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**Araştırma Makalesi • Research Article**

## **University Students' Thoughts on Konya and Its Residents' Prominent Peculiarities- A Perceptual Mapping Study**

### **Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Konya ve Sakinlerinin Öne Çıkan Özellikleri Üzerine Düşünceleri - Bir Algı Haritası Çalışması**

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**Abstract:** Cities are competing each other in order to be more preferred one for various groups such as tourists, residents, students and investors. In city branding activities, understanding the city's existing image and design strategies accordingly play an important role. This study aims at understanding Konya and its residents' image from university students' point of view. Survey technic was applied to the 300 students selected randomly in university's cafeteria during November 2019. The results showed that in general Konya's image can be interpreted as neutral, which can be accepted as an opportunity to change it to a positive image. Konya's industry, history, agriculture, accessibility and clean environment are found as its prominent peculiarities. Moreover, the mean value of the image-determining statements is not found high due to its neutral image. In addition to these, it was seen in the literature review that the city has a positive image. However, according to the data obtained as a result of this study, the image of the city has been achieved as neutral. This can be given as a feature that makes the study different from other studies.

**Keywords:** Konya, City branding, Perceptual mapping, City image, City marketing

**Öz:** Şehirler, günümüzün rekabet şartları içerisinde turistler, kentin içinde yaşayanlar, yatırımcılar, öğrenciler gibi çok farklı gruplar için daha çok tercih edilen bir yer olmak için birbirleriyle yarışmaktadır. Kentlerin markalaşma sürecinde mevcut imajını anlamak ve bu imaja göre tasarım stratejileri oluşturmak önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Bu çalışma Konya'da bulunan üniversite öğrencilerinin Konya ve şehrin sakinleri ile ilgili bakış açısını anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma kapsamında uygulanan anket tekniği, Kasım 2019'da üniversitenin yemekhanesinde rastgele seçilen 300 öğrenciye yapılmıştır. Anket sonuçlarına göre Konya'nın genel imajı nötr olarak görülmüş ve bu durum, olumlu bir imaja yaratabilmek için bir fırsat olarak yorumlanmıştır. Anket sonuçlarına göre Konya'nın sanayisi, tarihi, tarımı, erişilebilirliği ve temiz çevresi şehrin öne çıkan özellikleri olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Ayrıca imaj belirleyici ifadelerin ortalama değerleri nötr kent imajından dolayı yüksek oranda bulunmamıştır. Bunlara ek olarak literatür taramasında şehrin pozitif bir imaja sahip olduğu görülmüştür. Fakat bu çalışma sonucu elde edilen verilere göre kentin imajına nötr olarak ulaşılmıştır. Bu ise çalışmayı diğer çalışmalardan farklı kılan bir özellik olarak verilebilir.

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## Introduction

Image of a city in people's minds is formed by various factors such as residents' thoughts about the city, positive or negative experiences of visitors, movies, books, rumors, news, songs, friends, and so on. Cities' historical, physical, geographic, economic peculiarities and some activities like social, cultural and sportive events are also important determinants of city identity and its perception. As Kotler et al (1993) defined, image of a place is "the sum of beliefs, ideals and impressions that people have toward a certain place" and it is a simplification of a large number of information related to that place (Avraham, 2004, p. 471-472). All these determinants, which forms cities' perception in minds, recognition of cities is increased, and they became preferable places for tourists to visit, investors to invest, students to study and residents to live.

Today's competitive environment has also affected the cities. Cities try to be more prominent than other cities by highlighting and developing themselves in different categories (Demirel, 2014, p. 231). Concept of city image therefore becomes important phenomena for governors who want to promote their cities and make them attractive among their rivals. The concept of city image includes individuals' positive, negative or neutral views about a city. Individuals' feelings, thoughts, attitudes and judgments about a city shape and change their image of that city (Bakan & Kaya, 2010, p. 638). So, the governors try to pay more attention to change all negative and neutral image factors of the city into positive in order to be the preferred one. These efforts are so called "city branding activities" and this concept has been increasingly getting important for more than two decades.

A brand can be defined as collection of all physical and socio-psychological attributes and beliefs given to a product (Simoes & Dibb, 2001). Brands not only add value to products and services, but also create brand preferences and loyalty (Knox & Bickerton, 2003). City branding is the approach to conceptualization of the city as a brand. The brand is a multidimensional structure of functional, emotional, relational and strategic elements that create a series of associations in the mind, which guides all marketing actions (Kavaratzis, 2004, p. 58-59).

Cities having positive image are more likely to be called "branded city", where residents are happy to live, tourists want to visit, and investors prefer to invest. Moreover, these people behave pretty much like walking and talking advertising element and these city dwellers brings faith and success to city brand. Successfully "branded cities" exist not only with a single type of business industry but also with different activities, they create added value and have capability to adapt changes in different conditions. Several researchers set various criteria in order to name a city as "branded city" in national or even global market. Sahin (2010) gathered these criterias as:

- Population over 1 million.
- Geographical location of city.
- Socio-economic status and employment structure.
- Existence of high-level research universities.
- High capacity airway transportation.
- Strong telecommunication.
- Publications and films about city, existence of city in media.
- Existence of enough capacity to host international activities.
- Existence of cultural infrastructure and facilities like internationally recognized museums, monuments, cultural and artistic activities.
- Low level of crime.

As can be predicted, city branding activities are much more difficult than branding other types of products or services since cities have a complex structure, which is difficult to control. For instance, inhabitants' different interests and expectations, large number of stakeholders and external factors like natural diseases and wars, political atmosphere can directly affect city's faith, therefore it becomes so hard to handle all the city branding efforts. This study aims at understanding Konya's and its residents'

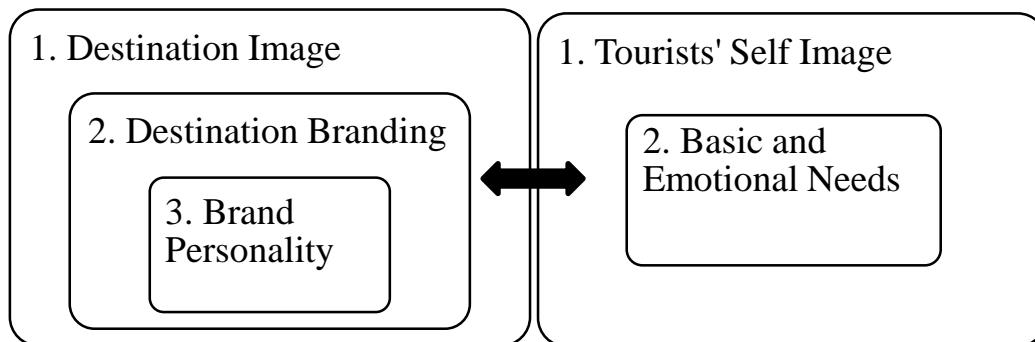
image from university students' point of view. Below, image and image management concepts and use of perceptual mapping in image management will be discussed. Later, Konya's prominent features will be perceptual mapped by evaluating the results of the 300 sample-sized survey.

### Perception of Cities and City Image

Perception can be described as “mental interpretation of physical senses that are caused by the impulses from the outside world” and since there is an interpretation in the essence of perception; there is subjectivity instead of objectivity in perception (Saydam, 2005, p. 80-81). For all branding activities image perception plays a very important role.

According to Baloglu and McCleary (1999) city image is formed by two factors, which can be classified into two groups: personal and stimulus factors. Peoples' values, norms, personality, age, education, marital status, etc. form personal factors, whereas stimulus factors are composed by information sources and previous experiences. Tasci and Gartner (2007) conceptualized three main image formation factors of cities: supply side, demand side and independent factors. Supply side covers administration/marketing managing side activities like marketing strategies, positioning and promotion. Demand side includes socio-demographics, psychographics, experiences of previous visits, attitudes, needs and motivations of perceivers. Finally educational materials, news, movies, word of mouth, etc. are categorized under independent factors. Költringer & Dickinger (2015, p. 1837) state that a place's mental picture can be more influential than its actual facts; moreover, they conclude that by itself, brand cannot control image formation for touristic destinations.

With the sum of all above-mentioned factors, people put a city as a mental picture in their minds. It means that the place can be conceptualized as attractive, expensive, hard to live, historical, lively, beautiful, criminal place, etc. according to previously learned information or experiences. Moreover, various people may attribute differently to a certain place due to their personal differences (expectations, personalities, etc.). Ekinci (2003, p. 22) claims that city image is more cognitive, and evaluations may vary from one person to another, for example each tourist may experience differently in a certain location. In his study, Ekinci also outlined the process of developing city image to market a place effectively in the Figure 1 below. Under the tourists' self-image, there are basic and emotional needs; whereas brand personality is important component of destination branding and it is effective in forming city image. Furthermore, city image and tourists' self-image are interrelated to each other. According to Murphy et al (2007), high level of harmony exists between tourists' self-image and their perceptions about the place when tourists can make association between a place and its brand personality, and when this association is consistent with their holiday experience expectations.



**Figure 1:** Three-stage Process to Develop Favorable Destination Image (Ekinci, 2003, p. 22)

Mental picture of a product, service or a brand can be visualized by perceptual mapping techniques. It allows people to understand the image of a product/service/place in people's minds and compare it with competitors in order to build marketing or branding strategies. Nestrud and Lawless (2010, p. 391), state that with the help of perceptual maps, complicated multivariable information is simplified for easier interpretation. According to Hauser and Koppelman (1979, p. 495), perceptual

mapping is helpful in new product design, advertising, retail location and various marketing activities, and it allows both the understanding of basic cognitive dimensions of consumers' point of view about the product and relative positions of present and potential products with respect to those dimensions.

### University Students' Thoughts on Konya and its Residents' Prominent Peculiarities

Students are one of the important target groups of cities branding activities. This study is designed to understand university students' thoughts on Konya and its residents. In this section, firstly, a brief information about Konya and the findings obtained from the literature review will be given. Then, the aim, method and findings of the study will be expressed.

#### About the City of Konya

As one of the ancient settlements of humankind, central Anatolia has hosted many civilizations that marked the history of the world. With ruins remained from 7.000 B.C. in Catalhoyuk, artifacts from Hittites, Persians, Roman Empire, Seljuk's and Ottomans, Konya has been an important historical city. City is also famous with great philosopher Mevlana Jaleddin Rumi, who lived most of his life in Konya. Every year, Mevlana Museum is visited by millions of visitors from all over the world. City is also well known with its cuisine. Together with 14 other cities in Turkey, Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism selected Konya to be branded city in its 2023 action plan ([http://www.sp.gov.tr/documents/Turizm\\_Strateji\\_2023.pdf](http://www.sp.gov.tr/documents/Turizm_Strateji_2023.pdf)). According to 2019 data, Konya is 7th most populated city in Turkey with the population of 2,2 million (<https://www.nvi.gov.tr/konya/2019-yili-konya-nufus-istatistikleri>). In a study conducted by the Forbes journal and listing "the best cities to do business and live", Konya is ranked 24<sup>th</sup> city among 81 other cities of Turkey according to 94 headed data set (<https://www.cnnturk.com/>)

In a study carried out by Gorkemli (2012, p. 89-86) Konya's capacity in order to be a "branded city" was analyzed and it is seen that it has many peculiarities for branding which are above Turkish cities' average. They were population, urban population, employment and unemployment rates, educational and health data, industrial structure, export-import rates, innovation and research capacity, museums and security statistics. At the time of that study, it was stressed that existing transportation and accommodation facilities were relatively poor to fulfill the needs of visitors. Nevertheless, after some developments from 2011, like high-speed train combining Konya to capital Ankara, Istanbul and Eskisehir, increased airport facility and opening of several new five-star hotels chains changed this handicap into an advantage for the city. Konya is also an important city in terms of its university student population. After Istanbul University, Konya's Selcuk University has the second highest university student population with its 68.355 students as of 2021 January (<https://webadmin.selcuk.edu.tr/>). Besides, there are four more universities in Konya. The names, statue and number of students in 2019-2020 academic year of the universities are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Universities of Konya and their Student Population (<https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr/>)

Name of the University	Statue	Total Number of Students	Approx. Percentage (%)
Konya Food and Agriculture Univ.	Foundation	627	0.5
Konya Technical University	State	13.506	11
KTO Karatay University	Foundation	8.370	7
Necmettin Erbakan University	State	34.497	28.5
Selcuk University	State	64.254	53
<b>Total</b>		<b>121.251</b>	<b>100.00</b>

As seen in Table 1, there are two foundation and three state universities in Konya. Selcuk University has more than half of the students' population in Konya. In fact, Necmettin Erbakan University and Konya Technical University were separated from Selcuk University in the years 2011 and 2018, respectively. Before that separation, Selcuk University had enormous number of students in

its body. With high number of student population, Konya can be seen as a city with relatively high university student population density.

### **Literature Review on Image of Konya**

In literature there are a few studies about Konya's branding activities and its image. Ozbey and Baser (2015), applied a survey to 160 foreign individuals who visited Konya in 2014 in order to measure the urban image of Konya. In the study, they found that Konya is one of the leading cities in terms of belief tourism. It was found that security and wage economy were important factors for tourists. Finally, in the study, it was showed that there were few tourist information and information centers in Konya and they reached that these categories should be developed.

Bakan and Kaya (2010) surveyed 400 people to understand the views of people living and not living in Konya about the city's image. They found that the first concepts that come to the minds about Konya were Mevlana and religion. When the general image of Konya was evaluated, it was found that the people had a positive perspective. In addition, they concluded that it was not a suitable city for vacation.

Canoz (2016) conducted a survey of 451 people from different parts of Turkey and measured Konya's image. In the study, it was found that Mevlana is one of the unique features of Konya that made up the city's image. It was also found that the most of the participants went to Konya at least once and they found its image positive.

Alagoz and Bilgeoglu (2019) gathered data from 421 people and measured the image of Konya. They found that Konya was poor in terms of entertainment and was at the forefront of its historical artifacts and religion. According to the data obtained from the survey, it was seen that Konya is a traditional and religious city (Alagöz & Bilgeoğlu, 2019).

Koçyigit and Aktan (2020), measured the effect of the thematic parks in Konya on city's image and surveyed 420 people. They found that the theme park contributed positively to the image of Konya. As a result of the study, it was found that parks, gardens and green areas had a positive effect on the city image. In a similar study, it was found that urban recreation areas made a positive contribution to the city image of Konya (Eren & Koçyigit, 2020).

Varol and Unusan surveyed 796 visitors to measure the images of local and foreign people towards Konya. In the study, it was found that Mevlana came to minds of people firstly and the city was perceived as a calm, peaceful place with a lot of cultural heritage (Varol & Ünusan, 2019).

Akın et al (2013) surveyed 272 students in Selçuk University to measure the conservatism degree of Konya. According to the answers given by the students to the questionnaire, it was found that the city of Konya was shaped by its conservative identity. In addition, general perceptions about Konya emerged as a livable, safe and tolerant environment. As a result of the survey, it was found that the students' negative perception of the city turned into a positive perception as they lived in Konya (Akin, Aydemir, & Nacak, 2013).

In a study, Güldendede (2017) used a questionnaire method to measure the image of the city of Konya from the eyes of 317 university students in Konya. Most of the students found Konya's image positive.

Tekin and Cici measured the awareness of university students in Konya towards city branding activities by using a questionnaire method. They applied to survey to 400 students and it has been reached that Konya was a safe city with sufficient infrastructure. Finally, it was stated by the survey participants that Konya had an advantage in terms of transportation from the surrounding cities (Tekin & Cici, 2011).

Gorkemli et al (2013) applied a questionnaire to 252 people in order to understand Mevlana commemoration activities visitors' opinion about Konya. According to the results of the research, the

first concept that comes to the mind of people coming to Konya from outside is Mevlana. In addition, it was found that people coming to Konya from outside of the city changed their views about Konya positively and Mevlana had a positive contribution to the image of the city.

### **Aim, Scope and Methodology**

As mentioned above, there is remarkable number of university student population in Konya. According to Selcuk University's Student Affairs Directorate, approximately 70% of students are coming from out of Konya. This study aims at understanding the university students' view about the city of Konya and its residents. The data obtained from the study will give information about students' mental picture of the city. This will help policy makers to understand an important group of stakeholders' point of view about the city so that with expanding data from other stakeholders, they can build strategies accordingly.

Selcuk University's students are selected as the universe of the study. The data obtained in the study were reached by using the survey method. Survey is a method applied to obtain verbal or written information from individuals face to face, by mail or online, and to transform this information into qualitative or quantitative methods (Arıkan, 2018, p. 98). Survey technic was applied to the 300 students selected randomly in university's cafeteria during November 2019. The data in the article were collected before 2020. Therefore, ethics committee approval was not required during the study process. In their studies conducted by Preston and Colman on Likert scales, they found that 7-10 Likert scales have more validity and reliability than others likert scales (Preston & Colman, 2000, s. 12). Therefore, a 10-point Likert scale was used for the validity and reliability of the data obtained in the study. Questionnaire is divided into three main parts. In the first part is composed of demographical questions. In the second part Konya's and its residents' image is questioned. And in the final part some statements are given based on several criteria in order to be a branded city and participants' view is asked. Frequency analysis is made for the answer of the students.

### **Findings**

In the first part of the questionnaire there were questions about demographical structure Table 2.

**Table 2.** Demographical Findings

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Female	165	%55
Male	135	%45
<b>Total</b>	300	%100
<b>Grade of Students</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Freshmen	98	%32,7
Sophomore	98	%32,7
Junior	61	%20,3
Senior	30	%10,0
Graduate Student	13	%4,3
<b>Total</b>	300	%100
<b>Years Passed in Konya</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Less Than One	63	%21,0
1-2	101	%33,7
3-4	39	%13,0
More Than 4	97	%32,3
<b>Total</b>	300	%100
<b>Reason for Being in Konya</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
For educational purpose	208	%69,3

I was in Konya	92	%30,7
<b>Total</b>	300	%100,0

As it is shown in Table 2, 55% of respondents are female and 45% of respondents are male. Approximately 65% of participants are freshmen and sophomore students with equal numbers in each category (98 students). Of the respondents, 20.3% are junior, 10% are senior and only 4.3% are graduate students. 33.7% of students are living in Konya for 1-2 years, 32.3% are living there for more than 4 years. 21% of students are living in Konya less than one year and only 13% are in Konya for 3-4 years. Very similar to university's general student distribution, 69.3% of students are not Konya's residents.

In the second part of the survey, participants' view on general Konya's image and their thoughts about other peoples' view on Konya is asked. Answers are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Participants' View About Konya' Image

Participants' View on Konya's Image	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	76	%25,3
Negative	98	%32,7
Neutral	126	%42,0
<b>Total</b>	300	%100,0
Participants' Thoughts about Other Peoples' View on Konya	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	50	%16,7
Negative	143	%47,7
Neutral	107	%35,7
<b>Total</b>	300	%100,0

42% of participants has neutral image on Konya, whereas 32.7% have positive and 25.3% has negative image. However, results differ when respondents' thoughts about other people's view about Konya are asked: they think almost half (47.7%) of other people has negative and only 16.7% has positive image. According to them 35.7% of people has neutral image on Konya. With these answers we may think that other people may think more negatively about Konya when compared to people living in the city (Table 3).

Table 4 shows cross table analysis of some demographic features of participants and Konya's image.

**Table 4.** Cross-Table Analysis of Demographic Data with Image of Konya and Chi-Square Test

Sex	Female		Male		Total	
Positive	48	29,1%	28	20,7%	76	25,3%
Negative	54	32,8%	44	32,6%	98	32,7%
Neutral	63	38,1%	63	46,7%	126	42,0%
<b>Total</b>	165	100,0	135	100,0	300	100,0
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)			
Pearson Chi-Square	3,317 <sup>a</sup>	2	,190			
Likelihood Ratio	3,343	2	,188			
Linear-by-Linear Association	3,249	1	,071			
N of Valid Cases	300					

Period of Living Time in Konya	< 1 years	1-2 years	3-4 years	>4 years	Total
Positive	14 22,2%	24 23,8%	5 12,9%	33 34,0%	76 25,3%
Negative	15 23,8%	41 40,6%	11 28,2%	31 32,0%	98 32,7%
Neutral	34 54,0%	36 35,6%	23 58,9%	33 34,0%	126 42,0%
<b>Total</b>	63 100	101 100	39 100	97 100	300 100
	<b>Value</b>		<b>df</b>	<b>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</b>	
Pearson Chi-Square	16,614 <sup>a</sup>		6	,011	
Likelihood Ratio	16,588		6	,011	
Linear-by-Linear Association	3,609		1	,057	
N of Valid Cases	300				

Female students' positive and negative Konya's image has quite close results: 29.1% and 32,8% respectively. Nevertheless male students' perception is more negative (32.6%) when compared to positive image (20.7%). In both sex groups, neutral perception rate is higher than positive and negative ones. In order to understand whether the years spent in Konya increase, image of the city moves positively or negatively; cross table analysis is made. However as the years spend in Konya increase positive, negative and neutral image of the city fluctuates, so it becomes hard to make an interference with these numbers. However, when total positive image is 25,3%, this rate is higher (34%) in students living more than 4 years. In less than one year, the rate is 22,2%: between 1 and 2 years the rate is 23,8% and between 3 and 4 years it is 12,9%; but the number of students in each group is not close to each other, so it may mislead to generalize the fluctuation. For the total of students, average negative image is 32,7%; but this rate is higher than the average for students living in Konya in 1-2 years (40,6%). Again results of negative image fluctuates as number of years increase due to unequal number of participants in each group so it becomes impossible for make a generalization between years increased and negative image of city. With the chi-square analysis in Table 4, it is aimed to measure whether there is a significant difference between the gender of the participants and their images for Konya. Moreover, with the chi-square analysis it is also aimed to measure whether there is a meaningful difference between the period of living time in Konya and the participants' image for Konya. According to chi square analysis, there is no meaningful relation between gender and participants' view of Konya's image ( $V^2=3,317$ ;  $df=2$ ;  $p=0,190$ ). Again, there is also no meaningful relation between staying time in the city and the participants' view of Konya's image ( $V^2=16,614$ ;  $df=6$ ;  $p=0,011$ ) (Table 4).

In Table 5, the views of the students residing in Konya and the students coming to Konya for educational purposes is given with a cross-table. Also, the data given in table 5 will be reviewed by a chi-square test.

**Table 5.** Cross Table Analysis and Chi-square Test According to the Image of Konya Residing in Konya or Coming for Educational Purposes

Konya's Image is...	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
Respondents being in Konya for Educational Purpose	45 21,64%	69 33,17%	94 45,19%	208 100%
Respondents Already Being in Konya	31 33,70%	29 31,52%	32 34,78%	92 30,7%
<b>Total</b>	76 25,3%	98 32,7%	126 42,0%	300 100,0%
	<b>Value</b>		<b>df</b>	<b>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</b>
Pearson Chi-Square	5,362 <sup>a</sup>		2	,069
Likelihood Ratio	5,240		2	,073
Linear-by-Linear Association	4,973		1	,026
N of Valid Cases	300			
<b>I think, According to Others, Konya's Image is...</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Total</b>



Respondents being in Konya for Educational Purpose	45	21,63%	91	43,75%	72	34,62%	208	69,3%
Respondents Already Being in Konya	5	5,43%	52	56,52%	35	38,05%	92	30,7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>16,7%</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>47,7%</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>35,7%</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100,0%</b>
		<b>Value</b>			<b>df</b>	<b>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</b>		
Pearson Chi-Square		12,437 <sup>a</sup>			2	,002		
Likelihood Ratio		14,597			2	,001		
Linear-by-Linear Association		5,027			1	,025		
N of Valid Cases		300						

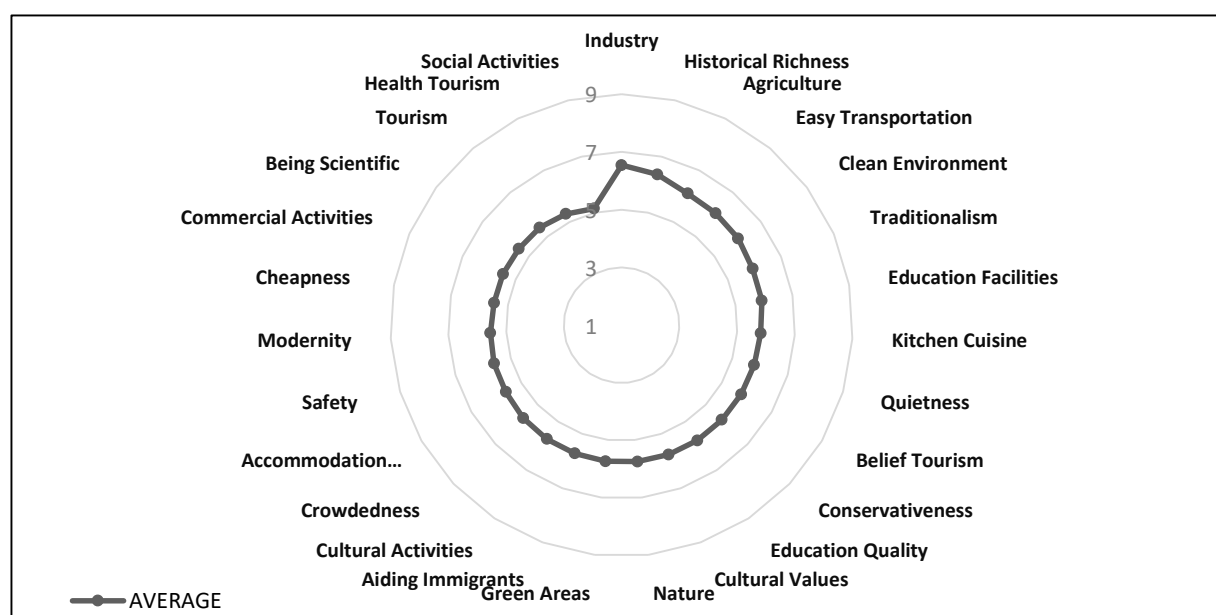
Konya's overall image is evaluated according to respondents' reason for being Konya. The answer to the statement "For me, Konya's general image is negative" are almost close to each other for the two groups (students being Konya for educational purpose and students already being in Konya) 33,17% and 31,17%, respectively. However results differ in the "positive image" in two groups. According to students already living in Konya, the city's positive image is around 12% higher in non-resident group. However, in both groups, Konya has not positive image in 79% and 67% respectively. Next, the answers to the statement "I think, according to others Konya's general image is....." are analyzed. Students coming out of Konya give around 16% more positive respond than the respondents, who are residents of Konya. It means, according to Konya's residents, around 95% of public think that Konya has not positive image: whereas this rate is around 80% in outsider respondents. Both answers indicate that positive image of Konya is not that high. With the chi-square analysis given in Table 5, it is aimed to measure whether there is a meaningful difference between the image of Konya and the purpose of the participants to come to Konya. Moreover, with this analysis, it is aimed to measure whether there is a significant difference between purpose of coming to Konya and the answer of other people's thoughts about Konya's image. According to chi square analysis, there is no meaningful relationship between purpose of being in the city and the participants' view about Konya's image ( $V^2=5,362$ ;  $df=2$ ;  $p=0,069$ ). However, there is a meaningful relationship between purpose of being in the city and thoughts of the participants about other people's views about Konya ( $V^2=12,437$ ;  $df=2$ ;  $p=0,002$ ). To the question about what other people think about Konya, those who came to Konya for educational purposes gave a significantly more "positive" answer than those already living in Konya (Table 5).

In the last part of the questionnaire there are two main parts: participants' thoughts about Konya's prominent peculiarities and participants' thoughts about Konya's people. In the questionnaire there are several statements about Konya and its residents and participants are asked to mark their thoughts to 10-point scale in each statement. Statements are formed according to the criteria that may affect image of a city for branding activities. In the statements, "number 10" means "I totally agree", whereas "number 1" means "I totally disagree".

Table 6 below, gathers all the answers for the views of participants on Konya. According to the table 6, Konya's industry takes the first place with 6,54 average point. Historical richness, agriculture, easy transportation and clean environment follow it with average point higher than 6,0. The other statements also close averages mean value between 5,94 and 5,15. Traditionalism, education facilities, kitchen cuisine, quietness, belief tourism, conservativeness, education quality, cultural values, nature, green areas, cultural activities, crowdedness, accommodation facilities, safety, modernity, cheapness, commercial activities, being scientific, tourism, health tourism and social activities followed with close averages. In fact it can be said that almost all the statements have close averages. Moreover, when taking into consideration that number 10 stands for "totally agree" and number 1 means "totally disagree", it can be said that all the statements about have ordinary or average value for respondents (Table 6 and Diagram 1).

**Table 6.** Konya’s Prominent Peculiarities

	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	$\bar{x}$	SD
Industry	54	28	33	37	48	43	17	16	5	19	6,54	2,59
Historical richness	40	25	40	44	42	42	25	18	15	9	6,36	2,45
Agriculture	38	26	33	38	43	28	37	35	15	7	6,10	2,53
Easy Transportation	41	16	47	33	40	37	26	27	15	18	6,06	2,64
Clean Environment	39	18	31	49	42	35	32	20	18	16	6,03	2,57
Traditionalism	33	19	37	37	45	35	36	31	17	10	5,94	2,49
Education facilities	19	31	39	43	40	36	41	24	16	11	5,93	2,40
Kitchen cuisine	14	29	33	37	58	61	23	12	9	24	5,82	2,34
Quietness	21	24	39	38	39	40	42	29	18	10	5,79	2,41
Belief tourism	25	26	35	27	45	46	30	39	18	9	5,78	2,46
Conservativeness	24	28	33	37	36	35	46	26	28	7	5,77	2,49
Education quality	20	22	38	35	47	39	37	43	11	8	5,77	2,34
Cultural values	20	27	35	36	38	41	44	36	14	9	5,76	2,39
Nature	24	19	33	39	47	44	36	29	15	14	5,75	2,41
Green areas	23	21	29	38	49	47	30	37	20	6	5,74	2,35
Aiding immigrants	22	24	33	39	46	37	34	31	21	13	5,72	2,47
Cultural activities	27	17	18	41	47	43	43	20	17	17	5,71	2,45
Crowdedness	25	19	23	44	44	42	40	38	18	7	5,68	2,37
Accommodation facilities	21	17	33	37	42	56	32	29	21	12	5,62	2,38
Safety	17	26	33	39	33	51	33	34	22	12	5,61	2,43
Modernity	16	24	26	45	40	48	35	32	18	16	5,55	2,40
Cheapness	20	18	37	38	37	40	33	33	25	19	5,48	2,54
Commercial activities	13	11	30	39	62	44	44	28	19	10	5,47	2,17
Being scientific	13	20	27	34	51	54	37	28	21	15	5,43	2,31
Tourism	16	12	34	37	51	43	38	33	17	19	5,41	2,36
Health tourism	5	21	26	41	44	45	58	29	20	11	5,31	2,16
Social activities	9	16	23	44	37	44	42	33	25	26	5,15	2,92

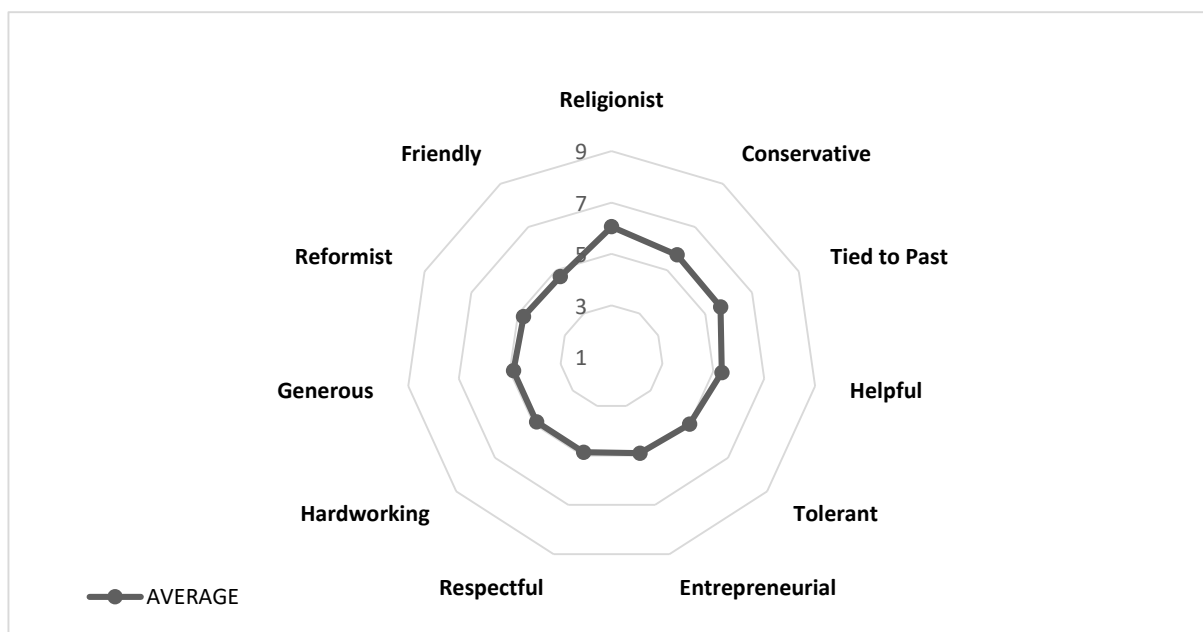


**Diagram 1:** Perceptual Map of Konya’s Prominent Peculiarities

Later, students are asked to label their view about Konya's people in 10-scale statement table. In the table number 10 means "I totally agree" whereas number 1 means, "I totally disagree" as above. According to students, statement of "religionist" get the highest average with mean 6,06. "Conservative" and "tied to past" statements follows it with average values 5,71 and 5,66. Other statements also have close values ranged from 5,33 to 4,70. The other statements are listed from the highest as follows: helpful, tolerant, entrepreneurial, respectful, hardworking, generous, reformist and friendly. As in the previous table, the averages of all statements are not found very high when it is considered that number 10 stands for "totally agree" (Table 7 and Diagram 2).

**Table 7.** Prominent peculiarities of Konya's people (Konya's people are...)

	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	$\bar{x}$	SS
Religionist	42	11	21	29	59	78	26	23	2	9	6,06	2,26
Conservative	30	24	24	33	43	39	50	26	15	15	5,71	2,53
Tied to past	26	22	26	16	38	70	64	21	6	11	5,66	2,30
Helpful	13	27	27	31	29	56	50	29	14	24	5,33	2,45
Tolerant	7	22	29	27	41	44	46	27	27	30	5,01	2,46
Entrepreneurial	11	17	17	27	38	55	47	40	26	22	4,91	2,33
Respectful	6	20	16	36	43	52	36	31	27	33	4,87	2,40
Hardworking	7	17	22	18	47	49	56	40	22	22	4,87	2,25
Generous	4	16	32	22	33	61	37	48	24	23	4,86	2,29
Reformist	3	19	27	30	31	43	52	39	24	32	4,77	2,38
Friendly	10	14	20	32	36	35	45	52	19	37	4,70	2,45



**Diagram 2:** People of Konya's Prominent Peculiarities-Perceptual Map

### Conclusion and Discussion

This study is designed to get information about Konya's and its people's image in students' point of view. Some prominent results of the study and comments of them are stated below:

32,7% of students stated that Konya's general image is positive; whereas 25,3% of them stated the city's image is negative and 42% indicated Konya's image as neutral. In other words, according to rest 67,3% of participants, city has not a positive image, so actions should be taken to change neutral

and negative images into positive ones. It is an opportunity that majority of the answers are distributed on neutral, because changing negative image to positive is much more difficult to change neutral to positive one. According to the students, other people's thoughts are more negative towards Konya. This result can be an indicator that actually living in a city may change the view more positively. Konya's general image is not differentiated significantly according to sexes of the students.

In a 10-point scale, several statements are asked to the students in order to learn their point of view about Konya and its residents. Almost all the statements have close mean values. For Konya's prominent peculiarities, its being industrial city, having historical richness, agriculture, accessibility and clean environment come to forefront among other answers, however the other statements' average values are not very much different than these. The average value for each statement varies from 6,64 to 5,15 out of 10; and that is consistent with the result of its high neutral image. About Konya's people image, students marked their opinion in 10-point scaled statement chart and according to them, being religionist ( $\bar{x}=6,06$ ), conservative ( $\bar{x}=5,71$ ) and tied to past ( $\bar{x}=5,66$ ) are people of Konya's prominent peculiarities. Residents of Konya's being helpful, tolerant, entrepreneurial, respectful, hardworking, generous, reformist and friendly are the other qualities, which are close mean values (ranged from 5,33 to 4,70). Being conservative, religionist and tied to past may be attractive for some people but it may be also a problem for other group of people to come visit or live in the city. So the policies can be built meticulously in this respect. Moreover, it can be said that all the mean values are found not very high when considered a 10-point scale chart in this sample.

Table 8 gathers the results of various studies done in literature. All these studies were performed independently in different years, different samples and with different questionnaires. Therefore comparison can mislead the researchers. However it seems majority of the studies show that city has mostly positive image and only this study reveals its neutral image. Positive image can be interpreted as an advantage for branding activities. This study's result of neutral image can be a warning for branding policy makers. By taking into consideration this point, precautions, policies and strategies can be built accordingly.

**Table 8.** Summary of the Results of Various Studies in Literature

	Sample Size	Sample	Concepts That Come to Mind	Views on Image (Mostly)
Ozbey & Baser (2015)	160	Foreign visitors	Religious, Cheap	NA(*)
Bakan & Kaya (2010)	400	People in Konya and in different cities	Mevlana, Religion	Positive
Canöz (2016)	451	People in different cities	Mevlana	Positive
Alagöz&Bilgeoğlu(2019)	421	Konya's residents	Traditional, Religious	NA(*)
Varol & Ünüsan (2019)	796	Visitors	Mevlana	NA(*)
Akın et al (2013)	272	Students	Safe, Tolerant	Changing from negative to positive as years spent in Konya increase
Güdüdede (2017)	317	Students	Mevlana, Education City	Mostly Positive
Tekin & Cici (2011)	400	Students	Safe, Educational Infrastructure	NA(*)
Görkemli et al (2013)	252	Visitors	Mevlana	Positive
This study	300	Students	Industry, historical richness, agriculture, accessibility, cleanness	Neutral

NA: Not available/not enough information in the study

This study is performed in a very limited group of students. One comprehensive study including high numbers of various target groups, such as visitors, investors, housewives, businessmen, officers, governors, foreigners, people living in other cities, etc. together, will bring more concrete results to

understand city's existing image for different groups. So these results may light the way of policy makers to help build effective policies in developing Konya's city image.

### Disclosure Statements

1. Contribution rate statement of researchers: First author %60, Second author %30, Third author %10.
2. No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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