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BRANDING EFFECT OF DESTINATION IMAGE: THE CASE OF BODRUM

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EXTENSIVE SUMMARY

Tourism is one of the most important sectors in terms of providing high income generating characteristics for the developed and developing countries, providing employment opportunities for local people and contributing to the choice of qualified employees and investors. In the tourism sector, which is one of the fastest growing sectors in the world economy, there are increases in the number of domestic and foreign travels due to the increase in income levels, the development of communication and transportation opportunities, and the regions that have the most benefit from this increase are obtained. The desire of the destinations to get more share from this increase has created a competitive environment among the destinations and the competitive environment has become more intense with the effect of globalization.

The destinations should be positioned as a brand in order to obtain the share they want from the tourism sector in the intense competition environment, meet consumer expectations and create intention to come back again. Branding is considered a plus value for countries, cities and destinations. The brand has functional features that enable products and services to be perceived as different from competitors, which are quality assured and which increase their competitiveness. The branding of cities and destinations requires a more complex and comprehensive process than product branding. While they may have distinctive characteristics such as cultural, historical, natural and geographical, they can have the artificial values that they have obtained through the works they have done. Destination and city branding can be made more easily than country branding. While making a decision to travel, the visitors make a choice according to the destinations and contribute to the awareness of the country.

Destination branding is important for marketing of destinations and developing destination marketing strategies. In destination branding studies, it is guiding to know the image perception related to the destination which consists of attractiveness, tourism enterprises, accessibility, tourism enterprises and image elements. The purpose of this study is to examine whether the destination brand image of foreign visitors to Bodrum has an impact on destination branding. 403 surveys were distributed to the foreign tourists who came to Bodrum with the application of survey technique and the obtained data were analyzed in the statistical program for social sciences.

According to the results of the analysis, a significant relationship was found between the perception elements of the brand image of the destination and the elements that constitute the destination brand value (at the significance level of 0.01). There are some positive, medium and strong relations between the sub-dimensions of destination brand image elements and sub-dimensions of destination brand value.

In this study, some recommendations have been made for destination management organizations, tourism organizations, press and public relations organizations. In order to avoid disruption of public transportation especially in the periods when visitors are intense, encouraging the expansion of public transportation, increasing the promotional activities abroad and increasing the tourist attractions for the purpose of extending the touristic season will increase the perception of the brand image of the destination positively. This study is important in terms of contributing to the literature. The repetition of the study in the future will help to see the corrected negativities, reveal the deficiencies and provide guidance on what needs to be done.