


COMPETITIVENESS OF THE CITIES: BRANDING AND POSITIONING

Muhammet Saygın^A



ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history:</p> <p>Received 10 March 2023</p> <p>Accepted 08 June 2023</p>	<p>Purpose: The primary aim of the research is to examine the branding and positioning of cities within the framework of competitiveness. In this regard, Silifke which is a district in Turkey has been analyzed in terms of competitiveness with its branding and positioning tendency.</p>
<p>Keywords:</p> <p>Competitiveness; Branding; Positioning; Urbanization; Silifke.</p>	<p>Theoretical framework: It is well-known fact that cities are in a competition with each other to attract entrepreneurs, tourists and citizens in today's globalized world. It is considered that the competitiveness of a city is largely determined by its branding and positioning features.</p>
	<p>Design/methodology/approach: The mixed research approach was preferred in the research process and data were obtained through a questionnaire using the Drugan's (2014) Brand City Scale. In order to ensure the highest level of measurement quality, that encompasses reliability of the research, the simple random sampling method was preferred. The analysis process was carried out with the data from 476 participants.</p> <p>Findings: When the discourse analyses including qualitative data have been taken into account, it was found that the city differs with its sea, historical background, agricultural features, river and tourism opportunities. These features occur as competitors however; quantitative data analyses' results identify that the city has only been regarded as a branding city with its agricultural production capacity.</p> <p>Research, Practical & Social implications: It is suggested that the future researches highlight the contributions by carrying out the comparative studies between the cities.</p> <p>Originality/value: The original aspect of the research is that there hasn't been any research dealing with the city itself in terms of branding and positioning.</p> <p>Doi: https://doi.org/10.26668/businessreview/2023.v8i6.2210</p>

COMPETITIVIDADE DAS CIDADES: BRANDING E POSICIONAMENTO

RESUMO

Objetivo: O principal objetivo da pesquisa é examinar o branding e o posicionamento das cidades no âmbito da competitividade. Nesse sentido, Silifke, um distrito da Turquia, foi analisado em termos de competitividade com sua tendência de branding e posicionamento.

Estrutura teórica: É bem sabido que as cidades competem entre si para atrair empresários, turistas e cidadãos no mundo globalizado de hoje. Considera-se que a competitividade de uma cidade é amplamente determinada por suas características de marca e posicionamento.

Projeto/metodologia/abordagem: O processo de pesquisa preferiu uma abordagem de pesquisa mista, e os dados foram obtidos por meio de um questionário usando a Brand City Scale de Drugan (2014). Para garantir o mais alto nível de qualidade de medição, que engloba a confiabilidade da pesquisa, preferiu-se o método de amostragem aleatória simples. O processo de análise foi realizado com dados de 476 participantes.

Resultados: Quando as análises de discurso, incluindo os dados qualitativos, foram levadas em consideração, constatou-se que a cidade se diferencia por seu mar, histórico, características agrícolas, rio e oportunidades de turismo. Entretanto, os resultados das análises de dados quantitativos indicam que a cidade só é considerada uma cidade de marca por causa de sua capacidade de produção agrícola.

^A Associate Professor. Mersin University. Turkey. E-mail: msaygin@mersin.edu.tr
Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7871-0235>

Implicações para a pesquisa, práticas e sociais: Sugere-se que pesquisas futuras destaquem as contribuições por meio da realização de estudos comparativos entre as cidades.

Originalidade/valor: O aspecto original da pesquisa é que não houve nenhuma pesquisa que tratasse da cidade em si em termos de branding e posicionamento.

Palavras-chave: Competitividade, Branding, Posicionamento, Urbanização, Silifke.

COMPETITIVIDAD DE LAS CIUDADES: MARCA Y POSICIONAMIENTO

RESUMEN

Objetivo: El objetivo principal de la investigación es examinar la marca y el posicionamiento de las ciudades en el marco de la competitividad. En este sentido, se ha analizado Silifke, un distrito de Turquía, en términos de competitividad con su tendencia de marca y posicionamiento.

Marco teórico: Es bien sabido que las ciudades compiten entre sí para atraer a empresarios, turistas y ciudadanos en el mundo globalizado actual. Se considera que la competitividad de una ciudad viene determinada en gran medida por sus características de marca y posicionamiento.

Diseño/metodología/enfoque: En el proceso de investigación se prefirió el enfoque de investigación mixta y los datos se obtuvieron a través de un cuestionario utilizando la Escala de Ciudad de Marca de Drugan (2014). Para garantizar el máximo nivel de calidad de la medición, que engloba la fiabilidad de la investigación, se prefirió el método de muestreo aleatorio simple. El proceso de análisis se realizó con los datos de 476 participantes.

Resultados: Cuando se han tenido en cuenta los análisis del discurso, incluidos los datos cualitativos, se ha descubierto que la ciudad se diferencia por su mar, sus antecedentes históricos, sus características agrícolas, su río y sus oportunidades turísticas. Sin embargo, los resultados de los análisis de datos cuantitativos indican que la ciudad sólo se considera una ciudad de marca por su capacidad de producción agrícola.

Investigación, implicaciones prácticas y sociales: Se sugiere que las futuras investigaciones destaquen las contribuciones mediante la realización de estudios comparativos entre las ciudades.

Originalidad/valor: El aspecto original de la investigación es que no ha habido ninguna investigación que trate de la propia ciudad en términos de branding y posicionamiento.

Palabras clave: Competitividad, Branding, Posicionamiento, Urbanización, Silifke.

INTRODUCTION

As Harris & Ullman (1945) expressed “each city is unique in detail but resembles others in function and pattern.” The process of developing a distinctive name (Zaichkowsky, 2010), design, symbol, or other identifier (Walsh et al., 2011) that sets a good, service, or business apart from rivals is known as branding. As stated by Murphy (1988), since the beginning of time, branding has been used to set products apart from another. However, the use of branding has changed significantly over time, especially in the previous 100 years.

Branding entails forging a unique identity and reputation for a company or organization among its stakeholders or target market. Designing a logo which is graphic element (Adîr et al., 2014) or coming up with a memorable phrase are only a small part of branding. It includes all aspect of the customer experience which plays an increasingly important role (Gentile et al., 2007), including the way a product or service is marketed, offered for sale, and supported. Developing a compelling, resonant message that connects with clients and distinguishes a company from rivals is essential to effective branding. Institutional territories (cities, regions,

and nations) are increasingly competing with one another on a national and international scale as a result of the expansion of socioeconomic globalization (Muñiz Martinez, 2012) and cities are now trying to be market, so their natural and architectural structures as well as the activities are just some of the elements that help the city brand (Cevher, 2012) so that branding is critical for cities in addition to being significant for goods and services.

The concept of brand is important in that it generally expresses a mental structure related to a product or service, as well as includes the experiences and perceptions of the target audience (Feldwick, 2002). Over the past century, the discipline of branding has grown to be a dominant force in marketing (Edelman, 2010). In an age of industrial information, modern branding matured. New technologies had industrialized the economy by the end of the 19th century, resulting in mass manufacturing and distribution for broad markets (Clifton, 2009).

Just like in businesses, it is important to situate the settlements and reveal their branding potential. In addition to its agricultural production potential and industrialization tendency, Silifke district stands out with its historical and cultural values. However, it can be said that it does not yet have a positioning and branding strategy in the context of development strategies. Thus, it is important to reveal the branding potential of the city to ensure the positioning in the context of branding. Silifke which is the former province with a population above 120.000, is now one of the thirteen districts of Mersin province creating value with its maritime transport, fertile lands, advanced industry, rich natural and underground resources, the first Free Zone established in Turkey and with its area corresponding to 2% of Turkey's surface structure (Saygın, 2016).

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The population of the globe has increased by more than three times since the middle of the 20th century (*World Population Prospects*, 2022). Cities nowadays are expected to differentiate themselves for a number of reasons. In order to build competitive brands and expand globally, brand strategy has assisted this process. Cities play a key role in regional development, just like all other goods and services do. In this regard, recent efforts have been made by national, regional, or urban administration to define territorial identity, that must be designed in a way by the markets. Because reorganizing, branding, and marketing are necessary for regional development programs to be productive (Cevher, 2012). Change is happening faster than ever; today isn't like yesterday, and tomorrow won't be like today. Both continuing today's plan and adopting a new one carries risk. Globalization, technological advancement,

and deregulatory reform all portend boundless opportunity. Marketing focuses on recognizing and addressing societal and human needs (Kotler, 2001).

Competitiveness of the cities has primarily been studied from an economic angle in the past, thus cities have a rising role in the globalizing world in addition to being significant economic hubs for their own countries. They frequently engage in direct competition with their peers on both a regional and a worldwide scale (Jiang & Shen, 2010). Scientists have yet to reach an agreement on the concept of competitiveness within the framework of cities and the city's competitiveness is judged primarily on competitive products created in this city and population income; however, no assessment of the competitiveness of offered services, population education, and investment is made (Paliulis & Činčikaitė, 2013). It is a well-known fact that increased competitiveness is the key to achieving economic bliss and desired characteristic of any economy because politicians and analysts commonly use the term while discussing economic and commercial issues. The factors that determine competitive advantage are the subject of extensive study as cities compete with one another at various levels (Begg, 1999).

There are numerous studies dealing with the competitiveness and urbanization of the cities. In this regard, it is meaningful to define the urban term. The term "urban" is also defined very differently around the world. Out of the 228 nations for which the UN has data, about half define urban as having all or some of its population, 51 define it as having a certain size and density, 39 define it as having certain functional characteristics. Official statistics do not employ a common definition of urban and instead rely on designations that are country-specific. In particular cases, urban definitions in neighboring nations diverge greatly (Vlahov & Galea, 2002). An urbanized area might be defined as a location and its surrounding densely inhabited territory that have a minimum population of 50,000 people (Frey & Zimmer, 2001). Today, more than half of the world's population resides in cities, many of which are growing in population density. However, in terms of human history, urban environments are a relatively recent phenomenon. This change has altered the way we work, travel, live, and establish networks (Ritchie & Roser, 2018).

Studies in the literature approach urbanization from several angles. One of the studies, for example, discusses the relationship between ports and urbanization. As a result, ports are said to be an essential location factor for cities, supporting international trade and investment as well as urbanization processes. The importance of better understanding the relationship

between port management, urban competitiveness, and investor attractiveness is underlined (Zhao et al., 2017).

Furthermore, it is accepted in another study that countries' historical backgrounds can have an impact on urbanization. In comparison to most other OECD countries, the United Kingdom, for example, is a highly urbanized and densely populated country, with big and small cities situated in close proximity in various sections of the country. According to the study, a city's past can influence its future, its functioning, and policies in order to strengthen its competitive advantage. Cities, with their historically determined institutional, economic, social, and physical structures, play a significant role in the emergence of cities (Begg et al., 2002).

Aristotle, considering whether a city maintains its identity as long as its population stays the same or if a change in the constitution causes the city to change, also defined the concept of a city as a place where people gather to lead a better life (Murray, 1993). The city term is a dynamic concept, a generally accepted definition cannot be made in the relevant literature and legal regulations throughout various periods of history. As a result of the different definitions created, different city numbers and urban population ratios are reached (Topal, 2004).

One of the interesting definition of city indicates that the city is made up of a number of core groupings and purposeful affiliations. While the first, such as family and neighborhood, are present in all communities, the latter is particularly true of urban life. The city can be described in terms of its social aspect, or expansion, beyond which additional urban growth has a tendency to stall rather than advance crucial social ties (Mumford, 1937). Besides that, there the cities serve as the hubs for human habitation and use of the planet. They are both a byproduct of and an impact on the surrounding areas, and they evolve in distinct patterns in response to economic and social requirements. Cities are paradoxes as well. Although their large size and quick growth attest to their superiority as an earth-exploitation method, because of their success and ensuing size, they frequently create unfavorable local conditions for humans (Harris & Ullman, 1945).

Though the phenomenon of city branding has been studied by various disciplines with various methods and tools, discussions about city branding have continued. The majority of the studies on city and place branding agree that city branding practices existed before their theoretical conception (Millington et al., 1997). It is appropriate to state that outside the city, there is no occupational grouping or specialization in residential areas, and the expectation for an education rate is low. Cities differ from rural settlements where behaviors are shaped according to customs, traditions, and norms. In terms of their social, economic, and legal

characteristics, cities gather production, distribution, and control functions, and have low agricultural production expectations, small family structures, and high fertility. These settlements are where education and cultural activities are widely carried out (Başaran, 2008). The brand component of the destination name may influence travelers' choices on where to travel. The destination's name is crucial in establishing the perception of the desired location. Additionally, it is simple to recall, which enables visitors to return and suggest the place to others (Chan et al., 2022)

The most crucial component of branding is product differentiation (Murphy, 1988). Internet usage has changed how customers interact with brands. It is changing the economics of marketing and rendering many of the conventional tactics and frameworks for the job obsolete. The traditional method of doing business is no longer viable for marketers (Edelman, 2010). The human urge to be someone of significance, to forge a social and personal identity, to show oneself as both similar to and different from others, and to have a good reputation lies at the core of all branding activities. This branding phenomenon requires both a sign and a symbol (Bastos & Levy, 2012). International positioning through branding has become essential for cities that want to participate in the global arena in an increasingly global and competitive world (Paganoni, 2012). City branding is undoubtedly a crucial endeavor for towns all over the world. The average per capita city marketing budget allotted for city branding was €400,000/city, in terms of 12 different countries that were included (Seisededos, 2006).

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The research aims to analyze the branding and positioning of Silifke within the framework of competitiveness. Based on the idea that cities can compete and differentiate just like businesses, the differentiation characteristics of Silifke district were determined. As a part of the branding project initiated by the Silifke Chamber of Commerce and Industry, it has been decided to initiate studies to determine the branding and positioning level of Silifke district. The author of the study is also the executive of the branding and positioning activities organized by the non-governmental organizations in Silifke. As a result, the findings to be obtained will be evaluated in terms of increasing the level of prior knowledge and human capital characteristics for the city. Moreover, it is aimed to plan socio-cultural activities and create strategic plans according to the findings of the study.

The mixed research method, in which quantitative and qualitative data are used together (Creswell, 1999), was preferred and data were obtained through a questionnaire. In order to

obtain the data, the Brand City Scale (Drugan, 2014) and adapted Turkish version (Şentürk, 2020) was used. The Brand City Scale, adapted as a model proposal from local to general in Turkey, consists of 34 questions and 6 dimensions. The research population of the research is the participants living in Silifke district. In the research, data were collected by choosing convenience sampling due to time and cost constraints.

Meanwhile, it would be appropriate to mention about the study from which the original scale was adapted. Drugan (2014) aims to identify a framework for the city brand and attribute dimensions to this concept. The measurement tool that mentioned in the research includes seven point Likert scale with 48 variables. Besides, the adaptation of the scale to Turkish language was carried out by Şentürk (2020) and in this research the scale has been modified with 34 variables in 6 dimensions including “Commercial Relations and Economic Infrastructure”, “City Features”, “Culture and Architecture”, “City Personality”, “Education” and “Events/Entertainment”.

SPSS 20 software was used to analyze the obtained data. In addition, word tightness analyzes and the process of creating theme and meaning groups were used to analyze qualitative data. In terms of sample size, considering the population of Silifke district, which is around 120,000, it is sufficient to collect data from at least 383 participants with a 95% confidence interval and a 5% sampling error. Thus, in order to ensure the highest level of reliability and validity of the research, the convenience sampling method was preferred and 582 data were obtained from the participants aged 18 and over. However, erroneous and incomplete forms were removed from the study and the analysis process was carried out with the data obtained from 476 participants. Before collecting the data, Ethics Committee Approval was obtained from Mersin University, Turkey.

The questionnaire form consists of three parts; the first part includes the socio-demographical questions, the second part includes the brand city scale dimensions that is the answers of the scale being placed with a rating scale system ranging from 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree" and finally the last part has open ended variables dealing with the branding and positioning of Silifke. In the process of obtaining the data, the support of Silifke Chamber of Commerce and Industry has been used in order to deliver the questionnaire forms to the participants. The chamber which has around 2700 member businesses, constitutes an important part of the population of Silifke together with the employees in its member businesses and their first degree relatives, therefore the member database has been preferred to obtain the data within the specified process.

During the data collection all participants have been given assurance that data confidentiality and reliability. As a result of the deep literature review process and discussions about the branding and positioning features of the cities, the hypotheses if Silifke has branding features or not have been put forward. In this context, the following question might be pertinent: What are the competitiveness features of Silifke within the scope of city branding and positioning? This theoretical question has never been asked and explored, thus one of the original aspects of this research is to argue this phenomenon in order to be better understood by the non-governmental organizations and local governments that is policymakers itself. The research data cover 476 participants and the brand city scale used in the research has the following reliability scores.

Table 1. Reliability Score of Branding Scale

Scale	Measurement Range	Variables	Cronbach's Alfa	(n)
Branding City	Likert Scale (1-5)	34	,969	476

Source: Prepared by the author (2023)

The constancy of a metric is referred to as its reliability (Heale & Twycross, 2015). The data presented in Table 1 can be identified as the Brand City Scale, which includes 34 variables in six dimensions in its original scale. However, for this research, only four dimensions were used, and the scale demonstrated high reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha (Cronbach, 1951) score of 0.969. Therefore, it can be concluded that the scale, with its variables, is reliable enough to conduct statistical analyses. The Table 2 shows the data about factor analysis results of the branding scale.

Table 2. Branding City Scale KMO and Barlett Test Results

Total Variance Explained	% 67,020
Dimension 1: City Characteristics and Personality	% 28,156
Dimension 2: Education, Events and Entertainment	% 21,197
Dimension 3: Commercial Relations and Economic Infrastructure	% 12,887
Dimension 4: Cultural and Architectural Dimension	% 4,781
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy	,964
Approx. Chi-Square	13565,932
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df: 561; p: ,000

Source: Prepared by the author (2023)

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) value for the Brand City scale was determined as ,964 and was found to be statistically significant. The Bartlett test of Sphericity has an approximate chi-square value of 13565.932 and a degree of freedom of 561, which is significant ($p=0,00$, $p<0,05$). Accordingly, the test results show that factor

analysis can be applied on the data set. The four dimensions of the Brand City scale explain 67,020% of the total variance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Within the scope of the research, the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants were examined and in this context, in addition to their age, marital status, occupation, data on the technology use levels of the participants were obtained. Socio-demographic variables of the data collection tool are indicated in Table 3.

Table 3. Socio-Demographic Features of Participants

Characteristics		f	%	Characteristics		f	%
Gender	Female	149	31,3	Marital Status	Single	121	25,4
	Male	327	68,7		Married	355	74,6
Age	18-25	36	7,6	Occupation	Entrepreneur	96	20,2
	26-30	48	10,1		Worker/Civil Servant	217	45,6
	31-35	46	9,7		Farmer	4	,8
	36-40	68	14,3		Other	159	33,4
	46+	209	43,9		Very Low	4	,8
Language	English	154	32,4	Technology	Low	16	3,4
	German	278	58,4		Middle	234	49,2
	Other	12	2,5		High	176	37,0
	Not Known	32	6,7		Very High	46	9,7

Source: Prepared by the author (2023)

Upon analysis of the data provided in Table 3. it is seen that the majority of the participants (68.7%) are male. Within the scope of the age variable, it is seen that 43.9% of the participants have the age distribution of 46 and above. Looking at the foreign language levels of the participants, it was seen that the most known foreign language was German. While it is apparent that the majority of participants are workers or civil servants, the rate of entrepreneurs who set up their own businesses is 20.2%. In addition, it was concluded that while 355 participants were married, 121 participants were single. Finally, the technology usage levels of the participants were examined and according to the data obtained, it was seen that the medium level of use constituted the largest group. The rate of participants with a very high level of technology use is only 9.7%. Table 4. presents the positioning variables for Silifke

Table 4. Positioning Variables

Hometown	f	%	City of Residence	f	%
Silifke	349	73,3	Silifke	328	68,9
Other	127	26,7	Other	148	31,1
Education Background			Following activities and developments via		
Secondary	106	22,2	Websites of Institutions/Organizations	173	36,3
Short-cycle	86	18,1	Local Newspapers/Magazines	66	13,9

Bachelor's	208	43,7	Social Networking Platforms	179	37,6
Master's	76	16	Poster/Brochure etc. documents	4	,8
Satisfaction about living in Silifke			Acquaintances/Friends	38	8,0
Yes	327	68,7	Instant Communication Groups etc.	14	2,9
No	30	6,3	Other	2	,4
Total	357	75,0	Urbanization Feature of Silifke		
Missing	119	25,0	Yes	263	55,3
			No	213	44,7

Source: Prepared by the author (2023)

When the data are examined, it is seen that 73.3% of the participants are from Silifke. In addition, it was determined that 68.9% of the participants were in Silifke. The participants were classified according to their education level and it was seen that 43.7% of the participants had a bachelor's degree, and 77.8% of them completed their university education. It was seen that the education levels of the participants were high on average. When both groups are examined in general, it is seen that 68.7% of the participants are satisfied with living in Silifke. In addition, when the participants were asked whether Silifke has urban characteristics, 55.3% of the participants stated that Silifke exhibits urban characteristics. It was aimed to determine how the participants were aware of the events and activities taking place in Silifke. In addition, social networking platforms were found to be the most effective method. In addition, it was emphasized that the websites of the institutions have a significant importance. The importance of local newspapers and press organizations is not as high as one might think.

Table 5. Crosstabulation about Urbanization Tendency of Silifke

		Are you from Silifke?		
		Yes	No	Total
According to you, does Silifke exhibit an "urbanization" feature?	Yes	199	64	263
	No	150	63	213
	Total	349	127	476
	Do you live in Silifke?			Total
	Yes	173	90	263
	No	155	58	213
	Total	328	148	476

Source: Prepared by the author (2023)

According to the data, 199 of the participants from Silifke, state that Silifke exhibits urbanization features, while 150 participants state that it does not have urbanization features. Likewise, 173 of the participants living in Silifke stated that there was an urbanization feature and 155 participants gave negative response. Overall, 55.3% of participants in the study stated that Silifke district has urban characteristics, which is a very low percentage. According to the crosstabulation table created to examine the distribution of the participants advocating the urbanization feature among those living in Silifke or those from Silifke, it is possible to say that

the participants remained undecided about the urbanization feature, although a similar distribution appeared. Table 6. presents data on which characteristics of Silifke district tend to become a brand.

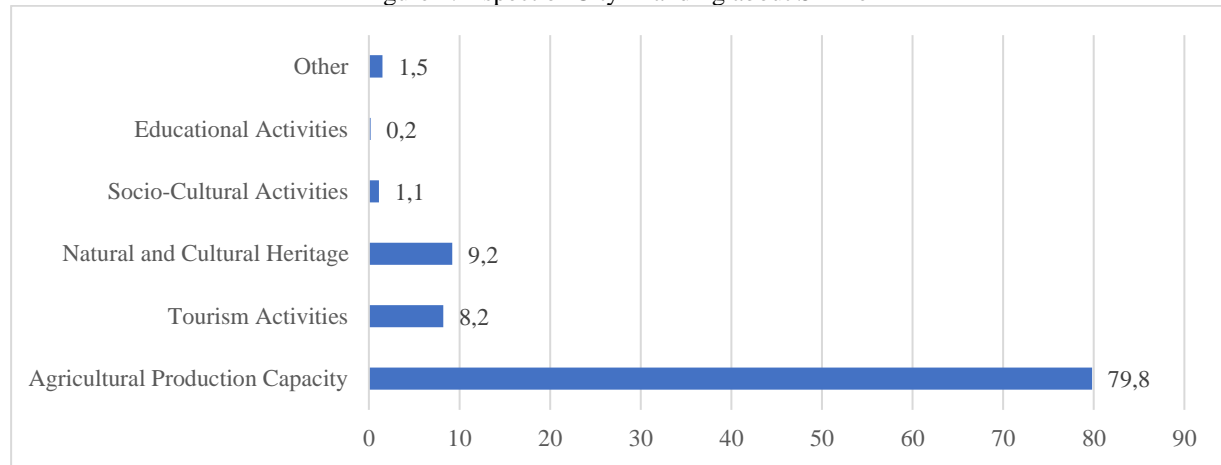
Table 6. Aspect of City Branding about Silifke

Variables	f	%
Agricultural Production Capacity	380	79,8
Tourism Activities	39	8,2
Natural and Cultural Heritage	44	9,2
Socio-Cultural Activities	5	1,1
Educational Activities	1	,2
Other	7	1,5

Source: Prepared by the author (2023)

Upon examining the data in the table, it is apparent that the agricultural production potential of Silifke district is deemed the most important element within the scope of branding by the research participants. Specifically, 79.8% of the participants considered agricultural production to be important, while natural and historical heritage and tourism activities were evaluated at rates of only 9.2% and 8.2%, respectively.

Figure 1. Aspect of City Branding about Silifke



Source: Prepared by the author (2023)

With the help of open-ended questions asked to the participants within the scope of the research, it was aimed to determine the features that make Silifke district different. Accordingly, the participants were asked to indicate the distinctive feature of Silifke by using a maximum of 3 words. According to the data obtained from the participants, a word cloud was created and presented in Figure 1. Since the questions directed to the participants are in Turkish, the data in the figure are presented in Turkish in order not to affect the reliability of the data and to present the obtained discourses without changing them.

By asking open-ended questions to the participants, the aim of this study was to identify the unique features that distinguish Silifke district from other regions. Participants were asked to describe Silifke's distinctive feature using a maximum of three words. The data obtained from the participants were analyzed. The word cloud consists of 2093 words in total, and the most frequently used words are 'sea' (70), 'historical background' (45), 'agriculture' (43), 'river' (37), and 'tourism' (34). Therefore, according to the participants, Silifke district is known for its sea, historical background, agricultural potential, Göksu river, and tourism opportunities. The descriptive statistics about branding city variables are shown in the Table 7.

Table 7. Branding City Variables' Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
This city is a safe city.	4,1954	,96772
This city is known for its history.	4,0021	1,06128
This city is an exciting city.	3,8676	1,16498
This city is known for its famous cultural events.	3,7647	1,20494
This city is known for its landmarks.	3,6387	1,22419
This city is a cool city.	3,5924	1,29365
This city is a universal city.	3,5231	1,29187
This city is an independent city.	3,5105	1,26403
This city is an ambitious city.	3,4790	1,33203
This city is known for its international activities.	3,3761	1,31844
This city is known for its cuisine.	3,3214	1,28622
This city is known for its other cultural representatives.	3,3193	1,22729
This city is a leading city.	3,2773	1,30052
This city is a modern city.	3,2710	1,25324
This city status city is a city.	3,2017	1,29504
This city is a smart city.	3,1996	1,32350
This city is known for its important architectural structures.	3,1891	1,32901
This city is a fashionable city.	3,1239	1,31364
This city is a good looking city.	3,1134	1,29605
This city is known for its development potential.	2,9874	1,30095
This city is known for the presence of potential customers.	2,8655	1,23748
This city is known for its international transport links.	2,6891	1,34241
This city is known for its museums/art galleries.	2,6639	1,32046
This city is known for its event venues.	2,6618	1,27696
This city is known for its commercial support structure.	2,6387	1,24126
This city is known for its potential business partners.	2,6282	1,22361
This city is known for its knowledge capital.	2,5924	1,22683
This city is known for its public-private sector cooperation.	2,5777	1,24488
This city is known for its trade facilities.	2,5756	1,19321
This city is known for its service facilities.	2,5525	1,21195
This city is known for its good schools.	2,4664	1,24517
This city is known for its local politicians.	2,3761	1,27625
This city is known for its educational institutions.	2,3655	1,20385
This city is known for its university/universities.	2,0378	1,14737
Valid n= 476 Min 1 – Max: 5		

Source: Prepared by the author (2023)

When the data in the table is examined; It is seen that the participants describe the city they live in as safe. The perception of a safe city is the most important issue that the participants

met on a common ground. In addition, it is seen that the historical background of the city is stated as the second most important issue for the participants. In other words, it is stated that the city has a high level of awareness with its historical features. The rate of participants who think that the city is exciting is high and it is seen that cultural activities related to the city are among the most important issues. When the variables with the lowest average are examined, it is concluded that the district is insufficient in terms of educational activities. Participants state that Silifke is not a city known for its universities. In addition, it is emphasized that educational institutions are not a distinctive feature of the city. In addition, the lack of local politicians related to the city is among the striking issues. When the features below the average are examined in general, it is clear that the participants have negative opinions about the development potential of the city. It can be said that there is a consensus that the transportation infrastructure of the city is insufficient. In addition to these, deficiencies in establishing potential business partnerships, lack of commercial facilities, inadequacies in service buildings are among the main factors that create negative situations. Table 8. Shows the correlation analysis of the dimensions of the scale.

Table 8. Correlation Analysis of the Dimensions

		Culture and Architecture	Commercial Relations and Economic Infrastructure	Education, Events and Entertainment	City Characteristics and Personality
Culture and Architecture	Pearson Correlation	1,000	,710**	,841**	,577**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,000	,000	,000
	N	476	476	476	476
Commercial Relations and Economic Infrastructure	Pearson Correlation	,710**	1,000	,693**	,669**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	.	,000	,000
	N	476	476	476	476
Education, Events and Entertainment	Pearson Correlation	,841**	,693**	1,000	,628**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	.	,000
	N	476	476	476	476
City Characteristics and Personality	Pearson Correlation	,577**	,669**	,628**	1,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	.
	N	476	476	476	476

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Prepared by the author (2023)

Table 8. presents the correlation analysis results between the sub-dimensions of the city branding scale; Culture and Architecture, Commercial Relations and Economic Infrastructure, Education, Events and Entertainment, City Characteristics and Personality. The correlation coefficients given in the table can also be used to test the relationships between the variables in a sense. From this point of view, it has been concluded that there is a statistically significant relationship between the dimensions of the branding city scale due to the significance ($\rho < ,01$ level) and $\rho = ,000$ result. Accordingly, there is a possibility that the dimensions affect each other, namely the characteristics and personality traits of the city; there is a statistically moderate probability of affecting commercial relations (.669) as well as activity and educational activities (.628) and architectural and cultural structure (.577).

CONCLUSION

Businesses as usual attempt to brand their products and services while also increasing their profit margins and sustainability prospects. The increased knowledge and quality of life that come with city branding will ultimately increase citizen satisfaction. Cities also compete with one another to attract investment, companies, and skilled workers in today's globalized world (Lee et al., 2021). A city's competitiveness is largely determined by its positioning and branding strategies. A city's brand is the image it presents to the outside world, while positioning describes how the city is viewed in relation to its rivals. A city may stand out from its rivals and communicate its special advantages and capabilities by using effective city branding. The reputation of a place can aid in luring business, tourists, and talent. The process of city positioning entails assessing a city's competitive advantages and disadvantages and creating a plan to leverage on those advantages. For instance, a city may promote itself as a center for knowledge-based companies if its workforce is well educated.

Cities both compete and cooperate through specializing, exchanging commodities and services, and participating in an urban system that is more transnational. The articulation of shared issues like social exclusion or environmental degradation, the exchange of experience, and the creation of policy networks are all examples of cooperation (Begg, 1999). As mentioned by (Jiang & Shen, 2010), governance of the cities must evolve in order for cities to remain competitive. Policymakers can benefit from benchmarking competitiveness, but when city competitiveness is primarily considered in economic terms, this limited understanding has negative policy repercussions. As stated in the study dealing with the word of mouth and branding relation, the consumers' choices to purchase experience products or services might be

influenced by advertising and brand strength. Positive electronic word of mouth might have a bigger impact on buying decisions for a weak brand than for a strong brand (Porto et al., 2022).

Cities' competitiveness is measured by their capacity to draw and keep citizens and visitors while attracting and retaining businesses, talent, investment, and businesses. A robust economy, a talented and diversified workforce, first-rate infrastructure, and an exciting and appealing metropolitan setting are all features of a competitive city. The competitiveness of a city is influenced by a number of factors, such as economic factors, human capital features, infrastructure, quality of life and of course branding and positioning. The existence of a strong business ecosystem, availability to financing, industry clusters, and a supportive regulatory framework are just a few of the elements that contribute to a city's economic competitiveness. Additionally, it can be said that a competitive city has an educated and diverse workforce that can support its businesses and sectors. It should offer top-notch educational and training opportunities, recruit and keep top personnel, and promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship. The infrastructure of a city consists of utilities, energy, transportation, and communication.

A competitive city supports its businesses, citizens, and visitors with a contemporary, effective, and sustainable infrastructure and offers its citizens a high quality of life, which includes access to affordable housing, decent healthcare, quality education, and cultural activities. It should also have a clean, healthy urban ecosystem and a safe and secure environment. The themes branding and positioning which are the focus of this research occur as the key elements of competitiveness. Therefore, it can be clearly said that competitive city has a strong brand and positioning plan that persuasively conveys to the world its distinct assets and advantages, luring firms, investors, and tourists. In general, is one that can strike a balance between economic growth and social and environmental sustainability, offering its citizens a good quality of living while luring talent and investment from around the world.

When the research findings are examined in general, it is striking that the most important features of Silifke district are the perception of a safe city and its historical background. However, according to the data set obtained from the participants, the most negative features of the city in terms of branding were shown among educational activities, local politicians and commercial facilities. Therefore, it is concluded that the participants have negative point of view regarding these issues. When the discourse analysis consisting of qualitative data is examined, the most important features that differentiate Silifke from other settlements are its location close to the sea and accordingly its predisposition to tourism opportunities. Similar to

the finding obtained from quantitative data, historical features and historical values seem to be in the foreground. In addition, according to the participants, it is seen as a remarkable finding that the most important factor branding Silifke is its agricultural production potential.

In this direction, in the light of the findings obtained, it is thought that issues such as the high agricultural production potential, the perception of a safe city and the tendency to sea tourism are important in terms of positioning the Silifke district. In the context of the city's educational opportunities and commercial facilities, it is recommended that local governments, non-governmental organizations and other relevant organizations take precautions. In addition, as it is seen in the results of the correlation analysis, since each dimension of city branding is likely to affect other dimensions, it is possible that the improvement to be made in a certain area will affect other areas as well.

When the limitations of the research were examined, the main limitation was that the data were obtained by questionnaire forms. It will be possible to obtain different findings for different settlements by carrying out studies in which comparisons are made in future studies and data are obtained by trying various methods.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

There is no conflict of interest between the authors or any third party individuals or institutions.

ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

This research has been approved by the ethics committee of Mersin University.

FUNDING DISCLOSURE

This research has been supported by Silifke Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

REFERENCES

Adır, V., Adır, G., & Pascu, N. E. (2014). How to design a logo. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 122, 140–144. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.01.1316>

Başaran, İ. (2008). Kent ve yerel yönetim. *Okutan Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 19*.

- Bastos, W., & Levy, S. J. (2012). A history of the concept of branding: Practice and theory. *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing*, 4(3), 347–368. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17557501211252934>
- Begg, I. (1999). Cities and Competitiveness. *Urban Studies*, 36(5/6), 795–809. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0042098993222>
- Begg, I., Moore, B., & Altunbaş, Y. (2002). Long-run trends in the competitiveness of British cities. *Urban Competitiveness: Policies for Dynamic Cities*, 101–134. <https://doi.org/10.51952/9781847425423.ch006>
- Cevher, E. (2012). Kentsel markalaşma süreci: Antalya örneği. *Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Dergisi*, 4(1), 105–115.
- Chan, A., Suryadipura, D., & Novel, N. J. A. (2022). Brand Element: Exploring the Effect on City Branding. *International Journal of Professional Business Review*, 7(4), e0750–e0750. <https://doi.org/10.26668/businessreview/2022.v7i4.e750>
- Clifton, R. (2009). *Brands and branding* (Vol. 43). John Wiley & Sons.
- Creswell, J. W. (1999). Mixed-method research: Introduction and application. In *Handbook of educational policy* (pp. 455–472). Elsevier. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-012174698-8/50045-X>
- Cronbach, L. J. (1951). Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests. *Psychometrika*, 16(3), 297–334. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02310555>
- Drugan, G. A. (2014). The development of an analytical framework for the measurement of city brands. Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1775429450). <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/development-analytical-framework-measurement-city/docview/1775429450/se-2>
- Edelman, D. C. (2010). Branding in The Digital Age You're Spending Your Money In All the Wrong Places. *Harvard Business Review*, 88(12), 62–69.
- Feldwick, P. (2002). *What is brand equity, anyway?: Selected papers on brands and advertising*. World Advertising Research Center Oxford.
- Frey, W. H., & Zimmer, Z. (2001). Handbook of Urban Studies. In *Handbook of Urban Studies* (pp. 14–35). SAGE Publications Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781848608375>
- Gentile, C., Spiller, N., & Noci, G. (2007). How to sustain the customer experience: An overview of experience components that co-create value with the customer. *European Management Journal*, 25(5), 395–410. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2007.08.005>
- Harris, C. D., & Ullman, E. L. (1945). The nature of cities. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 242(1), 7–17. <https://doi.org/10.1177/000271624524200103>
- Heale, R., & Twycross, A. (2015). Validity and reliability in quantitative studies. *Evidence-Based Nursing*, 18(3), 66–67. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/eb-2015-102129>

- Jiang, Y., & Shen, J. (2010). Measuring the urban competitiveness of Chinese cities in 2000. *Cities*, 27(5), 307–314. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2010.02.004>
- Kotler, P. (2001). *Marketing management, millenium edition*. Prentice-Hall, Inc. A Pearson Education Company Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 7458.
- Lee, M., Neeley, G., & Stewart, K. (2021). *The practice of government public relations*. Routledge.
- Millington, S., Young, C., & Lever, J. (1997). A bibliography of city marketing. *Journal of Regional and Local Studies*, 17(2), 16–42.
- Mumford, L. (1937). What is a City? *Architectural Record*, 82, 58–62.
- Muñiz Martinez, N. (2012). City marketing and place branding: A critical review of practice and academic research. *Journal of Town & City Management*, 2(4), 369–394.
- Murphy, J. (1988). Branding. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 6(4), 4–8. <https://doi.org/10.1108/eb045775>
- Murray, O. (1993). *Polis and politeia in Aristotle*. na. publ.royalacademy.dk
- Paganoni, M. C. (2012). City Branding and Social Inclusion in the Glocal City. *Mobilities*, 7(1), 13–31. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450101.2012.631809>
- Paliulis, N., & Činčikaitė, R. (2013). Assessing competitiveness of Lithuanian cities. *Ekonomika Ir Vadyba*, 18(3), 490–500. <https://doi.org/10.5755/j01.em.18.3.4307>
- Porto, R. B., Watanabe, E. A. de M., Barrozo, M. M. A., & Souza Júnior, E. X. de. (2022). Electronic Word-of-Mouth Advertising Versus Brand Strength: Effects On Consumers' Purchasing Decision. *International Journal of Professional Business Review*. <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.17942546.v1>
- Ritchie, H., & Roser, M. (2018, June 13). *Urbanization*. Our World in Data. <https://ourworldindata.org/urbanization>
- Saygın, M. (2016). *Kent Stratejisi: Silifke Kent stratejisi*. Eğitim Yayınevi.
- Seiseddos, G. (2006). State of the art of city marketing in European cities. *42nd IsoCaRP Congress*, 25, 2014.
- Şentürk, E. E. (2020). *Küresel çerçevede marka ülke Türkiye: Yerelden genele kent markalaşması bağlamında bir model önerisi* [Doktora Tezi]. Kırıkkale Üniversitesi.
- Topal, A. K. (2004). Kavramsal Olarak Kent Nedir ve Türkiye’de Kent Neresidir? *Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 6(1), 276–294.
- Vlahov, D., & Galea, S. (2002). Urbanization, urbanicity, and health. *Journal of Urban Health*, 79, S1–S12. https://doi.org/10.1093/jurban/79.suppl_1.S1

Walsh, M. F., Page Winterich, K., & Mittal, V. (2011). How re-designing angular logos to be rounded shapes brand attitude: Consumer brand commitment and self-construal. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 28(6), 438–447. <https://doi.org/10.1108/07363761111165958>

World Population Prospects. (2022). United Nations. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/content/World-Population-Prospects-2022>

Zaichkowsky, J. L. (2010). Strategies for distinctive brands. *Journal of Brand Management*, 17, 548–560. <https://doi.org/10.1057/bm.2010.12>

Zhao, Q., Xu, H., Wall, R. S., & Stavropoulos, S. (2017). Building a bridge between port and city: Improving the urban competitiveness of port cities. *Journal of Transport Geography*, 59, 120–133. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jtrangeo.2017.01.014>