



Research Article

**THE ROLE OF GASTRONOMY TOURISM IN SHAPING DESTINATION BRAND EQUITY:
THE CASE OF GAZIANTEP INTERNATIONAL GASTRONOMY FESTIVAL**

Ayşegül ACAR^{1*} (orcid.org/ 0000-0002-1871-4904)

¹Karabük University, Safranbolu Tourism Faculty, Recreation Management Department, Karabuk, Türkiye

Abstract

The study aims to determine the brand equity of the Gaziantep through gastronomy festivals by using a consumer-based brand equity model. A qualitative research method is adopted using the convenience sampling method, which is one of the non-random sampling methods for sample selection. The research data was collected by applying the survey to 384 individuals who actively participated in the 2021 International Gaziantep Gastronomy Festival between September 20 and September 22, 2021. To reveal the relationship between the sub-dimensions used in measuring consumer-based brand value, a pearson correlation analysis was applied to the factors. In the final stage of the study, regression analysis was used to determine the effect between variables. The results, a positive relationship was determined between the sub-dimensions of consumer-based brand equity and brand equity. In addition, it has been determined that the perception of brand value for Gaziantep is high.

Keywords: Brand Equity, Destination Brand Equity, Gastronomy, Gaziantep

Introduction

The increasing power of international media and the decrease in travel costs, the increase in consumer spending power and the increase in people's interest in different cultures have revealed the need for the improvement of regional images and their advertising, and the concept of promotion has become increasingly important (Hanna and Rowley, 2008). Worldwide changes include the increase in wealth, abundance of leisure time, ease of transportation, increase in life expectancy, and an aging population (Hall et al., 2003). Turkey is known as a high-appeal destination for its historical, cultural, and natural wealth. However, it is also valued as a region with a rich food culture and geography. Food has an undeniable importance in sustaining life. People now make travel choices based on what they can put in their stomachs. Over time, food and drink has become one of the key considerations when a tourist visits a destination. In other words, destinations are not only competing in the realm of natural resources and cultural heritage, but also in the food they offer (Sürenkök Kesimoğlu, 2011). According to Antonioli and Baggio (2002), food has always been a main component in society and has also been the main source of motivation in interpersonal social activities such as gatherings, weddings, travel, and celebrations. The connection between food and tourism is not surprising and is currently a hot topic. For example, Hall and Sharples (2003) argue that food is an essential part of any tourist experience. One of the global tourism trends, destination-oriented alternative tourism activities, has been widely adopted in Turkey and the country has started to bring to light the undiscovered values and heritage of its different regions. Eating and drinking activities that are encountered in almost every region of local culture are among the current topics in the tourism industry and are marketed in various platforms. Although gastronomy is a science field with a rich history, gastronomy tourism has recently gained attention as a field that is being discussed and studied from various perspectives (Sarışık and Özbay, 2015). In this era of extraordinary change and globalization, creativity and innovation are widely recognized as directing the new economy. Adopting creativity can significantly increase revenue for organizations and destinations and ensure stability in the future.

The events in gastronomy tourism, when evaluated regionally, are of high and valuable worth in terms of the benefits they bring to the relevant destination. The effect that conventional forms of tourism have on the reputation and long-term viability of destinations are two aspects that, from a managerial point of view, need

*Corresponding author: aysegulacar@karabuk.edu.tr
DOI: 10.33083/joghat.2023.282

to be taken very seriously. In addition to this, activating the attractions of existing tourist areas is valuable for furthering the destinations in the perceptions of tourists. This is in addition to the promotion of various destinations for tourism, which is also important. In this context, Gaziantep, one of the first destinations that comes to mind when it comes to food and drink culture in Turkey, is of great importance for the partnerships and actions that will provide the city's branding when the emergence tools of the heritage are considered. Increasing research and analysis show that many tourists are concerned about what they eat during their travels and, as a result, tourists make their destination choices considering the food aspect (Sürenkök Kesimoğlu, 2011). Events and festivals are defined as activities that provide significant momentum to the tourism industry in terms of content, importance, and areas of activity and have a high social impact and make important contributions to the local population and the area where the event is held. They are activities whose level of awareness is increasing day by day (Getz, 2000).

In a process where international competition has been replaced by competition and superiority among cities, cities that can take the initiative, determine effective policies, and read developments correctly stand out and enjoy the benefits of development, while other cities experience an inevitable decline (International Festival Association, 2018). In the tough competitive environment, destinations trying to survive generally rely on their cultural industries and wealth. The place of festivals, which showcase the cultural perspectives of cities and occupy a prominent place among cultural industries, is undoubtedly important in this competition. The striking food habits of the regional culture have become an important part of marketing in tourism activities. On the other hand, local cuisine cultures are also one of the most necessary tools in macro tourism marketing strategies of countries (Güneli, 2012). In Turkey, hundreds of festivals are held every year. Most of these festivals have limited participation and organizational size to their own regions, and generally emphasize local folklore elements. In addition, the number of international festivals and events that are increasing day by day also stands out. Especially with the change in the service understanding of local governments and the increasing importance given to cultural industries in urban development, the number of our festivals has also increased significantly. The various professional fields, culture and art, food and drink-themed festivals and events organized in different regions of Turkey have come a long way in terms of both quality and quantity. Within the framework of internationally recognized festivals, many cities and regions have taken on active promotion activities and have gained value as important festivals in their fields (Türten, 2021).

The main objective of the research is to examine the brand value dimensions that effectively impact the consumer-based brand value of a destination, which is a tourist product, by taking the Gaziantep International Gastronomy Festival as an example within gastronomy tourism. Branding is an important part of destination marketing, and the brand value is important in terms of learning the brand perception and value in the consumer's eye and directing branding strategies. However, when studies aimed at determining brand value are examined, it is seen that there are a limited number of studies on the brand value of the destination, especially in the framework of gastronomy tourism. Therefore, the study also has significance in terms of the contribution it will provide to the literature. In this direction, research data was obtained using the survey technique on the role of the city's brand value in determining the brand value of 384 local and foreign visitors who participated in the Gaziantep International Gastronomy Festival.

Literature Review

Destination Consumer-Based Brand Equity

Consumer-based Brand Equity (CBBE) was introduced by Aaker (1996) and Keller to marketing literature (1993) and is widely used in destination branding literature to evaluate destination brand performance. Consumer awareness of the destination brand is the first step in developing consumer-based brand equity for a destination. This includes destination recognition through external sources such as previous travel experiences or user-generated content (UGC) photos. High brand recognition leads to a positive image in the minds of potential visitors. Destination brand quality is the perception of potential visitors about the overall superiority of tourism features in the destination. A high perceived quality increases satisfaction, loyalty, and intention to revisit the destination or recommend it to others (Horng et al., 2012). Destination brand equity shows the balance between what potential visitors expect and what they receive. For example, if they don't value the time and money spent for the local cuisine they desire, their interest in the destination may decrease (Pike et al., 2010).

The first studies on CBBE in destinations include consumer-based brand equity for Slovenian and Croatian visitors (Konecnik and Gartner, 2007), brand equity of destinations, a short-term holiday for a specific target (Pike, 2007), and CBBE for casino destinations in the context of Atlantic City and Las Vegas (Boo et al.,

2009). This shows the need for further research on the implementation and testing of the CBBE model. Konecnik and Gartner (2007) measured consumer-based brand equity for Slovenia and Croatia tourism. Consumer-based brand equity variables were brand image, brand awareness, perceived service quality, and brand loyalty in previous research. It was determined that the most important factor in establishing brand value was the image of the brand. However, the results of this study suggest that all four variables should be considered when determining the consumer-based value of a brand. The potential performance metric of successfully positioning the brand identity in the market is presented to destination marketing specialists by the concept of consumer-based brand equity (CBBE), which was proposed by Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993). According to Pike (2009), who looked at a total of 74 destination branding publications written by 102 different authors between 1998 and 2007, there was a gap in the literature. Pike found this gap after reviewing the works of these authors (2010).

According to Pike (2015), the literature on branding dates to the 1940s, but the concept of branding a tourism destination didn't gain traction until the 1990s, when the aforementioned studies were conducted. As a result, its foundation is geared toward the measurement of the influence of the consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) model that was previously modeled in destinations. Pike (2015) conducted a review of destination branding publications from 1998 to 2007 and found at least nine major gaps related to the challenges faced by Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) such as National Tourism Organizations (NTOs), State Tourism Offices (STOs), and Regional Tourism Organizations (RTOs) in practice. These organizations include National Tourism Organizations (NTOs), State Tourism Offices (STOs), and Regional Tourism Organizations (RTOs) (Pike, 2015). Pike's (2015) study involved an extensive amount of consumer research to arrive at a conclusion regarding the consumer-based brand value of Bundaberg Island in Australia. This investigation was carried out between the years 2003 and 2007. Data was collected in 2003, analyzed, and found to be low in terms of Bundaberg consumer-based brand value. Factors affecting the low brand value of the Bundaberg destination, such as being far from the center of Brisbane, limited social activities, lack of nightlife, and the image of the island were identified in the mentioned research. It is argued that measuring the effectiveness of destination brands is possible with brand value.

Culinary destination consumer-based brand equity

Food and drinks reflect the culture and identity of people living in destinations such as a country, city, or region. Therefore, food and drinks play an important role in promoting a destination (Serçeoğlu, 2014). Despite having a rich diversity, destinations with weak impressions need branding. Differentiation and prominence of destinations are achieved through branding. In this context, destinations use their unique food and drink cultures to differentiate themselves. This is because using gastronomic identity to create differentiation can provide positive and effective results in destination branding (Kılıçhan and Köşker, 2015). In addition, tasting regional food and drinks, revealing their differences, and such gastronomic products playing an important role in destination choice for tourists is important for destinations to become a brand. In other words, these types of travel, known as gastronomy tourism, make destinations a center of attraction and provide a competitive advantage (Aydoğdu et al., 2016).

According to the findings of Horng et al. (2012), the contribution of brand value to the overall performance of food and beverage destination brands can be demonstrated by way of the following four dimensions of brand value: brand awareness, brand image, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. To empirically test the consumer-based brand value model in food and beverage tourism, Horng et al. (2012) adopted four accepted brand value dimensions. In addition, they used an additional control structure that they called "familiarity to the destination." This structure was based on Aaker's CBBE model. As noted by Baloglu and Mangaloglu (2001), familiarity has significant impacts on potential visitors' decision-making processes for choosing a destination. If potential visitors have a sense of familiarity with a particular location, they won't feel the need to look for additional information about the location to decide whether or not to visit it. According to the findings of Horng et al. (2012), familiarity with a destination may have a moderating effect on other aspects of the value of a food and beverage brand that is based on the destination. Based on the findings of a survey that was collected from a total of 407 international visitors coming from Taiwan, strong positive relationships were established between the different aspects of the destination-based brand value of food and beverage. Studies examining gastronomy within the scope of destination branding include the importance of gastronomy in destination branding (Kılıçhan and Köşker, 2015), the relationship between local cuisine experiences and brand congruence (Erkmen, 2018), the role of local cuisines in tourism marketing (Lin et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2015), the role of culinary culture in creating a city brand (Hoşcan et al., 2016), the evaluation of geographical indication products within destination branding (Yenipinar et al., 2014; Acar, 2018), and gastronomic branding

(Gordin and Trabskaya, 2013). Okumus et al. (2007) also conducted research on the inclusion of local and international cuisines in tourism destination marketing, and determined how they were used in marketing activities in two different countries (Hong Kong and Turkey). According to the research results, it has been observed that Hong Kong heavily uses food in its main positioning discourse, but it references its local cuisine very little despite it being extremely rich. The authors talked about the importance of expertise and knowledge and made suggestions on using unique culinary cultures to differentiate themselves. Lu et al., (2015) examined the relationship between customers' perception of uniqueness and brand equity dimensions and the effect of brand equity on the brand selection intention of ethnic restaurants. While a meaningful relationship between the perception of uniqueness and brand equity was established, it was also found that brand equity influenced brand selection intention. Lee et al., (2015) presented a comparative analysis of two regions in Canada in their study on the formation of food clustering through destination branding and the development of rural areas. They showed how food clustering can be achieved in the creation of rural development, the cooperation of stakeholders, and the success and obstacles in front of this formation. Şengül (2018) studied the effect of gastronomy brand value components on travel intention and found that the perception of brand value among tourists coming to Bolu was positive and that the gastronomy brand value components positively influenced travel intention. The strongest effect was mentioned as the brand loyalty component.

The main objective of the research is to examine the dimensions of brand value that are effective on the consumer-based brand value of destinations, which is a tourist product, by taking the Gaziantep International Gastronomy Festival within the framework of gastronomy tourism. Brand value holds an important place in the branding process within the context of destination marketing, as it is crucial for determining the consumer's perception and value of the destination's brand and guiding branding strategies. However, upon examination of studies aimed at determining brand value, it has been seen that there are limited studies on the brand value of the destination, especially in the context of gastronomy tourism. Therefore, the study is also important in terms of the contribution it will provide to the literature.

Research hypotheses:

H₁: Destination Brand Awareness (BA) within the Gaziantep International Gastronomy Festival affects the consumer-based brand value of the Gaziantep destination.

H₂: Destination Brand Quality (BQ) within the Gaziantep International Gastronomy Festival affects the consumer-based brand value of the Gaziantep destination.

H₃: Destination Brand Image (BI) within the Gaziantep International Gastronomy Festival affects the consumer-based brand value of the Gaziantep destination.

H₄: Destination Brand Awareness (BS) within the Gaziantep International Gastronomy Festival affects the consumer-based brand value of the Gaziantep destination.

H₅: Destination Brand Loyalty (BL) within the Gaziantep International Gastronomy Festival affects the consumer-based brand value of the Gaziantep destination.

Method

In this study, a qualitative research method is adopted using convenience sampling method, which is one of the non-random sampling methods for sample selection. Within this context, a survey technique was used on the visitors who participated in the International Gastronomy Festival in Gaziantep, to investigate the role of the city's brand value. The universe of the research consists of 384 individuals who participated in the 2021 International Gaziantep Gastronomy Festival. The research data was collected by applying the survey to 386 individuals who actively participated in the 2021 International Gaziantep Gastronomy Festival between September 20 and September 22, 2021. Of the 458 surveys reached, 74 were excluded from the research due to data deficiency. All the remaining 384 surveys were included in the research. Within this context, the surveys included in the research consist of two parts. The first part was created by adapting the "Consumer-Based Brand Value Scale," developed by Aaker (1991) and Pike (2010), using the scale scan of the literature and the conceptual framework created. The scale consists of 33 total recommendations for the dimensions of brand value: brand existence, brand quality, brand image, brand awareness, and brand loyalty. The 5-point Likert scale was used in the data collection tool; (1) "Strongly Do Not Agree", (5) "Strongly Agree" are rated. Additionally, fifteen questions were included to determine the participants' demographic characteristics and their experiences at the destination.

The data collection tool was used in Turkish and English. In the adaptation of the scale from a foreign language, it is of great importance that the expressions are compatible with the language and culture to be adopted. In this context, after obtaining the necessary permissions from the scale owners, the scales were adapted to Turkish by two academics who are proficient in English, and then a different English-speaking academic translated the initial translation back into English. The data was analyzed using the "SPSS 23 for Windows" package program. In the first stage, a frequency analysis was conducted to determine the demographic characteristics of the participants. In the second stage, the mean and standard deviation values of the expressions related to the scales were analyzed. To reveal the relationship between the sub-dimensions used in measuring consumer-based brand value, a Pearson correlation analysis was applied to the factors. Finally, regression analysis was used to determine the effect between variables. Regression analysis is a statistical method used to examine the effect between one dependent variable and one or more independent variables. In this study, the consumer-based brand value components were determined as independent variables and the overall brand value as the dependent variable. On the other hand, factor analysis was carried out using the varimax rotation and principal components method to evaluate the construct validity of the consumer-based brand value scale used in the survey as the measuring tool. The feasibility and sufficiency of the sample size of the factor analysis were checked using the Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin (KMO) - Bartlett Test value. Additionally, Cronbach's Alpha values were calculated to analyze the internal consistency reliability of the scales and the results were presented in the findings section of the study. The ethics committee permission was taken with the decision of Karabuk University Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee dated 08/12/2022 and numbered 2022/09-01.

Validity and Reliability

Cronbach Alpha is a value that determines whether the statements used in the scale express a homogeneous structure (Kalayci, 2010). In this context, the results of the reliability analyses of the consumer-based brand value scale prepared for determining the brand value of Gaziantep gastronomic festival participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Results of Reliability Analysis

	Number of Questions (n)	Reliability Coefficient (α)
Consumer Based Brand Equity	33	0,752
Brand Asset	5	0,723
Brand Quality	10	0,659
Brand Image	5	0,724
Brand Salienc	7	0,751
Brand Loyalty	6	0,689

If the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the scale falls within the range of 0.6 to 0.80, it is considered quite reliable. Alternatively, if the coefficient is between 0.80 and 1.00, the scale is regarded as highly reliable. The reliability consumer-based brand value scale was calculated as $\alpha=0.752$, and the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for the five factors are above 0.70, so it can be said that the consumer-based brand value scale used is reliable. Factor analysis is an analysis technique aimed at reducing and summarizing the variables determined to make it easier to understand and interpret the relationships between the numerous variables that are thought to be related. The basic logic behind factor analysis is that a complex phenomenon can be explained by fewer factors (basic variables) (Altunışık et al., 2004). The KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) test, is a test that measures the adequacy of the sample and was suggested as 0.60 (Nakip, 2003). The KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) value was determined as 0.752.

This value indicates that the sample size is suitable for factor analysis. The Bartlett test evaluates the hypothesis of whether the variables in the main mass are related to each other. The Bartlett test result found an approximate chi-square value of 582.85, with a significance of 0.000 ($p<0.05$). This value shows that the null hypothesis, being that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix, can be rejected and reveals the suitability of using factor analysis. As a result of the factor analysis, 5 independent factors were obtained that explain 75.2% of the total variance. The statistics obtained from this factor analysis are given in Table 2. In the table, the brand presence factor explains 19.768% of the total variance, the brand quality factor explains 16.113%, the brand image

factor explains 14.697%, the brand awareness factor explains 10.353%, and the brand loyalty factor explains 12.470% of the total variance.

Table 2. Results of Factor Analysis

Sub-Dimensions (Factors) n=322	Eigenvalue	Explained Variance	Cumulative Variance%
Brand Asset	3,28	19,768	18,678
Brand Quality	4,69	16,113	33,989
Brand Image	4,72	14,697	45,569
Brand Saliency	3,41	10,353	55,512
Brand Loyalty	2,83	12,470	76,461

Sample Profile

Table 3 contains the distribution of the findings related to the demographic and descriptive information of the individuals included in the scope of the research.

Table 3 shows the sample profile including socio-demographic characteristics.

Table 3. Descriptive and business information of the participants

Variables	Groups	f	%
Gender	Female	205	54.3
	Male	177	45.7
Place of Residence	İstanbul	97	26.4
	İzmir	33	6.5
	Ankara	30	5.6
	Other	118	29.8
	Abroad	116	31.7
Age	19 or younger	56	13.7
	20-29	118	32.9
	30-39	95	25.8
	40-49	68	17.4
	50 or older	47	10.2
Education	High School	46	9.6
	Collage	42	8.4
	Bachelor's degree	196	56.2
	Post-Graduate Degree	100	25.8
Occupation	Student	96	26.1
	Healthcare sector	34	6.8
	Private Sector	143	40.7
	Public Sector	74	19.3
	Other	37	7.1
Monthly Income	2000 TL or less	167	47.2
	2001-4000 TL	55	12.4
	5001-6000 TL	75	18.6
	6000 TL or more	87	21.7

Table 3 shows that out of the participants in the study, 205 are female and 177 are male. When looking at the average ages of participants, many participants are in the 20-29 age range, followed by groups of 30-39, 40-49, 19 and under, and 50 and over. The highest number of participants from within the country is 97, who are from Istanbul. The total number of people who participated in the study and contributed from abroad is 116.

Descriptive Statistics In this part of the study, the frequency distributions, arithmetic means, and standard deviation values of the participants' responses to the statements in the consumer-based brand value scale used to determine the participants' perception of the destination brand are presented.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for Brand Asset Dimension

Expression	Frequency Level					\bar{X}	s.d.	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)			
	f	32	33	26	135	170	4,19	1,07

I think the Gaziantep International Gastronomy Festival is an event that strengthens the city's gastronomy brand. (n=384)	%	5,9	3,4	4,3	38,2	48,1		
I think the local cuisine culture is quite rich. (n=384)	f	26	19	28	95	217	4,40	0,99
	%	4,3	2,2	5,0	25,8	62,7		
Gaziantep is an attractive gastronomy city with its food culture. (n=384)	f	26	25	28	121	125	4,26	1,03
	%	4,3	4,0	5,0	33,9	52,8		
I think the participation of Michelin-starred chefs in the festival adds value to the city and the festival. (n=384)	f	28	32	42	96	185	4,16	1,13
	%	5,0	6,2	9,3	26,1	53,4		
I think the photo competition held at the festival adds extra value to the event. (n=384)	f	25	29	118	106	107	3,72	1,05
	%	4,0	5,3	32,9	29,2	28,6		
							4,15	,874

The descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage distribution, arithmetic mean, standard deviation), are presented in Table 4. When the arithmetic mean values are analyzed, the general average value of this sub-dimension corresponds to the "agree" option ($\bar{X} = 4.15$). This value indicates that participants have a high level of positive attitude towards the Brand asset sub-dimension. According to Table 4, the highest average for the Brand asset sub-dimension was calculated for the statement "I think the local cuisine culture is quite rich" ($\bar{X} = 4.40$). A large majority of the participants stated that they consider the cuisine culture of Gaziantep to be very rich and that it has an important value in determining the brand value. The statement with the lowest average value in the Brand asset sub-dimension is "I think the photo competition held at the festival adds an extra value to the event" ($\bar{X} = 3.72$).

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for Brand Quality Dimension

Expressions	Frequency Level					\bar{X}	s.d.	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)			
High-quality accommodation facilities are available.	31	26	135	100	93	3,59	1,08	
	5,9	4,3	38,2	27,3	24,2			
I think local food and beverage businesses pay high attention to cleanliness and hygiene.	22	40	101	133	89	3,68	1,01	
	3,1	8,7	27,6	37,6	23,0			
I think Gaziantep is a safe city.	27	48	84	137	89	3,64	1,09	
	4,7	11,2	22,4	38,8	23,0			
I think high level security measures were taken in the festival area.	20	45	82	36	102	3,77	1,03	
	2,5	10,2	21,7	38,5	27,0			
I think the infrastructure in the city is of high quality	39	47	95	129	75	3,45	1,16	
	8,4	10,9	25,8	36,3	18,6			
I think the food and drinks are of high quality.	22	35	76	133	119	3,89	1,05	
	3,1	7,1	19,9	37,6	32,3			
I think the transportation services to the festival area and the city are well organized and systematic.	20	39	57	135	135	3,88	1,03	
	2,5	9,0	14,0	38,2	36,3			
I think the workshops, exhibitions, competitions, and concerts organized during the festival are well organized.	21	36	98	145	95	3,74	1,00	
	2,8	7,5	26,7	38,2	24,8			
I think the people of Gaziantep and the working staff approach in a very courteous and helpful manner.	20	41	57	135	135	3,96	1,04	
	2,5	9,0	14,0	38,2	36,3			
I don't think the food and drinks at the festival area are more expensive than their normal prices.	45	25	112	122	81	3,50	1,16	
	10,2	4,0	31,1	34,2	20,5			
							3,70	0,87

The Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentage distributions, arithmetic mean, standard deviation) covering the participant views on each statement within the brand quality dimension, which is another sub-dimension of consumer-based brand value determination, are presented in Table 5. When the arithmetic mean values are analyzed, the general mean value for this sub-dimension corresponds to the "I agree" option ($\bar{X} = 3.70$). This

value shows that Gaziantep has created a high brand value in the quality dimension as a gastronomy tourism destination. According to Table 5, the highest average for the brand quality sub-dimension has been calculated in the statement "I think the local people and employees in Gaziantep are very polite and helpful" ($\bar{X} = 3.96$). Participants have stated that most of them believe that the local people and employees in the city and businesses are very polite and helpful. Finally, the statement with the lowest average in the brand quality sub-dimension is "I think the infrastructure in the city is of high quality" ($\bar{X} = 3.45$).

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics for Brand Image Dimension

Expressions	Frequency Level					\bar{X}	s.d.
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		
Gaziantep's food and drink culture is compatible with my taste buds.	26	41	56	94	168	4,02	1,16
I think visiting Gaziantep has positively affected my friends' opinions of me.	32	29	111	100	113	3,70	1,13
Gaziantep city image is consistent with my own image	45	41	133	98	68	3,30	1,16
Visiting Gaziantep reflects who I am.	54	65	122	109	45	3,09	1,15
My participation in the festival enriched my experience in Gaziantep.	25	27	49	140	144	4,07	1,03
	4,0	4,7	11,5	39,8	40,1	3,63	,839

The descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage distributions, arithmetic mean, standard deviation) covering participants' opinions on each statement included in the brand image dimension, which is another sub-dimension of consumer-based brand value determination, are presented in Table 6. When the arithmetic mean values are examined, the general average value for this sub-dimension corresponds to the option "I agree" ($\bar{X} = 3.63$). This value indicates that Gaziantep has created a positive brand image as a destination for gastronomic tourism. According to Table 6, it has been determined that the highest average in the brand image sub-dimension was calculated in the statement "My participation in the festival enriched my experience in Gaziantep" ($\bar{X} = 4.07$). A large majority of the participants have expressed that their participation in the gastronomy festival has enriched their experience in Gaziantep. The statement with the lowest average in the brand image sub-dimension is "Visiting Gaziantep reflects who I am" ($\bar{X} = 3.09$).

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics for Brand Salience Dimension

Expressions	Frequency Level					\bar{X}	s.d.
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		
Gaziantep has a good reputation and name with its rich cuisine.	21	20	46	109	189	4,30	0,95
Gaziantep is a city famous for its local flavors.	21	22	31	90	221	4,43	0,92
When I think of a food-oriented vacation, Gaziantep is the first city that comes to mind.	33	44	75	93	140	3,79	1,23
I have seen a lot of advertisements introducing the Gaziantep International Gastronomy Festival.	33	52	72	132	96	3,62	1,17
Festivals are the most effective tool to create brand awareness.	33	23	40	143	145	4,05	1,10
I think the promotion of the festival is done adequately through social, print, etc. media channels.	35	56	104	108	82	3,43	1,16
I think Gaziantep needs to be introduced as a food-drink city in different channels.	28	20	70	125	142	4,01	1,06
	5,0	2,5	18,0	35,1	39,4	3,95	,741

The descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentage distributions, arithmetic mean, standard deviation) encompassing the participant views on each statement included in the brand awareness dimension, which is

another sub-dimension of consumer-based brand value determination, are presented in Table 7. When the arithmetic mean values are analyzed, the general mean value of this sub-dimension corresponds to the "I agree" option ($\bar{X}=3.95$). This value indicates that Gaziantep is a destination with a positive level of recognition as a gastronomic tourism destination. According to Table 7, the highest average in the brand awareness sub-dimension was calculated in the statement "Gaziantep is a city famous for its local flavors" ($\bar{X}=4.43$). A large majority of the participants indicated that they know that Gaziantep is a city famous for its local flavors. The statement with the lowest average value in the brand awareness sub-dimension is "I think the promotion of the festival has been enough through social, printed, etc. media channels" ($\bar{X}=3.43$).

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics for Brand Loyalty Dimension

Expressions	Frequency Level					\bar{X}	s.d.
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		
Gaziantep would be my first choice for a culinary holiday.	36	49	73	109	118	3,67	1,24
	7,5	11,5	18,9	30,1	32,0		
I recommend visiting Gaziantep to my other friends and surroundings.	21	30	52	123	159	4,12	1,01
	2,8	5,6	12,4	34,5	44,7		
I am considering visiting Gaziantep again in the future.	24	23	77	123	138	4,00	1,02
	3,7	3,4	20,2	34,5	38,2		
I think Gaziantep provides more benefits compared to other cities I visited for holiday.	32	62	98	130	63	3,38	1,10
	6,2	15,5	26,7	36,6	14,9		
I am considering participating in the Gaziantep International Gastronomy Festival in the coming years.	37	25	77	128	117	3,80	1,15
	7,8	4,0	20,2	36,3	31,7		
I am thinking of buying cookbooks containing unique local food recipes of Gaziantep.	54	64	94	89	86	3,26	1,31
	13,0	15,5	25,5	23,9	22,0		
						3,70	,797

The descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage distribution, arithmetic mean, standard deviation) covering the participant opinions related to each statement in the brand loyalty dimension, which is another sub-dimension of consumer-based brand value determination, are presented in Table 8. When the arithmetic mean values are analyzed, the general mean value for this sub-dimension corresponds to the "I Agree" option ($\bar{X}=3.70$). This value shows that Gaziantep has created a high brand value in the brand loyalty dimension in terms of being a gastronomy tourist destination. According to Table 8, the highest average in the brand loyalty sub-dimension is calculated in the statement "I recommend visiting Gaziantep to my friends and surroundings" ($\bar{X}=4.12$). Most of the participants have stated that they would recommend visiting Gaziantep to their friends and surroundings. The statement with the lowest average in the brand loyalty sub-dimension is "I am considering buying cookbooks containing local recipes specific to Gaziantep" ($\bar{X}=3.26$).

Consumer-Based Brand Value Correlation Analysis

A Pearson correlation analysis was applied to the factors used in measuring consumer-based brand value to reveal the relationship between the factors, and the results are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Correlation Matrix between Factors

Sub Dimensions	Overall Brand Equity	Brand Asset	Brand Quality	Brand Image	Brand Salience	Brand Loyalty
Overall Brand Equity	1,000					
Brand Asset	0,387*	1,000				
Brand Quality	0,796*	0,245	1,000			
Brand Image	0,685*	0,451	0,358*	1,000		
Brand Salience	0,553	0,338	0,952*	0,446*	1,000	
Brand Loyalty	0,521	0,397	0,853*	0,375*	0,897*	1,000

P<0,005

Table 9 results, when analyzed, show positive and significant correlations between the general brand value dimension and the brand existence ($r=0.387$; $p<0.005$), brand quality ($r=0.796$; $p<0.05$), brand image ($r=0.685$; $p<0.05$), brand awareness ($r=0.553$; $p<0.05$), and brand loyalty ($r=0.521$; $p<0.05$) sub-dimensions. This result clearly demonstrates the strong relationship between the general brand value dimension and the sub-dimensions of the brand value components. Positive and strong correlations, not limited only to the relationship between the general brand value dimension and the other dimensions, are also observed between the other dimensions.

The Effects of Consumer-Based Brand Equity on Overall Brand Equity

In this research, regression analysis was used to test the predetermined hypotheses. In this context, the effect of the components of consumer-based brand value was analyzed. The results of the regression analysis performed to determine the effect of the components of consumer-based brand value are presented in Table 10.

Table 10. Results of Regression Analysis

Independent variables	β	Significance level for t value (p)
Brand Asset (BA)	0,415	0,000*
Brand Quality (BQ)	0,352	0,017*
Brand Image (BI)	0,422	0,000*
Brand Saliency (BS)	0,475	0,000*
Brand Loyalty (BL)	0,345	0,001*
R^2	F	Significance level for f value (p)
0,482	108,592	0,000*

According to the results of regression analysis, it was determined that the determination coefficient was 48.2%, the determination coefficient was 25.4% and the corrected determination coefficient was 25.8%. Thus, it is possible to explain 48.2% of the change in brand value by the change in brand value dimensions. It can be said that the sub-dimensions of the brand value that make up the brand value explain 48.2% of the general brand value. According to Table 10; the F value is 108.592 and the significance level is $p=0.005$. Based on the F value and significance level, it can be said that there is a positive significant relationship between the general brand value and the sub-components of the brand value. The most effective factor on the general brand value of the Gaziantep destination was found to be brand awareness ($\beta_4 = 0.475$). Other factors that have a significant effect on the destination brand value, in order, are brand image ($\beta_3=0.422$), brand existence ($\beta_1=0.415$), brand quality ($\beta_2=0.352$), and brand loyalty ($\beta_5=0.345$). In this context, all hypotheses were accepted.

Results

Turkey is known as a high-attractive destination due to its historical, cultural, and natural riches. At the same time, it is also valued as a region with a rich cuisine culture and geography. Maintaining a food lifestyle has an undeniable importance. People now make their travel choices after considering what they can eat. Over time, food and drink have also become one of the main reasons for visiting a tourist destination. Gastronomic tourism is defined as activities that quickly take their place among alternative tourism types that are attracting increased attention, make a significant contribution to the development of the region and its people and the image of that place with their wide and highly awareness-generating effect, and are strategically planned to have an impact on the promotion of regions and countries. Gastronomic activities are the backbone that can carry regions and countries at the national and international levels for many years. Many people are curious about what they eat, where the food comes from, and how sustainably it is produced. Increasingly, many people are discovering more traditional and seasonal dishes that may have undergone some human intervention, even if they are not organic. Ultimately, food is connected to the place and the local area; it is also connected to memories, flavors, friends, family, and maybe comfort and security. For many people, food tourism is an opportunity to find something real, traditional, and meaningful that speaks to the brand value and identity of the destination, produced by craftsmen.

Upon examination of the data obtained in the determination of Gaziantep destination's brand value through the Gaziantep International Gastronomy Festival within the framework of gastronomy tourism, it was concluded that 384 participants who contributed to the research have positive thoughts about the city's brand value. Participants in the Gaziantep International Gastronomy Festival indicated that they participated in expressions that constitute a large majority in determining the overall brand value in five different sub-dimensions, based on frequency distributions, arithmetic means, and standard deviation values of their responses to the consumer-

based brand value scale. One of the important sub-dimensions, brand loyalty, holds great importance in improving the destination's overall sustainable brand value. The statement with the highest average in the brand loyalty dimension, "I recommend visiting Gaziantep to my other friends and environment," shows that Gaziantep has created a high brand value in the brand loyalty dimension as a gastronomy tourism destination. Regression analysis was used to test the proposed hypotheses in the research. In this context, the impact of the components of consumer-based brand value was analyzed in this part of the study. In this regard, all the hypotheses were accepted based on the results of the research. It has been proven through regression analysis that brand presence, brand quality, brand image, brand awareness, and brand loyalty sub-dimensions are effective in determining Gaziantep destination's consumer-based brand value within the framework of the Gaziantep International Gastronomy Festival.

Discussions

In addition to the research results, to increase the general brand value of Gaziantep city in the context of gastronomy tourism, by taking examples from cities that have established themselves as gastronomy destinations abroad, the formation and adequate promotion of various activities and events will positively affect the brand value in the consumer's eyes. Leading destinations in gastronomy tourism can be listed as various regions in America and Mediterranean countries in Europe such as Spain, Italy, and a region in France. Furthermore, events and festivals carried out by Far East countries that have seriously marketed themselves in the context of gastronomy tourism in recent times should also be taken as an example. During the conducted interviews, it was expressed by city representatives (City Council, Metropolitan Municipality) that the international cooperation carried out by Gaziantep since 2015 has positively impacted the branding process of the city in the context of gastronomy tourism. With two titles it obtained in 2015, European Distinguished Destinations (EDEN) and UNESCO World Gastronomy City, Gaziantep has grabbed the opportunity to bring its creative gastronomic richness to the international arena. The city's collective structure has been the largest supporter in this process and has provided the different criteria requested by UNESCO through strong partnerships led by the Metropolitan Municipality. The activities that need to be carried out in a sustainable framework include obtaining geographical indications for local products, reviving neighborhood kitchens (especially pot dishes), increasing export revenues, organizing various educational activities and events, etc.

As a destination that awaits discovery in the cultural, artistic, and historical fields, Gaziantep will have the opportunity to promote its other riches along with the revitalization of gastronomy tourism activities. Local authorities emphasize that that Gaziantep must be a driving force behind the recognition of Antep cuisine in Turkey and around the world, as well as increased cooperation and promotional activities to highlight Gaziantep's gastronomic assets. In this context, the Gaziantep International Gastronomy Festival has been an important step in developing the city's gastronomic brand value nationally and internationally. Although it is being organized for just the 4th time, the Gaziantep International Gastronomy Festival, which attracts attention from different regions of Turkey, has become a significant event in terms of introducing the city's cuisine and cultural heritage to a wider audience. The strong collaboration between non-profit organizations and various public and private sector institutions will contribute to Gaziantep becoming a strong world brand in the field of gastronomy tourism. The UNESCO committee's meeting held in parallel with the festival also increased foreign participation and provided an opportunity to discover the city's flavors, culture, and history. Additionally, the Culinary Arts Center, which greatly contributes to the promotion of Gaziantep cuisine, promotes the city globally and provides training for young people related to preserving the city's unique dishes. It actively works to revive forgotten recipes and bring them back to life. The continuity and support of these efforts will place Gaziantep among the first in the world's recognized gastronomy tourism cities in the future. Lastly, the International Gastronomy Festival in Gaziantep, as part of gastronomy tourism, aims to define the city's brand value, and this study and research will provide a practical perspective for destination local administrators to collaborate and implement in practice through future research and studies in this field.

References

- Aaker, D. A. (1996). Building strong brands. The Free Press.
- Acar, Y. (2018). Türkiye'deki coğrafi işaretli ürünlerin destinasyon markalaması kapsamındadeğerlendirilmesi. *Journal of Tourism and Gastronomy Studies*, 6 (2), 163–177.
- Altunışık, R., Coşkun, R., Bayraktaroğlu and S. Yıldırım, E. (2004). Sosyal Bilimlerde Araştırma Yöntemleri: SPSS Uygulamalı, (3. Baskı). İstanbul, Sakarya Kitabevi.

- Antonoli, M. C. and Baggio, R. (2002). Italian Culinary Tourism on the Internet. In Collen and Richards J. (ed.), *Gastronomy and Tourism, Proceedings of Atlas Expert Meeting, Sondrio, Italy, Antwerp: Academic voor de Streekgebonden Gastronomic*, 21-23 Kasım 2002, 92-106.
- Aydođdu, A., Özkaya Okay, E. and Köse, Z. C. (2016). Destinasyon tercihinde gastronomi turizminin önemi: Bozcaada örneđi. *Uluslararası Türk Dünyası Turizm Arařtırmaları Dergisi*, 1(2), 13.
- Baloglu, S. and Mangalolu, M. (2001) Tourism Destination Images of Turkey, Egypt, Greece, and Italy as Perceived by US-Based Tour Operators and Travel Agents. *Tourism Management*, 22, 1-9.
- Boo, S., Busser, J., and Baloglu, S. (2009). A model of customer-based brand equity and its application to multiple destinations. *Tourism Management*, 30(2), 219–231.
- Erkmen, E. (2018). Yerel mutfak deneyiminin tüketici temelli destinasyon marka denkliđine etkisi. *Journal of Tourism and Gastronomy Studies*, 6(2), 143–162.
- Getz, D. (2000). Developing a Research Agenda for the Event Management Field, Events Beyond 2000: Setting the Agenda. Proceedings of Conference on Event Evaluation, Research and Education, Sydney.
- Gordin, V. and Trabskaya, J. (2013). The role of gastronomic brands in tourist destination promotion: The case of St. Petersburg. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 9(3), 189–201.
- Güneli, M. (2012). Gastronomi ve imaj devri. Aralık. <http://www.turizmdebusabah.com/yazarlar/gastronomive-imaj-devri-mehmet-guneli-62638.html>, 3 Nisan 2018.
- Hall, M. and Sharples, L. (2003). The consumption of experiences or the experience of consumption? An introduction to the tourism of taste. In M. Hall, L. Sharples, R. Mitchell, N. Macionis, and B. Cambourne (Eds.), *Food tourism around the world: Development, management and markets*. Oxford, Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Hall, M. C., Sharples, L., Mitchell R., Macionis, N. and Cambourne B. (2003). *Food tourism around the world: development, management, and markets*. Butterworth-Heinemann, Elsevier.
- Hanna, S. and Rowley, J. (2008). An Analysis of Terminology Use in Place Branding. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*. 4(1), 61-75.
- Horng, J. S., Liu, C. H., Chou, H. Y., and Tsai, C. Y. (2012). Understanding the impact of culinary brand equity and destination familiarity on travel intentions. *Tourism Management*, 33(4), 815–824.
- Hořcan, N., Genç, K., and řengül, S. (2016). Bolu kent markası oluřturma sürecinde ařçılık kültürü ve gastronomi turizminin önemi: Bolgamer önerisi, *Journal of Tourism and Gastronomy Studies*, 4(1), 52–76.
- Kalaycı, ř. (2010). *SPSS Uygulamalı Çok Deđişkenli İstatistik Teknikleri*. Ankara, Asil Yayın Dađıtım
- Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, measuring, managing customer-based brand equity. *Journal of Marketing*, 57(1), 1–22.
- Kılıçhan, R., and Köřker, H. (2015). Destinasyon markalařmasında gastronominin önemi: Van kahvaltısı örneđi, *Journal of Tourism and Gastronomy Studies*, 3(3), 102–115.
- Konecnik, R. M., and Gartner, W. C. (2007). Customer-based brand equity for a destination. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 34(2), 400- 421.
- Lee, A. H. J., Wall, G. and Kovacs, J. F. (2015). Creative food clusters and rural development through place branding: culinary tourism initiatives in Stratford and Muskoka, Ontario, Canada, *Journal of Rural Studies*, 39, 133–144.
- Lee, R., Lockshin, L., and Greenacre, L. (2015). A Memory Theory Perspective of Country Image Formation. *Journal of International Marketing*, 24(2), 62-79.
- Lin, Y. C., Pearson, T. E. and Cai, L. A. (2011). Food as a form of destination identity: A tourism destination brand perspective, *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 11(1), 30–48.

- Lu, A. C., Gursoy, D, and Lu, C. Y. (2015). Authenticity perceptions, brand equity and brand choice intention: The case of ethnic restaurants. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 50, 36–45.
- Nakip, M. (2003). *Pazarlama Araştırmaları Teknikler ve SPSS Destekli Uygulamalar*. Ankara, Seçkin Yayıncılık.
- Okumus, B., Okumus, F. and McKercher, B. (2007). Incorporating local and international cuisines in the marketing of tourism destinations: The cases of Hong Kong and Turkey. *Tourism Management*, 28(1), 253–261.
- Pike, S. (2007). Destination image literature-2001 to 2007. *Acta Turistica*. 19(2): 107-125.
- Pike, S. (2015). Destination brand performance measurement over time: Tracking consumer perceptions of a competitive set of destinations over a 10-year period. *Acta Turistica*, 27(2),135–164.
- Pike, S., Bianchi, C., Kerr, G., and Patti, C. (2010). Consumer-based brand equity for Australia as a long-haul tourism destination an emerging market. *International Marketing Review*, 27(4), 434–449
- Sarıışık, M. and Özbay, G. (2015). Gastronomi Turizmi Üzerine Bir Literatür İncelemesi. *Anatolia: Turizm Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 26(2), 264-278.
- Serçeoğlu, N. (2014). Yöre halkının mutfak kültürünü tanıma durumunun tespit edilmesi: Erzurum ili örneği, *Journal of Tourism and Gastronomy Studies*, 2(4), 36–46.
- Sürenkök Kesimoğlu, A. (2011). *Gastronomy Tourism in Turkey and Beyond*. Rusya, LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing.
- Şengül, S. (2018). Destinasyon gastronomi marka değeri bileşenlerinin seyahat niyeti üzerine etkisi (Bolu örneği). *Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 18(1), 1–22.
- Türten, B. (2021). Film Festivalleri ve Turizm İlişkisi: Belgesel Film Yönetmenleri Üzerine Bir Çalışma. *Erciyes İletişim Dergisi*, 8(1), 205-230.
- Yenipınar, U., Köşker, H. and Karacaoğlu, S. (2014). Turizmde yerel yiyeceklerin önemi vecoğrafi işaretleme: Van otlı peyniri. *Journal of Tourism and Gastronomy Studies*, 2(2), 13–23.