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An Evaluation On The Process of Being A Brand City Of Muğla

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Abstract

The importance of urban marketing has been increasing today, when a rivalry between products and enterprises has arisen based on cities in terms of development of countries by the help of globalization and brand strategies applied for products are being adapted to cities, which aims to highlight cities. Cities are significant actors in efforts of economic, social and cultural development of countries. Branding, which means being different in the eyes of target mass, more chance of being recognized, and establishing values, is preferred. For a city, what being a brand means to attract local and foreign tourists, encourage investments, to increase the life standards of local public, and so to add value. Branding process is to create an identity for the city and position. In this study which includes three different disciplines, which are public management, economics and business administration, closely related to the issue, during the process of identity creation, Muğla's potential of being a brand city was evaluated and interviews were made in depth with the shareholders having a role in its being a brand city and results obtained have been suggested.

Key Words: Muğla, Brand City, Branding, City Identity, Local Development

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1. Introduction

Cities which have taken place in the centre of financial mobility for centuries have a dynamic structure in social and financial means. In this sense, when the concern is development, it is possible to say that the most significant centers are cities. Today, cities have been influenced more closely and deeply by effects of global rivalry and become the subject of the rivalry under these new competition conditions.

Even though a city has the potential to be a brand city with its own values, today the concept of "brand city" has increasingly become more significant, especially due to the necessities of global rivalry, which arises the concern that it should be professionally managed. "Brand city" concept is one of the terms used

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in business administration field and transferred to urban literature. However, it is an obligation to evaluate this issue not only in terms of business discipline but also in terms of public management and economics since it is a multi-dimensional issue.

The concept of brand city may also be defined as a means that cities use in order to establish their own identities and introduce themselves to the globalized world in frame of this identity (İşler and Tüfekci, 2014). To make cities center of attraction, to highlight their different ways apart from other cities, to provide advantage of rivalry and to create added value are some of the fundamental aims of the city's branding process. In this sense, branding of cities is a vision.

Kotler et. al. (1993) states in their study that rivalry not only exists between products and companies but also countries and cities are in competition with each other, which means they also emphasize cities need to be branded. City branding can be defined, in its simplest meaning, as adapting marketing of product, company or service in traditional marketing to cities (Peker, 2006). In other words, a city's branding is the effort to establish image by creating financial and social value in natural beauties as well as historical and cultural values which will enable that city to be discriminated from other cities. Professional and careful branding management is needed for other products' branding efforts; likewise, city branding can be realized through a professional branding management. Otherwise, it is inevitable that a demanded brand city cannot be created, which causes negative changes and that values and local people of the city can be damaged.

To create a brand city requires a vision to be formed and in the most fundamental statement, it is an image-creating project. Creating city brand defines a process at which brand strategies are used as in products and services in developing spaces and cities. Stages of this process are to establish brand identity, position brand and establish marketing communication related to the brand and a Professional brand management.

Since it is a necessity for a city to get branded under global competitive conditions today, it is a matter of concern to evaluate the potential of being a brand city in terms of the city of Muğla. Especially, the fact that Muğla has values which differentiate it from other cities such as natural beauties of Muğla, length of its coast, undestroyed surrounding, historical and cultural structures, geographical position and accessible life space is one of the advantages reinforcing its potential in branding. In addition, the fact that it has provinces which have developed in branding in national and international scale makes us to question the concept of "Brand City Muğla" as a whole.

While evaluating the potential of being a brand city of Muğla, representatives from Muğla Governorship, Muğla Metropolitan Municipality, Menteşe Municipality and Chamber of Trade and Industry of Muğla which are main actors and shareholders who need to be leading in this issue have been negotiated.

2. City, Identity and Brand City Relation

City which is a dynamic concept has had various meanings among countries and in all periods of the history and this variable structure has become an obstacle in making a common definition of city. However, valuable information concerning meaning and importance exist when analyzing the concept of city etymologically.

The words, "Cite", "polis", "medine", have been used as identical to the term, city and have historical value. While "Cite" means a city-state, the word, polis, has been used in meaning of "castle" which stands for the necessity to defend more (Toprak, 2008). During human history, civilization has been developed as a concept concerning cities. In this sense, it has been derived from the word "civilization" in Latin and "civitas", which means "city". This is not limited to Western Culture. The concept of civilization which has the same meaning in Arabic culture has been derived from the word "Medine", which is used in meaning of "city" (Demirkan, 1996).

While there are various approaches about the origin of cities, cities have become the transporter and determinant of socio-cultural, financial and societal change during the historical period, as seen in

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