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ADVANCES IN GLOBAL SERVICES AND RETAIL MANAGEMENT

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Local Food Festivals Within the Scope of Destination Branding

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Abstract

The perceptions and desires of individuals for touristic products are constantly changing in accordance with the changing conditions of the time. Today, while interest in mass tourism is decreasing, interest and searches for alternative types of tourism tend to increase steadily. In addition, in increasingly competitive conditions, destinations show their differences and attach importance to branding activities to create identity for themselves. In recent years, one of the most important tools used by destination (country, region, city, etc.) managers to differentiate their regions from their competitors and to achieve sustainable competitive advantage is destination branding. Activities in the region are of great importance for destination branding. Destinations can enrich their brands using regional food festivals. Employment opportunities, social-cultural and economic benefits can be provided to the people of the region where the festival is held. In this study, the importance of local food festivals is emphasized within the scope of destination branding.

Keywords: destination branding, local food festivals

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Introduction

The concept of destinations, which is important because it determines the framework, competitiveness, and strength of tourism activities; is explained in the literature with concepts such as "tourist station", "touristic area", "tourist destination". The place where the tourism activity occurs is called the tourist area. However, the tourist area is divided into the tourist-sending regions and tourist-accepting regions. Therefore, the naming of a tourist area can cause confusion. In order to remove this confusion from there, the word destination, which refers to "destination" or "destination region", is used instead of the concept of a tourist area. As a result, the word destination is referred to as "destination" or "tourist destination". (Türkay, 2014, p.1-2). According to Buhalis (2000:97), the concept of destination; used to be called country, region, city, area, but today it is defined as a mixture of tourism products that offer integrated experiences to consumers. Cooper and others (1998) define the concept of destination as the center of services and activities created to meet the needs of tourists. According to Leiper (1995), the concept of destination is the name given to places where people travel and prefer to stay to attend certain events. According to Cho (2000:144), the concept of destination is called the place

where individuals want to see it, except where they live all the time. According to Coltman (1989:4), the concept of destination is regions with natural attractions, features and beauty that serve tourists or day-to-day contractors. The brand concept has become one of the most popular terms used today. But when consumers are asked what the brand is, some say the brand is a name or a commercial term, some say the brand is a product or even a commitment. When many people use the word brand, they think of the brand's best-known form of presentation (Knapp, 2000:5). Kotler and Gertner (2002:249) say that the brand differentiates products and promises value to the consumer and that the consumer diverts their beliefs and emotions to behavior by revealing them. The brand thus accelerates the consumer's computing and learning process, providing the consumer with a "promise of shortcuts and value" to the informed purchase decision. The brand is defined by the American Marketing Association as "a name, term, sign, symbol, shape, or combination of a vendor or group of vendors, identifying their goods and services and trying to distinguish them from their competitors" (Wood, 2000:664).

Destination Branding

In recent years, one of the most important tools used by destination (country, region, city, etc.) managers to differentiate their regions from their competitors and to achieve sustainable competitive advantage is destination branding (Govers and Go, 2009:5). The most comprehensive definition of destination branding was made by Blain et al. (2005): "Destination branding is marketing activities that support the creation of a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that easily identifies and distinguishes a place; it is a concept that creates the expectation of an unforgettable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; it helps to strengthen and reinforce the emotional connection between visitor and destination, and finally helps reduce visitor research costs and perceived risk to a destination. When branding any destination, everything about that region must be collected under a single brand roof. These elements consist of hundreds of features, from products and services to agriculture, sport to art, investment to technology, education to tourism. The goal is to uncover the entire existence of the region and present it to visitors in a symbolic way. In doing so, all kinds of features must be marketed individually, but in a way that represents the whole. In this sense, the brand is becoming a "credibility brand", rather than a commercial one (Günlü and İçöz, 2004). In other words, it takes visionary troops to create a strong destination brand. A clear and realistic vision must be created for the destination brand and clearly articulated what it can achieve in the future with this vision, with the positive aspects of its cultural heritage and the contribution of its social stakeholders (Hankinson, 2007). The branding of a destination depends on a large number of events and staff in the region. Branding requires creating a name, symbol, or similar graphic that will clearly distinguish and highlight a region. These determine the holiday expectations of visitors and are brought together in a destination-specific way and are presented to a brand and tourism markets. In addition, these attractiveness elements in destinations offered under an effective and reliable brand combine, strengthen, and reduce the cost of research by reducing the perceptual risk of the visitor (Olimpia, 2007).

Local Food Festivals

The festivals are emerging as the growing tourism and leisure activities in the world. The festivals have significant economic, socio-cultural and political effects (Arcodia and Whitford, 2006:1) in a destination or in a host community. In terms of the content, importance and areas of

the activity, the festivals are defined as increasing awareness activities, which have significantly accelerated the tourism sector and have a very high social impact, which contribute significantly to the people of the region and the region in which the event will take place (Getz, 2000). The festival is a short experience due to its nature and offers a rich and local experience, unlike the traditional holiday concept. Most festivals have a seasonal structure. The phenomenon of seasonal food and beverages is often reflected in the time when the festival will take place. Accordingly, it may be difficult to market winter-specific products at the eating and drinking festivals that take place during other seasons of the year. This is also true in the opposite case. In addition, festivals offered as a consumer product differ in this direction from other tourism-oriented products, since they can only be experienced for a very short time of year (Hall and Sharples, 2008). In particular, festivals, which have been a very important part of the tourism sector for the last 20 years, have been considered a social event and a attractiveness factor (Getz and Frisby, 1990). The festivals provide economic benefits to the community, such as tax revenues for states, increased employment, business opportunities, and additional income for host cities. In addition, the construction of new facilities and locations, which can be used by the local community for other purposes after the festival, may justify the investment needed to renovate urban areas and organize infrastructure festivals. The festivals can also increase visitor arrivals, extend stay and spend time, helping to improve the tourism industry in the region (Prayag, Hosany, Nunkoo and Alders, 2013). Robert J. Smith, the concept of the festival states that even if not all of the communities in the world, most of them have set specific times for celebrations. These are the precious moments of a group or community. They may have a time to move from one season to another or from one period of life to another; the anniversaries of historical events may be the legendary day of the birth or death of a hero or god, the symbolic appearance of a religious leader or founder of society. It could also be to celebrate a living person or group or a social event by adding entertainment and entertainment. These repetitive moments, which include celebrations of special importance, are called festivals (2009:341). Based on these views, the festival belongs to the people, with symbols that represent a society's culture and the world's view, directly or indirectly affect all individuals of society, centered in celebration events, composed of ritual forms and events, usually universal, social and cultural influences. I can define it as a period of recurrence of days or days supported by a specific group or by religious and official organizations (Imirgi, 2005).

Hu (2010) describes the local food festival as a tourist attraction for both local and external participants, celebrating pride, traditions or specializations about local food or food that the host community desires to share, and especially local tourism and/or culinary products for outsiders. Regional food festivals have been determined to play an important role not only in economic development, but also in regional tourism development, and add value to existing products, as well as food festivals are organized to promote local products and separate themselves from the big city community festivals (Lee and Arcodia, 2011:1). Destinations can enrich their brands using local food festivals and help stakeholders provide additional income and improve the social and environmental values of their destination. The tourist who comes to the food festivals shows their willingness to spend more money on local food experiences that increase their cultural capital rather than cheap food products (Kivela and Crotts, 2006).

Food festivals are organized by many different businesses, local governments and universities to provide economic, social and cultural benefits to a region and the people of the region. The overall benefits of food festivals are as follows;

- Contributing to the development of the region in tourism,
- Improve the image of the destination and increase the region awareness,
- Mediating the configuration of the destination,
- To come to the people of the region and to revitalize the economy by creating jobs,
- Being aware of the ability to demonstrate their local public skills and to own their culture,
- Encourage local product consumption,
- Preserving traditional products, maintaining the identity of the rural community and enabling environmental sustainability (Mason and Paggiaro, 2009; Hu, 2010; Lee and Arcodia, 2011).

Examples of Food Festivals Organized in Turkey

In Turkey, there are 53 food and beverage festivals in the Mediterranean Region, 25 food and beverage festivals in the Eastern Anatolia region, 59 food and beverage festivals in the Aegean Region, 16 food and beverage festivals in the Southeastern Anatolia region, 46 food and 51 food-drink festivals in the Black Sea region, 84 food-drink festivals in the Marmara region (Ekerim & Tanrisever, 2020). When the food and beverage festivals were classified according to the provinces organized, it was determined that a maximum number of Istanbul (18), Antalya (14), Afyonkarahisar (7) and Manisa (7) were organized. Some provinces have no food and beverage festivals in their local event calendar. These cities are Ağrı, Artvin, Aksaray, Bayburt, Batman, Bilecik, Bingöl, Burdur, Elazığ, Eskisehir, Siirt, Iğdır, Karabük, Kilis, Osmaniye, Yalova, Şırnak, Kırklareli, Hakkari Hatay, Kars, Kahramanmaraş, Muş, Ordu, Sakarya, Samsun, Şanlıurfa is designated as a servant. Looking at the celebratory center of the gastronomy festivals, it is seen that the most festival-organized products are honey (15), cherry (12), grapes (10), watermelon (6) and exploration (4) as local food. Food and beverage festivals organized in Turkey are mainly organized on fruits and vegetables (Çetin, Demirel and Çetin, 219).

Examples of Food Festivals Organized in the World

La Tomatina is an annual food battle festival held in the town of Buol (history), near Valencia, Spain, on the last Wednesday of August. Hundreds of thousands of people travel from all over the world to participate in the 'World's Biggest Food War,' which sees more than a hundred metric tons of overripe tomatoes dumped into the streets. (<https://www.latomatinatours.com/>).

The vibrant Chinchilla culture, known as Australia's "Melon City," hosts over 20,000 visitors every two years for the Chinchilla Melon Festival, a one-of-a-kind, fun-filled, and insane experience. With a Street Parade, Beach Party, Free Family Events, Festival Feasts, Farm Tours, and an arena full of melon-related activities, this festival has something for everyone. Melon Skiing, Melon Pip Spitting, Melon Bungy, and Melon Chariot Races are among the unique events that draw visitors from all over the world to the township. This festival is a must-attend for anyone interested in experiencing the warm hospitality of the Western Downs region (<https://www.westerndownsqueensland.com.au/experience/chinchilla-melon-festival/>).

Dr. Rudy Melone's "crazy idea" sparked the Gilroy Garlic Festival. Bloomfield Ranch hosted the first Gilroy Garlic Festival in August 1979. The Gilroy Garlic Festival today remains true to its founders' vision while still promoting change and creativity. On Gourmet Alley, in addition to

returning festival classics, new dishes have been added, including the world-famous Gilroy Garlic Fries. The Great Garlic Cook-off's has spawned a slew of new cooking contests, including Garlic Chef Jr., Champions for Charity, the iron chef-style Garlic Showdown, and the Kansas City Barbecue Society's official Gilroy Garli-Que BBQ Challenge (<https://gilroygarlicfestival.com/history/>).

The Night of the Radishes is celebrated in Oaxaca's main square every December 23. It's a competition between artists who use purple produce to create sculptures in the hopes of winning the night's grand prize. The competition's origins date back to when holiday market vendors tried to make their vegetables more enticing by making sculptures with them. The governor, Francisco Vasconcelos, agreed to hold an official competition in 1897 because it was such a success. Since then, it's been a custom in Oaxaca (<https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/night-of-the-radishes-carving-festival>).

The Battle of the Oranges is the most exciting aspect of Ivrea's historic Carnival, and it's a wonderful depiction of the town's revolt against the tyrant. The Battle of the Oranges takes place over three days, beginning on Sunday and ending on Shrove Tuesday. It is a game in which nine teams of people on foot represent the people who revolted, and the 'Aranceri' (orange-throwers) on horsedrawn carriages represent the feudal armies (<https://www.storicocarnevaleivrea.it/the-carnival/the-battle-of-the-oranges/?lang=en>).

Literature Review

Çulha and Kalkan (2016), Quality of The International Olive Festival and Its Contributions to Regional Tourism: What Do Didim Local Tradesmen Say? 3, which was held in Didim. To evaluate the perceived quality of the International Olive Festival as a local tradesman and its contributions to regional tourism. The qualitative research method was used in the study and important findings were emerged regarding the program quality, quality of interaction, physical quality, management/governance quality, and output quality, positive or negative contributions to regional tourism, and improvement of festival quality and contributions.

Erdem, Mızrak and Aratoğlu (2018) The contributions and sustainability of the festivals to Regional Tourism: Examples of the International Mengen Cookery and Tourism Festival have been investigated in its studies, the International Mengen Cookery and Tourism Festival, as well as its social, economic, and cultural contributions to the region. As a result, the festival definitions of the participants show that themes such as promotion, culture, entertainment, art, and social sharing are particularly prominent. At the same time, participants see festivals as part of regional advertising and promotion, as well as having socio-economic and socio-cultural contributions to the region where they are organized.

İlban and Kömür (2019) The Role of Festival Tourism in Destination Branding: Ayvalik International Olive Harvest Days Example, 16 people were interviewed face-to-face with semi-structured interview technique and the data was obtained. The festival's; It has been concluded that ayvalik has a significant impact on destination branding, increases the number of tourists, brings vitality to the district economically and emphasizes themes of Ayvalik, olive oil, harvesting, festivity, tourism, tourists, sea, branding, overseas and promotional themes in the word cloud analysis.

Çoban and Süer (2018) The Role of Festival Tourism in Destination Branding: A Study on Alacati Grass Festival examined the impact of Alacati Grass Festival on alacati destination as a brand, interviewed the businesses serving in the region and tried to measure their perceptions. Alacati Grass Festival perceptions were evaluated and some suggestions were made for the festival to be held more effectively.

Bakırcı, Bucak and Turhan (2017) In his studies titled Impact of Regional Product Festivals on Regional Gastronomy Tourism: Urla Example, the "International Urla Artichoke Festival" was evaluated in order to investigate the effects of regional product festivals on regional gastronomy tourism. It was tried to reveal concrete effects by applying semi-structured interview technique with local administrators and stakeholders in the festival organizer position.

Ayazlar and Öngider (2018) Qualitative research method was used in the study titled Attitude of Grape Producers in Manisa's Branding with Wine Tourism. Within the scope of the research, data were obtained from twenty grape producers through interviews. According to the findings, participants view manisa's branding with wine tourism in a positive way. However, the lack of sufficient factories and cooperatives and the lack of the necessary infrastructure are considered as negative factors that prevent branding.

Lee and Acrodia (2011) The Role of Regional Food Festivals for Destination Branding, The role of regional food festivals in destination branding is investigated in this paper, as well as the characteristics of regional food festivals that contribute to the development of a destination brand. Regional food festivals have been discovered to have a significant impact on destination branding. Food festivals should deliver activities that use local food and promote the region's attractions to improve the effect of festivals on destination branding and improve the positive image of the destination and local food. The study's results will help regional food festival organizers and destination marketers succeed in their marketing efforts.

Yang ve diğerleri (2020) The role of food festivals in branding culinary destinations, Food-themed festivals are at the core of culinary tourism, and they've long been recognized as a critical component in a destination's competitiveness. The current study investigates how participants' motivation, timepressure, and prior festival awareness play a role in presenting a favorable culinary destination image that attracts patronage, based on the motivation, incentive, capacity (MOA) theory and elaboration probability model (ELM). In addition, the function of food participation as a moderator is investigated. The findings are expected to contribute to the body of knowledge on destination branding and provide managerial insights for destination marketing organizations and practitioners.

Kalkstein-Slikes (2007), Food and Food Related Festivals in Rural Destination Branding Food and food-related elements (FFREs) at festivals are investigated as a unique type of culinary tourism and as a destination's image builder in this report. The value of destination branding to rural communities is the study's context. The role of FFREs in rural festival marketing materials was investigated, as well as how text and graphics were used to highlight FFREs in these materials. Six in-depth interviews with festival promoters and destination marketing organizations were conducted using a case study approach (DMOs). The content review and case study, along with the incorporation of literature on destination image and branding, rural tourism,

festivals, and culinary tourism, culminated in the proposal of a conceptual model for festival-based culinary tourism in rural destination branding.

Vukic, Kuzmanovic and Vukic (2016) *Gastronomic Festivals As A Branding Tool* As a tourist destination, Serbia has a lot to offer. Given Serbia's rich cultural and historical heritage, hosting a food festival will reflect the creation of new branding opportunities as well as a source of economic growth focused on creative approaches to creating a holistic experience. A better understanding of gastronomic tourists' attitudes could help tourism marketers improve the efficacy of their branding strategies by developing a suitable deal for the right market segments. The study's results will help food festival organizers as well as the national tourism organization achieve success in destination marketing. Furthermore, a thorough examination of the data could lead to the conclusion that food festivals can be beneficial to destination branding.

Bassey Benjamin Esu and Vivian Mbaze-Ebock Arrey (2009) *Branding Cultural Festival as a Destination Attraction: The Calabar Carnival Festival as a Case Study* The study aims to establish a normative model for cultural festival branding. This is due to the fact that current analysis techniques and laws are contradictory and elusive. As a result, the study aims to add to the body of knowledge about cultural festival branding by proposing a normative model of branding that is connected to the service definition and mediated by demographic and behavioral variables. The study looked at cultural festival attributes to describe brand association and, based on that, suggested a model that uses cluster and discriminant analysis to simplify the process of cultural festival branding. The report used a convenience sample of 500 attendees from the 2007 Calabar Carnival Festival.

Belenioti Z.C., Gkarane S and Vassiliadis C (2017) *The contribution of social media to small scale events: Boosting the city branding & tourism demand through Thessaloniki Food Festival* Social media is becoming the new communication tool of every organization thanks to its multidimensional benefits. Despite its popularity, however, there is very little research on the impact of social media on brand recognition. Specifically, with the exception of a few recent studies, no previous research has looked into the effect of social media sites on brand recognition at food festivals. Performing arts festivals are a global tourism phenomenon that has grown in size, variety, and popularity in recent years. Despite the fact that food festivals are one of the most well-known festivals, growing in popularity around the world and attracting a large number of tourists, little is known about social media and food festivals. This research used a mixed methodology approach to its methodology. This research employs a case-study approach, with an in-depth examination of the Thessaloniki Food Festival, which lasted for a month (18 November-18 December 2017). The paper also includes useful empirical findings as well as managerial implications.

Results

Festivals are used as a key step in creating a destination brand. By creating a unique brand that distinguishes one destination from others, destination marketers aim to increase the number of tourists visiting the region. Effective destination branding; guarantees visitors the experience they will experience, reduces new visitor search costs and enables tourism destinations to create a unique sales offering (Manthiou, 2014:265). Destinations can enrich their brands using regional food festivals and help stakeholders generate additional revenue and improve the social and

environmental values of destinations. Tourists to food festivals show their willingness to spend more money on local food experiences that increase their cultural capital, rather than cheap food products (Kivela and Crofts, 2006).

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