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Research Article

THE EFFECT OF AWARENESS REGARDING TANGIBLE CULTURAL ASSETS ON CITY IMAGE PERCEPTION: A STUDY ON TOURISM UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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Abstract

Tangible heritage assets are elements like buildings and historic sites, landmarks, artifacts, etc. that are considered to be valuable of protection for future generations. However, city image, also known as destination image, is the culmination of all opinions, thoughts, and feelings that people connect with a destination. The aim of this study is to determine the effect of tourism students' awareness of tangible cultural assets on city image perception. In the study, data were collected from 218 students with questionnaire technique and analyzed with correlation and regression analysis on statistical analysis program. According to the results of the study, even though participants are aware of the cultural assets in Afyonkarahisar, they almost have a negative perception of the city image of Afyonkarahisar. Moreover, although the participants have a negative perception of the city image, they have a positive perception of the heritage of Afyonkarahisar. It is thought that the research will provide different perspectives to local government, planning experts and decision makers and other stakeholders.

Keywords: Culture, Cultural Values, Awareness of Tangible Cultural Assets, Image, City Image

Introduction

Tourism industry offers considerable economic benefits to destinations and it accordingly makes tourism a sector that merits attention, and culture is just one of these elements that the tourism industry makes use of in destinations. Almost each component of culture is employed as a strategy for strengthening a destination's tourism product attractiveness. That is to say, culture is of great prominence to destinations. In order to have a comprehensive grasp of the concept of cultural assets, it is inevitable to go over a few descriptions such as culture and cultural heritage. To start with, Kotler et al. (1993) assert that "culture" corresponds to the morals, ideologies, and manner of life of the relevant civilization. Similar to this, Hofstede (2001) outlined culture as the collectively programmed aspect of the human mind that separates members of one human group from those of another. Schein (1993a) comparably proposed that culture encompasses the deeper level of basic beliefs and presumptions that are commonly held by members of an organization, that operate unconsciously. In this context, culture is a set of values that people hold in common.

On the one hand, Karadeniz (2020) suggests that cultural heritage, composed of all the material and immaterial components of a society's history and culture that enliven people spiritually, strengthens people's sense of solidarity and belonging since members of the society exhibit a common past. Conversely, cultural tangible assets are things that are deemed worthy of being preserved for future generations, such as buildings, historic sites, monuments, artifacts, etc. These are artifacts that are central for a particular culture's science, technology, architecture, or archeology. According to Akça (2017), these locations, which serve as the hub of contemporary cities, have developed into major tourist, commercial, and economic hubs. By maintaining these cultural sites in their original condition, we can both preserve them and make them useful.

Brand awareness is derived from awareness and is specified as the ability to identify and recall a brand when it is used as a cue to corroborate prior exposure to the brand (Keller, 2013). As a major and unique component of brand equity, brand awareness refers to the likelihood that customers will recall and be aware of a brand (Tasci, 2018). Similar to the definition of brand awareness, tangible cultural asset awareness is the act of identifying and recalling buildings, historic sites, monuments, and artifacts while realizing their significance and unique value to the local community, nation, and world.

Nevertheless, Hernández-García (2022) argues that a destination's image exerts a direct bearing on people's decisions to visit. In a similar manner, image is a momentous notion that greatly influences the choice of destination and is of the utmost importance (Yaraşlı, 2007: 1). Because tourists evaluate a city based on its mental image, city image is therefore essential to them. The impression that people have of a city or location is critical, particularly when determining whether to live there or in a different area, as well as where to travel for leisure and shopping (Paquot, 2011: 69). Baloğlu and McCleary (1999) emphasized that an image can be made up of two aspects: an emotive component that is tied to the emotions that the destination generates in the person, and a cognitive component that is related to the tangible elements of the destination.

Numerous studies have researched cultural heritage connected with other variables. However, research on the tangible cultural heritage of Afyonkarahisar has been found to be limited and insufficient. Therefore, this study intended to investigate the effect of destination awareness regarding tangible cultural assets on city image perception involving undergraduate tourism studying students, who are to be the ambassador to Afyonkarahisar once they finish their school. The outcomes of this study are anticipated to be valuable in terms of raising awareness of cultural assets or directing Afyonkarahisar destination stakeholders in the execution of city image studies. In addition, this study underscores the importance of raising awareness of cultural assets so as to better understand the image of the city. In conclusion, it is projected that the research will substantially advance the relevant literature in terms of theoretical and application-based findings.

Conceptual Framework

Culture, Cultural Heritage and Tangible Cultural Heritage Assets

In the existing literature there are various numbers of descriptions encompassing culture. For instance, according to Bearden et al. (2006), culture is a multifaceted, intricate phenomenon that encompasses a range of characteristics, such as behaviors, beliefs, norms, values, and fundamental assumptions. Culture, which Tsai (2011) depicted as the collection of values that characterize people from other living things and give them a shared life, fosters harmony, and aids in the construction of communal aspects. In the words of Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010), culture can be specified as the culmination of a society's ingrained traits that influence its interactions with its surroundings and the collective programming of the human mind that sets its members apart from one another throughout life.

According to the European Commission's 2008 report named "Innovation in Cultural Heritage Research: For an integrated European Research Policy," cultural heritage is our connection to the past brought to life in the present, influencing not only our surroundings and places of residence but also our way of thinking and identity (European Commission, 2008). Additionally, it sparks creativity, piques interest, and provides an endless supply of inspiration for all facets of our existence. It creates connections between individuals and groups. There are numerous natural and human-caused dangers to the protection of our history, including pollution and climate change, as well as deliberate destruction of cultural property.

In a comparable manner, Barrère (2015) argued that cultural heritages possess significance for both economic and social life given that they are the primary institutions that identify the cultural context of social life and connect history, territory, and society. This is true even though the majority of cultural heritages remain informal, unprotected by the government, and unmanaged. Additionally, the interplay between cultural factors that are non-economic and those that are economic gets stronger the more creative the economy grows. According to Karadeniz (2020), cultural heritage is a reflection of historical knowledge, works, values, beliefs, structures, and customs which assign identity to the society to which it belongs. Cultural assets within heritages can be intangible (i.e., ideas, practices, beliefs, values, traditions, and public domain commodities such as music and literature) or tangible (i.e., buildings, structures, cultural artefacts including paintings, sculptures, etc.) (Barrère, 2015).

According to the UNESCO Tangible Cultural Heritage Expertise Committee (2024), the structures and historic sites, monuments, relics, and other items that are deemed worthy of preservation for future generations are examples of tangible cultural heritage assets. These are artifacts that are vital to a particular culture's science,

technology, architecture, or archeology. They are frequently irreplaceable and subject to limitations or ethical or legal prohibitions that restrict or prohibit the holder or owner from selling, transferring, or destroying them. Even though "all traces after human activities in our material surroundings" is how Swensen et al. (2013) explained tangible heritage, in public discussions tangible cultural heritage is most commonly comprehended and commonly referred to in terms of how the law is practiced and which assets are formally identified and safeguarded. According to UNESCO (2012) Cultural Heritage Act Chapter One General Provisions, the set of movable and immovable heritage of artistic, historic, archaeological, architectonic, urban, ethnographic, archival, and bibliophilic interest regulated by the provisions of Articles 50 and 51 herein, as well as other heritage designated or provided for by this law as showing evidence of particular civilization values, constitute tangible cultural heritage,

All movable and immovable works created by humans are considered tangible cultural heritage (Özkartal, 2015:26–36). Uğur and Dönmez (2021) assert that historical and architectural structures are the most vital assets that contribute tremendously to a nation's or region's tangible heritage and serve as a reflection of their historical context. A nation or territory's identity is also reflected in its historical structures and diverse monumental architecture, which serve as a mirror of that nation or region. As a result, it is critical to maintain these historical and architectural landmarks and support traveler activities as well as the marketing and promotion of nations or areas. Assets related to tangible cultural heritage play a substantial role in the tourism sector. According to Kuşçuoğlu and Taş (2017), by considering the cultural identity values of the society, visible cultural heritage assets are paramount for assuring economic and social development as well as highlighting social aspirations for the future generation and humanity. It is also important to note that the local economies and societies greatly benefit from these assets and the places in which they are located. Furthermore, Uğur and Dönmez (2021) state that a city's or destination's identity is also shaped by its tangible cultural heritage assets, which include historical buildings and other colossal structures that serve as a mirror image of a nation or region. As a result, it makes sense to recognize and preserve the historical and architectural significance of these buildings. Since these tangible heritage assets support the tourism activities, promotion and marketing initiatives of countries or regions.

Awareness of Tangible Cultural Assets

The expression "awareness" is the English equivalent of the Pali language "sati," which dates back 2500 years and was used in Buddhist psychology. It was first recorded in the English language in 1921 (Blake, 2013). According to the Cambridge Dictionary (2023), awareness is the comprehension of a situation or issue in the present based on knowledge or experience, or the knowing that something exists. However, according to the Turkish Dictionary, awareness can be interpreted as paying attention to something that needs to be comprehended or as being aware of things that need to be seen or known (TDK, 2019). Harris (2009, p. 8) defines awareness as "paying attention with flexibility, openness, and curiosity," which is similar to the description of TDK. To sum up, awareness is the requirement that a person be aware of something, concentrate on it, pay attention to it, and simultaneously possess a certain amount of information about it. Because of this, the primary objective is to increase awareness of the issue and of the person, to get people to think about it.

When examining the variable from an academic perspective, it is clear that the idea of awareness is highly popular today. Based on records from the Higher Education Thesis Center (YÖK) (2023), theses have been written in a variety of fields, including business, religion, psychology, educational sciences, social services, psychiatry, biology, health sciences, and political science. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that this study has examined the concept of tangible cultural assets as well as awareness in relation to tourism.

On the other hand, it is crucial to keep in mind that tourism destinations can take place in the minds of tourists through their unique attractions. According to Lai and Vinh (2013), attraction characteristics play a considerable role in creating a distinct perception of a destination among tourists. Specifically, these attractions help to develop awareness about the destination. Due to their interactions with the destination's various attractions, tourists are also able to exhibit loyalty behaviors, such as favoritism and referrals to others. According to Milman and Pizam (1995), a destination's success depends on two factors: first, it needs to have a positive destination image; and second, it needs to have destination awareness. However, awareness has been put into practice as the first place a person thinks of when evaluating possible vacation destinations (Pike, 2002).

As the study centers on tangible cultural assets, there are researchers who have examined the variable. For example, to Srivastava (2015), the primary aspect of protecting cultural heritage assets is the awareness. Karadeniz (2020) argues that awareness—one of the key elements in the preservation of cultural heritage—

must be instilled in every member of society in order to guarantee the survival of cultural assets. In a similar vein, Shankar and Swamy (2013) contend that raising awareness of one's cultural history is essential to its preservation and advancement. Thus, it is imperative to acknowledge cultural heritage awareness as a fundamental dimension. Additionally, Srivastava (2015) contends that a variety of initiatives that heighten public awareness and appreciation are among the best strategies to foster and preserve respect for a community's heritage. The local community's comprehension and involvement are extremely important for the success of heritage protection projects. Shankar and Swamy (2013) concluded that raising younger generations' understanding of cultural heritage is essential. As a result, the purpose of this study is to investigate the factors pertaining to the undergraduate tourism students at Afyon Kocatepe University's Tourism Faculty.

Image and City Image

Kotler et al. (1993) interpret image differently, stating that it is "the sum of beliefs, ideals, and impressions people have toward a certain place." They contend that an image is a cognitive byproduct of the effort to absorb vast volumes of information, representing a simplification of numerous associations and bits of information relating to a place. In today's society, image becomes a key factor in comprehending the process of choosing a place. As a result, the idea of the destination image appears to be an imperative framework. The term "destination image" refers to people's conceptions, assumptions, and mental models of a location or destination (Baloğlu and McCleary, 1999).

Regarding city image, Lynch (1960), the first person to discuss the idea, remarked in "The Image of the Cities" that city image is made up of the natural and human symbols that individuals who have either direct or indirect ties to a city imagine for themselves. In keeping with the preceding concept, Jannah et al. (2014) underlined that people's perceptions of cities are typically shaped by the unique qualities they encounter in that city.

Dai and Zheng (2021) referred to the city's image as the destination image in their study. They continued by saying that the city's image is critical because it corresponds with a number of variables, including moods, emotions, and behavioral intentions. According to Ger and Askegaard (1997), city image is also thought of as a mental representation process, which is a network of meanings that are stored in a person's memory in a specific form in addition to affective, motivational, and sensory components. The city image is a valuable resource to make use of. For instance, Cleave and Arku (2020) bolster the idea that a city's emotive image can be a potent weapon for helping people recognize and distinguish the city in their minds. This can assist draw in visitors, investments, businesses, and skilled workers while also luring in and keeping inhabitants and high-earning, educated migrants.

A destination needs to have a favorable, transportation and lodging options, museums, ruins, accommodations, and other attractions in order to grow as a tourist destination (İlban, 2007: 6). Establishing an excellent image is the first stage in creating effective marketing tactics for a tourist destination (Ceylan, 2011: 92). According to Milman and Pizam (1995), a tourist destination requires to have both a positive image and a high level of awareness in order to succeed. If all else is equal, a positive image will attract new customers. A second visit will come if the initial visit is met with satisfaction.

Relationship Between Awareness of Cultural Heritage and City Image

Cultural heritage is a vital part of a community's identity and history. Moreover, they serve as a gateway to understanding and appreciating the human history, traditions, and values. Therefore, the society needs to be aware of the cultural heritage assets they have in order to preserve them. In the national literature, there are some studies investigating students' awareness of cultural heritage. For example, Gök (2020) conducted a study to measure the awareness of university students regarding Kyrgyzstan's cultural heritage determined by UNESCO. According to the results of the study, it was seen that there was a meaningful difference between the awareness and experience levels of all cultural heritage elements. Yaşarsoy et al. (2021) intended to determine the awareness of students studying at Kastamonu University Faculty of Tourism about the cultural heritage of Kastamonu and to increase this awareness. In the comparison tests, it was found that cultural heritage awareness did not differ according to the gender and department of the participants. Harman Aslan (2023) attempted to evaluate the level of success/achievement of a project proposed at increasing the awareness of concrete cultural heritage and its preservation among young people. As a result, it has been revealed that young people mostly acquire information about the definition, scope and classification of concrete cultural heritage, understand the values of cultural heritage, and become aware that these values can be protected most by increasing the level of social awareness. Çelepi (2016) endeavored to determine the awareness and

commitment of university youth to the Intangible Cultural Heritage values of Turks and to determine their approaches to values. Many of the participants stated that they had not heard of the important figures of Turkish mythology. Similarly, it was revealed that they did not know Turkish epic heroes. Karaca Yilmaz et al. (2017), Cumhuriyet University students' awareness of the cultural heritage of Sivas, the city they live in, was examined. As a result of the research, it was understood that university students' awareness of cultural heritage is generally low. The areas where students' awareness scores were lowest were activities, minstrels and intangible cultural heritage. Additionally, awareness of historical buildings, handicrafts and local dishes is at a medium level. In their research, Öztürk and Caber (2017) examined the curricula of departments that provide tourism guidance education at undergraduate and associate degree levels in Turkey and a status determination was made regarding the course(s) in which the students acquired knowledge about cultural heritage during their education life and the course contents (if any). Demir (2023) conducted a study to determine secondary school students' awareness of cultural heritage. As a result of the study, a valid and reliable measurement tool was revealed.

On the other hand, a destination image performs an integral part in attracting tourists and influences a number of other factors. According to Ksouri (2015), the destination image has a main role in shaping travelers' choices, attitudes towards a certain place, satisfaction levels, and tendencies to visit again. There are studies investigating some specific examples from Türkiye including students. For instance, Olcay and Doğan (2015) discussed the city image of Gaziantep through the eyes of university students who are potential tourists. In addition, the advantages that Gaziantep has in terms of city image are also mentioned. For this purpose, it was tried to reveal the opinions of Gaziantep University students towards the city image of Gaziantep. As a result of the research, it was observed that the statement that the students agreed with the least was "Gaziantep people are forward-thinking".

Siyavuş (2020) strived to determine the image perceptions of students studying at Tekirdağ Namık Kemal University in the 2019-2020 academic year about the city of Tekirdağ. It was understood that the participants' perceptions of the city superiority image of the city of Tekirdağ, its image towards the city people and the abstract image of the city were at a medium level. When the answers were examined, it was determined that entertainment activities and sports and cultural activities in the city constitute medium-high image elements, but urban green areas, pedestrian transportation, walking and cycling tracks were determined to constitute medium-low image elements.

In another study, Albayrak and Özkul (2013) aimed to determine the impact of the factors that form the destination image on Y-generation tourists' decision on holiday destinations and to make suggestions regarding destination marketing for the generation in question by examining the relationship between the structural characteristics of Y-generation tourists and their destination perceptions. According to the results of the research, destination image varies according to the gender, education level and income level of the participants. On the other hand, it can be said that Generation Y tourists are motivated by the desire to relax, have fun and see new places, and consist of individuals who are looking for a quality and luxury holiday at an affordable price.

Based on the information given above, the following hypotheses have been developed accordingly.

H1: The participants' awareness of tangible cultural assets (ATCA) positively affects Afyonkarahisar's city image.

H1a: The awareness of tangible cultural assets (ATCA) of Tourism Management Department students positively affects Afyonkarahisar's city image.

H1b: The awareness of tangible cultural assets (ATCA) of Tourism Guidance Department students positively affects Afyonkarahisar's city image.

H1c: The awareness of tangible cultural assets (ATCA) of Gastronomy and Culinary Arts Department students positively affects Afyonkarahisar's city image.

Methodology

This study, aiming to reveal the effect of awareness of cultural assets on the perception of city image, embodies a quantitative research technique. By demonstrating the cause-and-effect connections between social phenomena, quantitative research seeks to discover the laws of social order by statistically examining measurable data (Gazeloğlu and Erkılıç, 2020). In this context, a three-part questionnaire was applied to the Tourism Faculty of Afyon Kocatepe University students. However, the application was conducted with only

third and fourth classes due to the necessity of attendance in Afyon for at least two years. The permission required to collect the data was obtained from the Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Board with the decision dated 22.12.2022 and numbered 398. The study was conducted from April to the end of May 2023, and 218 of 512 (42,57%) students responded to the questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire contains some demographic variables (gender, group of age, department, and hometown), 17 tangible cultural assets of Afyonkarahisar are listed in the second part, and the third part, 19 statements about the perception of the city image. A five-point Likert scale changing from "Never heard" to "I know it very well" was used to measure the awareness about tangible cultural assets. Similarly, the five-point Likert scale changing from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree" was used to measure the perceptions about the city image of Afyonkarahisar. The 19 expressions on city image were adapted from Gilboa et al. (2015)'s study titled "A summated rating scale for measuring city image". In the data analysis process, validity and reliability analyses were performed, and then the descriptive results about participants were analyzed. Correlation analyses were conducted to reveal the potential relationships among variables, and bivariate and multivariate regression coefficients were calculated to test the research hypothesis.

Data Analyses

Table 1 presents the results of EFA and the reliability analyses. Table 1 indicates that scale reliability (0,912 for ACA and 0,885 for PCI) and sub dimensions' reliability coefficients are higher than 0.70. Thus, the data of the study is reliable. On the other hand, as seen in Table 1, the study data is valid due to the EFA score. Within this context, items of ATCA explain approximately 69% of the total variance, while it is calculated as 63,79% for the PCI scale. Furthermore, the ATCA (KMO: 0,892, sig.: 0,000) and PCI (KMO: 0,840, sig.: 0,000) are suitable for factor analysis.

Table 1. Validity and Reliability

EFA results for Awareness of Cultural Assets (ATCA)

Factor	Items	Factor Loadings	Eigenvalue	% Variance	Cronbach's Alpha
Symbolic buildings and great offensive assets (SBGOA)	SBGOA1	0,764			
	SBGOA2	0,690			
	SBGOA3	0,544			
	SBGOA4	0,569			
	SBGOA5	0,666			
	SBGOA6	0,581			
	SBGOA7	0,715	3,980	23,409	0,855
Religious assets (RA)	RA1	0,618			
	RA2	0,919			
	RA3	0,923			
	RA4	0,813	3,895	22,912	0,915
	RA5	0,775			
Phrygian assets (PA)	PA1	0,552			
	PA2	0,867			
	PA3	0,867			
	PA4	0,857	3,806	22,388	0,919
	PA5	0,923			
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin coefficient		0,892			
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	x^2	2834,230			
	Sig.	0,000			
Cumulative variance %		68,709			

EFA results for Perception of City Image (PCI)

Factor	Items	Factor Loadings	Eigenvalue	% Variance	Cronbach's Alpha
Tourism, Leisure & Entertainment (TLE)	TLE1	0,523			
	TLE2	0,607			
	TLE3	0,549			
	TLE4	0,661			
	TLE5	0,789	2,741	14,426	0,802
Services (SER)	SER1	0,844			
	SER2	0,811			
	SER3	0,552	2,504	13,181	0,735
Security (SEC)	SEC1	0,717			
	SEC2	0,750			
	SEC3	0,694			
	SEC4	0,621	2,379	12,520	0,739
Heritage (H)	H1	0,856			
	H2	0,891			
	H3	0,591	2,261	11,901	0,781
Caring (C)	C1	0,684			
	C2	0,549			
	C3	0,729	2,235	11,761	0,707
	C4	0,471			
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin coefficient		0,840			
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	x^2	1724,653			

Scale reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)	0,912			*Sig.*	0,000
			Cumulative variance %		63,788
			Scale reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)		0,885

The ATCA scale has three sub-dimensions; conversely, the PCI scale involves five sub-dimensions. The eigenvalues of ATCA sub dimensions are higher than 3,80, and the SBGOA constitutes the most critical factor of the ATCA with a 23,41% variance explanation rate. The three highest factor loadings were calculated for PA5 (Aslankaya Monument), RA3 (Gedik Ahmet Pasha Madrasah), and RA2 (Gedik Ahmet Pasha Mosque) at ATCA scale while SBGOA 3 (Büyüktaarruz Martyrs' Memorial) has the lowest factor loading (0,544). Table 1 indicates that eigenvalues for the sub-dimensions of the PCI scale are also valid and higher than 2,235. Tourism, Leisure, and entertainment sub-dimension have the highest eigenvalue (2,504) and explain 14,43% of the total variance. The highest factor loading is observed at H2 [Afyonkarahisar is a province rich in cultural heritage (0,891)]. H1 [There are many historical sites in Afyonkarahisar (0,856)] and SER1 [There is a sufficient number of bank branches in Afyonkarahisar (0,844)] follows H2 item.

After confirming the validity and reliability of the data, some demographic variables were analyzed with percentage and frequency techniques. According to the results presented in Table 2, a large proportion of the participants are female (n: 154, 70,64%), and 92,7% of all participants is in the group 18-24 age of years (n: 202). 140 of 218 participants are studying at the Tourism Guidance Department (32,11%), 70 participants are at the Gastronomy and Culinary Arts Department (64,22%), and just eight participants are studying at the Tourism Management Department (3,67%). Half of the participants reside in the Aegean Region (n: 109, 50,00%), 32 participants live in the Marmara Region (14,68%), and 31 participants reside in the Mediterranean Region (14,22%).

Table 2. Demographics

Group	Variable	n	%	Group	Variable	n	%
Gender	Female	154	70,64	**Region of hometown**	Aegean	109	50,00
	Male	64	29,36		Marmara	32	14,68
Group of Age	Under 18	1	0,46		Mediterranean	31	14,22
	Between 18-24 of ages	202	92,66		Central Anatolia	20	9,17
	Older than 24 years age	15	6,88		Black Sea	12	5,50
Department	Tourism Management	8	3,67		Eastern Anatolia	6	2,75
	Tourism Guidance	140	64,22		South-Eastern Anatolia	3	1,38
	Gastronomy and Culinary Arts	70	32,11		Abroad	5	2,29
				n: frequency,	**%:** percentage		

The awareness level of the cultural assets of Afyonkarahisar and the perception level of the Afyonkarahisar city image are evaluated with mean and standard deviation in Table 3. It is clear from Table 3 that the participants of the study are aware of the cultural assets in Afyonkarahisar ($\bar{x}$: 3,614). Contrary to this, they almost have a negative perception of the city image of Afyonkarahisar ($\bar{x}$: 2,734) except for heritage sites ($\bar{x}$: 3,560). The highest awareness of cultural assets is observed at the SBGOA sub-dimension ($\bar{x}$: 3,915), while the lowest one is the PA ($\bar{x}$: 3,321). The most well-known cultural assets of Afyonkarahisar are, respectively, Taşhan (SBGOA7, $\bar{x}$: 4,28), Authentic/Traditional Afyon Houses (SBGOA5, $\bar{x}$: 4,22), and Afyonkarahisar castle (SBGOA7, $\bar{x}$: 4,20). The Maltaş temple monument is the least-known cultural asset (PA3, $\bar{x}$: 2,90). Remarkably, the Phrygian cultural assets are less known than others since they are pretty far from the city center. However, symbolic buildings and the assets of the Great Offensive are better known because they are more accessible and have a great sense of meaning within the context of independence.

Table 3. Descriptive results about the ATCA and the PCI

Factor		Item	Mean	St. D.	Factor		Item	Mean	St. D.
Awareness of Tangible Cultural Assets	*SBGOA* *$\bar{x}$: 3,915*	SBGOA1	4,20	0,71	**Perception of City Image**	*TLE* *$\bar{x}$:* *2,287*	TLE1	2,26	1,06
		SBGOA2	3,67	1,09			TLE2	2,10	1,10
		SBGOA3	3,47	1,14			TLE3	2,67	1,15
		SBGOA4	3,63	1,03			TLE4	2,52	1,12
		SBGOA5	4,22	0,85	*$\bar{x}$: 2,734*		TLE5	1,89	1,03
3,614		SBGOA6	3,91	1,09		*SER*	SER1	2,98	1,20

	SBGOA7	4,28	0,98	*x̄: 2,914*	SER2	2,89	1,18
RA *x̄: 3,606*	RA1	3,95	0,88		SER3	2,88	1,18
	RA2	3,33	1,30	*SEC*	SEC1	2,65	0,99
	RA3	3,28	1,31	*x̄: 2,672*	SEC2	3,28	1,20
	RA4	3,75	1,18		SEC3	2,35	1,11
	RA5	3,71	1,15		SEC4	2,41	1,03
PA *x̄: 3,321*	PA1	3,84	1,06	*H*	H1	3,84	1,01
	PA2	3,34	1,28	*x̄: 3,560*	H2	3,91	1,06
	PA3	2,90	1,23		H3	2,93	1,18
	PA4	3,36	1,23	*C*	C1	2,35	0,97
	PA5	3,16	1,26	*x̄: 2,235*	C2	2,37	1,14
x̄: **Mean, St. D.: Standard Deviation**					C3	2,13	1,06
					C4	2,08	1,10

SBGOA: **Symbolic buildings and great offensive assets**   **TLE:** Tourism, Leisure & Entertainment
RA: **Religious assets**   **SER:** Services
PA: **Phrygian assets**   **SEC:** Security
  H: Heritage
  C: Caring

Although the participants of the study have a negative perception of the city image ($x̄$: 2,734), they have a positive perception of the heritage of Afyonkarahisar (H, $x̄$: 3,560). Within this context, it is concluded that "Afyonkarahisar is a province rich in cultural heritage" (H1, $x̄$: 3,84, and "There are many historical sites in Afyonkarahisar" (H2, $x̄$: 3,91). On the other hand, participants have stated that there are not enough cultural activities in the city. The results of the PCI scale reveal that the perception of the city's image of caring services is inappropriate (C, $x̄$: 3,560), and the least perceived item in caring services is "Streets and sidewalks are well organized in Afyonkarahisar" (C4, $x̄$:2,08). The item TLE5 (There are sufficient numbers of entertainment venues in Afyonkarahisar, $x̄$:1,89) is also the least perceived among others regarding city image. On the other hand, the positive perception of participants is that "Afyonkarahisar is a very safe place" (SEC2, $x̄$:3,28).

Findings

This study focuses on the possible effects of ATCA on Afyonkarahisar's city image. Within this context, correlations among variables are listed in Table 4. As seen in the table, awareness of tangible cultural assets has a weak relation with the perceived city image of Afyonkarahisar. Indeed, this relation can only be observed in religious assets (r: 0,229), except in other dimensions. The services (SER, r: 0,201) and heritage (H, r: 0,229) sub-dimensions of PCI are also significantly related to ATCA. But those relations are weak, as well. It is predicted that these weak relationships arise from the negative perception of the Afyonkarahisar city image, and we think that this situation confirms the descriptive analysis results of the PCI scale. Although cultural assets are one of the other predictors of city image, there are also other predictors, such as local cuisine, customs and traditions, living standards, etc. Thus, the ATCA could relatively create a lesser effect than the desired level. Moreover, the negative perception of Afyonkarahisar city image could reduce this relation more and more.

Table 4. Correlation Analysis

	ACA	**SBGOA**	**RA**	**PA**
PCI	**0,204****	0,166*	*0,229******	0,094
TLE	0,114	0,083	*0,217******	-0,024
SER	*0,201******	0,151*	*0,242******	0,089
SEC	0,097	0,046	0,068	0,115
H	*0,229******	*0,248******	*0,177******	0,122
C	0,146*	0,124	0,144*	0,081
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).				

In Table 5, the measurement model of the main hypothesis and its variations regarding departments are supplied. As seen in the table, awareness of tangible cultural assets of Afyonkarahisar makes a very limited but weighty contribution to the city's image (r: 0,178). In other words, each increment in ATCA increases city image positively at a rate of 17%. Thus, the main hypothesis of this study was accepted. Meanwhile, this effect differs according to the participants' departments at the faculty. Although participants of Tourism

Management and Gastronomy and Culinary Arts students have positive ATCA, this awareness does not importantly affect their perceived city image of Afyonkarahisar. On the other hand, the awareness level of TCA of Tourism Guidance students remarkably contributes to Afyonkarahisar's city image. Hence, each increment in ATCA of Tourism Guidance students contributes to a positive change to Afyonkarahisar's city image at the rate of 22%. However, this influential effect constitutes only 5% of the total variance. Thus, it maybe concluded that ATCA is one of the decisive predictors of a positive city image with various elements that are not observed in this study. Taking into account all of these H1a and H1c sub-hypotheses of the study were rejected, whereas H1b was accepted.

Table 5. Regression Analysis and testing of hypothesis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	F Value	Adjusted R^2	Model sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta					
1	(Constant)	2,008	,216		9,309	,000	9,399	0,037	**0,002***
	ATCA	,178	,058	,204	3,066	,002			
2	(Constant)	2,377	,834		2,849	,029	0,709	-0,403	0,432
	ATCA	,197	,234	,325	,842	,432			
3	(Constant)	1,773	,275		6,456	,000	9,203	0,056	**0,003***
	ATCA	,223	,073	,250	3,034	,003			
4	(Constant)	2,269	,383		5,930	,000	1,597	0,009	0,211
	ATCA	,131	,104	,151	1,264	,211			
1: All, 2: Tourism Management, 3: Tourism Guidance, 4: Gastronomy and Culinary Arts									

Discussion

With the study employed by Yaşarsoy et al. (2021), it was hoped to determine the awareness of students studying at Kastamonu University Faculty of Tourism about the cultural heritage of Kastamonu. In the comparison tests, it was found that cultural heritage awareness did not differ according to the gender and department of the participants. Contrary to the study by Yaşarsoy et al. (2021), this study concluded that there are differences between the departments of the students and the awareness and city image. It may be explained by the example that participants of Tourism Management and Gastronomy and Culinary Arts students have positive ATCA. Yet, this awareness does not meaningfully affect their perceived city image of Afyonkarahisar. On the other hand, the awareness of TCA of Tourism Guidance students significantly contributes to Afyonkarahisar's city image.

Cihangir and Köksal (2019) conducted a study to determine to what extent young people studying at Osmaniye Korkut Ata University know and protect the cultural assets of Osmaniye. It has been concluded that the youth studying in Osmaniye do not know enough about or do not visit the cultural assets of the common heritage of humanity in their cities and that there is a serious lack of information about the cultural heritage. However, it was completed in this study that it is exactly the reverse. In other words, the participants are aware of the cultural assets in Afyonkarahisar and they are well aware that Afyonkarahisar is a province rich in cultural heritage.

Karaca Yılmaz et al. (2017), examined the awareness of Cumhuriyet University students regarding the cultural heritage of Sivas. As a result of the research, it was that inferred that university students' awareness of cultural heritage is generally low. Contrasting the research findings by Karaca Yilmaz et al. (2017), this study deduced that Afyon Kocatepe University students are aware of the cultural assets in Afyonkarahisar. It was also learnt that students' awareness of historical buildings, handicrafts and local dishes is at a medium level. In this sense, both studies have similar aspects.

Olcay and Doğan (2015) examined the city image of Gaziantep through the eyes of university students who are potential tourists. For this purpose, it was tried to reveal the opinions of Gaziantep University students towards the city image of Gaziantep. In addition, it was also examined whether these views differed according to the students' gender and the department of science they studied. As a result of the research, it was determined that students studying in science were more selective than students studying in social sciences and humanities in expressions related to the tourism dimension, and students studying in social sciences and humanities were more selective than students studying in science in expressions regarding the human dimension. Similar to the results obtained by Olcay and Doğan (2015), it was found out there are differences between the departments and the awareness and city image. It may be explained by the example that participants of Tourism

Management and Gastronomy and Culinary Arts students have positive ATCA. Yet, this awareness does not substantially affect their perceived city image of Afyonkarahisar. On the other hand, the awareness of TCA of Tourism Guidance students notably contributes to Afyonkarahisar's city image.

Siyavuş (2020), intended to determine the image perceptions of students studying at Tekirdağ Namık Kemal University in the 2019-2020 academic year in relation to Tekirdağ. It was determined that the participants' perceptions of the city superiority image of the city of Tekirdağ, its image towards the people of the city and the abstract image of the city were at a medium level. Unlike the study by Siyavuş (2020), this study ended that the students studying at Afyon Kocatepe University almost have a negative perception of the city image of Afyonkarahisar. On the other hand, it was added in the study by Siyavuş (2020) that the city has a calm and modern structure. Parallel with this finding, it was concluded in this study that Afyon Kocatepe University students believe that Afyonkarahisar is a very safe place to live. Once again, it was outlined by Siyavuş (2020) that entertainment activities, sports and cultural events in the city constitute medium-high level image elements. On the other hand, according to this study, that participants have reported that there are not enough cultural activities in the city. As a final point, it was portrayed by Siyavuş (2020) that walking and cycling trails constitute medium-low image elements, while the participants do not believe that streets and sidewalks are well organized in Afyonkarahisar. As a conclusion, it may be suggested that there are similarities and differences between the two investigations.

Conclusion and Recommendation

In order to preserve tangible cultural assets and pass it on to future generations, Harman Aslan and Diker (2022) contend that there is a need to raise societal awareness. In this regard, it is fundamental that people, especially young people, have a high degree of consciousness and awareness of cultural heritage and assets, as well as the use of modern, scientific, creative, and interactive approaches to conserve these values. Correspondingly, this study was conducted to determine the effect of tourism students' awareness of tangible cultural assets on city image perception of students studying at Faculty of Tourism of Afyon Kocatepe University. Within the scope of the study, descriptive statistical results and hypotheses regarding the subject were tested in order to measure this perception of the students. As a result of the analyses, it was finalized that awareness of tangible cultural assets of Afyonkarahisar makes a very limited but pivotal contribution to the city's image. This study holds a critical role as it may help local government and policymakers understand the important aspects of city image construction.

Drawing from the research findings, the following recommendations can be made to improve the city's image and raise the awareness of cultural heritage aspects among university students studying in Afyonkarahisar.

Building partnerships between educational institutions and local government agencies is strongly advised in order to support awareness-raising of tangible cultural assets in Afyonkarahisar and the development of the city's image.

It is the obligations of university administrations to make sure that students take part in field trips that allow them the opportunity to explore cultural assets. It should be considered to take advantage of this relationship and the fact that the aforementioned cultural assets are conveniently close to the city by planning quick, low-cost trips.

According to Olcay and Doğan (2015), students who relocate to a new city for a university education and stay there for a minimum of two years are viewed as potential tourists, and their propensity to promote the city to others enhances the image of the town. With this relationship in place, local officials can plan trips for just university students in an effort to enhance the city's reputation and entice them to recommend others about it.

Curricula for associate, bachelor's and master's degree programs may contain courses specifically on cultural heritage that act as a bridge to greater awareness, or the number of courses should be increased to better address concerns related to local cultural heritage.

In the words of Shankar and Swamy (2013), inviting experts from the national and international arenas, educational institutions may host seminars, workshops/conferences, and other gatherings to educate students concerning the cultural heritage assets. To back up the educational aspect, social media may be made use of. Since social media is immensely popular tool among young people, university students may be encouraged to take photos and shoot videos and share them on their personal accounts. Moreover, a competition may be organized among university students including social media posts so as to raise awareness of the cultural assets of the places along with disseminating the city image.

Early integration of cultural heritage studies into the curriculum will help students develop a concern for the protection and promotion of cultural heritage. In that sense, ministry of education also needs to take some responsibility. Moreover, cultivating the cultural component requires support from non-governmental organizations, the government, and business owners. It will take more corporate backing, operational assistance, and public engagement to fully realize the goal of raising awareness of cultural assets. Further decisions are required in order to raise people's consciousness levels.

It is suggested that additional research be carried out in this field in order to raise awareness of cultural assets of Afyonkarahisar. These studies are expected to have a positive impact on the city's image development as well as its marketing.

Similar to any other research study in the literature, this study bears specific constraints. For instance, the study's scope was restricted to three separate departments of tourism students of Afyon Kocatepe University. Because of the similar contexts, it was hoped that the findings would hold true for other Turkish universities. Plus, departments of other faculties may be involved in the research. Moreover, further researchers may concentrate on the academic staff of the university instead of involving students. Additionally, a survey is one of the quantitative methods used in this study. Conversely, in subsequent research, a focus group study and a qualitative methodology can be used or a mixed methodology may be employed. It is also recommended that further research may add intangible cultural assets into the consideration when exploring the awareness of the youngsters.

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