

INVESTIGATION OF WEB SITES WITH RESPECT TO THE CORPORATE IDENTITY FACTORS: AN ANALYSIS ON NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL HOTEL CHAINS IN TURKEY

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1. Corporate Identity

Corporate identity is a collection of meanings that a company uses to express itself and allows people to identify and remember the company (Topalian, 1984). This concept explains how an organization is formed and how it differentiates itself from stakeholders (Van Riel and Balmer, 1997). This concept explains how an organization is formed and how it differentiates itself from stakeholders (Van Riel and Balmer 1997).

According to Alessandri (2001), institutional identity should be conceptually and operationally defined separately in terms of measurement simplicity. Accordingly, conceptual corporate identity is a strategically planned and purposeful presentation of a company itself in order to gain a positive corporate image in the minds of the masses. Corporate identity is brought to the market in order to get the desired corporate reputation over time.

Factors that explain corporate identity will be included corporate communication, corporate design (visual identity), environment and service design, corporate structure, corporate behavior and corporate philosophy.

1.1. Corporate Communication and Methods

According to a definition, corporate communication is a management tool that is used through the harmonization of internal and external forms of communication as effectively as possible (Van Riel 1995) to create a positive base in relation to the groups to which the business is dependent. It is stated here that corporate communication emphasizes and covers the target groups to which the company is concerned. Corporate communication is also defined as a collection of messages from official and non-official sources that transmit the identity of a company to a large number of corporate stakeholders through some form of media (Gray and Balmer, 1998). According to another definition, corporate communication is

an important structure that transfers the company's aims to the corporate stakeholders of the company and provides the institutional identity (Steidl and Emery 1997: 17). As can be seen from the definitions of corporate communication, corporate communication is all communication means that show how the organization wants to be understood by its stakeholders.

Corporate communication methods explain these communication ways and are generally examined in six groups: (Alessandri and Alessandri 2004: 253). It is stated that these forms of communication should be integrated and strategically coordinated (Duncan and Everett 1993).

Most of the communication on the market is done through carefully planned and controlled promotional programs. The basic elements of the promotional mix used include advertising, personal sales, public relations, direct sales, and sales promotion (Van Riel 1995). Information about the institution is conveyed to the persons and groups through corporate advertising. This transfer of information is done through various mass media. The tools used for this purpose are; audio media such as newspapers and magazines, audiovisual advertising media such as television and radio, banners, outdoor advertising, online advertising via the Internet, advertising at the point of sale, advertising by mouth, and advertisement by mail (Tuna and Tuna 2007: 66).

Relations with the institutional public are activities related to the public, which aim at ensuring the communication of the institution with all sections of the society. Organizational rights instruments used to strengthen the image of the institution include birthday celebrations, competitions, trips, company entertainments, corporate seminars-meetings, organizing workshops, organizing workshops in institutional matters, and resolving social problems (Tuna and Tuna 2007: 69).

Sales promotion, which is one of the promotional activities in the market, consists of incentive instruments that are not sustainable and are applied to make a short-term supportive effect on corporate activities. Some methods used to improve sales; discounts on bonuses, discounts on bonuses, discounts on bonuses, discounts on bonuses, discounts on annual-weekends-seasonal discounts, campaign prices, discounts on permanent customers, points awarded on credit card exchanges, discounts or bonus coupons, the action packagings for purchasing in large quantities, the tasting of products at the central places, and the gift products supplied with the product sold (Tuna and Tuna 2007: 70).

In general, it is stated that in the fields of culture, arts, education, sports and health, corporate communication contributes positively to the sponsorship activities aimed at

providing useful services by collecting and developing projects that the state can not finance adequately (Bakan 2005: 132).

It is stated that the most effective methods for reflecting the corporate identity to the target group are direct mail, catalog retailing, tele-marketing, sales at the consumer's home and sales outside the consumer's home (Tuna and Tuna 2007: 72).

1.2. Corporate Design and Visual Identity

Corporate design is seen as the most important part of the identity of an institution and in fact represents the visual orientation of corporate identity (Melewar and Saunders 1998; Ind 1992: 150). According to Ind (1992: 151), the benefits of a well-regulated institutional design can be summarized as follows:

- Describe how the company is a company,
- Shows the company's style,
- Divide the company from competitors,
- Allows each element used to express other elements.

In this study, the visual identity will be considered in the evaluation of the corporate design. Corporate visual identity is the sum of the visual elements that enable the corporate stakeholders to distinguish the company from the others (Melewar and Karaosmanoğlu 2003). Similarly, it has been suggested that corporate identity is a component of corporate identity that reflects its qualities, prestige, and style to corporate stakeholders (Melewar and Saunders, 1999). Accordingly, corporate visual identity is a mixture of name, slogan, logo, symbol, typography and color. The visual identity of the institution is seen as a collection of signs that distinguish the institution from the others, that the audience will recognize the institution and distinguish it from the others. In other words, it is possible to say that the corporate visual identity is related to the visible elements of that institution, and that it is based on the senses of "looking and feeling" (Hatch and Schultz 2000: 13). In corporate design studies, the visual elements of the institution, namely name, slogan, typography, logo or emblem, color, product design, environmental design, building architecture, interior design and decore of offices, publications, tools, forms, advertisements, packaging and promotional products (Melewar and Karaosmanoğlu 2003). Elements of visual identity are shown as name, slogan, logo, emblem, typography and color (Melewar et al. 2005: 380).

1.3.Environment and Service Design

Institutional architecture, employees in the institution, visitors to the institution and those who are interested in the institution are very important in terms of the impression they get from that institution (Okay 1999: 158). With the institutional architecture, not only the external architect is mentioned, but the institutional architecture also includes the design of the in-house architecture and work areas. In terms of storefront and store, it is stated that branches of different institutions, which are arranged in different styles, colors and architectures, can not reflect a common identity (Okay 1999: 162). Environmental design is not limited to these, but elements such as signage, flag, clothing, representation and transport vehicles, environmental regulations and parking can also be included in this type of design. Service design is a designing activity that is carried out in order to make a service that is thought to be offered to people the easiest, best and most effective way possible. It is emphasized that service design is a human-focused approach that brings people to the forefront.

Depending on the innovation process, some of the hotel-based service designs that are applied in a work that addresses the transformation of businesses in organizational structure and service design are an ultra-all inclusive service, the service of 0-12 years free service, respect for environment, food hygiene, ISO 9000-ISO 14000 certificate, eco tourism, use of technology, social responsibility awareness, ecological product use, guest satisfaction and animation (activity) diversity. According to the author, the most used of these designs are all-inclusive, web pages with interactive content and ecological product usage respectively (Aygen Selin 2006: 203-206). Service design is the organization of planning the elements such as human, infrastructure, communication and materials to enhance and improve the quality of a service, service provider and customer relations, customer satisfaction (<http://blog.tkaraca.com>).

1.4.Corporate Behavior

Corporate behavior is the sum of organizational actions that result in institutional attitudes that can be planned in the same line as the corporate culture or spontaneously appear (Melewar 2003: 211). In the literature, corporate behavior is seen as an extension of corporate identity. Lambert (1989) defines corporate behavior as all manifestations that make one organization different. Northart (1980) and Ludlow (1997) view corporate behavior as one of the indispensable parts of corporate identity. In fact, Ludlow (1997: 88) states that corporate behavior, particularly during times of crisis, affects the company's stakeholders' stance as

strongly as visual identity. Again, Olins (1989) notes that institutional behavior is as important as other elements in establishing corporate identity. As a result, behavior is recognized as an important element of corporate identity.

It is a well-known fact that the employees of the corporation, its customers and their collective behavior are identified in senior management, and these behaviors directly affect the success of the businesses. Nowadays, consumers are also evaluating the performance of the social aspects of the businesses when they make purchasing decisions (Balmer and Gray 1999: 173).

1.5. Corporate Structure

Corporate structure includes brand structure and organizational structure, which are important elements of corporate identity.

Melewar and Saunders (1998) argue that organizational structure is part of the institutional framework within the framework of communication and reporting responsibilities. Olins (1989) interprets that institutions are one of the most important reasons for single, fractional, or revolving identity choices stemming from the organizational structures of companies. According to Laforet and Saunders (1999), the influence of an organizational structure on the brand structure plays an important role for corporate identity. For example; an enterprise with a very highly centralized structure usually controls all functions from the center. For this reason, the identity of the parent company and its distributors can be almost the same (Melewar and Saunders, 1998).

Olins (1989) referred to three forms of monolithic, approved, and branded in establishing corporate identity. In the monolithic structure, the institution uses a name and a visual style. In this case, the corporate identity of the company appears as a brand to consumers. In the approved structure, the corporate identity is used with the names of the franchisors who can divide them into visual stickers. In a branded structure, the institution has products with different brand names and images. For example, even though a corporation in a monolithic structure, even a business with a large number of branches, uses a single name and visual style, it is thought that people will have the same or similar perception in their minds.

1.6. Corporate Philosophy

Corporate philosophy, the main element of the identity of the institution, is a basic idea about an institution itself. The main element of the corporate philosophy is the vision of the institution. The vision of the institution is a concrete idea that will clarify the purpose of

the institution and the goal of the institution to its employees and the whole public. Making the corporate philosophy in writing while establishing the institution's identity makes it easier for the employees of the enterprise and play an important role in terms of institutional understanding in relation to external targets mass (Okay, 1999: 117-120).

Corporate philosophy refers to the principles that make a corporation work and dominate the corporation. In this context, the vision, mission, values and principles that an institution has determined for itself constitute the philosophy of that institution. Corporate philosophy is considered to be peculiar to the institution and it is suggested that corporate philosophy is the cornerstone of corporate identity formation (Abratt, 1989: 63-76)

2. Purpose and Method of the Research

Placing corporate identity items on web sites is an important tool for increasing the recognition of the institution and for transmitting the information about the institution to the target masses. The form of self-identification of the institution is embodied through the website and contributes to the formation of the photographs in the minds (Peltekoğlu, 2007: 311). Web sites provide a significant contribution in terms of introducing themselves, communicating with target groups whenever they want, creating their identity, and having a positive image as a result.

In this research, it is aimed to determine the corporate identity items of the web sites of local and foreign chain hotels operating in Turkey by using content analysis method to reveal the current situation and to develop suggestions. Within this scope, web sites of hotel companies which are identified by Turkey Hoteliers Association (TUROB) and operating in Turkey will be examined through content analysis of 60 chain hotels, 44 of which are local and 16 of which are foreign. Content analysis is a technique of gathering data disclosed in the form of text or content and code it into different categories (Guthrie et al., 2004). The process that is basically done in content analysis is to put together similar data within the framework of certain concepts and interpret them in a way that the reader can understand (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013: 259). In this qualitatively designed research, six main themes were identified, namely visual identity, environment and service design, corporate communications, corporate philosophy, corporate structure and corporate behavior as a result of the literature search. Each main theme has sub-theme. An evaluation form was used for each website visited and the themes under each category in the evaluation form were rated as done (1) and not (0).

3. Finding of the Research and Conclusions

Within the scope of the research, web sites of selected chain hotels were analyzed within the framework of six main themes that constitute the corporate identity. These items are visual identity, environment and service design, corporate philosophy, corporate communication, corporate behavior and corporate structure. The websites examined show the importance given to the corporate identity by the chain hotels that indicate whether or not there are indications or tools belonging to this item, and indicate that these items are pre-arranged.

Within the scope of the research, 35 chain / group hotel (14 foreign and 21 local chain) operations which have provided information on corporate identity applications through their official web sites were examined.

The results of the research are presented in the table below.

		FOREIGN CHAIN n:14				LOCAL CHAIN n:21			
		SUB THEME		CATEGORY (%)	CATEGORY (mean)	SUB THEME		CATEGORY (%)	CATEGORY (mean)
VISUAL IDENTITY	Logo and emblem	14	100,0%	71,4%	10	20	95,2%	61,9%	13
	Institution color	9	64,3%			9	42,9%		
	Corporate writing style	13	92,9%			21	100,0%		
	Slogan	4	28,6%			0	0,0%		
ENVIRONMENT AND SERVICE DESIGN	Interior and exterior architectural app	14	100,0%	100,0%	14	21	100,0%	100,0%	21
	Product and service photos	14	100,0%			21	100,0%		
	Knowledge of service diversity	14	100,0%			21	100,0%		
CORPORATE COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES AND ITEMS	Social responsibility campaigns	11	78,6%	78,5%	11	6	28,6%	66,6%	14
	sponsorship	4	28,6%			5	23,8%		
	marketing	14	100,0%			18	85,7%		
	promotional ad	9	64,3%			8	38,1%		
	corporate promotional videos	11	78,6%			14	66,7%		
	press releases	10	71,4%			5	23,8%		
	institutional publications	5	35,7%			5	23,8%		
	announcements	13	92,9%			14	66,7%		
	media archive	8	57,1%			5	23,8%		
	e-mail	14	100,0%			21	100,0%		
	events	14	100,0%			21	100,0%		
	social media	14	100,0%			21	100,0%		
	address	14	100,0%			21	100,0%		
	phone	14	100,0%			21	100,0%		
web site	14	100,0%	21	100,0%					
bidirectional communication	13	92,9%	15	71,4%					
CORPORATE PHILOSOPHY	corporate history	13	92,9%	71,4%	10	13	61,9%	42,8%	9
	basic values	6	42,9%			6	28,6%		
	vision	8	57,1%			7	33,3%		
	mission	6	42,9%			8	38,1%		
	working places	14	100,0%			13	61,9%		
	manager	13	92,9%			9	42,9%		
CORPORATE STRUCTURE	number of hotels	14	100,0%	71,4%	10	21	100,0%	57,1%	12
	number of brand	8	57,1%			7	33,3%		
	type of strategic cooperation	7	50,0%			7	33,3%		
CORPORATE BEHAVIOR	economic inform	6	42,9%	57,1%	8	2	9,5%	23,8%	5
	social inform	12	85,7%			5	23,8%		
	political inform	0	0,0%			0	0,0%		
	quality inform	10	71,4%			14	66,7%		
	employee inform	12	85,7%			5	23,8%		
	ethic values	9	64,3%			4	19,0%		

Both the foreign and local chains web sites are mostly given the logo and corporate writing style in the visual identity category. Both the foreign and local chains examined in the scope of the research included all the factors on environment and service design in their web sites. Both foreign and local chains, they have the most included marketing, events and two-

way communication applications, and also mail, address, telephone and social media information as the corporate communication activities in their web sites. The websites of foreign chains have the most corporate history, working areas and manager knowledge in the category of corporate philosophy. And also the website of the domestic chains has the most corporate history, the knowledge of the working areas in the corporate philosophy category. In both groups, the number of hotels is reached with full access, and the number of brands and strategic cooperation type are presented more in the websites of foreign chains than local chains. In the corporate behavior category, while the websites of foreign chains give the most information in the societal, personnel and quality fields, local chains give information especially in the field of quality.

The data obtained in this study show how much the chains in Turkey attaches importance to the corporate identity and how the elements that make up the corporate identity are located on their website. The all chain hotels actively use web sites to reflect their corporate identity. So, it is possible to say that web sites adopted for reflecting corporate identity by the chain hotels. However, in all categories, the foreign chain hotels in the study provide more information than the local chain hotels.

In this study, only the official websites of local and foreign hotel chains in Turkey were examined. Almost all the chains in the survey seem to use social media. Corporate identity factors can be analyzed in terms of social media.

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