



Images of Turkish Universities: A Study on University Print Advertisements

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Abstract

Turkish universities are recently under a heavy pressure of competition due to rapid increase in the number of both state and foundation universities. This competition can be traced through the print advertisements of the universities in which they try to build a positive image and reflect their distinguishing characteristics to attract students. These advertisements are supposed to comply with their institutional image; however, especially new foundation universities are far from being successful in building a strong image. This study examines the print advertisements of Turkish universities published in 2010 and 2011; a total of 1063 advertisements (397 original, 666 repeated) in 6 major Turkish newspapers were analyzed for their both quantitative and qualitative aspects. It is found that while old and reputable established universities rarely advertise, new foundation universities visually emphasize their campus facilities and infrastructure.

Keywords

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Introduction

History of Turkish universities goes back to the 18th century when Ottoman Empire rigorously needed reforms to compete with European powers. Imperial School of Naval Engineering was opened in 1773 as the first higher education institution in European standards. This military school is the origin of today's Istanbul Technical University and Turkish Naval Academy. *Medreses* (religious education institutions) also went through temperate modernization processes in late 19th century and in the year 1900 several of them were re-organized as *Dar-ül-Fünun* which is the basis of today's Istanbul University. In the early years of modern Turkish Republic, Istanbul University was re-organized as the first 'university' in 1933, just after a major university reform mainly based on Swiss scholar Albert Malche's report. This report envisaged a modern university structure similar to continental European Humboldtian model (Tekeli, 2003; Yağcı, 2010). This report was conveniently put into action with the support of European professors mostly exiled from Nazi Germany (Hirsch, 2002; Timur, 2000; Namal, 2012).

Higher education system in Turkey has witnessed substantial changes since 1981. Until then, the universities were relatively more autonomous under the law No: 1750. However, this law had

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been criticized from several aspects and some scholars believed that because of this legal framework the universities had become monotonous and bureaucratically structured. Following the Military Coup of 12 September 1980, Turkish universities had faced a strong challenge to restructure their status. The new law No: 2547 had generated far-reaching impacts on Turkish higher education. Autonomy had been limited and academic administrators such as rectors and deans were to be appointed rather than being elected. Additionally, a number of other higher education institutions which were previously labeled as 'academy' had also been recognized as 'university'. One of the most radical changes to the system were introduced two years later in 1983 through an amendment to the law and later to the Constitution; state monopoly had been abolished and foundations were also allowed to open universities.

The first 'foundation' university *Bilkent* was opened in 1984³, yet it was the only foundation university for the following nine years. After 1993 number of foundation universities increased rapidly and by the end of the year 2000 and 20 new foundation universities were then approved to be opened by the Higher Education Council (YÖK). Furthermore, last decade had witnessed a huge increase in the number of foundation universities and today there are 65 foundation universities. 'State' universities have also undergone a rapid increase in last two decades. When the new law was passed in 1981, the number of the state universities was only 19. Until the year 2000 this number had increased to 53 and today there are 103 state universities in total. Altogether, today the Turkish higher education system composes of 188 higher education bodies⁴. Figure 1 shows the sharp increase in the number of universities, particularly after 2006. Önder and Kasapoğlu-Önder (2011) report three waves of establishing state universities before 2006: first between 1973 and 1975 (9 universities); second in 1982 (8 universities) and third in 1992 (24 universities). Despite to this rapid increase in the number of universities, higher education schooling ratio remained nevertheless pretty low. Net higher education schooling ratio⁵ of Turkey in 2011 is 33% (TÜİK, 2012; MEB, 2012) which is quite low when compared to developed countries. On the other hand, between the years 2015 and 2025, it is estimated that Turkey is going to have the highest increasing enrollment rates among OECD counties (Vincent-Lacrin, 2008). All these factors contributed to the creation of a very competitive higher education market in Turkey particularly for the newly founded young universities. The competition among these universities resulted in heavy advertisement campaigns during the enrollment periods. Print advertisements are the biggest component of these campaigns; recently on-line advertisements are also gaining importance. Except some forms of advertorials, television advertising is not used in these campaigns. Although Law of Private Educational Institutions (No: 5580) prohibits television advertising, it is not clear if this ruling encompasses state and foundation universities. However, universities practically do not use television for their advertisement campaigns. The television advertisement of *Middle East Technical University* (METU) in July 2011 is the only example until now and it has created a strong controversy both from Higher Education Council and other state universities.

³ Decision for the establishment of *Bilkent* was taken in 1984 (this year is assumed as the foundation year of *Bilkent*); it started to accept students in 1986 and it gained its full legal status as late as 1992. "Foundation universities" are usually known as "private universities" by the general public.

⁴ 103 state universities, 65 foundation universities, 7 foundation vocational schools and 13 other higher education institutions (including universities in Northern Cyprus).

⁵ The net schooling ratio is obtained by dividing the number of students in the theoretical age group in the relevant type of education by the total population in the theoretical age group for that type of education. TÜİK's theoretical ages for higher education: 17-21 completed years.

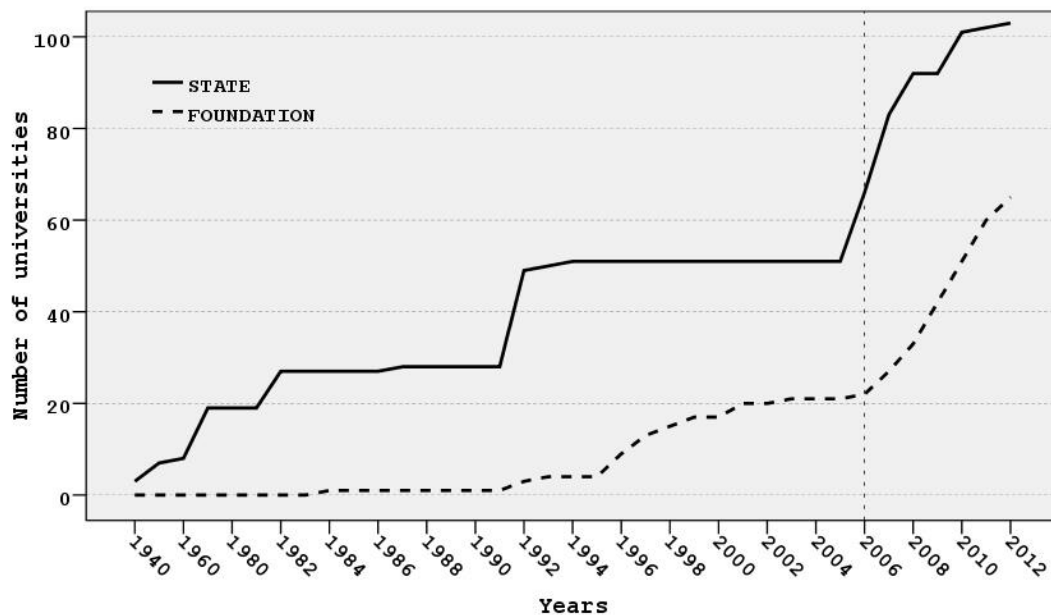


Figure 1: Increase in the number of Turkish universities by years
(cf. Önder, & Kasapoğlu-Önder, 2011, p. 469).

University Image

Recently, organizations' visual identity has been taken seriously both in scholar and managerial circles. Visual identity is believed to contribute to overall identity of the organization. Identity of an organization is a cumulative sum of many parameters such as customers' perceptions, organizational culture and history, employees' perceptions, organizational reputation, organization's media coverage etc. While management and marketing literature usually prefers the term 'corporate identity', the identity of organizations has long been a top issue in organization studies. Many factors such as globalization, increased competition, emerging social and ethical issues, all contributed to the increased need of strategic management of corporate identity (Allori, & Garzone, 2010). Fombrun (1996) points out the historical element in corporate identity as it derives from a company's experiences since its founding. He additionally emphasizes corporate identity's contribution to corporate reputation through corporate's image on customer, community, investor and employee (1996). Visual identity, as an important part of corporate's overall identity, must be included in the management of effective corporate identity (Belasen, 2008). Successful visual identity building is closely related to an effective organizational/corporate image management. Therefore, organizational/corporate image becomes a key managerial issue in organizational/corporate communication. On the other hand, although universities are quite different types of organizations than business organizations, they inevitably find themselves as image caring organization in a severe competitive environment. As Landrum, Turrisi, & Harless state, universities need to assess their images for the same reasons why it is important for business corporations (1998, p. 66). This need of universities is usually debated through a dichotomic discourse in academia. Marketization and academization are the two conflicting poles of ideas when university image is discussed by academia. However, Ek, Ideland, Jönsson and Malmberg (2011) argue if these positions are really opposites of each other. They propose that marketization and academization are the two sides of the same coin, in many cases they are inevitably interrelated with each other. Wasmer and Bruner II (2000) predict that universities with smaller size, funded privately and ambitious for innovation are more likely to be market oriented. They further explain that organizational innovation culture is very important for a successful marketing policy which requires openness in organizational communication. Masiki (2011) advances more on the role of organizational culture in academic institutions and emphasizes that academic visual identity is significantly different from corporate visual identity. Masiki (2011)

maintains that academic visual identity is closely associated with symbolic leadership especially in higher education institutions (p. 102).

As Kotler and Fox (1995) put, an institution's present image is strongly related to its past and it cannot be changed quickly; a strong and favorable image becomes possible if the organization performs well and generates real satisfaction. However, a strong and favorable image can be built, developed and maintained through well-planned marketing communication strategies. The main purpose of such image development strategies is to attract new customers. The organizational/corporate image has also strong influence on customers' satisfaction and loyalty. This positive influence of image has been extensively studied by many researchers however relatively less research has been conducted on service-oriented organizations such as universities (Sung, & Yang, 2008). In one of such exceptional studies, Brown and Mazzarol (2009) have shown that student loyalty is predicted by student satisfaction, which is in turn predicted by the perceived image of the hosting higher education institution. Helgesen and Nettet (2007) assert that image of university and image of study program are distinct concepts. Image of study program is indirectly related to student loyalty via image of university while student satisfaction and image of university are directly related to student loyalty. They suggest that image, satisfaction and loyalty are equally important to managers for both student attraction and student retention efforts. In a later study, Helgesen (2008) emphasized that retaining matriculated students equally as important as attracting and enrolling new students; and for this student loyalty is very important as it is related to university image and reputation. Nevertheless, university image has recently been a key issue and current all-encompassing severe competition has shaped 'image caring' university administrations in many developed countries. Today, most of the university administrators are aware of the necessity of sound marketing policies. McGrath (2002) reports US college and university administrators highly agree that marketing efforts are now "critically important" to their institutions' future. Latest entrance of many non-university competitors in the form of industry and non-university educators into the higher education market has also intensified the competition (Friga, Bettis, & Sullivan, 2003). As a developing country, Turkey is no exception to this trend especially after the swift increase in the number of universities. Also Turkish universities have gradually started planned marketing efforts for recruiting more and better students.

Kazoleas, Kim and Moffit (2001) identify seven components of university image: overall image; program image; teaching and research emphasis; quality of education; environmental factors, financial reasons and sports programs. Likewise, Arpan, Raney and Zivnuska (2003) admit similar factors and suggest that the role of these components may differ according to different publics. By using a structural equation modeling (SEM) technique, Luque-Martínez and Barrio-García (2009) propose a model of image formation which consists of 6 main dimensions directly affecting the image and 40 sub-dimensions indirectly affecting it (11 teaching, 6 research, 3 administration, 4 installations and infrastructure, 8 services to the community and 8 services to society). On the other hand, Duarte, Alves and Raposo (2010) argue that overall university image is related to the education as well as to non-education issues such as academic life and facilities. They report that social life atmosphere and employment opportunities are the most important predictors of university image formation (Duarte, Alves, & Raposo 2010, p. 32). We may expect similar results for Turkish universities regarding that their advertisements mostly promote better future carrier, high academic standards and modern campus facilities.

University identity, reputation and image issues have also appealed Turkish researchers. Çetin (2003) investigated the university administrators' views on marketing practices and image building effort in two state and two foundation universities in Turkey. This study provides a comprehensive list of positive and negative contributors of university image as stated by university administrators. Cerit (2006) explained how students' perception on organizational image of a state university develops through academic environment, physical and social environment, and social perception. In his extensive research Polat (2011a) investigated the relationship between

organizational image and gender, faculty and study shifts of students in a state university. Factor analysis yielded 7 factors to be related to overall university image: general outlook and physical infrastructure image; social context image; quality image; entertainment image; program image; sports image; food-accommodation image.

There are also other related studies on university image issues by Turkish scholars. For instance, Erkmen and Çerik's (2007) study found a significant relationship between organizational commitment and organizational image for a large scale state university. İcil (2008) explored the positive relationship between institutional reputation and communication success in a state university. In a later research Polat (2011b) explored the relationship between university image and academic achievement of students. This study found a moderate positive relationship between students' perceived organizational image and their academic achievement; the more students perceive the organizational image of their university the higher their academic achievement was.

University image can be studied in a multiple of ways and levels. Tight (2007) showed that most of the higher education research in and outside North America is based on institutional and national levels of analysis (pp. 242-243); while these researches mostly utilized quantitative methods, particularly multivariate analysis (pp. 243-244). Though, qualitative methods are also needed to analyze universities visually. Metcalfe (2012) emphasizes the importance of qualitative research methods for visual analysis of university and points out that visual records are very significant for understanding the relationship between the university image and its organizational saga. Here we prefer to employ both quantitative and qualitative methodologies for analyzing the advertisements and their visuals.

Method

This study analyses the newspaper print advertisements of Turkish universities published in 2010 and 2011. A purposive sampling is applied and considering their circulation and political affiliation, *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Habertürk*, *Cumhuriyet* and *Zaman* newspapers are included in the sample. As a non-probability sampling, purposive sampling is a deliberate inclusion of items in order to maximize the diversity of the sample in terms of representativeness (Yıldırım, & Şimşek, 2000; Kothari, 2004). In our research, *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet* and *Habertürk* are selected as highest circulation newspapers to represent the Turkish mainstream press. On the other hand, *Cumhuriyet* and *Zaman* newspapers are selected to represent the quality press with opposite political positions in Turkey. A regional newspaper, *Yeni Asır* is also added to the sample in order to envisage possible local differences. These newspapers were examined during students' university preference period (19.07.2010-06.08.2010 and 18.07.2011-04.08.2011) starting just after the announcement of the university entrance examination results. As a result, 1063 advertisement were picked for analysis. Some of these advertisements were repeatedly printed several times. It is understood that there were 397 original advertisement and remaining 666 were repetitions. Based on the grounded theory approach, we tried to develop conclusions from the data that we collected. Although there are many different versions of the grounded theory (Engward, 2013, p. 38), we subscribed to the classical version where it meant that the collected data inductively explains the researched social phenomenon. The theory is 'grounded' in that data and the grounded theory approach is an analytical methodology (Glacer, 2004; Punch, 2011; Engward, 2013). Therefore, in compliance with this methodology, the variables for our visual content analysis were defined through an initial examination of the data and we later developed them as needed. Our collected data are from the advertisements printed in the sampled newspapers. Advertisements are mostly the visuals with some textual elements which enrich the visual meaning. Therefore we applied visual content analysis to our data. Nevertheless, visual content analysis is not much different than the standard content analysis of texts. It is an empirical and objective procedure for quantifying various traits of visuals (Bell, 2004). Here we decided each advertising as the 'unit of analysis'. These advertisements are coded in terms of their basic quantitative traits such as how many advertisements are published, in which newspaper and on which page they are printed and if they original designs or repetitions etc. Additionally, qualitative traits such as what and who are shown

visually on these advertisements; what are these people doing etc. are coded. Finally, the textual meaning in the form of main slogan is also coded. The coder interpreted and decided which values of visual elements fits into what category; the categories are defined as mutually exclusive. All coding (into an SPSS file) is performed by the first author alone, thus the inter-coder reliability issues are avoided.

Our study is designed to answer three research questions. *RQ1*: What are the main characteristics of advertising universities? *RQ2*: What are the main characteristics of these print advertisements? *RQ3*: How are these universities are represented in these advertisements? In compliance with these research questions both quantitative and qualitative analysis methods are needed to be applied. All of these 1063 advertisements were coded in SPSS and analyzed for their quantitative features in respect to *RQ1* and *RQ2*. On the other hand, 397 original advertisements were furthermore analyzed for their qualitative features in respect to *RQ3*. Our method may well be labeled as 'artifact analysis'. Sari (1994) argues that content analysis, as a form of artifact analysis, is still the most appropriate way to observe the social phenomenon by examining the artifacts such as texts, visuals etc. In our study, we analyzed the content of print advertisements as social artifacts and tried to reveal their both quantitative and qualitative traits.

Findings

Characteristics of advertising universities are the focus of our *RQ1*. In 2010 and 2011, a total of 1063 print advertisements of 75 different universities and higher education institutions were published. The distribution of print advertisements by type of higher education institution is shown in Table 1. As can be seen from the table, foundation universities are clearly the biggest advertisers (90.1 %) while only 2.6 % of all print advertisements were given by state universities. Universities in Turkish Republic of North Cyprus (TRNC) account for 6.2% of all advertisements. TRNC universities are also considered in Turkish higher education area and in 2011-2012 academic year nearly 30,000 students from Turkey were studying in 7 TRNC universities (Çiftcioğlu, 2012). Table 1 shows that state universities rarely advertise. These advertising state universities are usually the ones which were established after the year 2000 in eastern provinces of Turkey such as Ağrı, Batman, Ardahan etc. and they advertised only once or twice in two years. The only exception among the state universities is *Istanbul Technical University (ITU)* with a total of 12 advertisements. Almost half of these advertisements were about ITU-SUNY dual diploma programs which are organized within YÖK system and require the students to pay tuition and other extra costs in the US. Basically, these advertisements visually depict the campus life at SUNY. The third advertising group is the foreign higher education institutions wishing to attract Turkish students. *International Balkan University (Macedonia)* is the top foreign advertising university with 5 advertisements in total while other 6 universities advertised only once. It is important to note here that all of these universities are western universities except the one from Malaysia. The overall low advertising ratio of foreign universities can be attributed to the direct communication strategies of these universities which generally participate in higher education fairs in Turkey in order to attract students wishing to study abroad. It is also important to note that when excluding the Izmir universities from the list⁶, the top three advertising universities are foundation universities from Istanbul. On the other hand Izmir universities generally advertise more in the regional daily *Yeni Asır* and national papers' regional supplements. This type of regionalization of advertising can be attributed to the current regional fragmentation of higher education market in Turkey; as a matter of fact, the students of Izmir universities are mostly from Aegean region.

⁶ Apart from the regional daily *Yeni Asır*, national dailies *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet* and *Habertürk* are also printed in Izmir and distributed in Aegean region. Accordingly, they have special regional advertising policies. Because of these evidences, in order to prevent our sample yielding biasedly higher numbers of advertisements by Izmir universities, we excluded them in determining the top advertisers.

Table 1. Distribution of Print Advertisements by Type of Higher Education Institution

Type	Frequency	Percent
Foundation	958	90.1
TRNC	66	6.2
State	28	2.6
Foreign	11	1.0
Total	1063	100,0

Our RQ2 is about the characteristics of the advertisements. It is found that 666 (62.7%) of the advertisements were repetitions of 397 (37.3%) original advertisements. Most of the advertisements (26.4%) are printed in *Hürriyet* as it is the number one advertising media among national Turkish dailies. 43.5% are printed in the 2nd to 7th pages and nearly all of them are in color (97.9%). 64.5% of these advertisement are full page to half page in size; only 6% of the are smaller than a quarter page. Most of them (82.2%) utilized both photo and text together while merely 5.7% utilized only text. Consequently, they are printed in the first pages of high circulation papers, they are colorful and large in size and they include more visuals than text. All these advertisement characteristics show that they are bold and glittering in style, as compared to timid and frumpy style which is usually expected for traditional public service institutions' advertisements. As part of this strategy, these advertisements directly target at the students 99.6% rather than the parents or teachers. We suggest that this strategy should be questioned. It is reported that students of Turkish foundation universities state family (16.8%) and teachers' guidance (10.0%) among important reasons of university choices (Hacıhafizoğlu, & Özdemir 2010). Based on our own observations, we argue that their contribution to final decision is even higher than stated by the students themselves. However, this issue requires further researches with multi-level analysis. Furthermore, it is found that 89.1% of them are manifestly formal advertisements while only 6.6 % are advertorials and 4.3% are plain announcements. In case of print advertising, it is important to note that Turkish foundation universities do not hesitate to advertise overtly and they seldom resort to advertorials.

How the Turkish universities are portrayed in these print advertisements is the concern of our RQ3. Table 2 shows the distribution of the main slogans in the advertisements (n=397). Table 2 reveals that these advertisements frequently emphasize a successful future (35.8%) which is an important appeal for the prospective students. Academic, scientific and educational quality seems to be the second important concern of the advertising universities (19.9%) while scholarships get the third row (13.6%). Having an international atmosphere (13.1%), high quality academic staff (4.5%) and contemporary style (2.5%) as well as being a city university (2.3%) are other themes in the advertisements.

Table 2. Distribution of Main Slogans in Advertisements

Main slogan	Frequency	Percent
Professional carrier and future success	142	35.8
Academic, scientific and educational quality	79	19.9
Scholarships	54	13.6
International atmosphere	52	13.1
Academic staff quality	18	4.5
Contemporary life style	10	2.5
City university	9	2.3
Others	33	8.3
Total	397	100.0

Table 3 shows the distribution of main visual elements in advertisements. Advertisements with visuals (n=393) mostly showed campus/buildings (27.0%) and students (26.5%). These figures are counted for the main apparent visual element in the advertisements. The 'mixed/other' category in Table 3 also includes some visuals of campus, buildings and students. Therefore, overall usage of visuals of campus, buildings and students is even higher in the advertisements. The fact that campus and buildings are extensively used in depicting a university may imply that universities are quite proud of their physical appearance. Steiner, Sundström and Sammalisto (2013) note that as a part of the symbolic identity, the campus architecture support university identity in the eyes of employees and students. As Temple (2009) argues, when inhabited, the space turns into a place, while physical capital turns into locational capital, and then into social capital. Therefore, when campus and buildings are shown with students inhabiting these spaces, then it signifies an important aspect of the university, the social capital. However, not many of the advertisements analyzed are this type; they simply show the empty campus and buildings that emphasize only the physical capital. This is usually the case for new foundation universities which do not have much to show other than their buildings. On the other hand, university administrators are shown in the advertisements quite often (13.5%). Among them, the rectors and president of the board of trustees take the lead. In some foundation university advertisements the presidents of the board of trustees are shown alone as a role model for a successful carrier. Here, *ersatz yuppie* academics concept introduced by Nalbantoğlu (2003) could be useful to understand this visual style of such university administrators and even some of the academics. As conceptualized by Nalbantoğlu (2003), *ersatz yuppie* is a 'social type' to depict some of the alienated and pretentious academics who are more in non-academic occupations such as business. As Altbach (2000) explains, recently more universities worldwide have been transformed into market-type organizations which frequently stress the managerial aspects of teaching and research. Altbach (2006) further states that through an extensive commercialization universities had to think more like businesses and less like educational institutions. In such a 'managerial' milieu, the role models of universities are inevitably more in business styles.

As can be seen from Table 4, male university administrators (22.0%) are shown almost 7 times more than female administrators (3.1%). White and Özkanlı (2010) report that only 10% of rectors and 13% of deans are female in Turkish universities. Hence, this gender inequality is respectively reflected in the advertisements. Most of these male university administrators' visual style apparently deserves Nalbantoğlu's (2003) depiction. Additionally, the study of Gizir and Şimşek (2005) reveals that Turkish universities experience high levels of individualism and lack of motivation, as reported by mostly female academics. These are evidently related to what Timur (2000) recounts as 'corporate style' universities, following the radical changes in Turkish university system after 1980's.

Table 3. Distribution of Main Visual Elements in Advertisements

Visual	Frequency	Percent
Campus/buildings	106	27.0
Students	104	26,5
Mixed/Others	111	28.1
University Administrators	53	13.5
Academics	16	4.1
City	3	0.8
Total	393	100,0

On the other hand, young female students are overwhelmingly shown in the advertisements (58.0%) as compared to young male students (1.0%). This may be attributed to a tacit visualization of contemporariness as none of the shown female students wear scarf. Although the universities emphasize their internationalization, the foreigners are shown rarely (2.0%). This may be an indication of the fact that the internationalization process has yet been a mere textual rhetoric rather than achieving a visual actuality to show. Similarly, mid-aged or senior students are also shown very rarely (0.6%) and this implies that recent strategic emphasis on continuous education centers is not yet reflected in university print advertisements.

Table 4. Distribution of Main Human Beings in Advertisements

Human	Frequency	Percent
Young female students	164	58,0
Male administrators	62	22,0
Unidentified and others	22	7,9
Female academics	15	5.3
Female administrators	9	3.1
Foreigners	6	2.0
Young male students	3	1.0
Mid-aged or senior students	2	0.7
Total	283	100,0

Finally, the human beings who are shown in the advertisements, mostly pose [to the camera] only as simple posers (Table 5). Academic activities such as reading (12.8%), lectures and conferences (10.4%), computer and laboratory work (10.1%) and art activities (4.0%) are not seen so often. Leisure (4.7%) and sports (2.4%) are also shown quite seldom. This may be typical for Turkish universities where, traditionally sports are not a major university issue. Emphasis on athletics is an important component of image building efforts for many American universities (Landrum, Turrisi, & Harless, 1998). Nevertheless, considering the recent image building efforts on news media especially by foundation universities, we expect that sports will probably be among the important factors for university reputation and image in the near future.

Table 5. Distribution of Main Human Activities in Advertisements

Activity	Frequency	Percent
Posing	165	58.3
Reading	38	13,4
Lecture, conference	31	11,1
Computer and lab activities	15	5.4
Leisure	14	4.9
Art activities	12	4.2
Sports	7	2.4
Other	1	0.3
Total	283	100,0

Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

We analyzed a total of 1063 newspaper print advertisements of the Turkish universities which have faced a strong competition recently. It is found that while old and reputable state universities rarely advertise, new foundation universities visually emphasize their campus facilities and infrastructure through extensive advertisement campaigns. We conclude that Turkish universities are still at the beginning stages of their image building process. Newspaper print advertisements that we analyzed are quite an important aspect of this image building process. The visual representations in these print advertisements which we analyzed, however, do not yet depict a mature and consistent university image. Referring to post-modern social theory, MacDonald (2013) defines identity as evolutionarily complex and mutable. MacDonald (2013) further states that the messages of universities must not be too simple or inflexible, and all members of the institution must be involved in identity construction efforts which must be based on carefully selected language and symbolism. However, Turkish university print advertisements seem far from being a collective work of the university components; rather they appear to be ordered to professional advertising agencies which may usually misinterpret the soul of a university. As put by Brennan and Bennington (2000) students are not merely customers in the sense currently recognized by business. Therefore university advertisements must not target them as typical customers.

We may not yet assert that these print advertisements are totally naïve and useless. Lauer (2007) prudently state that when used wisely university print advertisements can help establish institutional presence in locations which are remote to the campus, and it can also help “attract attention” and “clarify identity” when used as a part of a strategic campaign. However, here we will repeat what Hartley and Morphew (2008) suggested for US colleges and universities: “... [they] can do better. Such callow marketing is increasingly falling on deaf ears”. On the other hand, universities are rapidly changing and gaining new missions and identities. In a “post post-public era” (Marginson, 2007), it is expected that “deregulation and corporatization will be balanced by a renewed concern about public purpose and conditions, often with universities themselves defining the public interest” (p. 118). This requires that universities may have to cope with their heavy private enterprise image positioning in the future. Therefore, university administrators must pay due attention on their image formation strategies before it is late. We believe Turkish universities will be more stable and sure for their visual identity in the future. Yet, this requires more careful strategic planning by the university administrators and harmonization of overall social meanings of reactions to universities by the public policy makers. In this context, community relations of universities are of myriad importance. As Kim, Brunner and Fithch-Houser (2006) explained, contributing to the local community may enhance the public image of a university. Therefore universities should pay close attention to their relationships with communities; for which, advertisements may play an important role in their image building strategies.

Another assessment about recent advertising strategies of Turkish universities is that although they emphasize internationalization as a rhetorical slogan they do not advertise to international audiences. Furthermore, among the main slogans in advertisements, internationalization issue ranks as the forth with 13.1% (that is nearly as important as the scholarships issue) while only 2.0% of the advertisements show foreigners as the main character. This implies that internationalization issue is mainly for the Turkish students and it is not conceived as a part of an international marketing concern. Kondakci (2011) points that Turkey is more attractive for in-bounding students from Azerbaijan, Central Asia, Iran, The Middle East and Balkan countries who prefer Turkey, mostly for cultural reasons and historical proximity. Turkish universities host very few students from Europe and Americas. This fact should guide the universities for an international advertising strategy which will probably emphasize more Turkish cultural and historical values rather than global clichés.

Targeting strategies of print advertisement of Turkish universities should also be critically evaluated. Our research showed that almost all print advertisements slogans were targeting the students themselves. However, as to the student's final decision on university choice, parents and teachers are highly important. Kittle (2000) reports that according to the college and university administrators the potential students are the first and the parents are the second important targets for their institutional messages. Pampaloni (2010) confirms that most of the literature supports parents as being more influential while some research supports teachers as being more influential. Nevertheless they are both influential together; therefore targeting solely the students is obviously not a proper strategy. Noting also the lower rates of newspaper readership among students (Lauf, 2001; Haung, 2009), the newspaper print advertisements should be carefully designed to address to the students while not ignoring the teachers and parents who are the typical readers of newspapers. Lastly, brand harmonization is another issue which is not well observed in the advertisements that we analyzed. Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana (2007) emphasize that university branding should be harmonized with its constituents, namely its faculties and schools, through a well-constructed brand architecture. They point out that schools and faculties must be allowed for contributions to the overall identity; however without brand harmonization they will possibly damage the university brand. The newspaper print advertisements that are analyzed in this study do not tell much about brand harmonization since most of them neither visually nor textually put forward any of the faculties or schools. Yet, especially for large scale universities where some faculties may have more public appeal than others, brand harmonization must be considered as an important issue.

This exploratory research obviously has certain limitations and drawbacks. Firstly, our research apparently lacks adequate historical analysis; we have dealt only with two years' data (2010 and 2011). More comprehensive analysis could be obtained if it included data since the beginning of university advertisements in Turkey. At least, further research is needed for determining the changes in the use of advertising activities by universities through decades such as Newman (2002) study. Newman (2002, pp. 24-25) reports that advertising activities of university administrators in the USA had risen from 77% to 88% between 1989 and 2001. Our research indicates a slight increase in the number of print advertisements over one year; from $n=517$ in 2010 to $n=546$ in 2011. However, it would be more meaningful if we could compare the change in numbers of advertisements over decades; this obviously requires a longitudinal research designs. Furthermore, we analyzed only quantitative and qualitative elements in advertisements themselves; it could yield more meaningful explanations if we could analyze their impacts on the readers by applying reception analysis methods or by interpreting the visuals through semiological, rhetorical and discursive levels. Alessandri, Yang and Kinsey (2006) for instance, explored how the students perceived and identified certain university visuals with its reputation. Using Q methodology approach they explained the basic characteristic of visuals being sorted between the most unrepresentative to the most representative. They empirically demonstrated that people who have positive evaluations of visual artifacts have also positive views of a university's image. Such visual methodologies on reception can be very useful for further research on university print advertisements.

Finally, we did not deal with and comparatively analyzed the advertisements on social network media which is another important topic for university image building efforts. All these issues will remain to be accomplished by future researches. We believe that image building process of Turkish universities is an important research area to attract the interest of many scholars of higher education studies.

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