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A SENSITIVE AREA IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES: COUNTRY BRAND

Abstract

The concepts of brand and branding have been an important agenda item of the organizations in recent years. Country brand has also gained importance following the export of commercial products and the increase in the revenue based on tourism. There are ongoing controversies over country brand concept. It has been found that there are a few studies on this issue in Turkish literature. Moreover, as having a political dimension, the topic of country and city brands is wide enough to work on. Country brands cannot be managed as easily as trademarks, there are many decision-makers, the area which the brand spans and people who are affected by brand management consist of different groups, there are historical prejudices and background and target people are varied. Thus, 'country brand' can be considered as a 'sensitive' area. It is substantially aimed at detecting the dimensions which constitute country brand. In this context, this paper is regarded as exploratory research. This paper focuses on explaining the concept of country brand and components of it. After theoretical framework, there will be a research including the attitude of students in Turkey towards brands and what components they take into consideration to accept something is a brand.

Key Words: Country Branding, Nation Brand, Country Image, Country-of-Origin

İLETİŞİM ÇALIŞMALARINDA HASSAS BİR ALAN: ÜLKE MARKASI

Özet

Marka ve markalaşma, son yıllarda kurumların en önemli gündem maddelerinden birini oluşturmaktadır. Ülke markası kavramı ise ticari ürünlerin uluslararası pazarlanması ve turizme odaklanan ülke gelirinin artması sürecinde önem kazanmış gibi görünmektedir. Ülke markası kavramının üzerinde tartışmaların devam etmekte olduğu izlenmektedir. Bu çalışma için yapılan literatür araştırmasında; bu alanda ülkemizde yapılmış çalışma sayısının oldukça az olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Bununla birlikte, ülke ve şehir markası konusu siyasi yönü olması nedeniyle çalışılması çok boyutlu bir alandır. Ülke markaları; karar mekanizmalarının çokluğu, markanın kapsadığı alan ve marka yönetiminden etkilenen insanlar topluluğunun farklı gruplardan oluşması, tarihsel süreçler ve önyargılar, hedef kitle çeşitliliği vb. nedenlerle ticari markalar kadar kolay yönetilemez bir konumda bulunmaktadır. Bu nedenle 'ülke markası', 'hassas' bir çalışma alanı olarak değerlendirilebilir. Çalışmanın özünde, ülke markasını oluşturan bileşenlerin saptanması hedeflenmektedir. Bu yönüyle araştırma, keşfedici bir nitelik taşımaktadır. Bu doğrultuda çalışmanın içinde Türkiye'deki üniversite öğrencilerinin ülke markası algısına ve marka olarak ifade ettikleri ülkeleri hangi değişkenlere (bileşenlere) odaklanarak marka kabul ettiklerine yönelik bir araştırmaya da yer verilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ülke Markası, Ülke İmajı, Ülke Orijini

1. Introduction

One of the recent agenda items of institutions and organizations is creating a product range, thus discovering new markets. In today's world, global economy increasingly makes the countries economically dependent on each other. Global competition is an inevitable fact for the organizations. Kotler, Jatusripitak and Maesincee, state that global competition has been essentially critical for each country from the wealth of the nation became dependent on the increase of export revenues on (2000, 179). The desire of being a strong side in this competitive world has led the enterprises in general to focus on the value of 'brand' concept. Creating, managing, restructuring a brand is at the centre of marketing communications. Enterprises have also realized the importance of 'country brand' for 'international success'. Country brand still arises many controversies. It has been found that there are a few studies on this issue in Turkish literature. For this reason, it is thought that there is a huge need for academic studies and creating awareness in this area.

Country and city branding are multidimensional subjects as they have political facets. Country brands cannot be managed as easy as trademarks are. The number of the decision-makers, the area which the brand spans and the group affected by brand management are some of these dimensions. For this reason, 'country brand' can be considered as a 'sensitive' area.

This paper focuses on explaining the concept of country brand and components of it. There is also a part which gives place to the ideas as to Turkey brand. After theoretical framework, a research including the opinions of university students in Turkey on country brand is planned to be done. The aim of the research is collecting data as to the attitude of students in Turkey towards brands and what components they take into consideration to accept something is a brand. The questions prepared focusing on the aim of the research will be applied on the students in the 3rd grade in Istanbul University Faculty of Communication Public Relations and Advertising Department.

2. Brand in Conceptual Terms

The focal point of this paper is 'country brand'. It is believed that it is important to internalise the concept of 'brand' to be able to understand country brand and interpret the research. Thus, this part mainly deals with defining and explaining 'brand'.

Babür Tosun states that the roots of 'brand' dates back to 19th century when the owners of large cattle stamped their animals to differentiate them from the others on the way from southwest to west (2010,7). Similarly, Al and Laura Ries also note that branding in the market and stamping in the farms are same in commercial terms (2000, 14). Undoubtedly, brand/ branding are very old concepts. Knapp expresses that brand was first used –even primitively- in BC 3000 as some kinds of signs on the bricks, stones, pots, pans and tiles believed to be owned by ancient Egypt are believed to have been used to show belonging to someone or some groups (qtd. In Babür Tosun, 2010, 9). Both then and now, brand's role has been to differentiate a product or a service from another one (rivals in the market). According to Demir, a brand functions as a guide in terms of both information processing and placing reliance on the product (2012, 42). It is known that it is often mentioned of the increase in production, market saturation, new market search and organizations or people who look for new marketing strategies or new products to manufacture in the agenda of today's global world. This agenda seems to be the reason why a brand functions as a guide not only for the communicators but also organizations. How a brand grows/is built and managed explains the latter awareness.

As stated in American Marketing Association, well-known definition of 'brand' from their dictionary -name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature and so on-. Clearly, many of contributors feel that this is a new concept that still needs defining (qtd. In Anholt, 2010 a, 1). For them, brand enables a product to be differentiated from the others and develop identity. This proves that a brand is buildable and manageable. However, this process should start from the identity of organization/ product, go on with planning as to what kind of a perception wants to

be created in target group and end with planning the communication process in this direction and performance of brand communication studies. At this stage, it should be remembered that a 'brand' is not solely an emblem or a logo or a study on communication but closely correlated with the authenticity of the content (of the organization or product). Anholt says good advertising, as Bill Bernbach once remarked, can only make a bad product fail faster and the same is most certainly true of places (2008 a, 6).

3. Country Brand

In the first part above, 'brand' concept has been explained in order to understand country brand better. In this second part, a detailed literature scan as to 'country brand' is available to be able to interpret the research carried out.

3.1. The Explanation of 'Country Brand'

A long scan has been carried out to explain 'country brand' which is the focal point of this research. It has been found that there are a few studies on this issue in Turkish literature. The reason is that there is not enough awareness created in this professional area. When searched global articles, it has been seen that this subject is a very important profession and there are many articles in which concepts about the content of country brand are discussed. Country brand is under the title of 'place branding' in the literature. Place is also dealt with three main titles like country, city and area. Fan says despite the recent surge in interest amongst both academics and practitioners and more, research on nation branding is still in the infant stage and the topic itself remains as a complicated and somewhat confused construct (2006, 6).

In his article written taking those points into consideration, Fan evaluates the data he gathered like this:

Table 1 : Terms Used in The Literature – Relationship Between Terms

<i>Product related</i>	<i>National level</i>	<i>Cultural focus</i>
Country of origin	Nation/country brand	Country stereotype
Product-country image	Nation/country image	National identity
Made-in country image	Country equity	National characteristics
Country image effect	Country positioning	e.g. 'Britishness'

Source : Fan, Y. (2006). Branding the nation: What is being branded.?, *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 6.

The relation that Fan sets up among the concepts is clearly seen in the Table 1, Fan told about nation branding, it involves promoting a nation's image to an international audience (2006, 9). It is observed in this definition that a country is accepted as a brand and image building approach is adopted. Aronczyk explained that 'Nation branding' as a concept and practice has captured the attention – and financial resources – of national governments in countries with established capitalist economies and emerging market economies alike (2008, 42).

It is observed that country branding holds an important place in this fast globalized world. In addition, Demir expresses that two important points of prestige management are place brands and country brands (2012, 43). Fan adds that nation branding concerns applying branding and marketing communications techniques to promote a nation's image (2006, 6). Peoples' perception about countries is complicated. In the researches carried out in this area, it has been found out that such perceptions are built around tourism, products and services and how much they are reflected in the mass media. As to Johnsson, the framework of country brand is built over the citizens of the country in question, governments policies, experiences of people who visited that country before, attractiveness for foreign investors, cultural and material export (the effect of the country of origin) (qtd. in Dündar Kurtuluş, 2008, 287). Country of origin (coo) can simply be defined as the effect of the country producing 'the product' on the sales of that product. The image of the country shows itself not only in the political side of that country in international platform but also trademarks.

A country brand grows in a long period of time. Countries sometimes need to rebuild their brands to fix the damaged image of theirs or change the old perception. According to Barysch image that people have of a country, although usually grounded in reality, is not necessarily accurate (2007, 5). Politicians, journalists, bankers and other professionals whose job it is to know about the world frequently update their images of different places. But the general public does not. For Barysch, perceptions and prejudices, once formed, are useful for navigating an extremely complex world. People will not give them up easily, unless they have a good reason to do so. That is why people's images of other places are so often out of date.

In her article published in *Dünya* newspaper on 20th January 2011, Didem Eryar Ünlü presents her interview with Wally Olins, who is one of the most people figures in brand and corporate identity area (and have worked as a counsellor for Akzo-Nobel, Accor Hotels, Q8, The Portuguese Tourist Board, BT, Renault, Volkswagen etc.) (www.dunya.com). In the interview, Olins expresses that building a country image is far more difficult and different than building a trademark. He adds that it is difficult in terms of politics to control how a country is perceived by other peoples. It is a prerequisite to evaluate how the country perceives itself and is perceived by the target group to build a country brand. In the part below, how a country brand is built and dimensions of that brand will be analyzed.

3.2. Building a Country Brand

According to Ries, all the proper names, whether they represent a company or a group, are brands (2000, 13). Patagonia is a clothing brand, but it is also a brand which helps Argentinean and Chilean tourism agencies attract tourists to this old but untouched region. Philadelphia is a leading cream cheese brand, but it is also the name of a city of brotherly love. This indicates that brands can grow on their own. For Simon Anholt, the meaning of country names are also show themselves in the brands (2010 a, 4). He gives examples. For example; Formosa, the previous name for the island of Taiwan means beautiful or shapely, Venezuela means little Venice and the many places named Esperanza means hope, quite clearly fall into the same category; likewise Liberia based on the Latin root signifying freedom, an appropriate name for the new homeland of freed American slaves, is quite clearly the deliberate application of a constructed term onto a place in order to invest that place with a particular public meaning and attraction.

Anholt also discuss about the flags. For him flags of the countries also scrutinized in correlation with the branding process (2010 a, 6). Anholt says that many of the country flags extremely effective vessels for containing brand image, creating an instant and rich emotional response in the 'consumer'. He gives example from The Swissflag. For example, the Swiss flag is a natural logo -distinctive, graphically simple, instantly recognisable, easily reproducible and inherently elegant. Country brands are built taking many components about target groups into account. The components which constitute a country brand are given below.

A nation brand offers no tangible product or service; instead, it represents and encompasses a wide variety of factors and associations:

- place – geography, tourist attractions;
- natural resources, local products;
- people – race, ethnic groups;
- history;
- culture;
- language;
- political and economic systems;
- social institutions;

- infrastructure;
- famous persons (the face);
- picture or image (Fan, 2006, 7).

As it is seen above, there are many variables affecting the constitution of a brand.

Aronczyk called the 'guru' of the nation branding movement and member of the Public Diplomacy¹ Board of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the UK (2008, 47), Simon Anholt said that a place-brand strategy is a plan for defining the most realistic, most competitive and most compelling strategic vision for the country, region or city; this vision then has to be fulfilled and communicated (2003, 214). Branding includes many dimensions. These dimensions are itemized in a more detailed way.

The acts of communication in which places commonly engage may include:

- the brands which the country exports;
- the way the place promotes itself for trade, tourism, inward investment and inward recruitment;
- the way it behaves in acts of domestic and foreign policy, and the ways in which these acts are communicated;
- the way it promotes and represents and shares its culture with other places;
- the way its citizens behave when abroad and how they treat strangers at home;
- the built and natural environment it presents to the visitor;
- the way it features in the world's media;
- the bodies and organisations it belongs to;
- the other countries it associates with;
- the way it competes with other countries in sport and entertainment;
- what it gives to the world and what it takes back (Anholt, 2003, 214-215). Some other authors have different ideas about those dimensions. Still, they are all focused on tourism, export and public diplomacy.

Increased globalization, geopolitical rivalries, and economic competition have created the need for nations to actively brand themselves in an integrated way on what we consider the four pillars or critical dimensions of nation branding: public diplomacy, tourism, exports, and foreign direct investment. We have also referred to these dimensions as nation branding spaces (Simonin, 2008, 23).

These components arise as a result of various experiences and processes. How they are constituted are explained below.

Their assessment with regards to the nation in question may be based upon the following factors:

- personal experience, e.g. visiting the country;
- education or knowledge;
- prior use or ownership of a product made in that country;
- the depiction of the country through media channels;
- stereotypes, etc. (Fan, 2006, 10-11).

It seems that creating awareness in the the fields mentioned above and these processes are

¹ Public Diplomacy: being active in the international arena using soft power elements and gaining power (See for details Vedat Demir, Kamu Diplomasisi ve Yumuşak Güç, İstanbul, Beta Yayınları, 2012, 12-21).

planned in parallel with the professional communication research as much as possible will be helpful in creating successful country brands.

Pritchard and Morgan's research also mentions brand components. "Throughout this article it has been argued that the representations used in destination marketing are not value-free expressions of a place's identity-instead, they are the culmination of historical, social, economic and political process and reveal much about the social construction of space, cultural change, identity and discourse" (Pritchard and Morgan, 2001,177).

A country brand can also be affected by the geographical locations and historical background of the country in question as you see in the table. It is seen that the author underlines this subject when considered the expressions below.

The importance of geography-based descriptors and concepts has been with us since the beginning of time (eg Joseph of Arimathea, Greek mythology, the Hanseatic League, Chinese silk, Ceylon tea) and is with us as strongly as ever today and in countless manifestations (eg German engineering, Bally of Switzerland, Mexican standoff, Russian roulette, 'Visit Sunny Costa del Sol', 'Made in the EU' and the 'Brazilian Performing Arts ensemble' at the local arts centre) (Papadopoulos, 2004, 4).

For Fan, nation branding can be interpreted in several different ways. It is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Examples of Nation Branding

Example	What is being branded	
COO effect	Rover cars use the Union Jack as part of its logo	Being part of the product brand
	The New Zealand Way	A quality mark to promote exports
Country	100 % Pure New Zealand	Destination – place marketing
Nation	Cool Britannia People,	culture – nation branding?
State	'Axis of evil'	Regime – political marketing
Region	Four Dragons in Asia	A term used in the 1980s to refer to the newly industrialized countries

Source: Fan, Y. (2006). Branding the nation: What is being branded.?, Journal of Vacation Marketing, Vol. 12, No. 1, 6.

In Table 2, Fan underlines the concepts and their reflections in the practice. Wally Olins regards Spain as one of the most successful countries to rebuild a brand (qtd. in Eryar Ünlü, www.dunya.com). He explains that Spain was considered as a poor country which was governed by a dictator in 1970's. Following the death of Franco and membership to the EU, Spain both changed in real and peoples' perceptions. Today it is an esteemed country which has made her name in architecture, cinema, business and trade. It is thought that this change owes to the cooperation set among public, private sector and artists. It is an essential fact that a country brand is dynamic and might be composed of many images.

A nation has multiple images. China, for example, could conjure up the images of being the largest country with 1.3 billion people, the Great Wall, giant pandas, kung fu, Made in China, etc. Time seems to be an important factor here in determining people's perceptions. In spring 2003 China was associated with the SARS epidemic while in 1989 it was the Tiananmen massacres, but in 2008 it will be the Olympic Games. What image is retrieved depends on the audience and the context (Fan, 2006, 8).

Fan states that different variables are effective in terms of country brand components. It is true that the extensive usage of media creates an environment where each and every event in a country may turn into international. This environment also defines a world where country brands are not stable, must be regularly managed and maybe structured. Many foreign articles about building/ rebuilding a country brand have been found, some of which are Berkowitz,

Gjermano, Gomez and Schafer's 'Brand China: Using the 2008 Olympic Games to enhance China's image' which explains the effect of Olympic games (sports) in building country brand (2007); Simon Anholt's investigation on Asian nation branding 'Nation Branding' in Asia' (2008 b); György Szondi's 'The role and challenges of country branding in transition countries (2007): The Central and Eastern European experience and so on' which focuses on the collapse of the Soviet Union, 28 countries have emerged out of the eight former communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe. The steps that those countries took in brand management process can be examined as a case study.

A more different point of view belongs to Pritchard and Morgan's article named "Privileging The Male Gaze" (2000). "Sociologists, geographers, historians and students of international politics have recognized for some time that there are no politically neutral spaces. Indeed, a number of researchers have argued that place has a gendered identity" (2000: 892). This expression points out to a different field of research in terms of country brand. This field is not in the sphere of this paper but it should be taken into account as a theme for further researches.

3.3. The Importance of Having a Strong Country Brand

It is inevitable that a country should have a strong brand to have a voice politically and economically. Country brands, brand cities and places are very important soft power² elements. The author emphasizes this:

However, it is not easy to change public perceptions of another country or nation. Countries that already enjoy a strong and positive reputation can manage their 'brand' because their audiences are willing. But countries that have weak or negative brands are simply not listened to or believed. If the Swedish government says 'we're a great country' it is rather unnecessary. If the North Korean government says the same, it is rather futile (Barysch, 2007, 5).

The brand power of the countries are clearly seen in those expressions. Anholt, presents the contrast and comparison between positive and negative images of a country in the following examples (qtd. in Demir, 2012, 44):

- when a Swedish manager and an Iranian manager or a Bangladeshi exporter and a Canadian exporter are compared
- when positive comments made for an overrated touristic place in a leading country and a unique, impeccable touristic place in a disreputable country are compared
- when how much European and American consumers pay for an unheard 'Japanese' product and a 'Korean' product which was probably produced in the same factory in China is compared
- when the comments made about a common political update in a country accepted as fair, rich and stable and the criticisms made about a bold, cunning and novel policy in a privative country in foreign media are compared.

How a country brand is created is explained in detail in this part. In the light of this information, Turkey brand will be examined in the part below.

4. 'Turkey' Brand

According to 'Brand Countries' research carried out by Brand Finance, Turkey was evaluated taking investment, tourism, products and ability into account and calculated as 487 billion dollars (www.haberturk.com). This has helped Turkey be the 19th valuable country brand in the world. Turkey, which raised its brand value 114 billion dollars, has overtaken the EU members like Poland, Austria, Belgium and Greece.

² Soft power is a country's making the others want what she wants in order to be successful in international politics. It is the essence of public diplomacy. (See for details. Vedat Demir, Kamu Diplomasisi ve Yumuşak Güç, İstanbul, Beta Yayınları, 2012, 21-25)

In addition to these data, there are some other studies which tell something different about Turkey's brand value. "On television, Turkey means minarets, headscarves and the Bosphorus bridge", says Paul Taylor, Reuters' European affairs editor. "In the newspapers, a 'secular state with a predominantly Muslim population' gets edited down to 'a Muslim country'" (Barysch, 2007, 1). It is clear that Turkey's image in the EU countries is an issue which calls for professional interest. It is below emphasized that there are different components which create a country brand.

In the EU countries, the questions raised by Turkey's potential membership range from the future shape of the Union to the integration of existing immigrant communities. Countries that face similar issues do not necessarily arrive at the same conclusions about Turkey: some Poles, Czechs and Germans argue that Turkey does not have a place in an EU that they see as a Christian club. But for predominantly Christian Spaniards, this does not seem to be a problem. While some Austrians and Hungarians are wary because of their country's historical experience with Ottoman occupation, this does not seem to play a role in Slovenia or Italy. A large Muslim immigrant community has turned French people against Turkish (Kemming, Sandıkçı 2006 qtd.in Barysch, 2007, 2).

As it is stated in the afore mentioned parts, the people, traditions, experiences of a country are very important factors for a country brand. Immigrants are also important in terms of country brand. It is below explained how immigration is effective in creating of a Turkish brand.

While much of Turkey is becoming more open, modern and diverse, many Turkish emigrants remain traditionalist. Some Turkish families in Germany try to restrict the education of their daughters; and there have been 45 honour killings by Turks on German soil since 1996. More than 90 per cent of Germans now believe that Islam is hostile and aggressive to women, according to a survey cited by the European Stability Initiative (ESI) (Barysch, 2007, 4).

Güven Borça states that image of a country is limited to the first item of the agenda under an intense communication flow (2002, 197). According to him, France=Paris=Love, Vietnam=war, Thailand=sex tourism, Egypt= pyramids, Scotland= whisky, Columbia= drug, Brasil= carnaval, Iran= mullah and Turkey= human rights.

Despite the significance of politics and public diplomacy for nation brands, there is little research on the topic. The study seeks to contribute to the literature by investigating Turkey's European Union (EU) accession, which seems endangered by negative public opinion in other EU member states, as a case to understand how nation brand images can influence a given course of action in international politics. Specifically, through an exploratory qualitative research, the content of Turkey's nation brand image, its antecedents, and potential consequences within the political context of the country's accession negotiation are explored. The findings suggest that Turkey, at the moment, does not appear to be a well-run nation brand. Not only do the poor results indicate room for improvement, but also the management of Turkey in all relevant nation brand dimensions does not seem promising with regard to a successful EU application process. Furthermore, the analysis point to a truly complicated positioning dilemma for Turkey's nation brand and the challenge of accomplishing an integrated nation brand management. The paper concludes by outlining policy and research implications (Kemming, Sandıkçı, 2007, 31).

The information above is deduced from the EU countries' data. In correlation with this, it should not be forgotten that different views about Turkey are possible in different countries.

A country brand is composed of the people, investments, domestic and foreign policy, global brands, culture, religion, traditional life and cultural assets. Still, it is undeniable that global art and sports activities are also a plus. Wally Olins puts forward that how a country perceives itself is important for the management of the brand (qtd. in Eryar Ünlü, www.dunya.com). He continues that Turkey is one of the first countries which will shine thanks to its geographical location, economic growth rate, international market experiences and successful business world. Olins stresses that Turkey's problem is also shared by other developing countries and in spite of having a strong manufacturing industry she could not build her own brand. He examples that Arçelik is not known in West Europe, but Bosch is. Thus, if Turkey is able to inform the world about her market (Turkish cuisine, entertainment and sports etc.), she can be a very famous

brand in five years. ‘Come to Turkey, because Turkey is cheap’ slogan in the promotional videos shows that Turkey does not believe in herself.

It is obvious that it is very difficult to build/ rebuild/ manage a country brand. There are three main stages of getting prepared for a country brand: analysis, planning and practice/ communication. The first step is the self analysis of the country, thus determining which ‘unique’ cultural values, traditional structure, people characteristics is and infrastructure will be emphasized. Determining the advantages and disadvantages (emigrants, tourism budget, trademarks etc.), she should adopt a strong strategy which will use the formers as a spokesperson if necessary. After completing the necessary researches about the mission of the country and what the target group think about the country’s image, a multidimensional communication which will be used in all kinds of mass media should be prepared in parallel with public relations and advertising activities. Also, there is an interactive relationship between a country brand and a trademark. Maybe it is necessary to consider trademark as another country brand component. The brand of a country is high means that the country will have a voice in global markets. In other words, if the country of origin is included in brand message as a value contributing to the brand, the relationship between the country brand and the trademark will leave a positive effect on the target group. Relying on the national values, trademarks can evidently and intentionally reflect those values on their corporate identities. Furthermore, brand philosophy of a product may include values unique to that culture. Likewise, brands based on the country of origin can be used as an advertising tool of the cultures in global market.

According to daily newspaper in Turkey, no Turkish brand could not get into ‘500 Most Valuable Brands’ list prepared by Brand Finance, which is a brand evaluation organization (www.milliyet.com.tr). Last year’s eighth Apple, which has brand value of 70.6 billion dollars, is at the top of the list. Being known as developing markets, BRIC countries (Brasil, Russia, India, China) reflect their development to this list; China has 25, Brasil has 9, Russia has 8 and India has 6 brands in the list. The first five place of the list is conquered by the USA. Brand Finance Turkey Director Muhterem İlgüner told that Turkey needed to do its best both in public and private sector. He added, “The success of the countries to which we were considered as equal has reflected on such lists. How many brands a country has in global market indicates this country’s ability to generate values.”

Country of origin and value transfer to corporate identities are one of the mostly handled topics in articles. In such articles, how strong country brands support global trademarks using value transfer is dealt. Still, it is an undeniable fact that an international brand is the spokesperson of the country.

5. A Research on Turkish Youth’s Perception of Country Brand

5.1. The Aim of the Research

Country brand and the effect of it is considered as a new field which has newly been realized in Turkey. It is thought that there is not many works on it supports that statement. However, this subject is being scrutinized in detail in all over the world.

It is observed that country brands make it easy for the countries in question to be efficient in many fields from politics and trademarks’s existing in the global market to tourism income. In this frame, the countries aware of the importance of country brand has carried out many works to create and manage a country brand of their own.

This paper focuses on explaining the concept of country brand and components of it. There is also a part which gives place to the ideas as to Turkey brand. After theoretical framework, a research including the opinions of university students in Turkey on country brand is planned to be done. The aim of this pilot research is the attitude of students in Turkey towards brands and what components they take into consideration to accept something is a brand. Components affecting the creation of a country brand is important for all the parties who will work professionally in

order to create a brand. Because these component detected in the researches point to the fields that need to be looked into. It is also planned to gather data about the perception of country brands in Turkey.

5.2. Sample and Method of the Research

In the context of the research, a questionnaire was prepared for the students in their 3rd grade years in Istanbul University Faculty of Communication Public Relations and Advertising Department both in fall and spring terms in 2013.

As the students took all the basic classes about communication in their first 2 years, 131 students who are accepted as they have comprehensive information about communication took part in this research.

The questionnaire consisting of 6 questions (3 of which are open-ended and the other 3 of which are close-ended. 2 of those close-ended questions Likert type scale) which aim at which countries the university students consider as a brand and which components they take into consideration while labeling a country as a brand.

Thus, the research should be regarded as an exploratory pilot research prepared non-probable sampling method and does not represent all the students in universities.

5.3. The Data and Evaluation

The first question is 'Do you think that countries can get branded?'. 86 participants among 90 answered 'yes' to this question. These condquestion is 'Which country do you consider as a 'brand'?'. The answers are presented below (Table 3).

Table 3: The Countries Considered as 'a Brand'

COUNTRY	FREQUENCY (f)	PERCENT (%)
The USA	59	47.2
Germany	19	15.2
England	12	9.6
France	9	7.2
Italy	6	4.8
Japan	5	4
Sweden	4	3.2
TheNetherlands	3	2.4
Norway	2	1.6
China	1	0.8
Brazil	1	0.8
Australia	1	0.8
Belgium	1	0.8
Cuba	1	0.8
Denmark	1	0.8
TOTAL	125	100

The participants who answered the question above were asked to explain why they consider those countries they have chosen as a brand, namely the components of the brand. These data below are the answers of that question. The data on the USA, Germany and England are presented below in a table. The first country to be considered a brand is the USA, which has the highest frequency (Table 4).

Table 4: Components of the USA Brand

COMPONENTS	FREQUENCY (f)	PERCENT (%)
Power	16	20
Culture	12	15
Goodpositioning	9	11,25
Global trademark	8	10
Economics	8	10
Popular culture	5	6,25
Sports	4	5
Art	4	5
Media coverage	4	5
Politics	2	2,5
Globalisation	2	2,5
Academic works	2	2,5
Level of develop- ment	2	2,5
Sovereignty	1	1,25
Level of technology	1	1,25
TOTAL	80	100

Another country regarded a country brand, Germany's brand components are given below (Table5).

Table 5: Components of Germany brand

COMPONENTS	FREQUENCY (f)	PERCENT (%)
Global brands	7	63,64
History	1	9,09
Economics	1	9,09
Globalisation	1	9,09
Technology	1	9,09
TOTAL	11	100

Yet another one regarded a country brand, England's brand components are given below (Table 6).

Table 6: Components of England brand

COMPONENTS	FREQUENCY (f)	PERCENT (%)
Global brands	3	23,08
Sports	3	23,08
Economics	2	15,38
Education	2	15,38
Technology	1	7,69
Culture	1	7,69
Level of development	1	7,69
TOTAL	13	100

In addition to the countries presented in tables above, the other answers and brand components are like this: **Japan, economics, having global brands, academic works; France, having brand cities and global brands (2), popular culture (2), culture, economics, sports, level of development; Italy, having global brands (2), sports (2), history, culture, technology; The Netherlands, goodpositioning (2), economics; Norway, culture, level of development; Switzerland, economics (2); Brazil, sports; Sweden, culture, economic; Cuba, politics; China, technology; Denmark, culture.**

The fourth question of the survey is ‘What are topics that affect country branding?’. The topics which can also be regarded as brand components are given below (Table 7).

Table 7: Country Brand Components

COMPONENTS	FREQUENCY (f)	PERCENT (%)
Economics	18	18,37
Global brands	12	12,24
Recognition	9	9,18
Advertising- Promotion	8	8,16
Image	8	8,16
History	6	6,12
State of governance	5	5,1
Politics	5	5,1
Level of development	4	4,08
Art	4	4,08
Democracy	3	3,06
Sports	3	3,06
Having coverage in world agenda	3	3,06
Power	3	3,06
Sovereignty	2	2,04
Technology	2	2,04
Culture	1	1,02
Education	1	1,02
Traditionality	1	1,02
TOTAL	98	100

For the fifth question of the survey, the participants are asked to rank the effects of brand components on the country brand. Evaluation was done according to likert scale (Table 8).

Table 8: Ranking of Country Brand Components

COMPONENTS	1 (not at all interested)	2 (not very interested)	3 (neutral)	4 (somewhat interested)	5 (very interested)
Global trademarks	5	3	9	14	41
Global sportssuccess	15	15	16	20	6
Success in culturalevents	17	18	20	11	6
Advertisingcampaigns	15	20	16	13	8
PublicRelationsworks	20	16	11	14	11

The sixth question demanded participants to rank ‘the elements that compose country brand.’ The evaluation was made according to Likert scale. The answers are scaled using 5 units which range from ‘not at all interested’ (1) to ‘very interested’ (5). The opinions are presented below (Tablo 9).

Table 9: Tools Used for Making a Country a Brand

COMPONENTS	1 (not at all interested)	2 (not very interested)	3 (neutral)	4 (somewhat interested)	5 (very interested)
TVseries	22	11	6	6	4
Movies	3	10	12	11	13
TV, newspaper and magazine news	7	9	13	1	9
Adverts	5	6	12	11	15
Social media campaigns	12	13	6	10	8

The data gathered at the end of the research is presented above. The results will be evaluated and brought into question in the next part.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

This paper focuses on explaining the concept of country brand and components of it. There is also a part which gives place to the ideas as to Turkey brand. After theoretical framework, a research including the opinions of university students in Turkey on country brand is planned to be done. The aim of this pilot research is to determine which countries the university students consider as a brand and which components they take into consideration while labeling a country as a brand. Determining the components draw the borders of the research for those who want to study country brand. Because of this, it is important to detect those components. It is also planned to gather data about the perception of country brands in Turkey.

Some of the data is quite striking. These are:

- Almost all the participants (95.5%) think countries can get branded.
- 47.2% of the participants thinks the USA is a ‘country brand.’
- It is noteworthy that nearly all the countries regarded as a brand country are the USA or European countries. There are also China, Japan, Australia, Brazil and Cuba, but they have low frequencies.
- The main reason why the USA is accepted as a brand country can be classified into 3 main titles: Components with a high frequency like power, politics and good positioning can be counted under politics, the most noteworthy one. There are also brand components as to ‘social life’ like sovereignty, culture, sports and popular culture. Finally, the components under ‘economics’ title are trademarks, economics, level of technology.
- The second brand country according to the participants is Germany. The components of Germany brands are mainly related to economics.
- The third one is England. The components are both related to economics like global brands and social life like sports, education, culture, level of development.
- When asked about the criteria important for defining a country as a brand, ‘economics’ and ‘global brands’ are the answers with the highest frequency. These two answers make up of 38.7%.
- Level of awareness is planned to be determined through asking the components accepted as important for making a country a brand (in literature). It is seen that global trademarks are a very important factor in participants’ eyes.

- The last question is for seeing the awareness about mass media's importance for a country brand. It is understood that there is a high level of awareness about this issue.

From a general point of view; the politics, economical power and social life of the countries are effective on country branding. It is an undeniable fact that wide communication opportunities and planned organisation are also important. However it should be remembered that the research is conducted on a limited group.

Country brand is a subject which has caused long years of controversy in social sciences world. Thus, there are more foreign articles on it than Turkish ones. Those articles both discuss the definition and dimensions of country brand and give examples from the successful and unsuccessful country branding attempts. As it has been given in detail in previous pages, country brand is examined under three categories which are 'country, city and place' in international literature.

Functionality of country brand in two main points is mainly dealt in many articles. One of these points is determining the place of the brands of a country in international markets. For instance, considering German- made cars as enduring and the highest point of engineering, Japanese- made cars as technologic, Italian- made cars as elegant and the USA- made cars as big is accepted as the transfer of the country image to trademarks. The other point is the importance of country brand on the country as a tourism destination. The power of country brand is also effective in political arena in terms of both countries and politicians. Country branding is used not only for supporting trademarks or tourism but also supplying a soft power in political arena. Still, it is thought that the interactive relation between political power and country brand should be dealt in another paper. No matter what the prompts are, country branding process should be managed professionally.

In consequence, nation branding, whether we like it or not, is a necessity; and countries which want to compete effectively in a globalised world must do battle with the constant urge of the marketplace to see the world in terms of simple national stereotypes. Countries must do whatever they can to upgrade and 'upbrand' those images, to ensure that they become and remain as fair, as true, as complete and as useful to their aims as the marketplace is prepared to accept. That is the nature of the contest (Anholt, 2010 b, 224-225).

Building and management of a country brand are two sensitive areas. As both historical backgrounds and national cultures (of both source and target countries) vary greatly today, there are some essential points calling for attention in the branding process. It is very difficult to change the image of a country, but not impossible either. There have been many rebuilt country brands so far.

As to Turkey's image, it is seen that the image which was created by a movie adapted from a Agatha Christie book mentioning Turkey years ago is still valid. What outer world thinks about Turkey brand entails the rebuilding of that image in professional hands. It is assumed that a country image cannot be managed only with the advertisements. There is no doubt that the power of ads or TV series cannot be overlooked; however, prejudices arising from the historical background cannot be eliminated only with these methods. The first step should be determining (examining) the image among target country and groups. After reaching the necessary messages, a systematic and strategic public relations campaign should be run. Two essential actors of this process are millions of tourists visiting Turkey every year and citizens in other countries.

In the research done for this paper, it has been found out that there are a few academic works about country brand. The reason why the sources on this topic are very insufficient is thought to be the lack of awareness. In contrast, brand image is known to be very important in many platforms (trade, politics etc.). Thus, it is hoped that this paper will be a reference for the future works on this subject.

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