

A Study on Destination Image Perceptions of Domestic Tourists

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Abstract. *The concept of destination image has turned into a widely researched concept to revitalize local regions. As various regions develop in tourism, they give tourists or potential tourists more choice rights, and individuals' decision process is affected via different destination options. The destination image reflects the satisfaction levels, perceptions, and experiences of tourists cognitively and emotionally. Within the scope of the research, a face-to-face survey was conducted by applying the convenience sampling method to collect the data of 497 local tourists who visited Bartın Amasra, an urban tourism destination in Turkey founded in the 3000s BC and with a unique history of 5000 years. The "Destination Image Scale" was benefited through the quantitative research technique in the study. Besides, open-ended questions were asked to determine the travel behavior of tourists. Based on the findings, it is evident that domestic tourists who come to Amasra primarily attach importance to "the sea, nature, and cultural structure". It was also found that tourists act according to their family and friends' advice the most as a source of information in their preference for Amasra. Also, the emotional states tourists feel throughout their destination visits have come to the forefront as "Peaceful, Happy, Good and Comfortable". While there is a significant difference in the level of participation of tourists in the dimension of the affective image in favor of women at the gender level, there is a significant difference in the dimension of the cognitive image in favor of those with higher education levels. Within the scope of the study, the elements that may come to the forefront in promoting the relevant region as a desirable travel destination have been disclosed. As a result, it is clear that the perceptions of domestic tourists visiting Amasra regarding the image of the destination are high.*

Keywords: Image, Destination Image, Cognitive Image, Affective Image, Amasra

JEL Codes: M30, L83

1. Introduction

Nowadays, destination-related tourism has become a central factor in the strategies of many local regions seeking competitive advantage in specific areas such as manufacturing, arts, sports, public relations, marketing, and image studies. Many governments and their stakeholders may spend large sums of money on improving and repositioning the image of specific places and thus revitalizing their economies (Souiden et al., 2017, p. 54). It is important to influence tourists or potential travellers in selecting tourism destination areas. This may involve the creation of a new image of a destination area, or it may be done to maintain a positive image or improve the perception of a negative image (Telisman-Kosuta, 1989, p. 557).

Image has an important influence on the choice of holiday destinations (Baloğlu and McCleary, 1999, p. 868). Image is regarded as a concept linked to community satisfaction and loyalty to a place, which is important in the livability of a place. Residents are active providers of information, serving as "destination ambassadors", especially for their own friends and relatives, and significantly influencing the intentions of others to visit a destination. Some residents also offer local expertise regarding their area via social media platforms, co-

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creating value and contributing to destination differentiation. Hence, locals form a part of the destination image in their interactions with tourists and tourists' cultural experiences (Stylidis, 2020, p. 228-229).

The image creation process is intertwined with the destination selection process. Understanding how the touristic images of the region are formed will facilitate the promotion of the region. Moreover, destination image as a selection factor will become more important as competition increases and more touristic qualities are promoted (Gartner, 1993, p. 209). In this study, a destination image study was performed within Amasra, an Anatolian city in Turkey's Western Black Sea region. Thus, by examining the applicability of destination image in a local niche region, the possible deficiencies in the destination image study of the region were also attempted to be revealed. Within the scope of the study, it is intended to help develop images suitable for the prominent destinations of the relevant region and to contribute to the marketing, public relations, and promotional activities positioned especially in the field of tourism. Besides, the historical root of Amasra dating back to ancient times, its being an economic destination center for domestic tourists, and its increasing international value as a center of attraction for foreign tourists in recent years have formed the main basis of the study.

2. Destination Image

Destination image is considered a cognitive and emotional impression in line with people's perceptions about a place. Especially since destination image is an essential tool contributing to tourists' perspectives on the relevant region, it impacts tourist behaviors before, during, and after the travel to that region. In this framework, the destination image is an important concept in the field of tourism and offers information about many features of the region by considering historical, cultural, natural, and socio-economic aspects.

The research has no standardized analysis system because the destination image is a subjective issue. Motivations, interests, cultural background, emotional state, self-image, and many other factors are critical in the consumer's travel decision-making process (Stepchenkova & Mills, 2010, p. 576). Destination image is influenced by perceptual characteristics such as information from different channels, sociodemographic characteristics, and past travel behaviors (Tasci, 2006, p. 297). A review of publications on destination image from 1973 to 2000 indicated that these studies provided destination image researchers with a reference guide on the context, methodology, and focus of previous studies (Pike, 2002, p. 541). In the literature review between 2001 and 2007, it was seen that the publications in the field increased day by day, but there was a lack of qualitative methods, and the replies given by the visitors with incomplete information about the region were not enough in these studies (Pike, 2007, p. 107). Upon the examination of the publications on destination images between 2012 and 2022, it was found out that the studies were carried out on the structure of destination images, measurement and branding of destination images, factors affecting destination images, and finally, the effect of destination images on tourists' behavioral intentions (Chu et al., 2022).

Upon examining the publications on the destination image, Baloğlu and Brinberg (1997) scrutinized affective image positioning in tourism destinations, while Kim and Yoon (2003) scrutinized the effects of affective and cognitive components on tourism destinations. Beerli and Martin (2004), on the other hand, examined the factors affecting the destination image, while Chen and Tsai (2007) studied the effects of the destination image on behavioral intentions. Phillips and Jang (2008) studied tourist attitudes in the context of the relationship between cognitive and affective images, whereas Alaeddinoglu et al. (2010) examined Turkey's destination image from the perspective of UK-based travel intermediaries. Mohan (2010) studied the relationship between the destination image and attendance at professional hockey matches, while Lee and Lockshin (2011) discussed the impact of the destination image on tourists' beliefs and preferences for local products. Lopez (2011) studied the origins of the destination image, developments in the field, and its effects, while Zhou and Lin (2012) handled the potential impact of virtual tours on the destination image. Jeong and

Holland (2012) focused on the provision of travel information resources to potential tourists, whereas Marine-Roig (2015) scrutinized the role of identity and authenticity concepts in shaping the destination image. Lee and Bai (2016) studied the role of popular culture in shaping the destination image, while Ruan et al. (2017) studied the effects of tourism risk on the destination image. Baptista and Matos (2018) studied the destination image from a consumer behavior perspective, whereas Kışlalı et al. (2019) studied Turkey's destination image of people with different socio-cultural factors in the United Kingdom. Perpiña et al. (2019) analyzed the risk perception toward the destination images, while McFee et al. (2019) analyzed the effect of virtual reality (VR) use on destination images. Afshardoost and Eshaghi (2020) analyzed the relationship between destination images and tourists' behavioral intentions, whereas Trang et al. (2023) analyzed the inclusion of multi-sensory images in destination images.

Upon examining destination image examples in cities, Xiong and Chai (2010) suggested in their study on the destination image of Nanjing city in China, that the city should be positioned in modern life as the former capital of mountains and water. Bedran et al. (2014) examined how cosmopolitanism affects the destination image construction in São Paulo, Brazil. Santana and Gosling (2018) proposed a model with four destination image dimensions in Ilheus, Bahia, Brazil. Lojo et al. (2020) examined the online tourism destination of Barcelona, Spain via descriptive, evaluative, and prescriptive image components. Jani (2021) has segmented the tourists traveling to Tanzania using the destination image. Cho et al. (2022) analyzed the tourism destination image by investigating the touristic photos of Seoul, South Korea via deep learning method. Besides, Artuğer et al. (2013) examined the effect of the destination image of Alanya, the district of Antalya, Turkey, on building destination loyalty, while Alfian and Hassnah (2016) examined the dimensions of event sustainability (strategic and cultural adaptation, local community support, and event quality) for the destination image in Putrajaya, Malaysia. Erawan (2020), on the one hand, discussed the destination image and loyalty perception of Thai tourists visiting Indian travel destinations, whereas Marzouk (2022) handled the tourism destination image via social media platforms in Egypt. Dimitrovski et al. (2022) examined the perceived destination image of Lake Balaton in Hungary, while Lu et al. (2023) examined the destination image perceptions of first-time visitors to the Grand Canal Forest Park in Beijing, China. Finally, Tran et al. (2023) examined the destination social responsibility and destination brand loyalty among domestic tourists visiting Danang, Vietnam.

The image of a tourist destination impacts the perceived quality, satisfaction, and experience of visitors' holidays. Studies have generally indicated that tourists decide to visit a place based on common functional and psychological characteristics and the unique and privileged features a destination provides (Castro Analuiza et al., 2020, p. 45). In addition, it is evident that the publications are comprehensive regarding the content of the destination image, but they have less information as to how the image is formed. It is suggested that the reason for this situation is that there is not enough theory in the literature on how the image is formed in the minds of people and how it affects the target (Yılmaz, 2021, p. 17). As a result, the destination image is recognized as an important element in successful tourism development and destination marketing because of its impact on both supplies and demand sides of marketing (Tasci and Gartner, 2007, p. 413). In this study, the destination image of Bartın Amasra, an important tourism destination centre in the Western Black Sea region of Turkey, was analyzed.

3. Tourism Destination Amasra

Amasra, one of the most important tourism centers in the Western Black Sea region of Turkey, is better known when compared to Bartın Province, with its historical value despite being a small district and is regarded as "The Pearl of the Black Sea", "The Pupil of the World (Çeşm-i Cihan)" and "The Place Where Green and Blue Meet". Amasra is an important destination center for both domestic and foreign tourists with its historical

structure, culture, and nature tourism. The information regarding domestic and foreign tourists staying in Amasra (especially that of the the domestic tourists) between 2018 and 2022 is available in Table 1.

Table 1: Number of Tourists Staying in Accommodation Establishments in Amasra

Year	Foreign Tourist	Domestic Tourist	Grand Total
2018	4.988	175.708	180.696
2019	6.257	187.133	193.390
2020	2.711	121.436	124.147
2021	2.491	135.809	138.300
2022	4.196	142.566	146.762
Total	20.643	762.652	783.295

(Source: Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism General Directorate of Investments and Establishments, 2023)

The value of Amasra as a touristic destination dates back to ancient times. Tourism started to revive in Amasra in the 1940s. Between 1960 and 1970, tourism was taken more seriously in the region (Bartın Provincial Governorship, 2023). One of the main reasons for this is the advantage of its location as the closest seashore to Ankara, the capital of Turkey. Furthermore, the promotional brochure printed in English for Amasra in 1955 by the General Directorate of Press-Publication and Tourism is among the first publications issued for important tourism centers in Turkey (Sakaoğlu, 1987 cited in Özdemir, 2006, p. 39). Looking at the places in which the first promotional activities were carried out in the history of tourism in Turkey, it is clear that Antalya, Bursa, Istanbul, Ankara, Konya, Kayseri, Çanakkale-Truva, Akçakoca, Ephesus, Bergama and Amasra come to fore (Evcin, 2016, p. 110). This points out that Amasra was also given special importance in the first tourism promotion activities conducted in Turkey. Furthermore, by completing "Amasra Port Passenger Pier and Marina" project by 2022, "Cruise Tourism" also began in the region, Hence, the international value of Amasra has increased even more and foreign tourists have been able to reach the region more easily with opportunities for rest, entertainment and sightseeing by the sea.

Trips to small rural-cultural destinations rich in historical heritage and architectural harmony are popular nowadays. Such destinations are characterized by the historical and cultural heritage of small towns, cleanliness, peaceful atmosphere and cognitive-emotional components as to the treatment and service that visitors receive (Royo-Vela, 2009, p. 419). The ancient city, which was named Sesamos, Amastris, Samastro and Amasra respectively, was included in the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List in 2013 thanks to its historical castle belonging to the Genoese period, which is important for the cultural heritage richness of the ancient city (Western Black Sea Development Agency, 2014; UNESCO World Heritage Convention, 2020). The inclusion of Amasra Castle in an internationally recognized list of cultural and natural heritage of universal value has been a remarkable element for the destination image. Moreover, to encourage international cooperation and develop cultural ties, Amasra Municipality (2023) conducts collaborative municipality practices with Greece-Koropi, Italy-Pescara, Spain-Rute, Ukraine-Ochakov (Ozi) and Baden-Württemberg-Nagold Municipalities in Germany.

When international publications on Amasra are investigated, it is clear that Aksoy and Kiyici (2011) focused on destination image in tourism with the example of Amasra. Cengiz (2012) also examined the perceptions and attitudes of Amasra local people towards sustainable tourism planning and management. On the other hand, Aslan and Kiper (2016) studied the identity and historical structure of Amasra city within the scope of identity and memory problem. Yucedag et al. (2018) scrutinized the environmental awareness

attitudes of hotel and restaurant employees in Amasra District of Bartın Province, whereas Büyüktümürk et al. (2021) aimed to bring the cultural heritage of the Black Sea to international tourism with the game-based digitalization of Amasra, which used to host kingdoms and civilizations. There are also international studies regarding important historical and cultural monuments in the region. For instance, Eyice (1953) investigated a plaque with a coat of arms belonging to the period of Genoa rule in Amasra, while Verim (2015) examined the Fatih Mosque, a temple converted from a church during the Ottoman Period in Amasra. Cengiz et al. (2018) also examined the sustainable development of urban cultural and archaeological heritage in Amasra Castle and the walled settlement texture of Amasra, while Ayriksa and Etikan (2020) examined the art of "Çekicilik", a wood carving handicraft that has been maintained in Amasra for many years. In a study by Çelikbaş and Oyarçin (2022), an anthropomorphic candelabrum in the Amasra museum was also investigated. In the study, the perceptions of domestic tourists visiting Amasra regarding the destination image were measured via quantitative research and the elements that can stand out in the promotion of the region both nationally and internationally were disclosed.

4. Research Methodology

The quantitative survey method was benefited as a data collection tool in the research. The population of the research consists of domestic tourists visiting Amasra. Using a convenience sampling method, the study data were collected from 497 domestic tourists who visited Amasra between 01 May 2022 and 01 September 2022. While determining the sample number in the study, the method developed by Sekaran (2000) on representing the research population in social sciences was taken as a basis. In the survey, the scale applied by Baloğlu (1997a, p. 164), Baloğlu, and Mangaloğlu (2001, p. 5) to measure destination image was adapted for Amasra destination specific to domestic tourists. The language of the scale used in the research is English, and there are short questions. Because the language of the domestic tourists in the research sample is Turkish, it is necessary to ensure translation invariance due to the translation of the scale into Turkish. Translation invariance implies the comparison of translations after translating the scale from the original language into another language (Prieto, 1992). The scale used in the study was first translated from English to Turkish and then from Turkish to English by two different researchers who are experts in the field and have a good command of the English language. The researchers ensured that the translation expressions were clear and understandable.

The scale consists of 18 items and two dimensions (cognitive and affective). The statements were measured with a five-point Likert-type rating (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree). Demographic questions were included to determine the demographic profiles of tourists. It was clear that exemplary destination image studies in Turkey were conducted in Trabzon (Yaraşlı, 2007), Diyarbakır (Dinç, 2020), and İzmir (Baydeniz et al., 2022). Hence, it is observed that the validity and reliability of the questions in the research have been tested before and are suitable for related research.

It is suggested that in addition to structured questions, unstructured questions are also necessary for the successful measurement of all components of the destination image in a conceptual framework (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993, p. 3). In this context, three open-ended questions adapted from the study of Echtner and Ritchie (1993) were asked to determine the travel behaviors of domestic tourists.

The data were analyzed through SPSS 26 (Statistical Package for the Social Science) statistical package program. In the research, the following questions were attempted to be replied

- Does the respondents' participation level in the destination image dimensions differ in terms of gender and marital status variables?

- Does the respondents' participation level in the destination image dimensions differ regarding education level and income level variables?

5. Results and Discussions

The number of propositions and reliability coefficients of the destination image scale used in the research are shown in Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha value of the scale is highly reliable if it is between 0.80 and 1.00, highly reliable if it is between 0.60 and 0.80, low reliable if it is between 0.40 and 0.60, and unreliable if it is below 0.40 (Kalaycı, 2010). The destination image scale used to measure the destination image of Amasra in the study was found to be highly reliable, with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.893.

Table 2: Destination Scale Dimensions, Number of Items, and Reliability Coefficients

Dimensions of the Destination Image	Number of Items	Reliability Coefficients
Cognitive Image	14	0.782
Affective Image	4	0.862
Destination Image Scale (General)	18	0.893

When Table 3 is investigated, it is seen that more than half of the tourists participating in the research are single, received their bachelor's degree, and are women tourists. Besides, when the income level of tourists is investigated, it is clear that 54.9% have a low-income level.

Table 3: Information about the Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Demographic Characteristics	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Woman	300	60.4
	Man	197	39.6
Marital status	Single	376	75.7
	Married	121	24.3
Educational Status	High-School Graduate	71	14.3
	Bachelor's Degree	375	75.5
	Postgraduate Graduates	51	10.2
Monthly Income Level	Low	273	54.9
	Middle	181	36.4
	High	43	8.7

Table 4 refers to the information sources tourists consider in their preference for Amasra. Notably, more than half of the tourists prefer the advice of family and friends as a source of information. Afterward, it is seen that tourists mostly use internet sources in preference of their information source. Kim, Park, and Lamb (2019) found out in their research that tourists consider websites, comments shared in online environments, promotional materials, and people's recommendations in their immediate environment while searching for information about the destination.

Table 4: Information Source for Domestic Tourists' Preference for Amasra

Information Sources	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Travel Agency	29	5.8
Brochure-travel guides	4	.8
Advice from a family or friends	296	59.6
Advertisements	6	1.2
Books-movies	2	.4
Previous visit	49	9.9
Tourism fairs	4	.8
Internet	80	16.1
General information learned from school	27	5.4

In Table 5, 38.4% of the tourists were asked the open-ended question about which touristic product comes to mind when they think of Amasra as a holiday destination, and it was determined that 38.4% of them said "sea". Nature (15.5%), historical structure (10.3%), Ağlayan Ağaç (Crying Tree or Wood) (9.2%), and other touristic features come into mind, respectively. In the study carried out by Aksoy and Kiyici (2011, p. 487), the most important factors impacting the destination image of tourists visiting Amasra during their visit were listed as historical and cultural heritage, peaceful atmosphere, shopping and food.

Table 5: Touristic Products of Amasra Destination

Touristic Products of the Destination	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Ağlayan Ağaç (Crying Tree or Wood)	46	9.2
Amasra Salad and Fish	10	2.0
Kuşkayası Road Monument	15	3.0
Sea	191	38.4
Nature	77	15.5
Amasra Castle	18	3.6
Kemere Bridge	4	.8
Cultural Structure	12	2.4
View	18	3.6
Rampart Gates	4	.8
Historical Structures	51	10.3
Rabbit Island	31	6.2
Tourist Features	20	4.0

Table 6 offers the emotional states felt by tourists visiting Amasra. It is manifest that 36.4% of the tourists visiting Amasra feel peaceful, 15.5% feel comfortable, 14.5% feel good, and 14.3% feel happy. Based on the results obtained, it can be asserted that the emotional state of tourists, in general, is positive.

Table 6: The Emotional State of Domestic Tourists during Their Visits to the Destination

State of Emotions	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Amusing	35	7
Beautiful	38	7.6
Wonderful	1	.2
Peaceful	181	36.4
Good	72	14.5
Enjoyable	5	1.0
Bad	8	1.6
Happy	71	14.3
Terrific	8	1.6
Comfortable	77	15.5
Boring	1	.2

Table 7 offers the means and standard deviations of the propositions of the destination image scale in two sub-dimensions. In this context, upon examining the level of participation in the propositions of the cognitive image dimension, the first proposition is "I believe that having a holiday in Amasra has a relaxing and restful effect ($=\bar{x}4.09$)", while the last proposition is "I believe that Amasra is a lively place for a holiday ($=\bar{x}3.42$)".

Table 7: Mean and Standard Deviation Values Related to the Statements of the Destination Image Scale

Dimensions	Destination Image Propositions	Mean	Std. Deviation
Cognitive Image	I believe that Amasra is a beautiful place to spend a vacation.	4.02	1.011
	I believe that Amasra is a very lively place for a holiday.	3.42	1.054
	I believe that having a holiday in Amasra has a relaxing and restful effect.	4.09	1.046
	I believe it is exciting to have a holiday in Amasra.	3.46	1.052
Affective image	I think the accommodation facilities in Amasra are very convenient.	3.16	1.113
	I think there is a certain standard of cleanliness and hygiene in the facilities of Amasra.	3.10	,971
	I think that the tourism infrastructure of Amasra is sufficient.	2.95	1.124
	I think the people living in Amasra are friendly and warm-blooded.	3.63	1.152

I think the weather conditions in Amasra are favorable for a holiday.	3.69	1.038
I think the price of the products in Amasra is suitable for me.	3.01	1.222
I think that Amasra has an untouched nature and a clean environment.	3.56	1.157
I think Amasra has a unique view and different natural beauties.	4.19	.951
I think Amasra hosts interesting cultural events.	3.57	1.108
I think that Amasra has interesting historical places.	3.77	1.002
I think Amasra is a safe place to travel.	4.00	.900
I think the local dishes of Amasra are delicious.	3.57	1.050
I think there is a fast nightlife and entertainment environment in Amasra.	2.99	1.156
I think it is a positive choice to prefer Amasra as a holiday destination.	3.87	.992

When the level of participation in the propositions of the affective image dimension is analyzed, it is clear that the participants agree more with the proposition "I think that Amasra has a unique view and different natural beauties ($=\bar{x}4.19$)", while it is noteworthy that they do not agree much with "I think that tourism infrastructure is sufficient in Amasra ($=\bar{x}2.95$)" and "I think that there is a fast nightlife and entertainment environment in Amasra ($=\bar{x}2.99$)". For this reason, it is apparent that Amasra appeals more to those who prefer a holiday for historical and natural beauties rather than entertainment or nightlife.

Because the data obtained within the scope of the research meet the conditions such as normal distribution, homogeneity of variances, and the number of subjects being over 30, the analyses were handled through parametric tests (Ural & Kılıç, 2006). Within the scope of the research questions, an independent t-test was performed to determine whether there is a significant difference in the level of participation of the participants in the destination image scale propositions in terms of gender and marital status variables. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA Test) was carried out to test whether the level of participation in the propositions of the destination image scale differed based on participants' educational status and income levels.

T-test is a method used to test whether the difference between the means is significant at a certain confidence level by comparing the means of two independent groups or samples according to a dependent variable (Kalaycı, 2010). According to Table 8, it was concluded that there was no significant difference in the level of participation of the participants in the cognitive image dimension in terms of gender variable ($p>0.05$). It was also determined that there was a significant difference in tourists' participation level in the affective image dimension at $p<0.05$ significance level. Accordingly, in a 95% confidence interval, it can be asserted that women with higher means have higher levels of participation in the affective image dimension.

Table 8: T-Test Results Regarding Whether the Level of Participation in Affective Image and Cognitive Image Dimensions of Domestic Tourists Differ by Gender

	Gender	Frequency	Mean	Standard Deviation	Sig. (2-tailed)	T	df
Cognitive Image	Woman	300	3.80	.784	.061	1.878	495
	Man	197	3.66	.841			
Affective Image	Woman	300	3.56	.639	.030*	2.173	495

	Man	197	3.43	.636			
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* is significant at $p < 0.05$ level.

According to Table 9, it was concluded that there was no significant difference at $p > 0.05$ significance level in the level of participation in cognitive and affective image dimensions of tourists in terms of marital status variable. Accordingly, it can be claimed that there is no difference between the level of participation of married or single participants in cognitive and affective image dimensions.

Table 9: T-Test Results Regarding Whether the Level of Participation in Affective Image and Cognitive Image Dimensions of Domestic Tourists Differ by Marital Status

	Gender	Frequency	Mean	Standard Deviation	Sig. (2-tailed)	T	df
Cognitive Image	Single	376	3.80	.784	.200	1.283	495
	Married	121	3.66	.841			
Affective Image	Single	376	3.56	.639	.235	1.189	495
	Married	121	3.43	.636			

Analysis of variance is a method used to investigate whether the arithmetic mean values of more than two independent variables differ from each other (Kozak, 2014). When the results of the analysis of variance in Table 10 were analyzed, it was found that there was a difference at $p < 0.05$ significance level in the level of participation of the participants in the cognitive image dimension based on their education level. Tukey test was conducted to determine from which groups this difference originated. Based on the results of the Tukey test, it was seen that the means of the "Bachelor's Degree" students ($\bar{x} = 3.79$) were higher than the means of "High-School" graduates ($\bar{x} = 3.58$) at the level of participation in the cognitive image dimension. According to this result, it can be expressed that "Bachelor's degree" students agree with the cognitive image dimension more positively than "High School" graduates. In addition, it was concluded that there was no significant difference in the level of participation in the affective image dimension of the tourists participating in the research in terms of the educational status variable at $p > 0.05$ significance level.

Table 10: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results Regarding Whether the Level of Participation in Affective Image and Cognitive Image Dimensions of Domestic Tourists Differ by Educational Background

Factors		Variables	Frequency	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	F Value	Significance Level	Significant Difference (Tukey Test)
Cognitive Image	Educational Status	High school	71	3.58	.974	3.110	.045*	Undergraduate
		Undergraduate	375	3.79	.787			High school
		Postgraduate	51	3.71	.680			-
Affective Image	Educational Status	High school	71	3.40	.718	1.723	.180	-
		Undergraduate	375	3.54	.629			-

		Postgraduate	71	3.43	.595			-
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* is significant at $p < 0.05$ level.

When the results of the analysis of variance in Table 11 are analyzed, it is clear that there is no significant difference in the participants' participation level in terms of the cognitive and affective image dimensions based on the income level at $p > 0.05$ significance level. Accordingly, it can be stated that there is no difference between the level of participation of participants with low, medium, or high-income levels in cognitive and affective image dimensions.

Table 11: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results Regarding Whether the Level of Participation in Affective Image and Cognitive Image Dimensions of Domestic Tourists Differ by the Income Level

Factors		Variables	Frequency	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	F Value	Significance Level
Cognitive Image	Income Level	Low	71	3.58	.974	.102	.903
		Middle	375	3.79	.787		
		High	51	3.71	.680		
Affective Image	Income Level	Low	71	3.40	.718	.616	.540
		Middle	375	3.54	.629		
		High	71	3.43	.595		

Upon analyzing the related literature, it is seen that similar results are obtained in other studies. Tourists' familiarity with the destination, length of stay in the destination, and the characteristics of the destination's touristic products have been found to affect the perceived image (Chon, 1991; Hu and Ritchie, 1993; Milman and Pizan, 1995). In the related literature (Baloğlu, 1997b; Baloğlu and McCleary, 1999; Chen and Kerstetter, 1999), it is apparent that demographic variables such as gender, marital status, educational status, and income level have differences in the perceived image. Similarly, it was concluded that the nature, cultural resources, climate, view and other touristic products of the destination are essential in image perceptions (Dwyer and Kim, 2003; Murphy et al. 2000; Ritchie and Crouch, 2003). As a result, it can be said that the touristic products of the visited destination are a critical factor in influencing tourists' destination images.

6. Conclusions

Destination images imply tourists' perceptions of the touristic products they experience for the destination they visit. Hence, tourists compare what they think about the destination and what they perceive by experiencing touristic products. The positive image of tourists about the destination affects tourists' behavioral intentions. Therefore, the destination image can contribute to achieving competitive power for enterprises.

Destination marketers must develop brand strategies covering the dimensions of destination image to create a positive image. Consequently, the positioning of a destination should reflect the cognitive image dimensions that provide rational benefits, such as accessibility and vitality, as well as emotional benefits, such as people's feelings of friendliness, pleasure, excitement, and relaxation (Hosany et al., 2007, p. 76). In the results of the research, it was also determined that there was a significant difference in the level of participation of the participants in the cognitive image dimension based on the gender variable. When the results of the analysis of variance are discussed, it is observed that there is a significant difference in the level of participation of the participants in the cognitive image dimension according to their educational status. Considering the

differences according to demographic characteristics, it was determined that the participants were predominantly women, single, bachelor's degree students, and had low-income levels. In addition, tourists consider the recommendations of family and people around them as a source of information during their visits to Amasra. When tourists' thoughts about the touristic features of Amasra are analyzed, it is concluded that touristic products of the sea, nature, and cultural structures come to mind. It has also been determined that tourists visiting Amasra feel peaceful. Based on these results, it can be concluded that tourists attach importance to the natural and cultural assets in the destination they visit and it is important for them to feel peaceful, happy, good, and comfortable.

In line with the research, it is possible to make various suggestions for destination marketers and managers, restaurant businesses, travel agencies, tourist guides, and tourism industry stakeholders operating in the destination. Marketing strategies can be developed by considering the income level, information sources, touristic product preferences, and emotional states of tourists visiting Amasra. Central and local governments should encourage the effective use of promotional materials and online platforms (website, social media tools) to promote touristic products of Amasra. For instance, social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram can be used to provide information about tourism products belonging to Amasra and intensively promote and market them. It is remarkable that domestic tourists are affected by the recommendations of family and friends as a source of information in their choice of Amasra. In this framework, managers responsible for destination marketing and local administration can focus on promotional activities through digital platforms in the local and international arena in the promotion and marketing of Amasra, especially in the promotion of tourism products that impact the image of the destination. Travel agencies operating in the region can also contribute to increasing the number of tourists who visit Amasra by preparing different package tours including tourism products for the promotion of Amasra.

In terms of effective tourism planning and management in Amasra, it is recommended that the prominent features of Bartın Province should be utilized. For example, the natural beaches in the 59 km coastal region of Bartın, one of the most important ecosystems in Europe, the Kastamonu-Bartın Küre Mountains National Park, and the Bartın River, the only natural waterway allowing transportation in Turkey, can be included in the tourism planning of the region to contribute to the image of the destination (Cengiz, 2012, p. 196). Thus, different cultural treasures can be discovered with daily tours to the regions close to Amasra.

Within the scope of the study, it is recommended that local administrations and relevant organizations should act together to improve the tourism infrastructure standards of the city. In addition, since domestic tourists coming to Amasra generally have a lower budget as they belong to a lower socio-economic structure, it is recommended that the product price policies in the city should be suitable for domestic tourists, and the facilities should pay more attention to hygiene rules.

Future research may examine the dimensions of destination image and behavioral intention variables. This research was performed with local tourists visiting the Amasra destination. Future research can be conducted in different destinations and with different tourist groups and compared with the results of this study.

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