the ideas of the two groups were combined. And it is seen that corporate identity have been defined in time as 'what the organization/business is' and 'the presentation of the business itself' in the multidisciplinary studies. According to these approaches, corporate identity is an important tool that enables businesses to communicate with their environment (internal, near-external, far-outside), and express and promote their assets. In this context, the presentation of businesses is realized in a way that includes not only design-oriented but also many concepts such as corporate personality, symbolism, behaviour, communication, culture, strategy and structure.

Today, in the literature, it is possible to define corporate identity as the sum of all answers to "What the organization/business is, what it stands for, what it does, how it does and where it goes" (Olins, 1990: 108 from Abratt, 1989: 66; Olins, 2002: 2; Balmer, 2014: 463; Chamchong & Wonglorsaichon: 526; Pardo, 2014: 7; Balmer, 2015: 5-8). Based on this definition, the corporate identity, which is expressed as a collection of meanings put forward by the internal and external stakeholders while defining and remembering the enterprises (van Rekom, 1997: 411), comprises not only the first things that come to mind such as logos, colours and emblems, but also covers the subjects such as corporate communication, corporate behaviour and corporate philosophy. Corporate identity includes the culture, mission, goals, strategies, organizational structure, control mechanisms, goods and services, the market and sector it serves, and its suppliers (Markwick & Fill, 1997; Baker & Balmer, 1997; Melewar, 2003).

## 2.2. Corporate Identity Models

Various models have been created by different authors to understand and construct what the concept of corporate identity is. When the models are examined, it is seen that corporate identity models (Otubanjo, 2008), which are formed by focusing on different subjects, are grouped under three different paradigms (Balmer, 2001a; Pedersen, 2013). These are the functional paradigm, the interpretive paradigm, and the postmodern paradigm. Studies that have focused on different paradigms, different stakeholders and different elements have gained importance in creating

corporate identity. Examining and clarifying these complex models and bringing together the existing dimensions will lead to a better understanding of the meaning and content of the corporate identity.

The functionalist paradigm, which focuses on the central authority, has contributed to certain dimensions in the creation of a single and integral identity structure in the presentation of the institution to its stakeholders. The interpretive paradigm focuses more on the existence of multiple identities emerging with interactions and discursive structures within the organization, focusing on internal stakeholders and fed by the culture of the members of the organization. As the postmodern work goes on, it becomes dominant in the works of thought that different identities will be attributed to the institutions in different times, where there will be more than one institutional identity and there will not be a single identity (Balmer, 2001a; He & Brown, 2013; Balmer & Greyser, 2003). The models focusing on different dimensions are summarized in table 2.

**Table 2: Corporate Identity: A Review of Existing Models**

| Models | Dimensions | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Birkight and Stadler's (1986) Model** | Corporate Behaviour | Corporate Design | Corporate Communications | | | |
| **Abratt's (1989) Model** | Corporate Personality (Corporate Philosophy, Corporate Culture, Strategic Management) | Corporate Communication | | | | |
| **Balmer's (1995) Model** | Corporate Personality (Corporate Philosophy, Mission) | Corporate Communication | | | | |
| **Stuart's (1994, 1998) Models** | Corporate Personality | Corporate Strategy | Corporate Culture | Corporate Symbolism | | |
| **Markwick and Fill's (1997) Model** | Corporate Personality | Corporate Communication | Corporate Strategy | | | |
| **van Riel and Balmer's (1997) Model** | Culture | History | Corporate Strategy | Corporate Behaviour | Corporate Communication | Corporate Symbolism |
| **Stuart's (1999) Model** | Corporate Personality (Corporate Philosophy, Core Values, Corporate Mission) | Corporate Strategy | Corporate Behaviour | Corporate Communication | | |
| **Balmer and Gray's (2000) Model** | Values and Goals | Corporate Strategy | Corporate Culture | Organizational Structure | | |
| **Balmer and Greyser's (2002) Model** | Corporate Personality | Corporate Culture | Organizational Leadership | Organizational History | Corporate Strategy | Corporate Structure, Corporate Architecture | Corporate Design (Visual Identity) |
| **Suvatjis and de Chernatony's (2005) Model** | Senior management, Mission / Vision / Values, Leadership | Brands/ Products and Services, Corporate Strategy, Marketing | Visual identity, Corporate visual identity systems, Advertising | External communication, Internal Communication, Digital communication | Stakeholders, Corporate personnel, Company group dynamisms | Reputation, Corporate Image, Corporate Personality |

**Source: (Compiled by the author)**

These different approaches and divisions have created a complexity in the literature of corporate identity. It became important to establish and communicate the identities in enterprises at the same distance to all stakeholders, rather than differentiated approaches and divided identity on internal and external stakeholders. A single holistic corporate identity structure in a homogeneous structure that expresses the institution about the behaviours expected from the internal stakeholders and forms the image and reputation for external stakeholders gained importance in the multidisciplinary approach and the dimensions are being researched.

A multidisciplinary approach has dominated studies of the scholars who have studied corporate identity in recent years (e.g., van Riel & Balmer, 1997; Balmer & Wilson, 1998; Balmer 2001b; Knox & Bickerton, 2003). This emerging body of literature is characterised by multiple versions of identity, and multiple identity dimensions. This approach focuses on creating the corporate identity structure that includes all the disciplines that express businesses completely at the same distance from internal stakeholders to external stakeholders and the holistic structure (He & Balmer, 2007).

Balmer (2001b) has expressed the dimensions of corporate identity based on the definition of corporate identity of management science (the basic and central features that make organizations differentiated and special) and the definition of corporate identity of marketing science (how organizations express themselves to their stakeholders). He has suggested five distinct types of identity: actual, communicated, conceived, ideal and desired, in his study. Balmer and Greyser (2002) have defined the dimensions of the identity types by expanding Balmer's (2001b) study of corporate identity as "everything that expresses what the business is". They argued that a holistic corporate identity can revealed by managing the various and multiple identities existing in businesses in harmony (Balmer & Greyser, 2002: 75). Melewar (2003) brought together all the dimensions that exist in both marketing and management literature and defined corporate identity with corporate communication, corporate design, corporate culture, behaviour, corporate structure, industry identity and corporate strategy. Table 3,4 and 5 shows the different identity types the dimensions of Balmer (2002b), Balmer & Greyser (2002) and Melewar (2003).

**Table 3: Multidisciplinary Corporate Identity Model, Balmer's (2001b) Model**

| Balmer's (2001b) Corporate Identity Model and Dimensions | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Actual Identity** | **Communicated Identity** | **Conceived Identity** | **Ideal Identity** | **Desired Identity** |
| Strategy | Marketing Communication | Reputation | Strategy | Leadership |
| Structure | Corporate Communication | Image | Leadership | |
| Communication | Total Communication *Primary C. (Products, services, behaviour of the organization and of the personnel) *Secondary C. (Controlled Communication channels, Advertising, PR, visual identity etc.) *Tertiary C. (Word of mouth) | Corporate Brand | Environment and Corporate Analysis | |
| Culture | | Reputation | Corporate Structure | |
| History | | | | |
| Reputation | | | | |
| Leadership | | | | |

**Source: (Balmer, 2001b: 16)**

**Table 4: Multidisciplinary Corporate Identity Model, Balmer & Greyser' (2002) Model**

| Balmer & Greyser' (2002) Corporate Identity Types and Dimensions | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Actual Identity** | **Communicated Identity** | **Conceived Identity** | **Ideal Identity** | **Desired Identity** |
| Internal Stakeholders: Business founders, management and employees. | Internal Stakeholders: Marketing and communications. | External Stakeholders: Customers, financial institutions, government, local organizations, etc. | Internal Stakeholders: Strategic planning | Internal Stakeholders: Top management and board of directors |
| Corporate Personality | External Stakeholders: Advertising agencies etc. and the media | Corporate Image | External Stakeholders: financial analysts, legislatures | Corporate Personality |
| Corporate Culture | Organizational History | Corporate reputation | Corporate Strategy | Organizational Leadership |
| Organizational Identity | Visual Identity | | Organizational Structure | Visual Identity |
| Org.Leadership | | | | |
| Org.History | | | | |
| Org.Structure | | | | |
| Visual Identity | | | | |

**Source: (Balmer and Greyser, 2002: 76-79)**

**Table 5: Multidisciplinary Corporate Identity Model, Melewar' (2003) Model**

| Melewar' (2003) Corporate Identity Dimensions | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Corporate Communication** | **Corporate Design** | **Corporate Culture** | **Behaviour** | **Corporate Structure** | **Industry Identity** | **Corporate Strategy** |
| Controlled Corporate Communication | Corporate visual identity | Corporate philosophy. | Corporate behaviour. | Brand structure. | | Differentiation strategy. |
| Uncontrollable Communication | Corporate visual identity system. | Corporate values. | Employee behaviour. | Organizational structure. | | Positioning strategy. |
| Indirect Communication | | Corporate mission. | Management behaviour. | | | |
| | | Corporate principles. | | | | |
| | | Corporate guidelines. | | | | |
| | | Corporate history. | | | | |
| | | Founder of the company. | | | | |
| | | Country of origin. | | | | |
| | | Subcultures. | | | | |

**Source: (Melewar, 2003: 198)**

The identity types expressed by Balmer in table 3 represent the dimensions that make up a holistic corporate identity. For example, the strategies, structure, culture, history, reputation and leadership of businesses define real identity. The strategy also defines ideal identity. This refers to strategies that can be changed so that the business has the ideal status in market and competitor analysis over time with the strategic decisions of the real situation. While all these identities types express corporate identity as a whole, it is important that they are in harmony with each other (Balmer, 2001b: 16-17). In order to guide the reveal of a holistic corporate identity structure, which is the aim of this study, all dimensions and definitions in the corporate identity models presented in the literature are brought together and given in Table 6.

**Table 6: Definitions of Corporate Identity Dimensions**

| Authors | Corporate Personality |
|---|---|
| Olins, 1978: 212 (as cited in Balmer, 2015) | The soul, the persona, the spirit, the culture of the organisation manifested in some way. |
| Abratt, 1989 | The sum total of the characteristics of the organisation. These characteristics - behavioural and intellectual - serve to distinguish one organisation from another. |
| Birkigt & Stadler, 1986 (as cited in Pedersen, 2013; Balmer, 1998) | The core of a corporate culture - that is where the corporate values held by personnel reflect that of the organisation's mission and philosophy. The constant characteristic features of businesses which can be distinguished from others. |
| Balmer,1995; 1998. | The distinct mix of sub-cultures present within organisations. The cornerstone of corporate identity formation. |
| Balmer & Wilson, 1998 . | Features that create corporate culture. |
| | **Corporate Culture** |
| Daft, 2008. | The values, norms, understandings, and basic assumptions that employees share, and these values are signified by symbols, stories, heroes, slogans, and ceremonies. |
| Schein, 2009. | The basic assumptions which are involve not only the internal workings of the organization but, more important, how the organization views itself in relation to its various environments. For external environment: mission, strategy, goals, structure, systems, processes, error-detection and correction systems. For internal integration: common language and concepts, group boundaries and identity, the nature of authority and relationships, allocation of rewards and status. |
| Kiriakidou & Millward, 2000. | The corporate values that are held by staff and management and their concrete manifestation in organizational symbolism and behaviour, which frame the way that the organization operates. |
| Jenny, 1999. | The shared values and behaviours of the employees which are adopted and influenced by each other. The values that directs employees in how to act and get things done. |
| Melewar, 2003. | Corporate philosophy, corporate values, corporate mission, corporate principles, corporate guidelines, corporate history: customs-rituals-myths-taboos, physical structure, heroes (or strong leadership), business structure, business rules, values, beliefs etc. |
| | **Corporate Design (visual identity)** |
| Tuna & Akbaş Tuna, 2007. | All visible elements which are establishing the appearance of a business in accordance with its corporate identity and reflecting its corporate identity. |
| Melewar & Karaosmanoğlu, 2006 | The vast number of visual cues that are associated with a specific organization: the organisation's name, slogan, logo/symbol, colour and typography. |
| Baker and Balmer, 1997. | Visuals that represent the values and philosophy of businesses and support corporate communication. |

| van den Bosch, Elving & de Jong, 2006a. | Key elements of the way an organisation presents itself to both internal and external stakeholders. these are the corporate name, logo, colour palette, font type, and a corporate slogan, tagline and/or descriptor and these may be applied on, for instance, stationery, printed matter (such as brochures and leaflets), advertisements, websites, vehicles, buildings, interiors, and corporate clothing. Sometimes architecture can also be an important element in an organisation's visual identity. |
|---|---|
| Okay, 2013. | Product design (packaging, brand), communication design (design of visual communication tools: institution sign, color, typography) and architectural design (furniture, selected colors, buildings, building entrances and exits and similar designs, external design, garden design, lighting, designs of environmental elements such as building, showcase) |
| | **Corporate Communication** |
| Baker & Balmer, 1997. | Everything a business says, makes and does. |
| Cornelissen, 2011. | A Management function that offers a framework for the effective coordination of all internal and external communication with the overall purpose of establishing and maintaining a favourable reputations with stakeholder groups upon which the organization is dependent. |
| Gray & Balmer, 1998. | Corporate communications is the aggregate of messages from both official and informal sources, through a variety of media, by which the company conveys its identity to its multiple audiences or stakeholders. Nomenclature and branding, graphic design, formal statements, media relations, routine interactions, architecture. |
| Schmidt, 1997. | It is all internal and external information and measures that have been put forward to influence the perceptions of stakeholders: corporate design, internal and external communication, marketing communication, architecture, interior design and positioning. |
| Balmer & Soenen, 1999. | (1) Controlled communication (Management, Marketing, Organisational communication) (2) Non-controlled communication (employees discourse, commentaries made about the organisation in the media, employees' behaviour, comments in the press, etc.) (3) Visual identity (4) Indirect communication |
| van Riel & Fombrun,2007 | Management communications, management communication, organisational communication |
| Glöckler, 1995 (as cited in Okay, 2013) | Internal communication, advertising, public relations, corporate sales development, direct marketing, sponsorship, exhibitions and fairs. |
| | **Corporate Behaviour** |
| Melewar, 2003. | The sum total of the corporate actions, which results from the corporate attitudes that are planned in line with the company culture or that occur spontaneously, is called corporate behaviour. |
| Melewar & Karaosmanoğlu, 2006. | It is corporate actions in their entirety, both those that are planned and congruent with corporate culture and those that occur spontaneously. Company behaviour, management behaviour and employee behaviour. |
| van Rekom, 1997. | Managers' conversations and communication styles, corporate decisions, managers' behaviour towards their competitors, employees' conversation with customers, and the dialogue they establish while serving, and the way in which employees engage with each other; behaviours that form and reflect corporate identity. |
| Okay, 2013. | General principles of behaviour: social behaviour, economic behaviour, political behaviour, information behaviour, quality behaviour. |
| | **Corporate Strategy** |
| Sutton, 1980. | Long-term and business-defined decisions, which form the most basic outlines of strategic management. A plan for explaining the facts that express the self-expressing facts such as the goals are selected, self-defined, the available resources are revealed and how they are processed, what the business is, what their business is, what kind of business it is, its goals and objectives. |
| Melewar, 2003. | It concerns the whole business; the main plan that surrounds the overall goals and policies of enterprise's products and marketplace used in order to compete in the markets the company has chosen. A plan that includes what determines what businesses produce, how much profit they will make and how these products affect customers' feelings. (1) Differentiation strategy (2) Positioning strategy. |
| Leontiades, 1985. | Strategies that focus on issues such as the environment of competition, products, jobs, and the method of getting into business, determined by senior executives, containing corporate instructions, and implemented throughout the business. |
| Ülgen & Mirze, 2010; Mirze, 2013; Tanova & Karadal, 2004. | Top management strategies: one enterprise / concentration, vertical integration and diversification Competitive strategies: cost leadership - differentiation - focus Corporate strategies: protective strategy - opportunistic / innovative strategy - analyst strategy - reactive strategy. |
| | **Corporate Structure** |
| Melewar, 2003; Balmer and Greyser, 2002 | Identity structure and organizational structure |
| Olins, 1989 (as cited in Gray & Balmer, 1998: 697; Balmer, 2015) | Identity structure, what the business does, how it does, as well as answers to questions such as how it is organized, whether it is centralized, whether it has areas, branches or brands: Monolithic identity, approved / supported identity and brand identity. |
| Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly & Konopaske, 2011. | Corporate structure determines roles in the organization, roles, distribution, coordination and control, and defines relationships between individuals or groups. It is the formal pattern of how its people and jobs are grouped. |
| Robbins & Judge, 2012. | It defines how job tasks are formally divided, grouped, and coordinated. Managers need to address six key elements when they design their organization's structure: work specialization, departmentalization, chain of command, span of control, centralization and decentralization, and formalization. |

| Robbins & Judge, 2012; Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly and Konopaske, 2011; Timurturkan, 2010. | Organization Structure classifications:<br>- Complexity, Formalization, Centralization<br>- Simple structure, machine bureaucracy, professional bureaucracy, departmental structure and adhocracy structure.<br>- Simple structure, functional structure, multi-section structure, matrix structure, hybrid structure and network.<br>- Simple structure, bureaucracy and matrix structure. |
|---|---|

**Source: (Compiled by the author)**

Table 6 contains definitions that are completely derived from the conceptual, corporate identity literature and created by combining previous models. In this study, these definitions gain importance in order to be the basis for the exploration of dimensions that constitute a holistic corporate identity structure and, if any, new dimensions. The fact that the relationship between dimensions is not considered in the definitions is due to the discovery of existing or possible corporate identity dimensions of hotels for the purpose of this study.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

Based on the assumption that every business has an identity, the aim of the study is to explore and conceptualize the dimensions of a holistic corporate identity structure that expresses a business in every aspect and is located at the same distance to all stakeholders. This study focuses on exploring the corporate identity structure in hotels, adopting a multidisciplinary approach based on the conceptual corporate identity dimensions put forward in different disciplines and different paradigms that exist in the literature. The study aims to make a theoretical contribution to the literature with the definition of corporate identity that will reveal from a multidisciplinary perspective and will be developed with existing or new dimensions.

Although corporate identity studies have increased in both scientific and application fields in the last 50 years, different dimensions have come to the fore in different branches of science. Studies of conceptual and empirical have been relatively low in creating a holistic corporate identity structure. Also, the scarcity of studies focussing on corporate identity dimensions within the scope of hotels in literature (Balmer, 2001a; Otubanjo & Melewar, 2007), emphasizes both necessity of and importance of this study.

To achieve these goals, the study adopts a qualitative research method and the research design is both exploratory and descriptive. The in-depth examination of the corporate identity in hotels requires the exploratory research design in a qualitative structure, an approach that emphasizes researching and understanding social phenomena in the environment in which they are connected based on theorizing (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005). As Gegez points out (2005) that exploratory research design, which aims to identify a problem and its aspects, is used more widely in qualitative research. Exploratory research design gains importance when previous research on a certain topic is limited. In this context, semi-structured interview technique was utilized as the principal method in data gathering.

In the semi-structured interview form, developed in two parts, questions were constructed taking the relevant literature and evidence in preceding research into consideration. In the first part of the form, questions are prepared to obtain general information about demographic characteristics of participants and the existence and formation of corporate identity. In the second part of the form, questions explore the dimensions of corporate identity and sub-dimensions. These questions are based on existing definitions of Harris and de Chernatony, 2001; Balmer, 2001b; Melewar, 2003; Melewar & Karaosmanoğlu, 2006; Balmer, 2017; Koskimies, 2011 and Nyman, 2013 are compiled from the authors' works.

The population of the research is 5-star hotels in İzmir. It was aimed to reach the whole population. To reach the whole population in the research conducted with the theory forming strategy expresses the "theoretical sampling" approach. According to Glaser and Strauss's (1967) theoretical sample argument that "it is necessary to continue collecting data until the stage where concepts and processes that can answer the research question begin to repeat (saturation point)", the interviews were terminated when the desired data were reached (as cited in Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005).

With the finalization of the research questions after the pilot study, the research was completed with interviews with managers of 14 5-star hotels (12 general managers and 2 sales and marketing managers). Interviews were conducted between 45 minutes and 90 minutes. Participant interview periods and demographic information are given in Table 7.

**Table 7: Demographic characteristics and interview periods**

| Hotel Codes | Participants | Age | Gender | Education | Data Collection Technique | Interview Duration (Minutes) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O-1 | General Manager | 49 | Male | Bachelor | Interview | 60 |
| O-2 | General Manager | 54 | Male | Bachelor | Interview | 45 |
| O-3 | General Manager | 50 | Male | Bachelor | Interview | 50 |
| O-4 | General Manager | 46 | Female | Bachelor | Interview | 70 |
| O-5 | Sales and Marketing Manager | 36 | Female | Bachelor | Interview | 45 |
| O-6 | General Manager | 43 | Male | Master Degree | Interview | 90 |
| O-7 | General Manager | 55 | Male | Bachelor | Interview | 60 |
| O-8 | General Manager | 52 | Female | Bachelor | Interview | 50 |
| O-9 | General Manager | 58 | Male | Bachelor | Interview | 90 |
| O-10 | Sales and Marketing Manager | 36 | Female | Bachelor | Interview | 45 |
| O-11 | General Manager | 58 | Male | Bachelor | Interview | 50 |
| O-12 | General Manager | 51 | Male | Bachelor | Interview | 50 |
| O-13 | General Manager | 61 | Male | Bachelor | Interview | 90 |
| O-14 | General Manager | 46 | Female | Bachelor | Interview | 45 |

In data analysis, a specific word, multiple words, sentences, or paragraphs were coded by the content analysis method. In coding the data and revealing the themes, the data obtained by using the relevant literature were examined, divided into meaningful sections, and coded based on a certain word, more than one word, sentence, or paragraphs in accordance with the purpose of the research. After all the data was coded, with the help of the code list created, the codes that were related in terms of meaning were brought together and placed under the determined themes. In this study, it is expected that different encoders will perform the same encoding on the same text or at least 70% reliably when comparing the differences between them by making similar encodings. In cases where this ratio is not reached, reliability has been achieved by agreement of all coders and selection of common codes.

## 4. FINDINGS

### 4.1. Corporate Culture

In content analysis, the corporate culture code list was discovered based on the corporate culture definitions of Daft (2008), Schein (2009), Kiriakidou and Millward (2000), Jenny (1999), and Melewar (2003). The corporate culture codes were placed under the themes within the framework of the conceptual definitions in the relevant literature and are given in Table 8.

**Table 8: Corporate Culture Themes and Codes**

| Corporate Culture | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corporate Personality | frequency | Corporate History | frequency | Corporate Philosophy | frequency | Rules in Business | frequency | Business customs, rituals, myths, taboos | frequency |
| High capacity: Feature | 9 | History | 12 | Customer loyalty | 11 | Fair working conditions, Corporate rules | 38 | Support of managers | 4 |
| Service business: What the business is | 7 | Corporate heroes | 9 | Service quality | 30 | Selecting employees who can represent the hotel | 4 | Birthday celebrations, congratulations, awards, welcome meals | 17 |
| | | Believing in executive experience | 12 | Product quality | 14 | Cleaning, hygiene, inspections | 4 | Working like a family in a common language | 6 |
| | | Success story | | Employee loyalty | 15 | Empowering employees | 4 | | |
| | | | | To be reliable | 6 | | | | |
| | | | | Corporate values | 21 | | | | |
| | | | | Our environmentally conscious philosophy | 19 | | | | |
| | | | | Paying attention to | 9 | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | employee satisfaction | | | | | |
| | | | | Paying attention to customer satisfaction | 37 | | | | |
| | | | | Our philosophy is open to innovations | 14 | | | | |
| | | | | Vision and mission | 14 | | | | |
| | | | | Having a philosophy | 13 | | | | |
| | | | | Without personal identities | 1 | | | | |
| | | | | Prioritizing team work | 6 | | | | |
| | | | | Offering career opportunities | 6 | | | | |
| **Total** | **16** | | **33** | | **204** | | **50** | | **27** |
| **Rate %** | **4,8** | | **10** | | **61,9** | | **15,2** | | **8,18** |

As a result of the analysis, 30 codes that describe corporate identity and corporate culture were obtained and as a result these codes were mentioned with a total frequency of 330. Corporate culture code with the highest frequency is accepted as a core element of corporate identity (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Schmidt, 1997; Kiriakidou & Millward, 1999; Melewar, 2003). Fair working conditions code had a frequency of 38 and customer satisfaction 37, which reveals the importance of these issues in hotels. In addition, according to the findings obtained from the content analysis, it was seen that the codes expressing the corporate personality fall within the broad category of corporate culture (Olins, 1978 from Olins, 2002; Balmer, 1998; Balmer & Wilson, 1998).

## 4.2. Corporate Strategy

To discover the code list that forms the corporate strategy dimension, the definitions of Sutton (1980), Melewar (2003), Leontiades (1985), Ülgen & Mirze (2010), Mirze (2013), Tanova & Karadal (2004) were considered. The corporate strategy codes were placed under the themes within the framework of the conceptual definitions in the relevant literature and are given in Table 9.

### Table 9: Corporate Strategy Themes and Codes

| Competition Strategies | Frequency | Corporate Strategies | Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Cost Leadership** | | **Protective Strategy** | - |
| Resource utilization (human resources, products, services | 23 | **Opportunistic/innovative Strategy** | - |
| Financial structure (budget logic) | 22 | Turning to different markets | 7 |
| Cost-oriented | 17 | Collaborating with competitors | 10 |
| **Differentiation** | | Strategic partnerships | 6 |
| Product diversification | 17 | **Analysts Strategy** | |
| Leader in its field | 10 | Market structure analysis | 20 |
| Product diversity offered | 8 | Competition environment | 17 |
| The product is themed | 6 | Comparison with competitors | 4 |
| The kitchen is famous | 5 | Changing strategies depending on the country's situation | 22 |
| Suitable for families | 3 | Marketing strategy | 19 |
| **Focusing** | | **Reactive-reactor Strategy** | - |
| Certain goals | 32 | | |
| Target audience is defined | 14 | | |
| Price policy is defined | 12 | | |
| Strategy is determined | 10 | | |
| Target audience depending on the brand | 3 | | |
| Focus on your own product | 3 | | |
| **Total** | **185** | | **105** |

The codes were placed under the themes on competition strategies classified as cost leadership, differentiation and focus and on corporate strategies classified as protective strategy, opportunistic/innovative strategy, analysts

strategy, reactive-reactor strategy (Sutton, 1980; Melewar, 2003; Ülgen & Mirze, 2010; Mirze, 2013; Tanova & Karadal, 2004).

As a result of the analysis, 23 codes with frequency of 290 were obtained to describe corporate identity and express corporate strategy. In Table 9, it is seen that the participants mentioned on "having certain goals" with frequency of 32, "resource utilization" with frequency of 23, "financial structure was structured according to the budget logic", and "changing their strategies according to the country situation" with frequency of 22.

In addition, the participants mentioned their ownership status. Two hotels defined themselves as one enterprise / concentration, 12 hotels mentioned having a diversification strategy with ownership of management agreement, brand diversity and franchise. In this context, in the dimensions of the corporate identity structure of the hotels, it has been revealed that the enterprise/concentration, diversification, and vertical integration which are the top management strategies (Özel, 2012) are also significant.

## 4.3. Corporate Structure

Although not included in early corporate identity studies, corporate structure has been given more importance in time. At first, it started to be defined as an only identity structure and then as a whole, in which the organizational structure is also included. The corporate structure code list is based on the definitions in studies of Melewar (2003) and Balmer and Greyser (2002). The corporate structure codes were placed under the themes within the framework of the conceptual definitions in the relevant literature and is given in Table 10.

**Table 10: Corporate Structure Themes and Codes**

| Identity Structure | Frequency | Organizational Structure | Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|
| Name, properties, values, instruction of physical elements from the centre | 18 | Central rules, headquarters, top management decisions | 28 |
| Holding | 8 | Standards | 21 |
| Chain hotel | 8 | Board of Directors, central approval | 14 |
| Changing properties according to the brand | 4 | Boss requests | 13 |
| Brand feature | 4 | Family company | 7 |
| | | Procedures and job descriptions are defined | 7 |
| | | Task distributions are certain | 5 |
| | | Management style is certain | 4 |
| | | Operational books, business processes from the centre | 5 |
| Total | **42** | Total | **104** |
| Rate% | **100** | Rate% | **100** |

For the corporate structure dimension, codes placed under two themes identity structure and organizational structure. In placing codes under the Identity Structure theme, the classification of Olins (1989) that are monolithic identity, approved/supported identity, and brand identity was taken into consideration (as cited in Gray & Balmer, 1998: 697; Balmer, 2015). The organizational structure shows how works are divided, grouped, and coordinated. It defines how tasks are distributed, who reports to whom, and the style of formal coordination and interaction followed. So, it is expressed in centralization, formation, and complexity (Robbins & Judge, 2012).

As a result of the analysis, 14 codes with frequency of 146 were obtained to describe corporate identity and express corporate structure. In table 10, it is seen that the participants mentioned their organizational structure with frequency of 104 ("central rules, headquarters, top management decisions" with frequency of 28, "standards" with frequency of 21, "board of directors, central approval" with frequency of 14). According to the codes, the organizational structure in hotels based on central rules and standards indicates high centralization, high formation, and low complexity. Under the identity structure theme (42 frequency), it is seen that the code mentioned with frequency of 18 is" Name, properties, values, instruction physical elements from the centre".

## 4.5. Corporate Design

Corporate design, corporate communication, and corporate behaviour have been defined by some authors as tools that convey corporate identity (Birkight & Stadler, 1986, as cited in Abratt, 1989: 66). Some authors, on the other hand, considered each of them as separate dimensions of corporate identity (Melewar, 2003; Balmer & Greyser, 2002). Because hotels operate mainly in the services sector and their sectoral characteristics are included in their identity features, based on the answers given to the question of what the business is, in this study, it is appropriate to evaluate design, communication and behaviour as separate dimensions. The corporate design codes placed under the themes within the framework of the conceptual definitions in the relevant literature and are given in Table 11.

**Table 11: Corporate Design Themes and Codes**

| Corporate Design | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Product design** | frequency | **Communication Design** | frequency | **Architectural Design** | frequency |
| - | - | Logo | 20 | Design and Architecture | 22 |
| - | - | Colour | 10 | A new hotel | 2 |
| | | Employee clothes, cleaning, visual | 9 | | |
| | | Printed documents, business cards, brochures, text style | 9 | | |
| | | Being characteristic of the name | 7 | | |
| | | Images | 3 | | |
| **Total** | | | **58** | | **24** |

As can be seen in Table 11, while the most frequently emphasized subject in hotels is design and architecture (with a frequency of 22), it is seen that the expressions they attach importance to in general are combined under the communication design. Accordingly, we can say that communication design reveals itself as an element that highly supports corporate communication in businesses in the service sector such as hotels.

### 4.6. Corporate Communication

Corporate communication reveals itself as a dimension of corporate identity that enables information exchange with all stakeholders in various ways and communicates all statements and actions of the businesses (Gray & Balmer, 1998; Cornelissen, 2011). The corporate communication codes were obtained and placed under the themes within the framework of the conceptual definitions in the relevant literature and is given in Table 12.

**Table 12: Corporate Communication Themes and Codes**

| Corporate Communication | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Controlled Communication** | frequency | **Uncontrolled Communication** | frequency | **Indirect Communication** | frequency |
| **Managerial Communication** | | Word of mouth communication | 15 | Publicly known, name known | 3 |
| With employee training | 29 | | | Little known | 1 |
| Manager communication is high with employees | 22 | | | | |
| Daily, monthly, staff meetings | 20 | | | | |
| Sharing hotel data and information to employees, informing them transparently | 18 | | | | |
| Sharing reports | 6 | | | | |
| Employee satisfaction survey | 1 | | | | |
| Clear, transparent information to customers | 1 | | | | |
| Online trainings all over the world | 1 | | | | |
| **Marketing Communications** | | | | | |
| Customer satisfaction survey | 25 | | | | |
| Using social media | 19 | | | | |
| Customer feedback | 19 | | | | |
| Using pictures, photographs | 15 | | | | |
| Marketing communications (web sales, sponsorship, telephone, etc.) | 10 | | | | |
| Pay attention to advertising | 8 | | | | |
| Participation in fairs | 8 | | | | |
| Slogan | 5 | | | | |
| Working with agencies and consultants | 3 | | | | |
| Using the press | 2 | | | | |
| **Organizational Communication** | | | | | |
| Communication of employees with customers | 9 | | | | |
| Communication of employees with each other | 7 | | | | |
| **Total** | **229** | | **15** | | **4** |

The table above states that codes obtained within the scope of corporate communication are mentioned with a frequency of 248. Most coding is settled under the controlled communication theme. When the frequencies are

examined, it is seen that the most used communication methods are employee training, customer satisfaction survey, manager employee communication, personnel meetings, social media, customer feedback, pictures, photos, and word of mouth (uncontrolled communication).

## 4.7. Corporate Behaviour

The corporate behaviour code list was developed based on the definitions of Kiriakidou & Millward (2000), Balmer (2015), Melewar & Karaosmanoğlu (2006) & Okay (2013). The corporate behaviour codes were obtained and placed under the themes within the framework of the conceptual definitions in the relevant literature and is given in Table 13.

**Table 13: Corporate Behaviour Themes and Codes**

| Corporate Behaviour | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Manager Behaviours** | frequency | **Employee Behaviours** | frequency | **General Principles of Behaviour** | frequency |
| Managerial behaviour, example to employees, ethics | 18 | Employee behaviour | 17 | **Economic Behaviour** | - |
| | | | | **Social Behaviour** | **59** |
| | | | | Social responsibility projects | 21 |
| | | | | Green star, reverse osmosis, recycling | 21 |
| | | | | Supporting local elements, promoting the region | 9 |
| | | | | Employment provider to the region | 5 |
| | | | | Promoting the culture of the country | 3 |
| | | | | **Political Behaviour** | - |
| | | | | **Information Behaviour** | - |
| | | | | **Quality Behaviour** | **19** |
| | | | | Availability of quality systems | 12 |
| | | | | Environment and social project award | 7 |
| **Total** | **18** | | **17** | | **78** |

In Table 13, it is seen that codes under Corporate Behaviour are mentioned with frequency of 113. It is seen that most of the codes are gathered under general principles of behaviour. Participants have attached importance to social behaviour (with a frequency of 59) and quality behaviour (with a frequency of 19) that represent the whole business, especially where the business operates. In addition, the participants express their corporate behaviour in the form of manager behaviours with a frequency of 18, the behaviours of employees with a frequency of 17, the existence of quality systems with a frequency of 12, and supporting local elements with a frequency of 9.

As a result of the analyses, it was determined that the information behaviour was not mentioned. As it is revealed in corporate communication codes, this situation tells us the information behaviour is provided by corporate communication for hotels; through public relations activities for the external target audience and human resources for internal information activities (Okay, 2013). In this case, it can be said that information in hotel businesses is provided by verbal or written communication methods rather than behavioural information. This situation is also due to the fact that the distinction of corporate identity dimensions in the literature is not clear, and in the light of the information obtained, participating hotels consider the communication methods associated with the information behaviour. Also, based on the fact that this political behaviour is not mentioned and there is no evidence about this behaviour in the expressions of participating hotels, it can be said that there is no political behaviour in hotels.

## 4.8. Destination Identity

The hotels described themselves as summer / seasonal hotels, city hotels, mountain hotels and/or they mentioned that the place has local characteristics. Participants mentioned that while the tourists are evaluating the alternatives, they also evaluate the properties of the destination they are located in, as well as the prices, service quality and physical features (such as the number of rooms, stars, pool) of the hotels (Rızaoğlu, 2007). Participants mentioned many factors that will create the destination identity, such as the natural and historical characteristics of the destination, transportation opportunities, socio-cultural opportunities, local people, food and beverage culture (Reisinger, 2009). In the interviews, all of the participating hotels stated that it is important to reflect the characteristics of the destination they are in while expressing themselves. Based on these statements, the destination identity dimension emerged as a result of the analysis.

When the relevant literature is examined, destination identity was revealed for the first time among the dimensions that make up the corporate identity. The reason for this may be that this study is carried out on hotels (features of the accommodation industry), but also it should be seen as an important dimension for different industries.

Based on the statements obtained in this context, it can be said that destination identity must be seen as an important dimension of corporate identity in hotels. The encodings related to the destination identity are given in Table 14.

### Table 14: Destination Identity Codes and Content Analysis

| Destination Identity Codes | Freq. | O-1 | O-2 | O-3 | O-4 | O-5 | O-6 | O-7 | O-8 | O-9 | O-10 | O-11 | O-12 | O-13 | O-14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Destination features, history, nature, entertainment, local people) | 15 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| The location of the product offered (transportation, proximity to the city) | 14 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Regional differences | 13 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| **Total** | **42** | **5** | **1** | **1** | **5** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **5** | **4** | **1** | **4** | **7** | **2** | **1** |
| **Rate%** | **100** | **12,20** | **2,44** | **2,44** | **12,20** | **4,88** | **4,88** | **4,88** | **12,20** | **9,76** | **2,441** | **9,76** | **17,07** | **4,88** | **2,44** |

In Table 14, it is seen that the codes placed under the Destination identity are mentioned with a frequency of 42. It is seen that the destination features are the most mentioned subject with a frequency of 15. The features of the destination of hotels such as being urban, seaside, mountain, rural, historical or exotic (Buhalis, 2000: 102-103) cause the products and services offered by hotels to be shaped. Again, it is seen that the location of the product such as ease of transportation and proximity to the city are important. As regional differences, characteristics such as the culture of the region, food and beverage culture and employment sources were included in the participants' expressions. In addition, it was stated in the interviews that there were differences from the training given to the employees in the hotels to the advertisements due to the regional cultural differences, which shows the importance of the destination identity.

### 4.9. Industrial Identity

There are few studies that show the industrial identity among the corporate identity dimensions in literature. Melewar (2003) in his study that investigated the conceptual corporate identity dimensions, defined industrial identity as the size of the industry, growth models, rate of change, competitiveness, use of technology, and the industry's unique characteristics and included it among the corporate identity dimensions (Melewar, 2003). Olins (1995) argued that the characteristics of the industry in which the enterprises are located have an effect on the corporate identity of the enterprises. Balmer (1995) and Morison (1997) also mentioned about industrial identity and argued that businesses operating in strong industrial identities may have identical characteristics of similar structure and the difficulty of creating their own corporate identities (as cited in Melewar, 2003).

In the interviews, it has been observed that the involvement of hotels in tourism and some situations arising from the unique characteristics of tourism have an effect on their corporate identities. In Table 15, codes related to industrial identity are given.

### Table 2: Industrial Identity Codes and Content Analysis

| Industrial identity Codes | Freq. | H-1 | H-2 | H-3 | H-4 | H-5 | H-6 | H-7 | H-8 | H-9 | H-10 | H-11 | H-12 | H-13 | H-14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Containing the characteristics of tourism | 9 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| High employee turnover business | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Operating within the services sector | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| **Total** | **19** | **1** | **1** | **0** | **3** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **6** | **1** | **1** | **3** | **3** | **0** |
| **Rate%** | **100** | **5,26** | **5,26** | **0** | **15,79** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **31,58** | **5,26** | **5,26** | **15,79** | **15,79** | **0** |

In Table 15, it is seen that the codes placed under the industrial identity are mentioned with a frequency of 19. The result of analysis, Codes that the features of the tourism sector with a frequency of 9 and the turnover rate working with frequency of 7 are obtained.

### CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Hotels operating in a competitive environment (Burgess, Hampton, Price and Roper, 1995) have an increased necessity to effectively communicate what they do, how they do it, features and differences in order to get a share from the international market and be one step ahead by distinguishing themselves (Kedidi & Torfve, 2005; Mohammed, Denizci Guillet, Schuckert & Law, 2016). In this context, in order to improve their market share by revealing their existence, clarifying the concept of corporate identity in hotels and revealing its dimensions are vital, and constitute the main purpose of this study.

The aim this study, with the assumption that every business has an identity, is to explore and conceptualize the dimensions of a holistic corporate identity structure, which defines every aspect of a hotel. This study, with a multidisciplinary approach based on the conceptual corporate identity dimensions put forward in the light of different disciplines and different paradigms existing in the literature, focuses on exploring the corporate identity structure in hotels.

As a result of this exploratory and qualitative research for the in-depth examination of the corporate identity in hotels, research findings point out 8 dimensions that make up the corporate identity structure in hotels. Considering the themes and codes that were revealed according to the content analysis, the dimensions that constitute the corporate identity in hotels are determined as corporate culture, corporate structure, corporate strategy, corporate design, corporate communication, corporate behaviour, destination identity and industrial identity. The dimensions are given in Table 16.

**Table 16:** Corporate Identity Dimensions of Hotels

| Dimensions | frequency | Rate % |
|---|---|---|
| Corporate Culture | 330 | 25,98 |
| Corporate Strategy | 290 | 22,83 |
| Corporate Communications | 248 | 19,53 |
| Corporate Structure | 146 | 11,50 |
| Corporate Behaviour | 113 | 8,9 |
| Corporate Design | 82 | 6,46 |
| Destination Identity | 42 | 3,31 |
| Industrial identity | 19 | 1,5 |
| Total | **1270** | **100** |

In Table 16, it is seen that corporate culture is the most mentioned dimension and it is taken into consideration in the formation of corporate identity in hotels more than other dimensions, with a rate of 25.98%. According to the literature and the results of analysis, the inclusion of corporate personality in the corporate culture in hotels shows that the values, beliefs and philosophy of the businesses are one of the cornerstones of the corporate identity structure. Corporate strategies with 22.83%, corporate communication with 19.53%, corporate structure with 11.50%, corporate behaviour with 8.9%, corporate design with 6.46%, destination identity with 3.31% and with 1.5% industrial identity are the other dimensions that build up the corporate identity in hotels.

As an important result of the research, two dimensions have emerged that make up the corporate identity structure of hotels that did not exist in previous models in the literature.

Destination identity as a new dimension (42 frequency, 3.31%) is included in the research findings in the discovery of the dimensions that constitute the corporate identity structure in hotels, which are not included in the existing models in the corporate identity literature. Considering the objective criteria, the destination identity formed by the elements such as the natural and historical characteristics, transportation, socio-cultural opportunities, local people and food and beverage culture on the place where the hotels are located has revealed with 3 coding. In the research findings, it has been revealed in the analysis that the features of the destination are also important in the preference of the hotels, besides the hotel features, that the hotels benefit from the features of the destination they are in while structuring themselves, are affected and even consciously create their corporate identities according to these features.

The second newly discovered dimension is industrial identity. The dimension of industrial identity has emerged, supported by the opinions of the participating hotels, that similar identity structures may occur in businesses in strong industries such as accommodation, but being aware of this, feeding on industry's characteristics is important and effective to make their own corporate identities (Melewar, 2003). In the reveal of the industrial identity dimension (19 frequency, 1.5%), it is seen that the expressions were gathered under 3 different coding and the characteristics of tourism and the features related to the services sector are emphasized.

According to the dimensions discovered as a result of the study within the scope of hotels, corporate identity can be define as it is used by businesses to introduce themselves to their internal and external stakeholders, a phenomenon or a structure formed by the corporate culture, corporate strategy, corporate structure, corporate communication, corporate behaviour, corporate design, destination identity, and industrial identity. The corporate identity dimensions obtained as a result of the research and the sub-dimensions that make up these dimensions are summarized and the corporate identity model is given in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: The corporate identity Model**
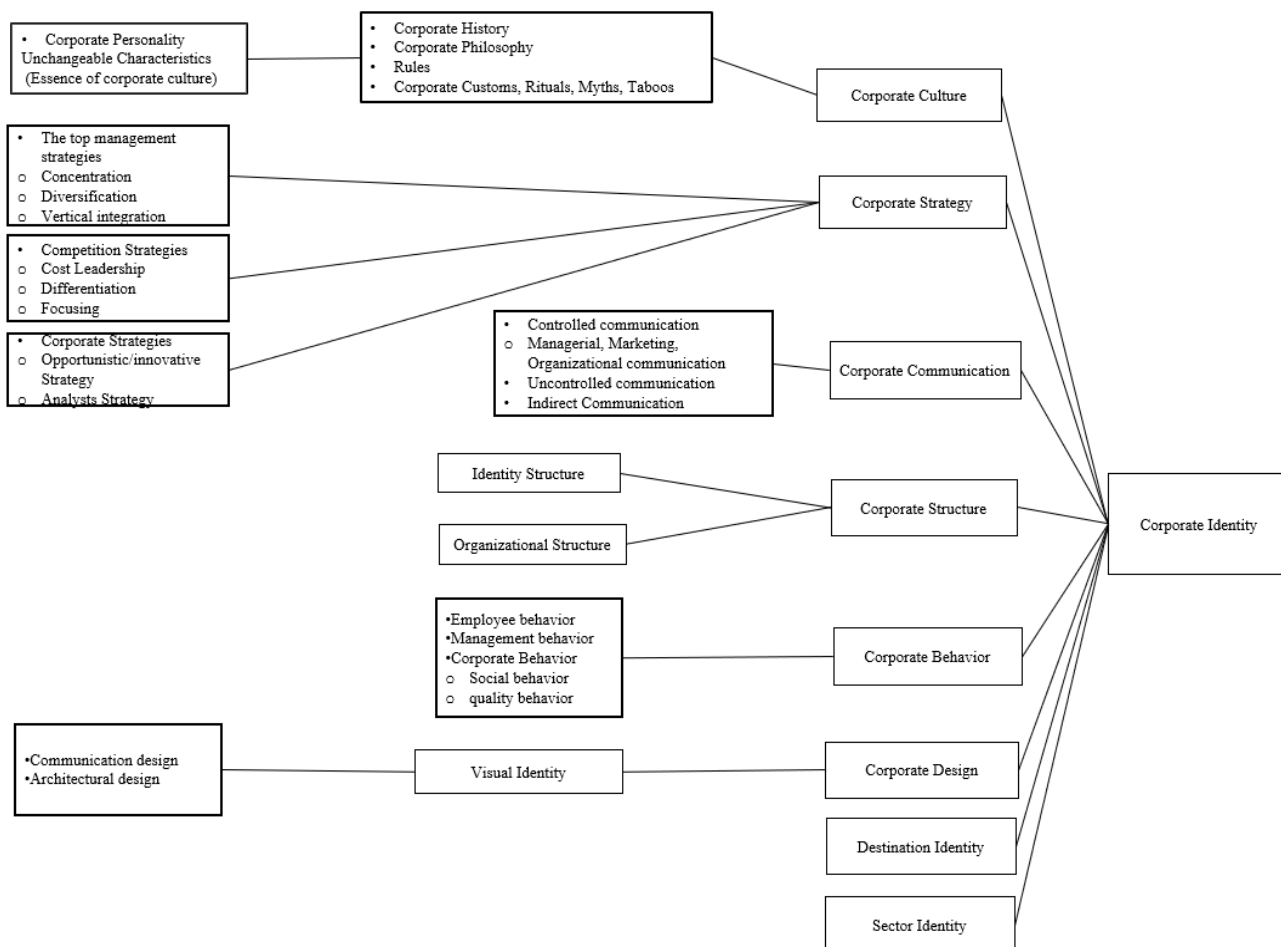


This study suggests focusing on the dimensions obtained for businesses that are aware of their corporate identity and want to turn it into their advantage. It is thought that this research will be an example and guide for corporate identity studies to be carried out for hotel businesses of different qualities such as boutique hotels or businesses operating in different industries. The necessity of considering the issue with its multidisciplinary structure in various studies on corporate identity has shown that new dimensions can emerge in different sectors.

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**Ethical approval**

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**Conflict of interest**

There is no potential conflict of interest in this study.