

**VISUAL SENSE OF THE CITIES AND THE IMPACT ON TOURISM:  
CASE OF IZMIR**

**Özgür SARIBAŞ, M.Sc.**

Izmir Kâtip Çelebi University

Faculty of Tourism

E-Mail: ozgur.saribas@ikc.edu.tr

**Simge KÖMÜRÇÜ, Ph.D.**

Izmir Kâtip Çelebi University

Faculty of Tourism

E-Mail: simge.komurcu@ikc.edu.tr

**Mehmet Emre GÜLER, Ph.D.**

Izmir Kâtip Çelebi University

Faculty of Tourism

E-Mail: memre.guler@ikc.edu.tr

**—Abstract —**

The needs and expectations of customers are changing day by day in tourism industry. As a result of the increased numbers of the international tourist and tourism activities in recent years, countries and cities have started to compete fiercely. Many different methods are being developed to compete under these conditions. According to this study, identifying the five senses of the cities and to use as a competitive factor in tourism are the important methods.

Every cities carry their own senses as “Sights (Visual), Sounds (Auditory), Touch (Tactile), Smells (Olfactory), Tastes (Gustatory).” All these factors have an impact on their perceptions created by the cities. In this case, it is important for tourism development of cities. The purpose of this study is to identify visual sense of the cities and provide an impact on the tourism development of this perception. To quantify this phenomenon, image based research technique was used in this

study which covered qualitative data collection techniques in Izmir. As a conclusion of this paper, visual sense of Izmir has been identified and using of the determining factors have been examined in terms of tourism.

**Keywords:** Visual Image, Tourism, Destinations, Izmir

**JEL Classification:** L83, Z32

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Tourists travel to many different places, communicate with people from various cultural backgrounds (Tussyadiah and Fesenmaier, 2009), see many different structures, get different feelings, try different flavors, hear different sounds and bring back travel memories. There are many factors affecting the travel memory as it mentioned. The motivation of this study is based on sight of the cities. The sensory experiences during travel help to take shape of places in people's mind and embody journeys. These experiences take place in people's lives. After traveling, there would be an idea in travelers' mind and then it turns into actions (McCabe and Foster, 2006).

The general opinion of the tourist experiences are formed socially and culturally (Tussyadiah and Fesenmaier, 2009). There are also other opinions and several studies in the literature about tourist experience forms. No matter how the tourist experience formed or identified, there are things that appeal to the human senses. There is always something affecting whether good or bad.

Senses collect data and provide knowledge and they turn to attitudes, behaviors and memories. They are all related to core of human body. Sensory experiences make mediates the relationship between place and meaning. Understanding this process can create a significant tourist experience design (Kim and Fesenmaier, 2015). It's an important that determining senses of the cities are help to understand impact on tourism. In this context, purpose of this study is to determine visual sense of the Izmir and to understand the impact on tourism development of the city.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

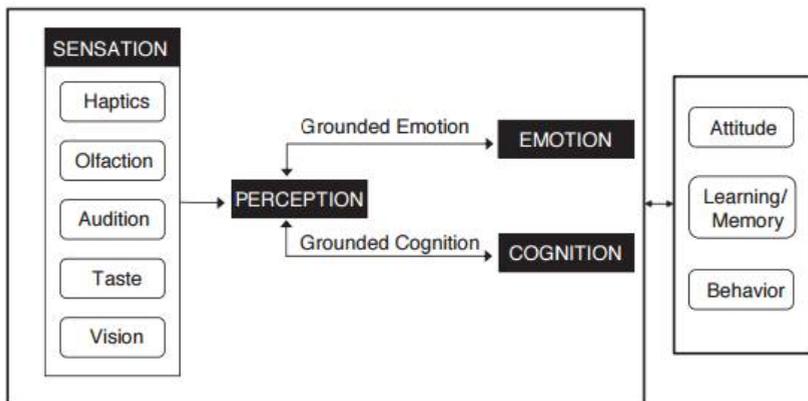
### 2.1. “Senses”, As an Impact on Tourism

People respond to things around themselves which are geographical structure, historical sites, society and the things they see, touch, smell, feel and taste. These responses are transformed into stories, experiences and memories. Become exceptional spirit, unique to itself (Binder, 2008). The sensory idea of people about a city creates importance on and a special sense of place. This can create important advantage for the cities (McClellan, 2008; 2), also give a message to the people who want to live the experience of travel.

The tourist experiences are physical and multi sensual. Tourism providers need to take an attention to the sensual concept as a promotional message. Pan and Ryan (2009) have identified the relations between senses and destinations awareness. They have indicated that senses and destinations are not separate from each other and they are significantly interrelated. Senses as a message, are detected and transmitted in different ways. And this kind of message allows us to define a destination better (Pan and Ryan, 2009).

As an associated with this work, research of Krishna (2011) focused on Sensory marketing.

Figure-1: A conceptual framework of sensory marketing.



As it is seen from the Figure 1, senses provide feedback as an attitude, memory and behavior to the receiver. The study has indicated that sensory marketing is a

function of perspective of sensation attitude to range of marketing among client behavior, learning or choice. According to the Krishna (2010:2), sensory marketing is “*the marketing that engages the consumers’ senses and affects their perception, judgment and behavior.*” Preservation of the sensory experiences is particularly important to the management of a city or destination according to the economic demands (Binder, 2008). From this perspective, defining a destination senses and enduring the perception of customers can provide memorability and recognition of destination.

## **2.2. Sights (Visual), Sounds (Auditory), Touch (Tactile), Smells (Olfactory), Tastes (Gustatory), As a Five Senses of the Cities**

In recent years, senses are getting important for the marketing strategies. Marketers have put more importance on senses to get more advantage ([www.thesis.topco-global.com](http://www.thesis.topco-global.com); 09.04.2016). The senses undoubtedly have an influence on the behavior of people (Morrin and Ratneshwar, 2000). Sensory advertisement is also becoming more and more important for the recent years in marketing studies. This type of advertisements can increase the searching motivation and purchasing request as the intention of the consumers (Yun and Yazdanifard, 2013). Relationship and trustiness between retailers (tourism marketers) and consumers (tourists) can be strengthened with special sensory image (Davies et al., 2003). This also relates to the branding and the presentation of the cities.

Mentioned in this study as senses are Sights (Visual), Sounds (Auditory), Touch (Tactile), Smells (Olfactory) and Tastes (Gustatory). All of them are important for memorability of the cities. There are many researches about using senses while doing marketing planning. Sensible promotion becomes very important in terms of presentation and marketing. Senses are used for the advertising, promotion and marketing of the product or used for collecting the interest and retention in mind. For example, the feeling of smell is directly linked to the limbic system which provides persistence in memory (Davies et al., 2003). Therefore, senses are associated with the behavior of customers and the assessment process that displays in the minds of customers towards the retail sale (Davies et al., 2003).

The smell of flowers may bring to mind a special brand of body lotion and also a romantic moment. This is also applied in different senses, too. Visuals, tastes,

sounds or feelings of the touches may remind a special brand, a romantic moment or a memory. It's also the same for the cities as a product. The scent of a native flowers of city, beautiful or disturbing odor of the city may remind location to the person, for instance a romantic moment, pleasant time, beautiful memories or vice versa (Yun and Yazdanifard, 2013). In this way, memory of senses indicates incomparable and separate memory system (Zucco, 2013).

Every city, region or destination has their own characteristics of senses. These senses are the thing that exists by itself. When tourists go holidays in rural areas, it is the sound or silence of nature that helps activate aural senses (Pan and Ryan, 2009). According to Bauman (1993) smells are to be disciplined. It means that not only allowed appearing on their own attempt but also in places of their preference (Bauman, 1993).

There are some studies about senses. However, as mentioned above, they are mostly related to the process of marketing. There are not many studies about the senses of the cities as sights (visual), sounds (auditory), touch (tactile), smells (olfactory) and tastes (gustatory). On the other hand, some examples may be encountered in the Internet browsing as the 5 senses of Marrakech in Morocco. According to the experience of traveler ([www.thetravelista.net](http://www.thetravelista.net); 10.04.2016):

- Marrakech Sights: *“The sights of Marrakech are rich, colorful and forever changing. Another sight of Marrakech is the signature Majorelle Blue, which is the trademark color of French artist Jacques Majorelle. The Jardin Majorelle is full of the stuff and you can find hints of the color all over the city (it also makes for a fabulous nail polish color).”*
- Marrakech Sounds: *“The sounds of Marrakech are much like many other bustling cities. Beeping cars from angry drivers mixed with the odd ‘moo’ of a cow in transit or the trotting of hooves of a horse and cart. The hectic sounds of the street contrasted with the babbling fountains and soothing spa music from within my luxurious hotels. Of course, Marrakech sounds can’t be listed without mentioning the famous call to prayer, which echoes around the city from the towering minarets five times a day.”*
- Marrakech Touch: *“When you’re busy getting lost in the souks, you will want to reach out and touch everything you see. Moroccan slippers, soft fabrics, handmade souvenirs and spices are some of the most common wares you can find. Another touch I remember is when a local lady grabbed my hand in the*

*Jemaa el-Fna square and began penning my hand with a henna paste. The best touch of the trip was a 2 hour 'four-hand' massage I had at the Es Saadi Spa."*

- Marrakech Smells: *"Orange Blossom is the most heavenly and exotic fragrance and is the signature scent of Marrakech. Another smell I remember is the crystalized menthol which was sold in the souks."*
- Marrakech Tastes: *"I experienced exquisite Moroccan fine dining and twist on the classic tagine. We were also spoilt at the hotel with Macaroons and fresh French pastries which were a very memorable taste. As well as the fancy stuff, I also loved digging in to local street food and shabby Moroccan restaurants off the beaten tourist trail."*

The other examples from the different cities are listed below:

- The sound of the Corfu, Greece: You can hear the sound of the crash of the waves. While walking around the city, you'll hear the sound of animals (sheep, donkeys, dogs, cats). As well as the nature of the sensor, you can also hear sound of philharmonics in the streets; the city has a rich musical heritage ([www.thetravelword.com](http://www.thetravelword.com); 10.04.2016).
- The smell of the Brugge, Belgium: Walking along an herb garden and feel the aroma of freshly roasted coffee or brewed beer ([www.bezoekers.brugge.be](http://www.bezoekers.brugge.be); 10.04.2016).
- Tactile of the London, England: Touching the turnstile for subway or the seat of a taxi; Times as a newspaper in your hand. Your shoes will be on the streets of Greenwich. All this things become touch of London ([www.thoughtcatalog.com](http://www.thoughtcatalog.com); 10.04.2016).
- The sound, sight, touch and smell of the Bangkok, Thailand: The sound of the city is not only car horns but also stylish sound of the Thai bells. And also, sight (brilliant colors); touch (pleasurable sensation of the cold paving under your bare feet) and smell (sweet fragrance of the lotus flowers) is the other senses for the city that can be described ([www.manfrottoimaginemore.com](http://www.manfrottoimaginemore.com); 10.04.2016).
- The taste of the Lima, Peru: Peru located on the coast of the pacific, so the county has one of the richest sea cousins in the world. Lima has numerous seafood dishes and ceviche is their famous dish, marinated raw fish or seafood and typically garnished and served as an appetizer, it's simple but

tasty and to be enjoyed with a glass of award-winning pisco sour, made from distilled grapes ([www.thetravelword.com](http://www.thetravelword.com); 10.04.2016).

- The vision of the Krakow, Poland: While doing your walking in the city, you will past narrow streets, see the medieval ruins and imagine the kings and aristocracy. The mosaic of the Royal Cathedral and mysterious inscriptions on the Jewish tombstones will be attached to your eye. Your around will be surrounded by communist structures and you will inevitably begin to imagine the lives of the workers in the steel factory which is presented as a "gift" to the city. After all this, you will feel fantastic atmosphere. Seeing such this city and get fantastic experience gives new meaning to the words "*the eyes are windows to the soul*" ([www.thetravelword.com](http://www.thetravelword.com); 10.04.2016).

As it is seen from charming words while described the cities, senses can get in people's memories. Senses have key importance for identification and recognition of the cities. They are also important to naming the mental things and clarify presence. All of them show the importance of naming the senses of the cities. So the cities can get a meaning and will have more than just places.

### **3. METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS**

Qualitative data collection techniques have been used in this study which covered image-based research techniques. "Google images" about Izmir are used as a data collection technique. According to Albers and James (1988), there are two methods used in image-based research. These are semiotics and content analysis. Content analysis is used in this study and 620 Google images related to the Izmir have been examined. Thus, we have tried to determine the most frequently used images of Izmir. The data of this study is collected from the Google Search Engine by typing the word "IZMIR". The results of the analysis are listed in Table 1 below:

As shown in Table 1, 8 dimensions have been created after the Google image analysis. These are "Nature, Hotels, Eating and Drinking, District/County/Village, Educational Institutions, Symbols/Cultural Heritage, Transportation and Shopping/Commerce/Sport." The most frequently encountered image has been Gulf of Izmir. 151 images of the Gulf of Izmir are located in 620 Google images of Izmir. The "Clock Tower" is the second most common image (120). Panoramic

day (62) and night (57) images are the third and fourth most common Google images in respectively.

By the dimension of Hotels, Wyndham Grand Izmir Hotel is seemed to be more popular images in Google than the other hotels in Izmir. Hilton Izmir is the second hotel in this context.

When examined images on eating and drinking, "Lokma" (21) has been shown to taken the most common images. Also "Kumru", "Mussel" and "Izmir Meatballs" are located in the Google Images of Izmir.

The Table 1 shows us the most common places in Google images of Izmir as a district, town or village. As it is seen from the Table 1, "Alsancak" (36) is the most popular places in Google images of Izmir. "Kordon", "Konak" and "Gündoğdu Square" are the other popular regions in Google Images of Izmir in respectively.

It has been found that 3 educational institutions are located in Google images of Izmir. These are Dokuz Eylül University, İzmir University of Economics and American Collegiate Institute.

Table-1: Google image analysis

Nature	F	Hotels	F	Eating and drinking	F	District / County / Village	F	Educational institutions	F	Symbols / Cultural Heritage	F	Transportation	F	Shopping / Commerce / Sport	F
Gulf of Izmir	151	Wyndham	6	Lokma*	21	Alsancak	36	Dokuz Eylül University	1	Clock tower	120	Ferry / Jetty	20	Izmir Fair	3
Panoramic Sunlight	62	Hilton Izmir	3	Kumru†	3	Kordon	24	Izmir University of Economics	1	Ephesus	29	Map	18	Folkart Towers	3
Panoramic Moonlight	57	Ephesus Princess	2	Izmir Meatball	2	Gündoğdu Square	18	American Collegiate Institute	1	Elevator	15	Port	10	Forum Bornova	3
Seaside / Beach	16	Mövenpick	1	Mussel	1	Konak	18			Agora	13	Cruise	10	Mistral Izmir	2
Seagull / Pigeons	13	Hilton Garden Inn	1			Cumhuriyet Square	8			Old images of Izmir	11	Airport	3	Hippodrome	2
Flamingo	1	Kaya Thermal	1			Urla	5			Teleferik	4	Metro	2	German Consulate	1
						Alaçatı	4			Evil eye	3	Alsancak Station	1	Stock Exchange Building	1
						Kemeraltı	4			Atatürk Relief	3			Ataturk Stadium	1
						Güzelyalı	3			Kadifekale	3				
						Sığacak	3			Hisar Mosque	1				
						Şirince	3			Konak Mosque	1				
						Foça	3			Efeler	1				
						Karaburun	2								
						Bergama	2								
						Karşıyaka	2								
						Seferihisar	2								
						Bornova	1								
						Sasalı/Izmir Bird Paradise	1								
						Güzelbahçe	1								

\* Lokma is a donut-like sweet pastry

† Kumru is a kind of sandwich which ingredients are cheese, tomatoes, fresh pepper into special sandwich bread

As we have examine the symbols and the cultural heritage of Izmir from the images, the clock tower as a symbol of Izmir is seen as the most popular images (120) in the Google images of Izmir. Although Ephesus is one of the UNESCO World Heritage Site, it has reached only 29 results in Google Images of Izmir. “Elevator”, “Agora”, “Teleferik”, “Evil Eye”, “Atatürk Relief”, “Kadifekale”, “Hisar Mosque” “Konak Mosque” and “Efeler” are the other images that encountered.

The most popular Google image of Izmir about transportation is Steamboats. Map of Izmir, Port, Cruise, Airport, Metro and Alsancak Station are also located among google images of Izmir.

Fairground, Folkart Towers, Forum Bornova, Mistral Izmir, Hippodrome, German Consulate, Stock Exchange Building and Ataturk Stadium are the other located Google images which are related to the Shopping, Commerce and Sport section of the Table 1.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Tourism is an area that is bound to change and development. It seems that doomed to disappear who do not respond to this change. These changes not only take places just some of the tourist destinations, but also they take places in the mind of tourists. This is a kind of a placement in mind. The things that you see, hear, touch or taste, even those you smell can leave lasting effects on person. All of them place somewhere in memory. This has been called the senses of the places.

Cities, regions or destinations have their own characteristics of senses. These are getting important for the destination marketing process and giving specific messages to the people who want to visit those destinations. Creating senses for the destinations are taking into consideration in the marketing studies in recent years. With internet technology, tourist can easily reach the information about destinations and it is the first step for people to make it in Google. To have in tourists' mind in a positive way, all the resources of cities are shown as images.

There are multiple ways and marketing strategies to ensure this formation. One of the most effective ways of creating this formation is to use the internet. Google is one of the largest and most comprehensive search engine and Google Images are very important for the persistence of the human mind. For these reasons, Google Images of Izmir have been analyzed in this study.

In this research, it is shown that, most common images of Izmir is natural beauties of city (%39), which is well promoted via internet. It is surprising that, eating and dining pictures are not too much on images. As being one of alternative tourism type, Gastronomy is important for the countries which have rich cuisine. Because of the geographical location of Izmir, which has Mediterranean climate, Izmir can use its own healthy cuisine better. Also accommodation facilities are very important for tourists. Although Izmir has more than 75000 bed capacity, there are just few pictures of the hotels. On the other hand, Izmir is known and promoted as "City of Congress and Fairs". The oldest and well known fair of Turkey, Izmir

International Fair which is 85 years old, located in the Izmir city but there are only 3 related pictures about fair of Izmir out of 620 pictures. Izmir needs to make better marketing about MICE tourism, which can help cities not to suffer from seasonality, as Izmir face with. Logos are also important visual for the cities for memorability. Although logos are a critical aspect of destination marketing, it is surprising that the logo of the Izmir has not seen in any visual of the city. City promotion organizations, both state and sector representatives, should take into account the important visuals of cities. Being up to date and promote with better visuals will help cities to remain competitive.

In this study, only images were examined due to resource and time constraints. We also analyzed only Google Images because some images from social media tools as Instagram, Tripadvisor etc. were listed in Google searching engine. On the other hand, images and their comments in the social media tools analyze will be suggested for further researches. Further steps on the feelings can be examined for further researches for the other cities too. Additionally, other senses as Sounds (Auditory), Touch (Tactile), Smells (Olfactory) and Tastes (Gustatory) can be analyzed for Izmir City. In Turkey, there are many other popular destinations like Izmir. For those, similar analysis can be taken into consideration and compared cities using these senses. These senses can also be used for cities strategic planning, maybe for making SWOT analysis, for promoting the cities and as a current marketing approach.

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