

## From the Land of Beautiful Horses to the Land of Beautiful Loves: The Transformation of Destination Image from Legends to TV Series and Cappadocia

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### Abstract

This study aims to identify the touristic attractions covered in TV series that determine touristic destinations as shooting platforms and to discuss the roles of these attractions in constructing the image of the destination. Because TV series rich in visual content can also be integrated into social media platforms such as YouTube and become a promotional tool for destinations at national or international levels in a very short time. The study utilizes the semiotic method and examines the TV series called Land of Beautiful Loves, which focuses on the Cappadocia region in Türkiye. Since the analyzed content is a TV series, the type of semiotic sign preferred is the iconic sign. The results of the study indicate that this series covered visual content that would contribute to the image of destination in terms of natural and cultural resources, infrastructure and superstructure.

**Keywords:** Tourism, destination image, semiology, TV series, Cappadocia

**JEL Classifications:** M31, Z32, L83

## Güzel Atlar Diyarından Güzel Aşklar Diyarına: Efsanelerden TV Dizilerine Destinasyon İmajının Dönüşümü ve Kapadokya

### Özet

Bu çalışma, turistik destinasyonları çekim platformu olarak belirleyen TV dizilerinde işlenen turistik çekicilikleri belirlemeyi ve bu çekiciliklerin destinasyon imajını oluşturmadaki rollerini tartışmayı amaçlamaktadır. Çünkü görsel içerik açısından zengin TV dizileri, YouTube gibi sosyal medya platformlarına da entegre edilebilmekte ve çok kısa sürede ulusal veya uluslararası düzeyde destinasyonlar için bir tanıtım aracı haline gelebilmektedir. Çalışmada göstergebilimsel yöntem kullanılmış ve Türkiye'de Kapadokya bölgesine odaklanan Güzel Aşklar Diyarı adlı TV dizisi incelenmiştir. İncelenen içeriğin TV dizisi olması nedeniyle göstergebilim türlerinden görüntüsel gösterge tercih edilmiştir. Çalışmanın sonuçları, bu dizilerin doğal ve kültürel kaynaklar, altyapı ve üstyapı açısından destinasyonun imajına katkıda bulunacak görsel içeriklere sahip olduğunu göstermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Turizm, destinasyon imajı, göstergebilim, TV dizileri, Kapadokya

**Jel Kodları:** M31, Z32, L83

### 1. Introduction

Consumer trends that have not changed since the 2000s continue to change day by day and even turn into increasingly individualized trends. Against these individualized trends of consumers, producers are also making an intensive effort to produce appropriate goods and services (Keillor et al., 2001). This is an expected

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situation and is one of the most important determinants of the competitive process. Because as consumers' expectations change and become more individualized, it becomes difficult for producers to gain competitive power (Rosenzweig et al., 2003; Zuo et al., 2019; Şengel, 2020). A similar situation is experienced for almost all industries. Tourism is at the forefront of these industries. Due to the increase in competition in the tourism industry, destinations either try to develop alternative tourism types or try to create a destination image by highlighting the basic features of existing resources (Manhas et al., 2016). Many destinations, regardless of whether they are large or small, make such an effort.

There are many factors that affect the image studies of destinations. One or more of the many factors such as legends, religion-belief, realistic historical sources, cultural values, natural resources, shopping opportunities, souvenirs are at the center of the image studies of destinations (San Martín and Del Bosque, 2008; Lopes, 2011; El Sheikh, 2020). There are different sources that destinations use to highlight these elements. Promotional media with visual content that appeals to the eye have started to have great value. Shani et al. (2010) emphasizes that promotional videos shot by destinations in particular have a critical role in this context. Azevedo et al. (2023) say that TV series and movies that choose popular tourist destinations as platforms make serious contributions to the image studies of destinations. In addition, such efforts are also evident on recently popular platforms that offer access to online series and movies.

Table 1. TV Series Filmed in Cappadocia

Years	Series Name	Series Topic
2002-2023	Asmalı Konak	Love and Tradition
2002-2003	Broken Mirror	Drama and Action
2010-2013	Love of Heaven and Earth	Love, Romance and drama
2011-2013	Life Goes On	Family and Drama
2014-2015	Revenge of Snakes	Drama
2015-2017	Father is a Life	Family
2016-2018	Love and Blue	Love and Romance
2017-2017	Shepherd's Star	Village life and Farming
2019-2019	Raven	Drama and action
2020-2020	Maria and Mustafa	Romantic and Drama
2020-2021	Zumrud-u Anka	Love and Mythological elements
2021-2021	Surely One Day	Love and Drama
2023-2024	Sapphire	Love and drama
2024-2024	Ash Tale	Drama
2024-2025*	Black Heart	Love and action
2024-2024*	Land of Beautiful Loves	Love, action and adventure

Note: \* This is not information taken from the source. Both series were added by the author because this was the actual situation, as the article was completed after the writing process.

Source: (Kapadokyahaber, 2024)

Cappadocia, one of the important tourist destinations of Turkey, has been one of the popular points preferred for TV series broadcasting in Turkey, especially since the last 20-25 years when TVs became widespread (Özbek and Güllü, 2021). The broadcast dates, names and subjects of these series are given in Table 1. The unique natural beauties and cultural heritage of the region have an important share in the preference of the series for Cappadocia. While the destination creates a natural platform for these productions, it also does contribute significantly to the image of the destination by introducing the rich touristic resources of the destination (Umur and Eren, 2016). In this context, the mansions where some series are shot have become one of the products that make up the package tours and have made significant contributions to the destination. Çakır (2014) stated in his study that the series named Asmalı Konak made significant contributions to the tourism activities and destination image in the Cappadocia region as a series included in the package tours.

As of September 2024, the TV series called “Land of Beautiful Loves” shot in the region has started broadcasting in Turkey. The series, which tells a gripping love story, also stands out with its adventure and action scenes. In many episodes of the series, which are thought to be inspired by the legendary name of Cappadocia, Land of Beautiful Horses, popular touristic places of Cappadocia are showcased, and important touristic resources serve as scenes or decor for the series. In the light of this information, the study aims to examine the contributions of the series called Land of Beautiful Loves to the destination image of Cappadocia in the context of touristic attractiveness elements, considering the criteria of semiotics. The study is important in terms of revealing the strong connection between touristic resources and semiotics and discussing the roles of TV series, which have become a tool of popular culture, in the destination image. The study is expected to reveal that series that use tourist destinations as filming platforms utilize destination attractions (cultural, natural, historical, architectural, etc.). These attractions motivate the viewer to visit the destination where the series takes place.

## **2. Conceptual Framework and Research Questions**

### **2.1. Destination Image**

Destination refers to a complex structure that includes many different components. Hosany et al. (2007) supports this statement by stating that touristic destinations consist of a bundle that can stand out with their tangible and intangible qualities. They also state that they are used to meeting two different functions such as being a product and a brand due to their qualities. The fact that a destination contains both a complex and very different structure and is perceived in two different ways as a product or a brand can affect the understanding or success of many different elements related to the destination. One of these elements is the destination image. The fact that studies on destination image generally follow a path based on brand image facilitates the comprehensibility of identities such as product and brand that emerge in the definition of touristic destinations.

Since destinations are referred to as products or brands due to their characteristics, it is known that evaluations regarding destination image are addressed in the context of product, especially brand image. Brand image, which stands out as an important outcome of consumer behavior, is the associations and perceptions formed in the minds of consumers about a brand (Keller, 1993; Zengin and Koç, 2021). These can emerge through many different means such as direct experience, information sources and previously existing similar feelings (Martinez and Pina, 2003; Kazancıoğlu and Bilbil, 2023). Regardless of the source from which the brand image is formed, it can affect the future behaviors of consumers towards the relevant brand. In this respect, while a positive image provides brands with an advantage in competition, negative image can cause disadvantages. A similar situation applies to touristic destinations as a brand.

Destination image, which is considered in the context of product and brand, has become one of the most critical concepts in gaining a share of the ever-growing tourism market. There are several important points that emerge in this situation. First, destinations are arenas where tourism activities take place, and they need to have a positive image to create demand. Second, destinations by their nature represent a complex organization that includes very different resources and stakeholders, and it can sometimes be challenging for the entire organization to provide coordination that will create a positive image. Finally, due to online social platforms, tourists, who are increasingly producing content, can spread their positive or negative attitudes very quickly and therefore destinations can find themselves in a difficult situation. Chen and Tsai (2007) state that destination image, which plays a role in consumers' decision-making processes, is a very important element for tourism regions. In this respect, no matter how complex the stakeholders make up the destination and the relationships between them are, they must find common points to agree on for the image and success of the destination.

Destination image is beyond being a concept, it is a dynamic process and one of the most powerful and distinct tools of the global competition process that is shaped by the dynamics of labor-intensive production in tourism (Afshardoost and Eshaghi, 2020). In this respect, it is an important factor that can affect tourists' repeat purchase behaviors (Şengel et al., 2014; Styliadis et al., 2015; Molinillo et al., 2018; Koçoğlu, 2019). Despite the strong relationship between destination image and tourists' behavioral tendencies and purchasing decisions, the results regarding these relationships may differ. Since destination image is a social phenomenon and represents a multi-stakeholder organization and different factors are involved in the process, the level of influence on tourists' behavioral intentions is not fully revealed (Tan and Wu, 2016). This situation creates gaps in the subject and causes academic studies that offer different perspectives on the subject to be repeated periodically.

Studies or evaluations indicate that there are many different elements that affect the image of destinations. Especially with the widespread use of technology, the presentation of the visual capacities of the sources that form the image of the destination to tourists through content such as photos or videos affects the image of the destination. Xiao et al. (2022) emphasizes that the content taken by tourists has

a unique importance for the image of the destination. Because tourists do not only create visual content but also spread it to very large audiences in a very short time through social media platforms. It should be noted that there are a considerable number of similar studies in the literature that reveal the potential of tourists to affect the image of the destination with their identity as content producers (Zhao et al., 2018; Hooker and Cooper, 2021; Işkın et al., 2023). This situation is deepening and spreading even more with the help of smart mobile devices that develop alongside social media and internet technologies (Taecharungroj and Mathayomchan, 2021). All content and developments and platforms that facilitate the sharing of content increase the repeat purchasing behavior of those who travel and create content and influence the travel decisions of potential tourists. Styliadis (2022) states that the interaction between locals and tourists is one of the important determinants of the destination image. Although it is often stated that locals represent an important group for destinations, there is no clear information about their exact role in the destination image. For this reason, it is very important to reveal the interaction between locals and tourists with empirical evidence in the study on the island of Thassos in Greece. According to Murphy (1999), the factors affecting the destination image include three important distinctions: pre-visit, during-visit, and post-visit factors. The factors in these three stages carry an identity shaped in environments or conditions suitable for the dynamics of the three stages. Of these elements, the factors after the visit are especially critical.

All this information reveals two important points. First, image is one of the most important phenomena in destination success that can be created by both supply and demand. While the supply side is formed by micro and macro stakeholder groups in the destination, the demand side is formed by tourists. Second, the destination image can be both positive and negative depending on the content created and the meaning they will gain in people's minds. In both cases, image stands out as one of the most important criteria in destination competitiveness.

## **2.2. The Contribution of TV Series to Destination Image**

With the age of communication, referred to as new media, television program formats are also taking shape and showing their presence in many aspects of life. The most important of these program formats are genres where enjoyable content such as series and movies are produced. The use of such content, which allows for national or international recognition of cultural content, is encouraged in certain areas and is used as a tool in marketing activities, especially in macro or micro issues. Based on this information, Askanova et al. (2021) states that TV movies and series should also be used in tourism marketing. In this context, strong content has the potential to make a serious contribution to visits to tourism destinations. While economic developments that cause an increase in income and free time affect tourism demand, the fact that TV content includes content that will increase the attractiveness of destinations brings about an increase in the relevant demand to these destinations. The places where people's favorite TV series take place have made it popular to visit.

The relationship between TV content and tourism was initially recognized in Western regions, especially in Europe countries and USA. Later, studies that became widespread discussed that TV movies or series contribute to the image of the destinations where the plots take place. These contents and especially series can create awareness, consciousness and image about the destination. TV series or similar contents have the characteristics of creating the destination image or strengthening the existing image since they positively affect the cognition-emotion-behavior trilogy. Because TV series and other contents can come to the forefront at critical points such as providing information about the destination, transforming the perceptions of consumers into positive ones, increasing the internal attitudes of tourists and affecting the intention to travel (Beeton, 2001; Connell and Meyer, 2009). All these bring about some predictable results such as the relationship between TV series and tourism. Based on this, it can be said that TV series fulfill an important task in tourism marketing and affect the destination image (Buchmann et al., 2010). Therefore, TV series can be considered an influential factor in tourists' travel decisions.

One of the sources from which the inferences and perceptions that will provide the destination image are obtained is to obtain information from different platforms. Despite the diversity of information sources, television series and films play a significant role in shaping destination perceptions by raising awareness and disseminating information through increasingly popular online platforms. People who watch series and movies have a special interest in the destinations where the series and movies are shot (Harrill et al., 2022). Since the beginning of the 1990s, when the interaction between movies and tourism activities was introduced (Riley and Van Doren, 1992), it has been observed that the regions where content such as movies and series take place on various platforms (TV, cinema, internet, etc.) have gained popularity and turned into travelable areas for tourists (Kim et al., 2019; Thelen et al., 2020).

The subject can be addressed in the context of destination branding from an image perspective. Akarsu et al. (2020) emphasizes the importance of the roles of TV series in this context. In the study emphasizing visual media, emphasis is placed on genres rich in visual content such as TV series and movies. It is emphasized that there are strong relationships between the behavioral intentions of tourists and the rich content offered by TV movies and series. In this context, it can be said that TV series and movies offering important content provide important data for Destination Management Organizations (DMO) and decision-making stakeholders. O'Connor et al. (2008) stated in their study that cities where popular TV series are shot contribute to destination branding in the context of film-based tourism activities. In this respect, they emphasize the importance of decision-making stakeholders in the destination to benefit from TV series as a promotional platform for the future success of the destinations.

It is often seen that the regions where TV series are shot are visited by tourists or that an intention is stimulated in this context. Because TV series or movies are often rich in terms of tourism resources and are known by a wide audience. Saltık et al.

(2010) state that TV series are shot in popular destinations and reach a wide audience in a short time, creating a target-oriented awareness in a very short time compared to traditional market methods or content that focuses directly on destination promotion. It is seen that this development is directly reflected in the image of the destinations and the increasing tourist demand accordingly. Çakır (2024) emphasizes that TV series shot in the Nevşehir region of Turkey affect the perceptions of the destination in the minds of tourists. Of course, the positiveness of this perception is one of the most basic sources of the destination image.

What makes TV series stand out in terms of destination image is that they include destination shooting elements in their visual scenes. Natural, historical, cultural etc., touristic values are the values that are highlighted in the locations where the series is shot. For example, it can be said that natural, environmental and adventure content scenes will be at the forefront in series shot in Scandinavian countries. In addition, mass tourism resources in Greece, historical and cultural values in Turkey, cultural heritage resources in Egypt, contemporary urban texture and shopping in America may be prominent. Even in different regions of a country, series that handle different touristic resources can be encountered. In this context, because there is an important interaction between TV series and destination image, answers to the following research questions (RQ) were sought.

*RQ1: Does the TV series Land of Beautiful Loves feature any destination attractions?*

*RQ2: Are the destination attractions portrayed in Land of Beautiful Loves presented in a way that positively influences the destination image?*

### **3. Methodology**

For a TV series to be a source of destination image, the scenario must stand out at certain points. Regardless of which touristic source it will highlight, the most important of these points is the popularity of the scenario. Destinations where popular and high-rating TV series are shot are important and gain an image depending on the details they cover. In addition, from time to time, preferred locations and series names are used to refer to an important point in the destination, and the series is highlighted in terms of some touristic sources. In this context, it is also accepted that series names that sometimes contain an important metaphor contain a message about the series. Based on this information, this study examines the TV series titled “Land of Beautiful Loves”, which was shot in the Cappadocia region of Turkey as of September 2024. Since the study visually examined a TV series, ethics committee approval was not required. Although the series ended its broadcasting life by making its finale in the 6th episode, it became one of the series that attracted attention among the scenarios that started broadcasting in Turkey in 2024 with its name, as well as its attention-grabbing treatment of touristic sources that would contribute to the destination image. Cappadocia was used in Persian language to correspond to the word “Katpatuka” which means “Land of Beautiful Horses” (Güngör, 2016; Genç and Şengül, 2016). Cappadocia, which stands out as a touristic destination with the expression “Land of Beautiful Horses”, also has

historical importance and a legendary identity with its existence in the ancient world. In the light of this information, the roles of TV series in creating the destination image were examined through the TV series named “Land of Beautiful Loves” which was named by establishing a metaphorical connection with this ancient and legendary name of Cappadocia.

The TV series examined in the study was analyzed using the semiotic method. The semiotic method, which began to develop as a branch of science or scientific method in the 1950s, has gained a multidisciplinary identity by utilizing the institutions and methods of many different disciplines in social sciences (Aktulum, 2004; Hunter, 2016). These studies, combined with the experiences of the researcher, enable a successful analysis. Indeed, semiotics are known as the science of value doctrine. Because the method allows the analysis of values in texts or other different content. In this analysis, perceptions that may occur in many different dimensions such as senses, knowledge, description, moral value and aesthetics can play an important role (Güneş, 2012; Gretzel et al., 2019). The semiotic method has a critical function in systematizing these perceptions and transforming them into findings. Semiotic has different subtypes, according to some researchers. According to Peirce (1934), a pioneer in this field, there are three subtypes: iconic sign, indexical sign, and symbolic sign. These are said to be shaped by the impact evoked by the content. Considering the context, it can be said that the study utilizes an iconic sign.

In the study, only the first episode of the series named “Land of Beautiful Loves” was deciphered and analyzed within the framework of semiotics. The duration of the episode consists of 2 hours, 6 minutes and 14 seconds. Evaluations were made under two themes such as destination attractiveness elements or supply sources, natural and cultural resources, and infrastructure and superstructure. Under the theme of natural and cultural resources, visuals depicting cities and urbanization, natural areas, fairy chimneys, and handicrafts such as pottery were included. In the theme of infrastructure and superstructure, visuals were included by making a wide-perspective analysis such as souvenirs, transportation, accommodation, and social activities. A total of 14 visuals were determined in the study and used in a way that the video player was stopped, and the visuals were taken. The durations of the visuals in the series take values ranging from 0.3 seconds to 0.24 seconds. The obtained visuals are detailed in the findings section.

#### **4. Findings**

As a result of the analysis, it was observed that the touristic attractiveness elements of the Cappadocia region were handled throughout the first part of the TV series (Land of Beautiful Loves). In the examinations, it was concluded that some examples were not successful or original. The roadmap followed in the categorical analysis and reporting of the findings was created by taking Civelek (2018) as reference. Table 2 includes some natural and cultural elements handled in the first part of the series. It is seen that generally the city view, fairy chimneys and especially pottery from handicrafts stand out.

Table 2. Natural and Cultural Resources in the "Land of Beautiful Love"

Visuals	Analysis
	<p>Visual: 1 Duration: 00.14 Indicator: Buildings Display: City Center Displayed: Landscape</p>
	<p>Visual: 2 Duration: 00.03 Indicator: Natural Source Display: Fairy Chimneys Displayed: Landscape</p>
	<p>Visual: 3 Duration: 00.08 Indicator: Natural Resource Display: River Displayed: Landscape</p>
	<p>Visual: 4 Duration: 00.24 Indicator: Buildings Display: City Displayed: Landscape</p>

	Visual: 5 Duration: 00.21 Indicator: Buildings Display: City Displayed: Landscape
	Visual: 6 Duration: 00.03 Indicator: Buildings Display: City Displayed: Landscape
	Visual: 7 Duration: 00.18 Indicator: Object- Human Display: Pottery Displayed: Handicrafts

Visual 1 provides content showing the city structure and city center from a distance. Visual 2 provides a visual of fairy chimneys. Even when you travel by car in Cappadocia, which is especially prominent with its fairy chimneys, it is possible to see these mushroom-like natural rocks or pillars, which are natural wind-erosion forms. Visual 3 describes the heroes in the series crossing a bridge in the city. The river passing through the city and the bridge over it add a different atmosphere to the city. Visuals 4, 5 and 6 include views of the city. While 4 and 5 provide daytime views from different points of the city, visual 6 provides a view of the city's night view. In the last frame in Table 2, visual 7, emphasis is placed on pottery production, a classic of Cappadocia's handicrafts. Especially traditional public and civil architecture and urban texture, fairy chimneys and pottery production stand

out as natural and cultural resources emphasized in studies conducted on Cappadocia.

It is understood from the contents of the first episode that examples of infrastructure and superstructure services that highlight the city in the context of touristic attractions are also exhibited in the TV series called "Land of Beautiful Loves" (Table 3). In this context, it has been determined that topics that highlight traditional content such as transportation and accommodation, daily social activities and souvenirs are covered.

Table 3, which includes infrastructure and superstructure services, covers four categories: Activity, Accommodation, Transportation and Souvenirs. In Visual 8, a plane belonging to Turkish Airlines, a scheduled flight company of Turkey and one of the most important global companies of the country, is depicted landing on the Kayseri airport runway with a content that refers to transportation. With the landing scene of the plane, which includes very successful visual content, an infrastructure service is highlighted, and it is emphasized that Cappadocia is an easily accessible destination. Although Cappadocia is affiliated with Nevşehir province in Turkey, it is geographically very close to Kayseri, and it is known that Kayseri Airport is used intensively for air transportation to the region. In addition to air transportation, it is necessary to use road transportation from the airport to Cappadocia, which takes approximately 40-60 minutes.

Table 3. Infrastructure and Superstructure in the "Land of Beautiful Love"

Visuals	Analysis
	Visual: 8 Duration: 00.13 Indicator: Vehicle Display: Aircraft- Airport runway Displayed: Transportation
	Visual: 9 Duration: 00.14 Indicator: Buildings Display: Hotel Displayed: Accommodation

	<p>Visual: 10 Duration: 00.07 Indicator: Object Display: Tile Decorated Plate Displayed: Souvenir</p>
	<p>Visual: 11 Duration: 00.05 Indicator: Object Display: Vase Displayed: Souvenir</p>
	<p>Visual: 12 Duration: 00.07 Indicator: Object Display: Decorated Ceramic Vessels Displayed: Souvenirs</p>
	<p>Visual: 13 Duration: 00.08 Indicator: Object Display: Balloon Displayed: Activity</p>



Visual 9 shows a visual belonging to an accommodation business that has an important superstructure service. There are many accommodation facilities in the Cappadocia region that emphasize the traditional architecture specific to the region and are built with gray-white stones that are suitable for the texture of the region. Facilities where rooms are made by carving rocks also provide accommodation services in the region. Especially in these types of facilities, it is seen that rock carving is used in interior decoration because rocks can be easily carved. These are highlighted a lot in the TV series examined. It is seen that elements such as the exterior appearance of the accommodation facilities and the structure and decoration of the rooms are handled in many scenes.

One of the most intensely handled themes in the TV series called "Land of Beautiful Loves" is souvenirs. In Visuals 10, 11 and 12, it is seen that products that stand out with tile decorations that can be considered within the scope of souvenirs and especially handicrafts are processed. It has been determined that vases, jugs, pitchers and plates are processed as important contents. When Cappadocia is mentioned, balloon tours are at the top of the symbolic activities that come to mind. Balloon tours, which are one of the most important services of the destination, have become an inseparable part of the urban texture of the destination. In Visuals 13 and 14, content referring to these balloon tours is included. Visual 14 provides data on the preparation for the flight of the balloons that start close to sunrise in the morning and the moment of flight. In this respect, it can be said that it is processed in a way that is enjoyable and convinces the audience to do this activity.

## **5. Conclusion and Discussion**

The results of this study reveal that TV series use touristic destinations as film platforms, while also showing that they give extensive space to destination attractions. Natural and cultural resources in cities are extensively addressed. There are many studies in the literature that support this result and reveal the role of mass media via TV in affecting the destination image and its relationship with the tourism industry (Lee et al., 2008; Zhou et al., 2023; Chekalina et al., 2024). The phenomenon of urbanization is highlighted in the series with civil architecture and public structures. Natural resources created by water-related content are also intensively addressed. In addition, cultural resources such as the people's lifestyle, production methods, and family structure are also addressed. The scenes in this

series where pottery production looms, pottery wheels, and produced ceramics are discussed are important indicators of this. Natural and cultural resources are the most important factors that determine a tourist's motivation before traveling (Connell and Mayer, 2009; Busby et al., 2013). In this respect, these resources (natural and cultural) covered in the series contribute to the destination image and pave the way for the destination to attract demand in the long term. In their study, Fu et al. (2016) stated that TV series and movies affect the behavioral intentions of tourists and affect the demands of destinations.

This study reveals that transportation services that will facilitate the accessibility of the destination are processed. In addition, accommodation facilities that will meet the accommodation needs in visits with accommodation also play a critical role. The results of the study reveal that visual content that can emphasize accommodation facilities is processed in many scenes in the examined series. Li et al. (2017) stated in their study that infrastructure and superstructure services are the most important elements that will affect the satisfaction of tourists and naturally contribute to the image of the destination during the destination visit process. In this context, they state that resources such as transportation, accommodation and food and beverages increase both in quantity and quality in destinations where TV series or movies are shot. In addition, it was concluded in the study that products and places that will provide shopping opportunities were discussed and that balloon tourism, one of the most important touristic activities in the region, was processed in the series. Diversification and the increase in shopping opportunities or the presence of social-physical activity opportunities affect the motivation of tourists to spend quality and long time. Akarsu et al., (2019) makes evaluations to support this information and states that these are important conditions for the destination image. In this way, the time spent at the destination is productive and the extension of this time is always among the most important expectations of both destination stakeholders and tourists. These results show that the TV series called “Land of Beautiful Loves” includes touristic attraction elements that will positively affect the destination image.

### **5.1. Theoretical Implications**

Studies in the literature reveal that there is a strong connection between TV series and theories explaining tourist behavior, which is one of the basic elements shaping tourism activities. In this context, audience participation theory (Kim, 2012), attachment theory (Boateng et al., 2020) and place attachment theory (Sun et al., 2021) are just some of them. It is known that these theories are generally based on the relationship between the organism (individuals), stimulus (TV series and destination resources it processes) and response (travel tendencies or behaviors). These contextual evaluations are formed based on the SOR theory and are generally shaped on the stimulus-organism-response axis (Loung, 2024). Since theories or studies that process them produce results based on primary-empirical data, the theoretical contributions of this study are addressed within the framework of the semiotic method.

This study has contributed to the semiotic method literature with its findings and results. It is a fact that it is difficult to understand the details and subtle messages in visual content, especially those that present a long-term and complex plot. This difficulty is also addressed in different studies in literature (Hassan, 2015; Gretzel and Collier de Mendonça, 2019; Ye and Jeon, 2023; Luo and Hunter, 2024). The results of this study are important and contribute both in terms of revealing this difficulty and in terms of understanding the role of the semiotic method in understanding the part within the whole. The fact that a TV series with love, action and adventure has turned into a phenomenon that offers destination promotional material and contributes to the destination image fulfills a critical task in seeing the interdisciplinary scientific contributions of semiotics.

## **5.2. Practical Implications**

It can be said that TV series shot in tourist destinations contribute to the destination image in the medium and long term. It should also be considered that this interaction is two-way. In short, it is not a coincidence that film and series organizations choose destinations rich in tourist resources as platforms where the series are shot. Because one of the most important functions of these works is to provide rich visual content, and destinations provide more than enough due to the tourist resources they contain. Akarsu et al. (2019) include evaluations on the subject in their studies and state that if the process is completed successfully, the destination image can turn into an authentic destination identity.

There are important responsibilities for the professional team that shoots the series for a positive destination image. Considering the power of visual media, using incorrect information or content about the destination can lead to irreparable consequences. In this respect, it is recommended that the team that determines touristic destinations as shooting platforms for their series should conduct studies that can use accurate information and visual content. Askanova et al. (2021) stated that TV series serve as an advertisement and that they contain accurate information. In the example of a historical series, the relationship between place and history should be taken into consideration and support has been obtained from experts who are knowledgeable about the history or culture of the region. If a series is to be shot in a destination that stands out with its natural resources, information can be obtained from tourism experts in the region about the tourism resources and activities that stand out in the destination. Chen and Sun (2024) included similar evaluations in their study and stated that the resources in the destination have become important platforms for series or films about touristic regions. Therefore, it is thought that the opinions of the stakeholders about the capacity and impact area of these resources can positively affect the success of the series and subsequently the destination image.

It is a known fact that TV series have a significant impact on the regions where they are shot. It is useful to turn this actual situation into an advantage. Series shot in tourist destinations can directly become a promotional tool. Fu et al. (2016) reveals that TV series have significant effects on promotion in the subject they address to a marketing perspective. After the series are broadcast on national TV channels,

depending on the strength of the scenario, their national or international qualities can be realized in a very short time. At this point, all stakeholders at the destination have very important duties. First of all, the biggest responsibility is to control the sharing of correct information and content. In this context, decision-making stakeholders (Local governments, provincial governors and others official members, non-governmental organizations, tourism main or complementary businesses, etc.) have important duties in terms of ensuring the necessary controls before the series starts broadcasting. The responsibilities of the local people come into play after the series starts broadcasting. Pham and Hwang (2022) state that the local people are an important stakeholder group at this point. Because when the whole of the local people is considered, it is easy for them to detect findings that are against social and cultural values, especially when many people with different moods and thinking structures watch these contents. Kim and Hyun (2024) discuss the necessity of this in connection with the social and cultural interaction between TV series or movies and the local people in the tourist destination. Any possible deficiencies or inaccuracies detected can be reported to the decision-making stakeholders so that the necessary measures can be taken.

### 5.3. Limitations and Future Studies

Although this study has provided broad perspective results that will highlight the destination attractions of a TV series and discuss their roles in the destination image, it is limited to only one TV series and one destination. In this respect, similar topics can be studied in future studies and the roles of TV series in creating the destination image can be revealed with the help of different examples using semiotics.

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Ümit ŞENGEL: Conceptualization, Literature review, Data curation, Methodology, Analysis, Writing.