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## Araştırma Makalesi • Research Article

# Investigation the Contributions of Niğde Gazozu (Soda-Pop) as Local Brand to City Brand\*

## Yerel Bir Marka Olarak Niğde Gazozu'nun Şehir Markasına Yaptığı Katkıların İncelenmesi

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### ÖZ

Bu araştırmanın amacı yerel bir marka olarak Niğde Gazozu'nun Niğde ili şehir markasına yaptığı katkıları incelemektir. Amaca uygun olarak çalışma halkın bakış açısına göre tasarlanmıştır ve halkın Niğde gazozunun şehir markasına yaptığı katkıların nasıl algıladıkları incelenmiştir. Çalışmada gerekli bilgiler anket yöntemi ile toplanmıştır. Araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilen anket formu, 2019 yılı içerisinde Niğde ilinde yaşayan 668 katılımcıya uygulanmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda; yerel bir girişim ve marka olarak Niğde Gazozu'nun Niğde ili şehir markasına orta düzeyde katkı sağladığı saptanmıştır. Katılımcıların yaşlarına, medeni durumlarına ve eğitim düzeylerine göre Niğde Gazozu'nun Niğde ili şehir markasına yaptığı katılara yönelik algılamalarda farklılaşmalar olduğu görülmüştür. Diğer yandan katılımcıların cinsiyetlerine, aylık gelir durumlarına ve mesleklerine göre Niğde Gazozu'nun şehir markasına katkısı açısından algılamalarda bir farklılaşma olmadığı görülmüştür.

### ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the contribution of Niğde Gazozu (Soda-Pop) as local brand to city brand. According to purpose, the study was designed through citizens' perspective and it is investigated how citizens perceive the contribution of Niğde gazozu on city brand. The data was collected by survey method. The survey questionnaire, developed by the researcher for this purpose, is applied to 668 participants residing in Niğde Province as of 2019. As a result of the study, it was determined that there was a partial contribution of Niğde Gazozu which is a local brand to city brand. The perceptions for contribution of Niğde Gazozu to city brand differentiated by participants' marital status, education degree and age. On the other hand, there wasn't any differences between perception for contribution of Niğde Gazozu to city brand and participants' gender, income and occupation.

## 1. Introduction

A brand is described as a name, sign, symbol, color, etc. or a certain combination of these, which defines producers'

goods and services and distinguishes them from their competitors (Kotler and Armstrong, 2004: 248). Today, it is observed that all commercial products and enterprises

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that wish to maintain their existence and to be at the forefront of competition are in the effort of branding.

Although branding has been a concept for consumer products for decades, the strategic branding concept of countries, cities, and regions was only present throughout the mid-1990s in order to enable the venues to compete more efficiently in a harshly competitive environment (Rizzi and Dioli, 2010: 303). As well as commercial products, cities also undergo branding to be preferred by target audiences. The city brand is briefly expressed as the implementation of the brand strategies applied to the products for the cities (İçyer, 2010: 68). "City brand is a concept that is obtained as a result of the process which aims to be more marketable. The city brand, which has a wide impact from the economy to social activities, is generally a value formed by the impressions of the people or the media. The more a city affects people positively, the more a city brand it becomes" (Başpınar, 2015: 31).

City branding is a new discipline that uses information obtained from brand strategy and communication for the development of venues and cities. Along with this discipline, cities base their efforts on ensuring that all their strengths are properly coordinated in accordance with the market needs and that their strong, positive and city-specific reputations acquire continuous and permanent advantages (Tanlasa, 2005: 44). City branding aims to achieve one or more of the four core objectives: enhancing the export of city's products, protecting its local enterprises from foreign competitors, attracting or development factors or retaining the existing ones and positioning the cities at local and national levels in economic, social and political terms (Papadopoulos, 2004: 36-37).

The city brand has a value that varies depending on the position of competitors, the distance to the brand cities and the geographical region. The brand city perceptions are directly affected by the fact that the competitors of a city in a certain field of activity are far away or the success in that area is low. However, it is necessary to keep the bar of success higher in order to succeed in wider geographies. For example, the city of fashion Milan has a worldwide reputation and is at the top of the list on fashion. If the city of Milan had a lesser reputation and did not meet the international success criteria, it would be considered a brand city only within the borders of Italy. In that case, Milan's recognition in the fashion field outside Italy would have been at a relatively lower level and it would have had many compelling competitors in this field (Başpınar, 2015: 31).

City branding undertakes two important economic tasks such as ensuring the introduction of the strengths of cities in accordance with the needs of the market and supporting the city's renewal strategies by creating economic revival when changes are needed (Seisedos and Vaggione, 2005: 2). Thanks to these tasks, cities protect the local or national

structures of the city and, by the same token, increase their competitiveness by venturing in new sectors.

Economic reasons underlie beneath the efforts of cities to become a brand. Attracting global fixed capital investment as well as circulating capital as well as transportation, tourism, cultural and social activities through internationally recognized identities of cities has become a development strategy (Paul, 2004: 575).

As cities have their own distinctive features, each city is a brand of its own. However, not all brands have the same value. Some brands consider the target audience more valuable, whereas others tend to assess it more worthless (Özdemir and Karaca, 2009: 114). For example, a product with a label "Made in Germany" written on is likely to be demanded more in comparison to another a product with a label "Made in PRC" written on (Işık and Erdem, 2015: 33). Likewise, the perceptions and images of the cities formed on individuals' minds are different, designed to determine the values (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005: 507). There are many factors that influence city branding. One of these factors is the branding of city-specific products. The quality and image of the product are perceived as an effective strategy that increases the brand value of the city. The thermal springs in Yalova, İnegöl meatballs of İnegöl district and lahmacun of Urfa province are unique examples (Apaydın, 2014: 27-28). On a global basis, Italy's pizza and spaghetti would be given as proper examples.

The local brands and investments in the city and the city brand have a bilateral relationship. The brands and the volume of business opportunities they create are factors that infuse value to the city. Similarly, as a result of the city being a brand, the power of the brands and, in turn, the investment/business opportunities tend to increase. These two elements which trigger each other can be handled with the win-win principle. The local brand, which is decisive for the city brands, and the business areas they create are effective tools for rendering the city a center of attraction. The relationship between the city and the business community provides mutual benefits to both sides. The benefits of interactions between Munich and BMW, Tokyo and Sony, as well as the city and the business world, can be said to strengthen and exploit each other. Such successful enterprises attract significant investments and visitors to their venues and make internationally competitive (Başpınar, 2015: 38-39).

In this research study, the contribution of Niğde Soda-Pop to the branding of Niğde city as a local brand and investment in Niğde is examined.

Niğde is a medium-sized city in Turkey's Central Anatolia Region with a population of 306,730 (<https://biruni.tuik.gov.tr>). Niğde's main livelihoods are agriculture and livestock production ([nigde.tarim.gov.tr](http://nigde.tarim.gov.tr)). The industry in Niğde began to develop after the 1980s. There are textile and fruit juice production facilities in

Niğde that can provide international branding (Polat ve Kılınc, 2008:4). One of these facilities is Niğde Soft Drinks and Food Industry Limited Company which has been producing Soda-Pop under the brand of “Niğde Gazozu” (Niğde Soda Pop) since 1960.

As the results of short-, medium- and long-term planning made in the early 1980s, the establishment of today’s facilities was planned and built on an area of 5500 m<sup>2</sup> in Niğde Organized Industrial Zone in 1992. In the 2000s, the facility went through a technological renovation and modernization applications were carried out. In 2003, it was certified by the Turkish Standards Institute and its trademark was registered. Niğde Soda Pop, which was first exported to the United States in 2003, was exported to Azerbaijan in 2006. As of 2019, Niğde Soda-Pop continues its production with a fully automatic integrated facility that produces 10,000 bottles/hour. Niğde Soda Pop, identified with Niğde, is being sold in shopping malls and entertainment centers all over Turkey.

Many other national Soda-Pop productions are being maintained in Turkey, but Niğde Soda-Pop is preferred over them due to its taste and aroma. It is stated that Niğde Soda-Pop has a special formula generated by years of experience in addition to the use of natural spring water and artificial sweetener in its production which makes it different from other Soda-Pop brands (<http://www.nigdegazozu.com.tr/hakkimizda.html>).

Although there are many national and global brands in the non-alcoholic beverage sector, Niğde Soda-Pop represents both the brand and the city of Niğde as the preferred beverage.

Although it has been observed that there has been an increase in the number of researches on the brand city, city brand and its image in the national and international literature throughout recent years, no research study has been conducted on the contribution of a local brand to the city brand. It is thought that this aspect of the research would introduce an idea to the relevant literature and city brand studies.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Research Model

The study is designed through survey model. “*Survey models are suitable for research aiming to describe a situation that exists in the past or the present*” (Karasar, 2011: 77).

### 2.2. Aim of the Study and Its Hypotheses

This study aims to determine the contributions of Niğde Soda-Pop as local brand to the city brand. In addition, this study analyzes how citizens perceive the contribution of Niğde Gazozu to City brand. For these purposes, the following hypotheses are tested:

H<sub>1</sub>: The perceived contribution of Niğde Soda-Pop to the city brand differs according to the age groups of the participants.

H<sub>2</sub>: The perceived contribution of Niğde Soda-Pop to the city brand differs according to the genders of the participants.

H<sub>3</sub>: The perceived contribution of Niğde Soda-Pop to the city brand differs according to the marital status of the participants.

H<sub>4</sub>: The perceived contribution of Niğde Soda-Pop to the city brand differs according to the education level of the participants.

H<sub>5</sub>: The perceived contribution of Niğde Soda-Pop to the city brand differs according to the monthly income levels of the participants.

H<sub>6</sub>: The perceived contribution of Niğde Soda-Pop to the city brand differs according to the occupations of the participants.

### 2.3. Population and Sample

The population of the study consists of individuals over 18 years of age living in Central Niğde. According to the address-based population registration system data, the central population of Niğde is 181,979 as of 2018 (<https://biruni.tuik.gov.tr>). Approximately 25% of the population is younger than 18 years of age. In this case, the sample size is determined as 136,484. In determining the sample size, the following are used by considering the required sample size (n = 661) with ± 5% sampling error in 99% confidence interval for this population (Salant and Dillman, 1994: 55);

- (i).  $n = N t^2 p q / d^2 (N-1) + t^2 p q$
- (ii). N: Number of individuals in the target audience
- (iii). n: Number of individuals included in the sample
- (iv). p: Frequency of occurrence of the investigated event (probability of occurrence)
- (v). q: Frequency of non-occurrence of the event under investigation (probability of non-occurrence)
- (vi). t: the theoretical value found in t-table at a certain level of significance
- (vii). d: Accepted ± sampling error according to the frequency of occurrence of the event.

In order to obtain more general outcomes from survey results, the survey questionnaires are applied to 700 participants and 668 valid questionnaires are obtained. The descriptive characteristics of the sample group are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Characteristics of the Participants

	Groups	Frequency(n)	Percentage (%)
Age	18-25	410	61.4
	26-35	140	21.0
	36-45	62	9.3
	46 and older	56	8.4
Gender	Female	332	49.7
	Male	336	50.3
Marital Status	Married	182	27.2

Single	486	72.8
Education Level		
High School Degree or lower	156	23.4
Associate Degree	70	10.5
Undergraduate Degree	360	53.9
Graduate Degree	82	12.3
Monthly Income Level		
0-2000 TL	330	49.4
2001-3000 TL	114	17.1
3001-4000 TL	80	12.0
4001-5000 TL	66	9.9
5001 TL and higher	78	11.7
Occupation		
Public Sector Employee	114	17.1
Private Sector Employee	130	19.5
Student	366	54.8
Niğde Soda-Pop Employee	58	8.7

#### 2.4. Data Collection Tools

The data were collected by the survey questionnaire method. The survey questionnaire consists of two parts. In the first part, there are 6 multiple choice questions including participants' age, gender, etc. to determine their descriptive characteristics. In the second part, there is a 5-

point Likert-type scale consisting of 61 propositions for Contribution to the City Brand developed by the researcher. The reliability and validity tests for the scale are performed. The internal consistency coefficient "Cronbach's Alpha" is calculated to measure the reliability of the scale. The overall reliability of the scale is found as  $\alpha = 0.995$ .

The explanatory factor analysis method is utilized to determine the construct validity of the scale. As a result of the Barlett test ( $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ), it was found that the variables included in the factor analysis are correlated. As a result of the test (KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value) =  $0.978 > 0.60$ ), the sample size was found to be sufficient for the application of factor analysis. In the factor analysis application, the varimax method was chosen thus, it is provided that the structure of the relationship among the factors remained the same. As a result of the factor analysis, the variables were collected under 3 factors with a total variance of 84.383%. According to the alpha and the variance value, which is related to its reliability, it was understood that the Contribution to the City Brand scale was a valid and reliable tool. The factor structure of the scale is shown below.

**Table 2.** Factor Structure of the Contribution to City Brand Scale

Dimensions	Factor Load
Perception of being national brand (Eigenvalue =46.669; Explained Variance=31.551; Alpha=0.992)	
I like Niğde Soda-Pop very much	0.824
Niğde Soda-Pop is delicious enough	0.824
Niğde Soda-Pop has the characteristic of being a brand	0.816
Niğde Soda-Pop can be distinguished from other sparkling beverages	0.815
Its participation in congresses, fairs, and exhibitions should be supported in order to make Niğde Soda-Pop more available in national and international markets	0.808
I think Niğde Soda-Pop has enough good quality	0.796
Niğde Soda-Pop is easily accessible	0.781
Niğde Soda-Pop has the characteristic of being a strong brand	0.765
Niğde Soda-Pop is a strong brand	0.750
Niğde Soda-Pop can compete with other sparkling beverages in terms of taste and quality	0.749
Niğde Soda-Pop is respectful to its customers	0.744
The most important feature that distinguishes Niğde Soda-Pop from other sparkling beverages is the halal certificate	0.741
Niğde Soda-Pop is a trademark	0.733
Being alcohol-free is the most important feature that separates Niğde Soda-Pop from other sparkling beverages	0.709
The promotion of Niğde Soda-Pop should be provided in order to promote Niğde and its surroundings in national markets and make it a brand city	0.694
Niğde Soda-Pop is a service-based brand	0.674
Niğde Soda-Pop is affected by economic criteria in the country	0.672
Niğde Soda-Pop has correctly chosen logos and slogans	0.669
Niğde Soda-Pop can be defined as the existence of potentials as a brand city	0.651
Compared to other sparkling beverages, Niğde Soda-Pop is more carbonated and contains less sugar	0.647
Niğde Soda-Pop is innovative enough in branding	0.634

Niğde Soda-Pop has a strong marketing strategy as a brand	0.630
It is thought that Niğde Soda-Pop provides sufficient brand context	0.629
Niğde Soda-Pop bottle attracts sufficient attention of the consumer	0.616
Niğde Soda-Pop contributes positively to both the residents of the city and the potential visitors, the tourists, and the stakeholders.	0.601
Its contribution to innovation and entrepreneurship (Eigenvalue=2.807; Explained Variance=28.553; Alpha=0.987)	
I think that the promotion of Niğde Soda-Pop is done in the national media at a sufficient level.	0.831
Local authorities and the private sector sufficiently promote Niğde Soda-Pop as a city brand	0.820
I think that the promotion of Niğde Soda-Pop is sufficiently carried out by the local media	0.775
Niğde Soda-Pop is sufficiently involved in the branding process on the Internet	0.769
I think that Niğde Soda-Pop is sufficiently introduced to Ömer Halisdemir University students	0.766
The name of Niğde Soda Pop' s owner is well-known	0.751
Ömer Halisdemir University strives to make Niğde soda a city brand	0.731
I think Niğde Soda-Pop has made enough innovation	0.729
I think Niğde Soda-Pop takes enough risks	0.716
It is sufficient for the sustainability of urban promotion of Niğde Soda Pop	0.712
Niğde Soda-Pop uses sociocultural elements sufficiently to increase brand value	0.688
I think that Niğde Soda-Pop has applied the concept of continuous innovations sufficiently in the corporate sense	0.676
Niğde Soda-Pop sufficiently uses historical elements in branding	0.668
Niğde Soda-Pop has sufficiently ensured entrepreneurship	0.662
During the branding process of Niğde Soda-Pop, Niğde province has carried its identity and urban image to national and international level	0.657
I think that internal communication mechanisms are effective enough for the branding of Niğde Soda-Pop.	0.649
Niğde Soda-Pop uses enough physical properties in branding	0.641
I think that Niğde Soda-Pop is paying enough attention to the internal entrepreneurship factor in its corporate structure.	0.615
I think that Ömer Halisdemir University can contribute to the economic development of Niğde Soda-Pop, employment creation, creation of brand value in general knowledge, production, technology transfer, management, etc.	0.552
Its contribution to development of Niğde (Eigenvalue=1.998; Explained Variance=24.279; Alpha=0.986)	
Niğde Soda-Pop can benefit from the advantages of the brand and increase its marketability	0.753
As a soda brand, Niğde Soda-Pop is a part of the city marketing process that serves to create a strong image of cities	0.741
Niğde Soda-Pop gives importance to branding concept	0.734
Niğde Soda-Pop contributes to Niğde in becoming a brand city	0.729
Niğde Soda-Pop contributes to the marketing of Niğde as a city	0.704
Niğde Soda-Pop has made Niğde a competitive province	0.696
Niğde Soda-Pop associated its product with Niğde to influence its target audience	0.695
Niğde Soda-Pop provides value for urbanization and all kinds of city-related outputs during the branding process	0.686
Niğde Soda-Pop has been able to deliver the promises that create a real image that would identify with the province of Niğde	0.673
Niğde Soda-Pop establishes an emotional connection with customers by using Niğde' s attraction feature	0.668
Niğde Soda-Pop has succeeded to become a brand by using the unique characteristics of Niğde province	0.668
Technological development of Niğde province has an impact on the development of Niğde Soda-Pop	0.665
Niğde Soda-Pop contributes to Niğde becoming the center of attraction	0.632
Niğde Soda-Pop constitutes an image of Niğde in the minds of individuals	0.613
Niğde Soda-Pop creates the appropriate image for the branding of Niğde	0.601
Branding of Niğde Soda-Pop reveals the potential of the city	0.591
The communication and promotion activities of Niğde Soda-Pop draw attention to Niğde province	0.578
Total Variance=84.383%; Cronbach' s Alpha Coefficient=0.995	

When calculating the scores of the factors in the scale, factor values were obtained by dividing the values of the items in the factor by the number of items (arithmetic mean).

## 2.5. Data Analysis

The data obtained from the study were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) for Windows 22.0. Upon evaluation of the data, frequency and

percentage analyses were used to determine the descriptive characteristics of the students who participated in the research study, and average and standard deviation statistics were used to determine the perceptions of the participants about the contribution of Niğde Soda-Pop to Niğde city brand.

The scores of scale dimensions were evaluated between 1 and 5. In order to calculate the distribution range, the formula  $\text{Distribution range} = \text{Maximum value} - \text{Minimum value} / \text{Number of degrees}$  is utilized. This range has a width of 4 points. This width is divided into five equal intervals and the limit values are determined as “very low (1.00-1.79), “low” (1.80-2.59), “medium” (2.60-3.39), “high” (3.40-4.19) and “very high” (4.20-5.00) and the findings are interpreted (Sümbüloğlu 1993: 9).

One-way ANOVA test is used for testing the research hypotheses, for comparing the gender-related data obtained from the t-test, and to test the hypotheses of the other variables. After performing the ANOVA test, the Scheffe test is used as a complementary post-hoc analysis to determine the differences. The obtained findings are evaluated within a 95% confidence interval and at a 5% significance level.

### 3. Findings

Table 3 indicates the participants' perceptions regarding the contribution of Niğde Soda-Pop to the city brand of Niğde.

**Table 4.** Differentiation of Perceptions of Contribution of Niğde Soda-Pop to City Brand of Niğde According to Age Groups

	Group	N	Mean	St. Dev.	F	p	Diff.
Perception of Being National Brand	18-25	205	3,249	1.334	5.701	0.001	2>1 2>3 1>4 2>4
	26-35	70	3,621	1.325			
	36-45	31	2,854	1.457			
	46 and older	28	2,457	1.579			
Its Contribution to Innovation and Entrepreneurship	18-25	205	3,000	1.265	2.730	0.044	2>3 2>4
	26-35	70	3,205	1.355			
	36-45	31	2,628	1.211			
	46 and older	28	2,494	1.568			
Its Contribution to Development of Niğde	18-25	205	3,327	1.309	6.209	0.000	1>3 2>3 1>4 2>4
	26-35	70	3,477	1.289			
	36-45	31	2,693	1.409			
	46 and older	28	2,429	1.524			
Its Contribution to City Brand of Niğde (General)	18-25	205	3,193	1.250	5.079	0.002	2>3 1>4 2>4
	26-35	70	3,451	1.268			
	36-45	31	2,739	1.326			
	46 and older	28	2,461	1.546			

#### One-Way Analysis of Variance

Table 4 indicates the results of a one-way analysis of variance to investigate the differentiation of the perceptions of the contribution of Niğde Soda-Pop to the Niğde city brand according to the age groups of the participants. According to the age groups of the participants, there is a significant difference in perception of being a national brand ( $F_{(3, 330)}=5.701$ ;  $p=0.001<0.05$ ). As a result of the

According to the data presented in Table 3, the mean value of the participants' perception of Niğde Soda-Pop being a national brand is  $3,224 \pm 1,394$ , the mean of “its contribution to innovation and entrepreneurship” is  $2,966 \pm 1,317$ , the mean of “its contribution to the development of Niğde” is  $3,224 \pm 1,364$ , and the mean of “its (general) contribution to city brand of Niğde” is  $3,144 \pm 1,311$ . In other words, the participants' perceptions about the contribution of Niğde Soda-Pop to the city brand of Niğde are at moderate levels. Table 4 indicates the results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test the hypothesis claiming that “ $H_1$ : The perceived contribution of Niğde Soda-Pop to the city brand differs according to the age groups of the participants”.

**Table 3.** Participants' Perceptions of Niğde Soda Pop' s Contribution to Niğde City Brand

	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Perception of Being National Brand	668	3,224	1.394	1,000	5,000
Its Contribution to Innovation and Entrepreneurship	668	2,966	1.317	1,000	5,000
Its Contribution to Development of Niğde	668	3,224	1.364	1,000	5,000
Its Contribution to City Brand of Niğde (General)	668	3,144	1.311	1,000	5,000

Scheffe test conducted to determine the cause of the difference; it is determined that the perceptions of those aged 26-35 for Niğde Soda-Pop being a national brand ( $\bar{x} = 3,621$ ) are higher than of those aged 18-25 ( $\bar{x} = 3,249$ ), 36-45, and 46 and older ( $\bar{x} = 2,457$ ), whereas the perceptions of those aged 18-25 for Niğde Soda-Pop being a national

brand ( $\bar{x} = 3,249$ ) are higher than of those aged 46 and older ( $\bar{x}=2,457$ ).

Participants' contributions to innovation and entrepreneurship scores differ significantly according to age ( $F_{(3, 330)}=2.730$ ;  $p=0.044<0.05$ ). The reason for the difference stems from the fact that the scores of the contribution to innovation and entrepreneurship perceived by those aged 26-35 ( $\bar{x} = 3,205$ ) and of those aged 36-45 years ( $\bar{x} = 2,628$ ). It also stems from the fact that the scores of the contribution to innovation and entrepreneurship perceived by those aged 26-35 ( $\bar{x}=3,205$ ) are higher than those aged 46 and older ( $\bar{x} = 2,494$ ).

The scores of the contribution to the development of Niğde differ significantly according to age ( $F_{(3, 330)}=6.209$ ;  $p=0.000<0.05$ ). The reason for the difference stems from the fact that the contribution scores for the development of Niğde ( $\bar{x} = 3,327$ ) perceived by those aged 18-25 are higher than those aged 36-45 ( $\bar{x} = 2,693$ ). This is because the scores of contributions to the development of Niğde ( $\bar{x} = 3,477$ ) perceived by those aged 26-35 are higher than those aged 36-45 ( $\bar{x} = 2,693$ ). It stems from the fact that the scores of contributions to the development of Niğde ( $\bar{x} = 3,327$ ) perceived by those aged 18-25 being higher than

those aged 46 and older ( $\bar{x} = 2,429$ ). It is also because the scores of the contribution to the development of Niğde perceived by those aged 26-35 ( $\bar{x}= 3,477$ ) are higher than those aged 46 and older ( $\bar{x} = 2,429$ ).

The overall scores of participants' perception of city brand and image differ significantly according to age ( $F_{(3, 330)}=5.079$ ;  $p=0.002<0.05$ ). The reason for the difference is because the general scores of the perception of those aged 26-35 for the city brand and image ( $\bar{x} = 3,451$ ) are higher than those aged 36-45 ( $\bar{x} = 2,739$ ). This is because the general scores of the perception of those aged 18-25 for the city brand and image ( $\bar{x} = 3,193$ ) are higher than those aged 46 and older ( $\bar{x} = 2,461$ ). This is because the general scores of the perception of those aged 26-35 for the city brand and image ( $\bar{x} = 3,451$ ) are higher than those aged 46 and older ( $\bar{x} = 2,461$ ).

According to these obtained data, the hypothesis claiming that "*H<sub>1</sub>: The perceived contribution of Niğde Soda-Pop to the city brand differs according to the age groups of the participants*" is verified and accepted. Table 5 presents the results of the Independent groups' T-test conducted to test the hypothesis "*H<sub>2</sub>: The perceived contribution of Niğde Soda-Pop to the city brand differs according to the genders of the participants*".

**Table 1.** Differentiation of Perception Scores of City Brand and Image According to Gender

	Group	N	Mean	St. Dev.	t	sd	p
Perception of Being National Brand	Female	332	3,318	1.331	1.231	332	0.219
	Male	336	3,131	1.452			
Its Contribution to Innovation and Entrepreneurship	Female	332	3,043	1.286	1.054	332	0.293
	Male	336	2,891	1.347			
Its Contribution to Development of Niğde	Female	332	3,345	1.317	1.617	332	0.107
	Male	336	3,104	1.403			
Its Contribution to City Brand of Niğde (General)	Female	332	3,240	1.259	1.335	332	0.183
	Male	336	3,049	1.358			

**Independent Groups T-Test**

Upon examining the data presented in Table 5; it is determined that the (general) scores of participants' perception for Niğde Soda-Pop of being a national brand, its contribution to innovation and entrepreneurship, its contribution to the development of Niğde, city brand and image do not differ significantly according to gender variable ( $p > 0.05$ ). Accordingly, the hypothesis "*H<sub>2</sub>: The*

perceived contribution of Niğde Soda-Pop to the city brand differs according to the genders of the participants" is not verified and rejected.

Table 6 presents the results of independent group T-Test performed to test the hypothesis claiming that "*H<sub>3</sub>: The perceived contribution of Niğde Soda-Pop to the city brand differs according to the marital status of the participants*".

**Table 6.** Differentiation of Perception Scores for City Brand and Image According to Marital Status

	Group	N	Mean	St. Dev.	t	sd	p
Perception of Being National Brand	Married	182	3,005	1.567	-1.764	332	0.105
	Single	486	3,306	1.317			
Its Contribution to Innovation and Entrepreneurship	Married	182	2,825	1.458	-1.196	332	0.265
	Single	486	3,019	1.259			
Its Contribution to Development of Niğde	Married	182	2,864	1.517	-2.985	332	0.006
	Single	486	3,359	1.279			
Its Contribution to City Brand of Niğde (General)	Married	182	2,910	1.481	-2.005	332	0.067
	Single	486	3,231	1.233			

Upon examining the data presented in Table 6; the scores of contribution to the development of Niğde differ significantly according to the marital status of the

participants ( $t_{(332)}=-2.985$ ;  $p=0.006<0.05$ ). The scores of single participants' perception for contribution to the development of Niğde ( $\bar{x} = 3,359$ ) are found to be higher

than of married people ( $\bar{x} = 2,864$ ). The overall scores of participants' perception of being a national brand, contribution to innovation and entrepreneurship, and contribution to the city brand (General) do not differ significantly according to the marital status variable ( $p > 0.05$ ). According to these obtained data, the hypothesis " $H_3$ : The perceived contribution of Niğde Soda-Pop to the city brand differs according to the marital status of the participants"

is verified and accepted in terms of the Contribution to the Development of Niğde dimension, whereas it is rejected in terms of other dimensions. Table 7 presents the results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test the hypothesis " $H_4$ : The perceived contribution of Niğde Soda-Pop to the city brand differs according to the education level of the participants".

**Table 7.** Differentiation of Participants' Perceptions of Contribution to City Brand According to Monthly Income Levels

	Group	N	Mean	St. Dev.	F	p
Perception of Being National Brand	0-1000 TL	330	3,205	1.347	0.207	0.934
	1001-2000 TL	114	3,211	1.473		
	2001-3000 TL	80	3,112	1.500		
	3001-4000 TL	66	3,379	1.518		
	4001 TL and higher	78	3,306	1.305		
Its Contribution to Innovation and Entrepreneurship	0-1000 TL	330	2,964	1.258	0.206	0.935
	1001-2000 TL	114	2,955	1.432		
	2001-3000 TL	80	2,921	1.332		
	3001-4000 TL	66	3,148	1.520		
	4001 TL and higher	78	2,885	1.243		
Its Contribution to Development of Niğde	0-1000 TL	330	3,305	1.315	0.572	0.683
	1001-2000 TL	114	3,207	1.444		
	2001-3000 TL	80	2,944	1.439		
	3001-4000 TL	66	3,235	1.504		
	4001 TL and higher	78	3,186	1.275		
Its Contribution to City Brand of Niğde (General)	0-1000 TL	330	3,158	1.252	0.188	0.944
	1001-2000 TL	114	3,130	1.405		
	2001-3000 TL	80	3,006	1.394		
	3001-4000 TL	66	3,267	1.486		
	4001 TL and higher	78	3,141	1.220		

Upon examining the data presented in Table 7; it is determined the (general) scores of participants' perception for Niğde Soda-Pop of being a national brand, its contribution to innovation and entrepreneurship, its contribution to the development of Niğde, city brand and image do not differ significantly according to monthly income level variable ( $p > 0.05$ ). According to these

obtained data, the hypothesis " $H_4$ : The perceived contribution of Niğde Soda-Pop to the city brand differs according to the education level of the participants" is rejected and cannot be verified. Table 8 presents the results of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test the hypothesis " $H_5$ : The perceived contribution of Niğde Soda-Pop to the city brand differs according to the monthly income levels of the participants".

**Table 8.** Differentiation of Perception Scores for City Brand and Image According to Education Level

	Group	N	Mean	St. Dev.	F	p	Diff.
Perception of Being National Brand	High School Degree and lower	156	2,813	1.562	4.414	0.005	2>1 3>1 4>1
	Associate Degree	70	3,465	1.521			
	Undergraduate Degree	360	3,244	1.321			
	Graduate Degree	82	3,710	1.037			
Its Contribution to Innovation and Entrepreneurship	High School Degree and lower	156	2,771	1.503	1.864	0.135	
	Associate Degree	70	3,400	1.413			
	Undergraduate Degree	360	2,957	1.239			
	Graduate Degree	82	3,005	1.131			
Its Contribution to Development of Niğde	High School Degree and lower	156	2,835	1.561	3.614	0.014	2>1 3>1 4>1
	Associate Degree	70	3,444	1.577			
	Undergraduate Degree	360	3,263	1.283			
	Graduate Degree	82	3,604	0.907			
Its Contribution to City Brand of Niğde (General)	High School Degree and lower	156	2,806	1.521	3.186	0.024	2>1 3>1 4>1
	Associate Degree	70	3,439	1.454			
	Undergraduate Degree	360	3,160	1.226			
	Graduate Degree	82	3,461	0.963			



Upon examining the data in Table 8; it is determined that the participants' perception levels of being a national brand according to their education levels significantly differ ( $F_{(3, 330)}=4.414$ ;  $p=0.005<0.05$ ). The reasons for the difference include;

- Associate degree-holding individuals' perception level of being a national brand ( $\bar{x} = 3,465$ ) is higher than high school degree-holding individuals' perception level of being a national brand ( $\bar{x} = 2,813$ ).
- Undergraduate degree-holding individuals' perception scores of being a national brand ( $\bar{x} = 3,244$ ) are higher than high school degree-holding individuals' perception scores of being a national brand ( $\bar{x} = 2,813$ ).
- Graduate degree-holding individuals' perception scores of being a national brand ( $\bar{x} = 3,710$ ) are higher than high school degree-holding individuals' perception scores of being a national brand ( $\bar{x} = 2,813$ ).

According to the education level of the participants' scores of their contributions to the development of Niğde differ significantly ( $F_{(3, 330)}=3.614$ ;  $p=0.014<0.05$ ). The reasons for such difference are as follows;

- Associate degree-holding individuals' perception scores of the contribution to the development of Niğde ( $\bar{x} = 3,444$ ) are higher than those with high school degrees or less ( $\bar{x} = 2,835$ ).
- Undergraduate degree-holding individuals' perception scores of the contribution to the development of Niğde ( $\bar{x}=3,263$ ), are higher than those with high school degrees or less ( $\bar{x}=2,835$ ).

- Graduate degree-holding individuals' perception scores of the contribution to the development of Niğde ( $\bar{x}=3,604$ ), are higher than those with high school degrees or less ( $\bar{x}=2,835$ ).

According to the education level of the participants' overall scores of perception towards city brand and image differ significantly ( $F_{(3, 330)}=3.186$ ;  $p=0.024<0.05$ ). The reasons for such difference are as follows;

- Associate degree-holding individuals' perception scores regarding the city brand and image ( $\bar{x}=3,439$ ) are higher than those with high school degrees or less ( $\bar{x}=2,806$ ).
- Undergraduate degree-holding individuals' perception scores regarding the city brand and image ( $\bar{x}=3,160$ ) are higher than those with high school degrees or less ( $\bar{x}=2,806$ ).
- Graduate degree-holding individuals' perception scores regarding the city brand and image ( $\bar{x}=3,461$ ) are higher than those with high school degrees or less ( $\bar{x}=2,806$ ).

The scores of participants' contribution to innovation and entrepreneurship do not significantly differ according to the education level variable ( $p> 0.05$ ). According to these obtained data, the hypothesis "*H<sub>5</sub>: The perceived contribution of Niğde Soda-Pop to the city brand differs according to the monthly income levels of the participants*" is validated and accepted outside the contribution to innovation and entrepreneurship.

Table 9 presents the results of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test the hypothesis "*H<sub>5</sub>: The perceived contribution of Niğde Soda-Pop to the city brand differs according to the monthly income levels of the participants*".

**Table 9.** Differentiation of Perception Scores for City Brand and Image According to Occupation

	Group	N	Mean	St.Dev.	F	p
Perception of Being National Brand	Public Sector Employee	114	3,137	1.353	0.640	0.590
	Private Sector Employee	130	3,331	1.583		
	Student	366	3,258	1.277		
	Other	58	2,939	1.725		
Its Contribution to Innovation and Entrepreneurship	Public Sector Employee	114	2,799	1.275	0.725	0.537
	Private Sector Employee	130	3,147	1.515		
	Student	366	2,962	1.194		
	Other	58	2,918	1.652		
Its Contribution to Development of Niğde	Public Sector Employee	114	3,101	1.328	1.236	0.297
	Private Sector Employee	130	3,177	1.574		
	Student	366	3,335	1.233		
	Other	58	2,870	1.675		
Its Contribution to City Brand of Niğde (General)	Public Sector Employee	114	3,022	1.282	0.624	0.600
	Private Sector Employee	130	3,231	1.519		
	Student	366	3,187	1.174		
	Other	58	2,914	1.677		

Upon examining the data in Table 9; it is seen that overall scores of participants' perception of being a national brand,

contribution to innovation and entrepreneurship, contribution to the development of Niğde, and perception

of city brand and image do not differ significantly according to occupation variable ( $p > 0.05$ ). According to these data, the hypothesis “ $H_6$ : The perceived contribution of Niğde Soda-Pop to the city brand differs according to the occupations of the participants” is rejected.

#### 4. Conclusion and Suggestions

The following results are obtained from the study conducted to determine the contributions of Niğde Soda-Pop as a local brand to the city brand of Niğde. The sample of this study includes 668 participants living in Niğde. The contributions of Niğde Soda-Pop as a local brand to the city brand are examined in terms of dimensions such as “the perception of being a national brand”, “the contribution to the development of Niğde”, and “the contribution (overall) to the city brand” in the study. The level of participants’ perception of all dimensions is found to be moderate. The lowest perceptions are pertinent to its “Contribution to Innovation and Entrepreneurship” dimension of Niğde Soda-Pop, whereas the highest perceptions are pertinent to its “Contribution (Overall) to the City Brand of Niğde” dimension. Consequently, Niğde Soda-Pop contributes to the city brand at a moderate level according to the participant perceptions. In order to boost its contribution to the city brand, the city where it was born as a local initiative and a national brand exported worldwide, national and international advertisements of Niğde Soda-Pop should serve its recognition and reputation. It may be interesting to include celebrities from different fields identified with Niğde in national advertisements.

According to the descriptive characteristics of the participants, it is also questioned whether or not there is a difference in the perceptions of Niğde Soda-Pop’s contributions to the city brand. It is determined that the perceptions of the participants regarding the contributions of Niğde Soda-Pop to the city brand differ. Accordingly, perceptions of participants under 35 years of age are detected to be higher than of older age participants. It is thought that younger individuals are more active in their social lives compared to older ones, and the opportunities of encountering Niğde Soda within their environments are positively reflected in their perceptions.

It is detected that there is no difference in the perceptions of the participants regarding the contributions of Niğde Soda-Pop to the city brand. In other words, it is thought that females, as well as male participants, perceive that Niğde Soda-Pop contributes to the city brand at a similar level.

In terms of the marital status of the participants, only the difference in contribution to the development of Niğde is determined. The single participants tend to perceive that Niğde Soda-Pop contributes more to the development of Niğde in comparison to the married ones, whereas the perceptions of married and single participants are similar to each other in other dimensions.

According to the monthly income levels of the participants, no difference in their perceptions regarding the contributions of Niğde Soda-Pop to the city brand is detected. In other words, participants with different income levels have similar perceptions of the contribution of Niğde Soda-Pop to the city brand.

According to the educational background of the participants, it is determined that the perception of Niğde Soda-Pop’s contributions to the city brand besides the contribution of innovation and entrepreneurship differ. Perceptions of the participants with high school (or lower) degrees towards Niğde Soda-Pop being a national brand, its contributions to the development of Niğde and to the city brand (general) dimensions are lower than those participants with higher education levels. It is thought that individuals are more conscious about their perceptions regarding the brand throughout the educational life following high school graduation and such awareness is positively reflected in the research results.

This study is 668 participants from Niğde, Turkey. So, similar studies can be conducted in terms of the contribution of local enterprises in different provinces to the city brand of the province. On the other hand, if national initiatives of local enterprises and brands are supported by the government in terms of corporate development, advertising promotion and image; their contributions to the city and the country would accelerate.

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