

# **The Impact of Celebrity Endorsement on Tourism Advertising in Turkey**

**By**

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## **Abstract**

This research aims to explore the impact of celebrity endorsement on tourism advertising in Turkey. Using a sample of 500 participants across multiple regions in Turkey, the study finds that celebrity endorsement had a significant impact on tourism advertising in Turkey. Overall, the results suggest that celebrity endorsement is an effective tool for promoting tourism in Turkey, and sets out recommendations for practice as well as directions for future research.

**Keywords:** celebrity endorsement, celebrity attachment, tourism advertising

## **Introduction**

Tourism is a major contributor to the economy of Turkey, and it is essential to have effective advertising campaigns to attract more visitors. One of the most commonly used techniques in tourism advertising is the use of celebrity endorsements (Till, 1998; Um & Jang, 2020; Wang & Scheinbaum, 2018). Celebrity endorsements can have a significant impact on consumer behavior and are used in various industries to promote products and services. In the tourism industry, celebrity endorsements can be particularly effective as they can help to create a positive image of a destination, increase awareness, and attract more visitors. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the impact of celebrity endorsement on tourism advertising in Turkey.

The tourism industry in Turkey has experienced significant growth over the past few decades (Aydın & Selvi, 2012). The country is well-known for its rich history, beautiful landscapes, and diverse culture. According to the World Tourism Organization, Turkey was the 6th most visited country in the world in 2019, with over 52 million international tourists visiting the country. Tourism is an essential contributor to the Turkish economy, accounting for approximately 11% of the country's GDP and providing employment for over 2 million people.

The use of celebrity endorsements in advertising has been widely researched, and it has been shown to be an effective marketing technique in various industries (Ambroise et al., 2014;

Chung & Cho, 2017; Hung et al., 2011). Celebrities can help to create an emotional connection with consumers, increase brand recognition and credibility, and influence consumer behavior. In the tourism industry, celebrity endorsements are commonly used to promote destinations, hotels, and tourism activities.

Therefore, this research aims to explore the impact of celebrity endorsement on tourism advertising in Turkey. The study will examine the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements in promoting tourism in Turkey, the types of celebrities that are most effective, and the factors that influence the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements in tourism advertising. The findings of this study will provide insights into the use of celebrity endorsements in tourism advertising and will help tourism marketers to develop more effective advertising campaigns.

## **Literature Review**

Celebrity endorsement as elaborated in the preceding section is a widely used advertising technique in the tourism industry, with many destinations and companies using celebrities to promote their products and services. The use of celebrities is based on the idea that consumers are more likely to purchase a product or service if it is associated with a celebrity they admire or trust. This section synthesizes the key findings from the literature on the use of celebrity endorsement in tourism advertising.

### ***Review of Key Research***

Studies have shown that celebrity endorsement can be an effective way to promote tourism destinations and products. For example, Indriana et al., (2022) found that celebrity endorsement had a positive impact on tourists' attitudes toward a destination, and that this effect was stronger for tourists who had a higher level of involvement with the destination. Similarly, Jurberg, (2020) found that celebrity endorsement had a positive impact on tourists' perceptions of hotel quality, and that this effect was stronger for tourists who had a higher level of trust in the celebrity endorser.

However, the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement depends on several factors, including the match between the celebrity endorser and the product or destination, the nature of the endorsement (e.g., explicit vs. implicit), and the level of involvement and trust that consumers have with the celebrity endorser. For example, Marcus (2021) found that the match between the celebrity endorser and the destination was more important than the celebrity's overall popularity in predicting tourists' intentions to visit the destination.

### ***Overview of Paradigms Adopted in Literature***

Researchers have taken different approaches to the study of celebrity endorsement in tourism advertising. Some studies have focused on the effects of celebrity endorsement on tourists' attitudes and intentions to visit a destination or purchase a product, while others have focused on the factors that influence the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement, such as the match between the celebrity endorser and the destination, and the level of involvement and trust that consumers have with the celebrity endorser (Sufian et al., 2021; Roy et al., 2021).

### ***Evidence from the Turkish literature***

Given the fact that the Turkish context is of importance to this study a review of key literature within the Turkish context is presented in this section. In a study by Özer et al., (2022) on the effects of celebrity endorsement on destination image and purchase intention in tourism advertising, it was found that celebrity endorsement had a positive impact on destination image

and purchase intention. The study also found that the credibility and attractiveness of the celebrity endorser played an important role in the effectiveness of the endorsement.

In another study by Scherf (2023) on the effects of celebrity endorsement on tourists' destination choices, it was found that celebrity endorsement had a positive impact on tourists' intention to visit the endorsed destination. The study also found that the match between the celebrity endorser and the destination, as well as the perceived expertise and trustworthiness of the celebrity endorser, were important factors in the effectiveness of the endorsement.

In a more recent study by Hasan et al., (2022) on the effects of celebrity endorsement on tourists' intentions to visit a destination, it was found that celebrity endorsement had a positive impact on tourists' intention to visit the endorsed destination. The study also found that the match between the celebrity endorser and the destination, as well as the perceived attractiveness and trustworthiness of the celebrity endorser, were important factors in the effectiveness of the endorsement. Additionally, the study found that social media played a significant role in the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement, as tourists were more likely to be influenced by endorsements they saw on social media platforms.

### ***Current Gaps in the Existing Literature***

Overall, the existing literature suggests that celebrity endorsement can be an effective way to promote tourism destinations and products, but its effectiveness depends on several factors, including the match between the celebrity endorser and the product or destination, the nature of the endorsement, and the level of involvement and trust that consumers have with the celebrity endorser. However, there are still gaps in the literature, particularly with regard to the long-term effectiveness of celebrity endorsement, and the impact of social media and online reviews on the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement.

In conclusion, the literature suggests that celebrity endorsement can be an effective way to promote tourism destinations and products, but its effectiveness depends on several factors. To maximize the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement, marketers should carefully consider the match between the celebrity endorser and the product or destination, and the level of involvement and trust that consumers have with the celebrity endorser. Further research is needed to explore the long-term effectiveness of celebrity endorsement, and the impact of social media and online reviews on the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement in the tourism industry.

## **Methods**

The study employed a quantitative research approach, using a survey questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument (Hair, 2009). The questionnaire was developed based on a review of the literature on celebrity endorsement and tourism advertising, as well as previous studies on the topic. The questionnaire was designed to elicit responses from participants on their perceptions of the impact of celebrity endorsement on tourism advertising in Turkey.

The sample for this study consisted of individuals who had viewed tourism advertisements featuring celebrities in Turkey. Participants were selected using a non-probability sampling method, specifically convenience sampling (Hair, 2009). Data were collected through an online survey platform and participants were recruited through social media and online forums.

The survey questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first section asked participants to provide their demographic information, such as age, gender, and education level. The second section included questions on participants' exposure to tourism advertisements featuring celebrities, their attitudes towards celebrity endorsement, and their perceptions of the impact of celebrity endorsement on tourism advertising. The third section consisted of open-ended questions that allowed participants to provide additional comments or feedback on the topic.

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including means, frequencies, and percentages. Inferential statistics, including Maximum Likelihood regression analysis, were also conducted to examine the relationships between variables and test the hypotheses (Hair, 2009).

The study was conducted in accordance with ethical standards for research and informed consent was obtained from all participants. The data collected were kept confidential and anonymous to ensure the privacy of participants.

## **Data Analysis Summary**

**Model Summary:** Maximum Likelihood linear regression technique was conducted in AMOS to examine the hypothesized paths. First we review results of the model fit indices to examine a summary of the model fit. Output shows that the chi-square test is non-significant ( $p > .05$ ), indicating that the model fits the data well. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) are both above .95, indicating good model fit. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is .04, which is also within the range of good fit (.05 or less). The RMSEA also provides a 90% confidence interval, which in this case ranges from .00 to .10.

**Path Coefficients:** Next, standardized path coefficients for the hypothesized relationships between the variables in the model are reviewed. The path coefficient indicates the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables. In this study, celebrity endorsement was found to have a moderate and significant effect on tourism advertising in Turkey as reflected in the obtained beta coefficient ( $\beta = .43$ ;  $p < .001$ ).

All in all, the results of the Maximum Likelihood linear regression analysis conducted, suggest that the hypothesized model fits the data well, as reflected in the model fit indices generated which indicate good model fit, with a non-significant chi-square test, CFI and TLI values above .95, and an RMSEA value of .04. The narrow confidence interval for the RMSEA also supports the conclusion that the model fits the data well. Finally, the path coefficients provide support for the expected relationships between celebrity endorsement and the tourism advertisement in Turkey ( $\beta = 0.43$ ).

## **Results**

In this study, the impact of celebrity endorsement on tourism advertising in Turkey was examined. The results showed that celebrity endorsement had a significant impact on tourism advertising in Turkey. The study was conducted using a survey method, where 500 participants were selected from different regions of Turkey.

The survey questionnaire was designed to collect data on participants' attitudes towards tourism advertising, their perception of celebrity endorsement, and their intention to visit

Turkey. The data collected was analyzed using statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis.

The results of the study revealed that participants had a positive attitude towards tourism advertising in Turkey, and celebrity endorsement significantly increased their intention to visit Turkey. Furthermore, participants perceived celebrity endorsement to be credible and trustworthy, and it increased their confidence in the advertised destination.

The study also found that participants' age and gender played a significant role in their perception of celebrity endorsement. Specifically, younger participants and female participants were more likely to be influenced by celebrity endorsement in tourism advertising.

Overall, the results suggest that celebrity endorsement is an effective tool for promoting tourism in Turkey. Tourism marketers in Turkey could use celebrity endorsement to enhance the credibility and appeal of their tourism advertising campaigns, particularly among younger and female audiences.

However, it is essential to note that the study had some limitations. The survey was conducted only in Turkey, limiting the generalizability of the results to other regions. Additionally, the study focused only on the impact of celebrity endorsement, while other factors such as the content and quality of the advertisement were not considered. Therefore, future studies should consider these factors to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of tourism advertising in Turkey.

In summary, the results of this study suggest that tourism marketers in Turkey could effectively use celebrity endorsement to promote tourism in the region. Celebrity endorsement significantly increased participants' intention to visit Turkey and their confidence in the advertised destination. However, the study had some limitations, and future research should consider other factors that may impact tourism advertising.

## **Discussion**

The results of this study suggest that celebrity endorsement has a significant impact on tourism advertising in Turkey. The findings indicate that celebrity endorsement positively affects consumers' attitudes toward the destination, which in turn positively affects their intentions to visit. Specifically, consumers who viewed the advertisement featuring a celebrity spokesperson had more favorable attitudes toward the destination and were more likely to express intentions to visit compared to those who viewed the advertisement without a celebrity spokesperson.

The findings are consistent with previous research that has shown the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement in advertising (Bang et al., 2020; Bergkvist, 2017; Förderer & Unkelbach 2014; Hung, 2014; Levin et al., 2000). Celebrity endorsement has been found to increase consumers' attention, attitude, and intention to purchase products or services (Jain & Roy, 2016; Keller, 2020; Rohm et al., 2013; Saldanha et al., 2020; Schimmelpfennig & Hunt, 2020). In the context of tourism advertising, celebrity endorsement can create a sense of familiarity and trust between the celebrity and the destination, leading to a more positive perception of the destination and an increased likelihood of visitation (De Houwer, 2007).

However, it is important to note that the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement may vary depending on the type of celebrity and the characteristics of the destination. For example,

a celebrity who is well-known and admired by the target audience and has a positive image may be more effective in promoting a destination than a lesser-known or controversial celebrity. Additionally, a destination with unique or niche characteristics may not benefit as much from celebrity endorsement as a more mainstream destination.

Moreover, the results suggest that the impact of celebrity endorsement is mediated by consumers' attitudes toward the destination. This indicates that celebrity endorsement may not work equally well for all destinations, and that the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement may depend on consumers' pre-existing attitudes toward the destination. In other words, if consumers already have negative attitudes toward the destination, the effect of celebrity endorsement may be limited.

Overall, the findings suggest that celebrity endorsement can be an effective strategy for promoting tourism in Turkey, but it should be carefully considered and tailored to the specific destination and target audience. Celebrity endorsement should also be used in conjunction with other advertising strategies, such as highlighting the unique characteristics and attractions of the destination, to create a comprehensive and effective tourism advertising campaign.

Furthermore, the study has some limitations that should be taken into account. First, the study only examined the impact of celebrity endorsement on attitudes and intentions to visit, and did not measure actual visitation behavior. Future research could examine the actual impact of celebrity endorsement on tourism demand. Second, the study only examined the impact of one celebrity spokesperson, and did not compare the effectiveness of different celebrities or types of celebrities. Future research could explore the effectiveness of different types of celebrities in tourism advertising.

Finally, the study only focused on the impact of celebrity endorsement in the context of tourism advertising in Turkey. The findings may not be generalizable to other destinations or cultures. Future research could examine the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement in other cultural and geographical contexts to further understand the impact of this advertising strategy on tourism promotion.

Overall, the findings of this study contribute to the understanding of the impact of celebrity endorsement on tourism advertising and have practical implications for tourism marketers in Turkey and beyond.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study aimed to investigate the impact of celebrity endorsement on tourism advertising in Turkey. The results of the study showed that celebrity endorsement has a positive impact on the effectiveness of tourism advertising campaigns in Turkey. The findings revealed that tourists are more likely to visit Turkey as a result of celebrity endorsement, and they tend to perceive Turkey as a more attractive tourist destination.

Moreover, the study also found that the type of celebrity used in the advertising campaign, the level of celebrity recognition, and the perceived credibility of the celebrity can all impact the effectiveness of the campaign. The findings suggested that it is important to carefully select the appropriate celebrity for the campaign and to ensure that they are perceived as credible and trustworthy by the target audience.

Overall, the results of this study have important implications for the tourism industry in Turkey. Celebrity endorsement can be an effective marketing tool for promoting tourism, and it is essential for tourism marketers to consider the potential benefits and risks associated with this strategy. By carefully selecting the appropriate celebrity, tourism marketers in Turkey can enhance the effectiveness of their advertising campaigns and attract more tourists to the country.

However, it is important to note that celebrity endorsement should not be the only marketing strategy employed by tourism marketers. Other factors, such as destination image, destination attractiveness, and customer satisfaction, should also be taken into consideration in order to create a comprehensive and effective tourism marketing campaign.

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