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## Evaluation of Travel Agencies' Attitudes towards the European Union

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### ABSTRACT

The path to European Union (EU) membership requires the economic, political, and socio-cultural interaction and transformation of the candidate country. This paper considers both Turkey's EU membership prospects as a marketed product and the opinion of the Turkish public in general, with a focus on travel agencies as the consumers of this product. As tourism is an important economic activity for both the EU and Turkey, this paper highlights the importance of raising and clarifying the issues regarding the perception of Turkish travel agencies toward Turkey's EU membership. This paper identifies the implications of Turkey's EU membership perspective on a sectoral basis in the framework of expectancy theory and in light of a questionnaire survey conducted in the Aegean Region of Turkey. Results from the field study indicate that travel agencies expect an increasing role for the actors in the tourism sector on the path to accession. Membership to the EU is expected to affect Turkey's economic development in the following areas: economic relations, the composition of the tourism sector, and the development of travel agencies.

**Keywords:** European Union, Travel Agencies, attitude measurement, Turkey.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the 1990s the EU became the world's most important tourism market, both as a tourist destination and as a tourism-generating region. Although this trend is expected to continue into the early decades of this century, the fact that Asia, especially South Asia, is recording growth that far exceeds the worldwide average means that Europe's share of tourist arrivals will diminish over time. However, these forecasts do not "reveal a decline of Europe's attractiveness as a destination in the world, but towards European tourists". This is related to the changes in the share of arrivals within Europe, where the traditional destinations in western and southern Europe are expected to lose out in favour of eastern Europe and eastern Mediterranean (Leidner 2004: 23).

Tourism is the basis of two million businesses in the EU, mainly small and medium sized enterprises that generate 5.5 percent of gross domestic product, 6.0 percent of employment and 30 percent of external trade in services (European Commission 1999). Cross-border tourism is an important economic factor within the EU, as it accounted for 222.5 billion Euros in tourism income in 2004 (Bovagnet 2006). In 2004, Spain, France, Italy, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Austria were among the top ten countries in terms of international tourism receipts; their combined share of international tourism receipts was 30.9 percent. Turkey is predominately a destination country for international tourism. Turkey ranked 8th in terms of international tourism receipts in 2004 and generated 2.6 percent of international tourism income (World Tourism Organisation 2005).

Official relations between the EU and Turkey began in 1963 with the signing of the Ankara Association Agreement. The Customs Union was established between the EU and Turkey in 1996 and in 1999 at the Helsinki European Council, Turkey was declared as a candidate country for EU membership. On 17 December 2004, the Brussels European Council decided to open accession talks with Turkey and on 3 October 2005 accession negotiations began between the EU and Turkey (Delegation of European Commission to Turkey 2006). Aside from candidacy relations, Turkey-EU relations also have a partnership aspect. Turkey is a member of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, which brings together the EU member countries and countries in the south and east Mediterranean with the aim of developing closer relations based on three pillars: a political and security partnership, a partnership in socio-cultural and humanitarian affairs and an economic and financial partnership (Prosperini n.d.). As a partner of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, Turkey participates in EUMEDIS, MEDSTAT, and EUROMED heritage programmes and benefits from these programmes in terms of project execution. For example, a project involving the rehabilitation of the Fener and Balat districts has been co-financed by the MEDA fund, which is a financial instrument of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership (Delegation of the European Commission to Turkey 2003).

Another important factor is the exclusion of the trade in services and agricultural goods within the Customs Union between Turkey and the EU. There

has been a huge growth in the provision of services in the Turkish economy of more than 65.0 percent between 2001 and 2006 (Undersecretariat of Foreign Trade 2006), and the contribution from the tourism industry (including travel) to gross domestic product in 2006 is expected to be 5.7 percent (World Travel and Tourism Council 2006). In terms of Turkey's accession to the EU, becoming part of the European common market may have a greater impact on the Turkish economy than the formation of the Customs Union (Dervis et al. 2004). In other ways, EU membership may have a negative impact on tourism by limiting its competitiveness tools. For example, joining the Economic and Monetary Union will limit the scope for using devaluation to deal with factor-cost inflation; this could have significant implications given the high price elasticity of demand in tourism (Williams 2001: 144).

During post-Helsinki period, the EU perspective has become increasingly important for the actors involved in the tourism industry. As a candidate country, Turkey is influenced by the EU regulatory framework and market practices; these also apply to the tourism industry. In addition, the EU has the biggest share of the world tourism market, and EU countries constitute the most important market for Turkish tourism. Tourists from the EU make up more than 50 percent of all visitors to Turkey. A detailed list of tourist arrivals, in terms of country of origin, is provided in Table 1.

The candidacy status of Turkey and the economic significance of tourism, both for the EU and Turkey, necessitate a sectoral approach to Turkey's membership perspective. The main purpose of the present paper is to analyze the general attitude towards the EU and related tourism issues in the context of Turkey's EU membership perspective. As such, the research questions were framed as follows:

Table 1. Distribution of tourist arrivals by main countries of origin

	2003	%	2004	%	2005	%
Germany	3 332 451	23.8	3 983 939	22.7	4 243 584	20.1
Commonwealth of Independent States	2 121 254	15.1	2 792 123	15.9	3 432 082	16.3
United Kingdom	1 091 404	7.8	1 387 817	7.9	1 757 843	8.3
Bulgaria	1 006 612	7.2	1 309 885	7.5	1 621 918	7.7
Netherlands	940 098	6.7	1 191 382	6.8	1 254 153	5.9
Iran	497 282	3.5	628 726	3.6	957 244	4.5
France	470 582	3.4	548 858	3.1	701 190	3.3
Greece	393 517	2.8	485 417	2.8	584 840	2.8
Belgium	308 118	2.2	426 971	2.4	503 821	2.4
Austria	379 830	2.7	455 863	2.6	486 051	2.3
U S A	222 918	1.6	291 102	1.7	434 991	2.1
Sweden	204 205	1.5	284 086	1.6	405 956	1.9
Italy	236 931	1.7	318 097	1.8	401 852	1.9
Others	2 824 356	20.0	3 413 344	19.5	4 339 361	20.5
Total	14 029 558	100.0	17 517 610	100.0	21 124 886	100.0

Source: (TYD 2006<sup>b</sup>)

*1. What are the factors shaping the attitudes of Turkish travel agencies towards the EU?*

Tourism is an important economic activity for both the EU and Turkey. Turkey, as a candidate country, has to align with EU legislation; this includes the tourism industry. The EU membership debates in Turkey are influencing Turkish travel agencies, and it is expected that EU membership will affect the lives of Turkish citizens. By analyzing expected effects and those that are not expected, and by uncovering the motives behind the attitudes of travel agencies towards the EU, it will be possible to discover the basis for the desire for EU membership from a sectoral viewpoint.

*2. Which factors are important in the development of the Turkish economy due to EU membership?*

The EU's share of world gross domestic product is 28.0 percent, and more than half of the world's direct foreign investments are from EU member countries. In addition, the EU is the world's largest exporter and second-largest importer (Young 2004: 393). Thus, being a member of such an important economic bloc is expected to bring about changes to the Turkish economy. This makes it necessary to identify those factors that influence the development of the Turkish economy on the path toward EU membership.

*3. Which factors are important in the development of Turkish tourism with EU membership?*

Tourism is one of the main sectors of the European economy because of its contribution to the gross domestic product of member countries, the attainment of an internal market in services, and the level of employment generated by tourism (European Union Council 2002). This paper aims to determine which factors will become significant for tourism in Turkey in terms of EU accession.

*4. Which factors are important in the development of Turkish tour operators in terms of EU membership?*

The fact that there are no Turkish tour operators in the Turkish tourism industry makes it important to identify the major issues influencing the development of tour operators. Once these issues are identified, policies can be developed to promote this sector of the tourism industry.

*5. Which factors are important in the development of travel agencies in the context of EU membership?*

Although there is no specific EU policy on tourism, tourism is affected by other EU policies. It is important to identify those factors that influence the development of travel agencies because EU legislation, and measures that are implemented in response to the policies, are liable to have a bearing on the tourism industry and travel agencies in particular. In the framework of ex-

pectancy theory, the paper aims to identify the factors affecting the hierarchical goal structure of travel agencies with respect to Turkey's EU membership prospects and the EU. The survey was the preferred method in seeking the expectations of travel agencies in regard to Turkey's EU membership.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Turkey's EU membership is an economically and politically marketed product, and the Turkish public in general (travel agencies in the case of the present paper) is consumer of this product. In this context, the perception of travel agencies of Turkey's EU membership prospects is examined in the framework of expectancy theory. Expectancy theory states that a consumer's behaviour is a function of the extent to which the behaviour is instrumental in the attainment of particular outcomes and the consumer's evaluation of these outcomes (Reinhardt and Wahba 1976). The two core concepts of expectancy theory are expectancy (subjective probability) and valence (anticipated value) (Wahba and House 1974). Expectancy is defined by Reinhardt and Wahba (1976: 259) as "the likelihood that a person will undertake a specific activity or behaviour in anticipation of such behaviour leading to a specific desired outcome or set of desired outcomes, or avoiding a specific undesired outcome or set of undesired outcomes". Expectations can also be defined as probabilities of satisfaction assigned by consumers to various behaviours or products (Rayburn and Palmgreen 1984). As the definitions imply, expectations relate to the future behaviour and have two dimensions: the anticipatory nature of expectations and their normative quality. Expectations are anticipatory in nature vis-à-vis the future performance of the product and normative in quality when they have become established via previously encountered situations (Clow and Beise 1995; Tutuncu 2001).

Evaluation is the degree of effect, positive or negative, toward an attribute or behavioural outcome (Rayburn and Palmgreen 1984). Value is a negative function of what is sacrificed and a positive function of what is received; it is the consumer's desire for specific consequences serving as a means of accomplishing an intended goal. Put simply, value is the "worthiness" point assigned to a concept or item; thus, it is a derivative of the consumer's goals for possessing (Oliver 1999: 45–49). In this context, value does not depend solely on how important or rewarding the person regards the outcome: it also depends on the costs associated with achieving the outcome (Shepperd and Taylor 1999). In fact, a consumer's valuation is a complex series of social construction. The constructivist approach to a consumer's valuation regards status and status-seeking as a motivational construct. The existing discrepancy between the consumer's present state and ideal state creates an arousal, motivating the consumer to engage in consumption intended to accumulate "status symbols" (Solomon 1999: 64–66). It is noteworthy that in symbolic consumption, products are used as a vehicle by consumers to determine one's social identity and placement within a social nexus. In this case, the social meanings of status symbols are not static; rather, they are given differential

value by various reference groups, although there are strong associations between products and social roles (Solomon 1999).

Previous research on consumer goals has identified a hierarchical goal structure (see Paulssen and Bagozzi 2006; Huffman, Ratneshwar and Mick 2000; Bagozzi and Dholakia 1999; Carver and Scheier 1998). Consumers regulate their behaviour according to different goal levels in their goal hierarchies (Paulssen and Bagozzi 2006:702). The conceptualization of a goal hierarchy starts with a goal and then specifies the steps needed to accomplish the goal (Bagozzi and Dholakia 1999: 22). The goals toward which consumers strive and the processes via which they try to realize these goals become evident in the interaction between the "being side of life", for example a consumer's social identity or values, and the "having side of life", such as preferred products and their characteristics. It is the hierarchies of consumer goals in which the consumer's values drive the expected psychosocial consequences of product consumption and in return influence the product preferences (Huffman et al. 2000: 9).

Since consumer expectations and goals are influenced by the social, cultural, and temporal contexts of consumption, an integrative framework is needed to explain travel agencies' perceptions of Turkey's EU membership. As such, the hierarchical model proposed by Huffman et al. (2000), similar to the ones proposed by Carver and Scheier (1998), is used in this paper to clarify the issues affecting expectations and thereby the goal-determination processes of the travel agencies. The goal-determination process refers to the consumer's conscious process of constructing and modifying goals in light of contextual information. Higher-level goals are more inclusive, more abstract, and less mutable compared to lower-level goals. In this context, the model has six discrete goal levels in three categories: *being goals*, *doing goals*, and *having goals*. Goals of "being" relate to conceptions of desired self-state and cover life themes, values, and life projects. Goals of "doing" include purposeful activities and tasks that people wish to be engaged in; these are associated with current concerns and consumption intentions. Goals of "having" are acquisitive means of facilitating or realizing a person's "doing" goals, often in a manner consistent with his or her "being" goals and related to benefits sought and feature preferences (Huffman et al. 2000).

The first category of the model shown in Figure 1, *being goals*, refers to conceptions of desired self-states; that is, who a person is trying to be. In this scope, life themes and values represent the highest level of goals (Yordanova 2006). Life themes and values are limited in number within the consumer and are relatively invariant once developed; however, once a value of life theme is internalized, it serves as a standard to guide many lower-level goals. The second level, life projects, is associated with the construction and maintenance of key life roles and identities. Life projects are likely to be modified when consumers pass through life-stage transitions (Huffman et al. 2000: 15).

A consumer with a goal intention is committed in principle to the execution of actions needed to achieve the goal (Bagozzi and Dholakia 1999: 27). The



second category, doing goals, involves current concerns and consumption intentions. Current concerns are placed at the third level. These concerns are defined as activities, problems, tasks, or quests that are “on the top of the consumer’s mind” and which the consumer chooses to be engaged in over the short-term. Consumption intentions, the fourth level, enable the consumer to divide the current concern into a set of specific action sub-goals. To meet current concerns, the purchase and consumption of multiple and complementary products and services is often necessary (Huffman et al. 2000).

Lower-level goals are more concrete and specific, providing a better match for consumers’ construal in the implementation stage of decision-making (Yordanova 2006: 1089). The third category, *having goals*, which covers benefits sought and feature preferences, represents the lowest level. Benefits sought, the fifth level, relate to the desired consequences of purchasing a product; they are usually subjective and outcome referent. In contrast, feature preferences, the sixth level, are objective and product referent, which means that they depend mostly on the concrete physical and financial terms of the product. In the model, goals of “life projects” and “consumption intentions” have dual characters, as they represent the interface of being and doing (Huffman et al. 2000:19).

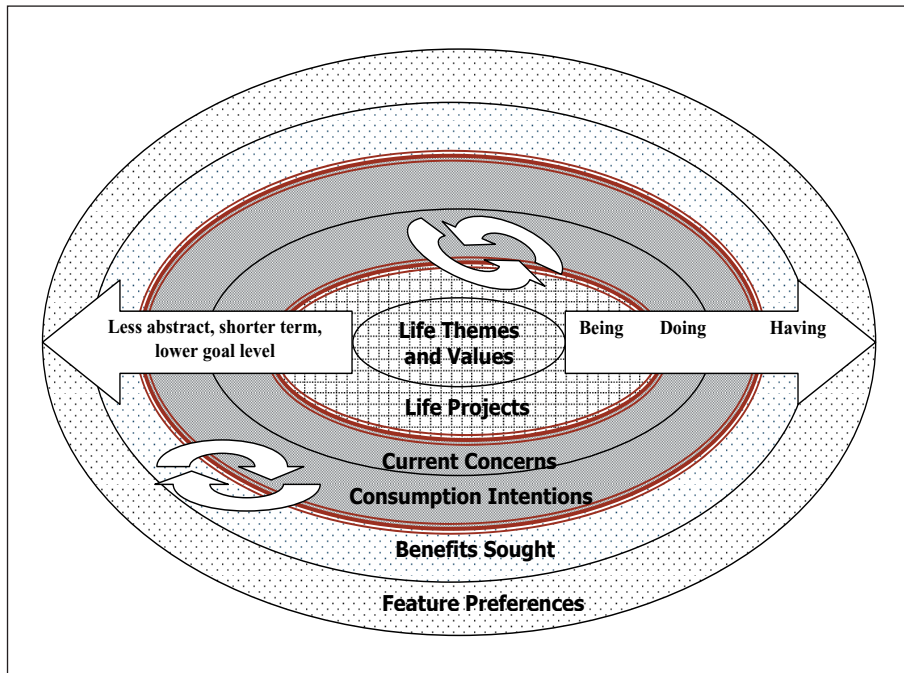


Figure 1. Hierarchical Model of Consumer Goals (Adapted from the Huffman et al.’s Hierarchical Model)

Source: (Huffman et al. 2000:9)

## METHODOLOGY

The questionnaire was developed on the basis of EU tourism-related legislation and contained seven sections involving 48 items (excluding demographic-related questions). Part A contained nine items on the economic aspects of Turkey's accession to the EU. Part B involved seven statements on political aspects, and Part C covered nine items on the effects of EU membership on the composition of the tourism industry. Part D included eight items on the requirements of travel agencies, and Part E contained nine items concerned with travel agencies' awareness with regard to the tourism policies of the EU and EU-Turkey relations. Part F consisted of six items of dependent variables related to travel agencies' general attitude towards Turkey joining the EU and its effects on Turkish tourism. In part G, nine demographic questions were presented as closed-ended questions.

According to Turkish Law No. 1618 and the Directive of Travel Agencies (OJ 2427 and 04.09.1996), Turkish travel agencies are classified into three groups: A, B, and C. Group A travel agencies have the right to execute all agency activities. Travel agencies in Group B sell international airline tickets, railway and bus tickets, and tickets for tours organised by the travel agencies in Group A. Travel agencies in Group C are only able to organise tours for Turkish citizens. Group A travel agencies operating in the main tourism centres of Turkey's Aegean Region, where regional chapters of the TURSAB are located, represent the population examined in the present study. The regional chapters of the TURSAB operate in the Aegean Region, encompassing Afyon, Izmir Kusadasi, Marmaris, and Bodrum. The travel agencies in Group A were targeted in this study because they are involved in the most comprehensive range of agency activities.

The number of Group A travel agencies in the tourism centres named above totalled 500 according to figures released by the TURSAB (The Association of Turkish Travel Agencies 2003); however, these figures are considered outdated because only 400 travel agencies are active currently. The questionnaire was given to all travel agencies operating in the Aegean region. A total of 209 completed questionnaires were received from 400 travel agencies and were subsequently used for the investigation. The survey instrument was pilot tested in Izmir in May 2003. Fifty questionnaires were gathered as a result of the pilot testing, and results were evaluated to improve the clarity and readability of questions in the final version of the questionnaire form.

Responses to the statements were based on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. A 'neither agree nor disagree' option was available and graded as a '4'. The respondents were required to choose the one option from each series that best reflected their opinion. The use of personally administered questionnaires allowed for explanations of the questions and items, where necessary. To identify the variables in a certain way, factor analysis (principal component analysis) was applied to the data and the number of variables was reduced. The reliability of the data (Cronbach's Alpha) was then tested. Regression analysis was then performed to define the priorities of related factors.



## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The demographic profiles of the respondents are listed in Table 2. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which evaluates internal consistency, is 0.95 for this index. This result is within acceptable limits, and the scale has a high level of reliability (Nunnally 1978). Subsequently, a principal factor analysis was performed to identify the construct validity. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin sample value is 0.931 and the Bartlett's test of Sphericity value is 7357.351 ( $p < .001$ ). These results show that the findings are within acceptable limits. Table 3 provides the results of the factor analysis.

Two items of the independent variables were excluded from the scope of evaluation after discovering they were misinterpreted by the respondents. Factor analysis results produced six factors: requirements of travel agencies, awareness of the EU policies affecting tourism, effects of EU membership on the composition of the tourism industry, economic aspects of EU membership, political aspects of EU membership, and general preferences. With re-

Table 2. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

<i>Age</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Educational Background</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
18-25	54	25.8	Primary education	3	1.4
26-32	68	32.5	Elementary school	3	1.4
33-42	50	24.0	High school	70	33.7
43 and older than 43	37	17.7	Undergraduate	123	59.1
Total	209	100.0	Post-graduate	9	4.4
		Total	208	100.0	
<i>Sex</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Working Period</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Female	94	45	less than 1 year	16	7.7
Male	115	55	1-3 years	27	12.9
Total	209	100.0	4-6 years	45	21.5
			7-9 years	37	17.7
			More than 10 years	84	40.2
			Total	209	100.0
<i>Education on Tourism</i>					
Taken	113	54.1			
Not taken	96	45.			
Total	209	100.0			
<i>Department</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Foreign Language</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Owner	18	9.1	None	14	6.7
Manager	49	24.7	1	107	51.1
Ticketing/Reservation	56	28.3	2	67	32.1
Operation	18	9.1	3 and more	21	10.1
Information	11	5.6	Total	209	100.0
Accounting	7	3.5			
Auto-hiring	5	2.5			
Other	34	17.2			
Total	198	100.0			

Table 3. Results of the Factor Analysis

	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained	Mean	F Value	Alpha	P
<b>FACTOR 1- Requirements of travel agencies</b>							
Activities of the TURSAB	.837	15.813	39.533	2.0797	17.7717	.9516	.0001
Activities of politicians	.830						
Activities of the Ministry of Tourism	.828						
Activities of universities	.813						
Activities of tourism associations	.794						
Cooperation among agencies	.775						
Measures on package tours	.621						
Tourist rights	.618						
Harmonisation with the EU standards	.510						
<b>FACTOR 2- Awareness of the EU policies affecting tourism</b>							
		5.579	13.949	4.2010	42.8177	.9224	.0001
<b>Information on MEDSTAT (Euro-Mediterranean Statistical Co-operation)</b>							
Information on EUMEDIS (Euro-Mediterranean Information Society- Multimedia Access to Cultural Heritage and Tourism)	.911						
Information on the Euro Mediterranean Partnership	.889						
Information on tourism satellite accounts	.857						
Information on the measures for disabled tourists	.839						
Information on the Tourism Unit of the EU.	.814						
Information on the legislation relevant to tourism	.807						
Information on the EU projects related with tourism	.682						
	.490						
<b>FACTOR 3- Effects of the EU membership on the composition of tourism sector</b>							
		1.910	4.774	2.6453	45.2145	.9155	.0001
<b>The EU membership and travel agencies' role in the sector</b>							
The EU membership and mergers in the sector	.690						
The EU and Turkish tourism policy	.673						
The EU membership and number of incoming tourists	.656						
The EU membership and number of incoming European tourists	.639						
The EU membership and tour operators	.636						
Importance of tourism for the EU	.624						
Effectiveness of the European tourism associations	.602						
	.519						

TABLE 3. RESULTS OF THE FACTOR ANALYSIS (CONTINUED)

	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained	Mean	F Value	Alpha	P
<b>FACTOR 4- Economic aspects of the EU membership</b>							
The EU membership and foreign direct investment	.751	1.512	3.779	2.6053	37.4318	.9103	.0001
The EU membership and investment in Turkish tourism	.750						
The EU membership and the quality of Turkish tourism	.743						
The EU rules and competition capacity of Turkish tourism	.638						
Euro and Turkish tourism	.551						
Contribution of efforts for the EU membership to Turkish Tourism	.537						
<b>FACTOR 5- Political aspects of the EU Membership</b>							
Success of the reforms in the course of the EU membership	.740	1.447	3.616	2.8708	26.1287	.8083	.0001
Necessity of the reforms in the course of the EU membership	.626						
The EU membership and political prestige	.623						
The EU membership and political stability	.610						
<b>FACTOR 6-General Preferences</b>							
Political support of the EU to Turkish tourism associations	.681	1.246	3.114	4.1560	57.9619	.6949	.0001
The financial support of the EU for Turkish tourism	.674						
Using tourism as an instrument for integration in the course of membership	.499						
Effects of the EU's internal market to Turkish tourism	.494						
Effects of mergers in the EU on Turkish tourism	.432						

gard to variable averages, the results showed that travel agencies do not have a clear understanding of either the Euro–Mediterranean Partnership and its components or EU practices in areas directly related to tourism. Respondents have strong expectations for increasing the activities of the actors in the tourism industry on the way to EU accession.

Items included in the first factor are the activities of the TURSAB, politicians, the Ministry of Tourism, universities and tourism associations, as well as the items of cooperation among travel agencies, measures on package tours, tourist rights, and harmonization with EU standards. The second factor is the awareness of travel agencies with regard to EU policies that affect tourism. The third factor relates to the effects of EU membership on the composition of the tourism industry. The fourth factor involves the following six items that refer to economic aspects of the EU membership. The fifth factor accounts for political aspects of EU Membership. The sixth factor represents the general preferences of the travel agencies.

Stepwise regression analysis of the data produced four dependent variables (Table 4). The first dependent variable is 'Turkey's accession to the EU accelerates the development of Turkish travel agencies'. The effects of EU membership on the composition of the tourism industry and the economic aspects of EU membership are the independent variables. According to the results of the regression analysis, the two most effective variables in the development of Turkish tour operators are acceleration of the development of travel agencies due to Turkey's EU membership and the effects of EU membership on the composition of the tourism industry. Moreover, the third variable, explaining the development of Turkish tour operators, relates to the general preferences that cover the political and financial support of the EU for Turkish tourism, the effect of mergers and the European internal market on Turkish tourism, and the potential use of tourism as an instrument for integration on the path to EU membership.

Regression analysis of the variables affecting third dependent variable, "Turkey's accession to the EU accelerates the development of Turkish tourism", determines the following four independent variables: the acceleration of travel agencies' development due to Turkey's accession to the EU, the effect of EU membership on the composition of the tourism industry, acceleration of the development of Turkish tour operators due to Turkey's accession to the EU, and political aspects of Turkey–EU relations. Regression analysis of the fourth dependent variable, 'Turkey's accession to the EU accelerates Turkey's economic development', revealed three independent variables: the development of Turkish tourism due to Turkey's accession to the EU, economic aspects of EU membership, and the acceleration of the development of travel agencies.

To evaluate Turkey's EU membership prospects from a sectoral viewpoint, the factors identified in the factor analysis are discussed in the framework of a hierarchical model of goals. In the context of Turkey's EU membership, the life theme of travel agencies is related *with being an EU member*. According to the model, with travel agencies as the consumers of the conceptual prod-

Table 4 Regression analyses results of four dependent variables

	1 <sup>st</sup> Dependent			2 <sup>nd</sup> Dependent			3 <sup>rd</sup> Dependent			4 <sup>th</sup> Dependent		
	B	t	Sig t	B	t	Sig t	B	t	Sig T	B	t	Sig t
membership on the tourism sector	.558	6.497	.0001	.408	5.611	.0001	.289	4.727	.0001			
of the EU	.452	5.995	.0001				.200	4.234	.0001			
as the development agencies				.533	9.612	.0001	.342	6.938	.0001	.214	4.143	.0001
				.154	2.576	.011						
as to the Turkish tour operators							.252	5.042	.0001			
the EU Membership							.175	4.057	.0001			
as the development										.590	10.280	.0001
	-.426	-.441	.016	-.652	-2.699	.008	-.648	-5.575	.0001	-.160	-1.715	.088
	.763			.838				.905			.914	
	.582			.702				.820			.835	
	.578			.697				.816			.833	
	143.615			160.847				231.676			345.844	
	.0001			.0001				.0001			.0001	

uct of Turkey's EU membership, the ideas of the self (the link between the present self-identification and the ideal one) reside at the highest level. The self-conception of travel agencies has two dimensions: one related to being a citizen of a candidate country for EU membership and the other related to being part of the tourism industry. On the one hand, as plainly symbolized in the Copenhagen criteria, the EU is a normative entity emphasizing some universal values and norms that represent an ideal to be reached by a candidate country. Turkey's quest for western-style modernization since the foundation of the republic is also consistent with the membership goal (Eylemer 2004). On the other hand, travel agencies that are attracted by the fact the EU is the world's most important tourism market, both as a tourist destination and as a tourism-generating region (Leidner 2004), desire to be part of this market. These idealizations represent what the travel agencies aim "to be". Figure 2 shows the hierarchical model of the travel agencies' goals regarding Turkey's EU membership.

The emphasis here is the desire of travel agencies to fulfil the items found in the first factor. The requirements of the travel agencies (*first factor* in the factor analysis) are in line with their life projects. As stated in the methodological framework section, life projects are related to the construction and maintenance of key life roles and identities (Huffman et al. 2000: 18). In this context,

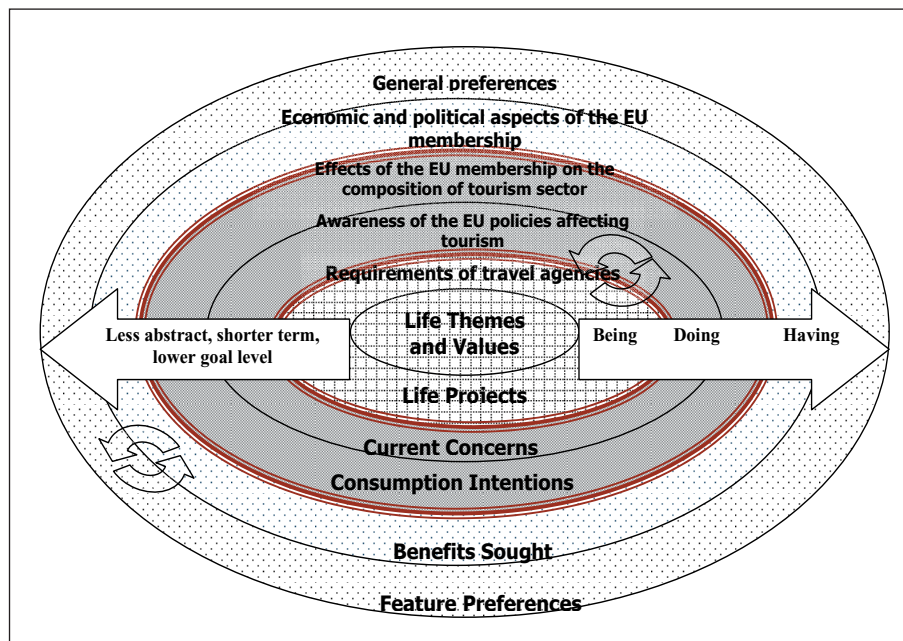


Figure 2 Hierarchical Model of Travel Agencies Goals (Adapted from the Huffman et al.'s Hierarchical Model)

Source: (Huffman et al. 2000:9)



and bearing in mind the candidacy status of Turkey for EU membership, travel agencies' life projects imply being supporters of Turkey's EU bid by demanding more dynamism during the candidacy process and being eager to perform the obligations of both candidacy and membership.

The *second factor* in the factor analysis involves items related to the travel agencies' awareness of those EU policies that directly affect tourism. This refers to a *current concern* for the tourism industry of a candidate country. It is obvious that expectations and perceptions regarding the EU and its policies are closely related to the level of information available on the EU (Eurobarometer 2006). During the candidacy process, Turkish public opinion is subject to information flow from different sources, but information on sector-specific issues from reliable sources is of paramount importance. In this regard, the activities of the Turkish Tourism Investors Association (TYD) and the TURSAB are worth mentioning.

The TURSAB highlights the need for increasing the knowledge of and improving the capacities of information units of the private sector during the accession negotiations process (The Association of Turkish Travel Agencies 2006). Thus, the TURSAB screens legislation and policies that affect tourism and disseminates the results for the use of the sector participants. For example, several books on the EU and tourism have been published by the TURSAB (See Ersin 1997; TURSAB 2001). The TYD also takes a stance in terms of increasing awareness and knowledge of the EU and EU policies within the Turkish tourism industry. In this context, the association carried out an EU-funded project between 2003 and 2004 on EU tourism legislation in cooperation with the Association of Greek Tourist Enterprises under the Bridges of Knowledge Programme (TYD 2006).

The *third factor* in the factor analysis, the effects of EU membership on the composition of the tourism industry, involves items that refer to the aforementioned effects and relate to the *consumption intentions* of the travel agencies. Consumption intentions lie at the interface of "doing" and "having" goals, and are the aims and desires of consumers to engage in the consumption of a particular product (Huffman et al. 2000:18). Within this context, and as citizens of a candidate country, travel agencies are interested in carrying out the necessary reforms and ensuring harmonization with the *acquis communautaire* for EU membership, although they are also interested in the possible outcomes of the harmonization process and the EU membership and how it will affect the tourism industry.

The *fourth and fifth factors* in the factor analysis, the economic and political aspects of EU membership, are related to "having goals", and comprise the *benefits sought* from obtaining EU membership. These two factors indicate the consequences desired from Turkey's EU membership. The fifth factor consists of four items that indicate the political aspects of Turkey-EU relations from the perspective of the travel agencies. The *sixth factor* in the factor analysis relates to *preferred product features*. It is stated above in the literature review that feature preferences often play an important role in the decision making

process of the consumer, mainly with regard to their concreteness and the relative ease of cognitive processing (Huffman et al. 2000:19). To this extent, travel agencies look for benefits from Turkey's EU membership in two ways. The first is related to the benefits of EU citizenship that accompany EU membership, including the free movement of labour, services, goods, and capital, and an increase in the standard of living. The second aspect is related to the benefits that EU membership will bring to the tourism industry, such as an increase in the number of tourist arrivals and tourism receipts resulting from the right of free movement within EU borders. It is expected that EU membership will contribute to the development of Turkey's tourism industry and increase tourism's share of the economy. In addition, the feature preferences of the travel agencies relate to financial aid from the EU that can be allocated to meet the requirements of the sector (*having the benefits of EU membership*).

Regression analysis identifies *four dependent variables* that refer to the development of the Turkish economy, tourism, tour operators, and travel agencies. In this context, *the development of the Turkish economy* is more comprehensive, indicating a higher level of impact. Regression analysis of the variables affecting Turkey's economic development due to Turkey's EU membership reveals three independent variables: *the development of Turkish tourism* due to Turkey's accession to the EU, the development of travel agencies, and economic aspects of EU membership. Regarding the development of Turkish tourism, a spectrum of independent variables is identified, ranging from specific to general issues. These variables involve *the development of travel agencies* due to Turkey's accession to the EU, the impact of EU membership on the composition of the tourism industry, the *development of Turkish tour operators* due to Turkey's EU membership, and political aspects of EU membership.

The development of travel agencies due to Turkey's EU membership is related to the impact of EU membership on the composition of the tourism industry and the economic aspects of EU membership. This implies that when supported with the appropriate policy measures on tourism, the economic benefits of EU membership may enhance the development of travel agencies. The effects of EU membership on the development of Turkish tour operators are thought to be shaped by the development of travel agencies, the effects of EU membership on the composition of the tourism industry, and general preferences. The third independent variable, general preferences, mainly reflects the following economic concerns: financial and political support by the EU for Turkish tourism, the effects of the European internal market, the effects of European mergers on Turkish tourism, and the use of tourism as an instrument for integration on the path to EU membership.

As citizens of a candidate country, the attitudes of the travel agencies are not indifferent to the pro-EU and Euro-sceptic circles within Turkey. In this sense, the findings of the recent Eurobarometer survey public opinion in the European Union (Eurobarometer 2006) are in line with the findings of the travel agencies survey. The Eurobarometer survey results showed that the Turkish people had different ideas about the EU than EU citizens themselves. For

Turkish citizens, "economic prosperity" (35 percent in spring 2006 and 41 percent in autumn 2005), "social protection" (21 percent in 2006 and 32 percent in autumn 2005), and "peace" (24 percent in 2006 and 23 percent in autumn 2005) ranked highly in terms of what the EU represents. The priorities vocalised in EU Member States are quite different. For example, "freedom to travel, study and work anywhere in the EU" comprises the largest group (50 percent in spring 2006 and 52 percent in autumn 2005). The Euro comes in second on this list with 39 percent in spring 2006 (37 percent in autumn 2005). The two issues that generate the most concern in Turkish public opinion are "loss of national identity and culture" and "the end of the Turkish Lira". Compared to the EU members, Turkish citizens rated the lowest in terms of possessing information on the EU, including EU policies and institutions. With respect to the EU poll, the Turkish poll does not appear particularly apprehensive about the possible negative impact of EU-related issues. The expectation of the EU's positive role on the economy is higher (44%) than the EU-25's expectation (37%), although the overall positive image of the EU is diminishing. In autumn 2005, 60 percent of Turkish citizens had a positive view of the EU; this dropped to 43 percent in spring 2006 (Eurobarometer 2006).

Goals at the "doing" level (current concerns and consumption intentions) and "having" level (benefits sought and feature preferences) are the goals most proximal to purchase and consumption decisions (Huffman et al. 2000: 21), as the survey results indicate. If the EU and Turkish elites fall short in fulfilling these goals, this will create EU fatigue within the Turkish public in general and travel agencies in a sectoral perspective. In other words, the value of Turkey's EU membership may differ among the travel agencies, but it is not independent from its capacity to produce desired outcomes.

## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The use of consumption activities as a form of self-construction is more obvious in Turkey's EU bid, where EU membership is often identified with modernization, democratization, economic and social development, etc. In the case of travel agencies, consumption choices are driven by the motivation to attain membership to an "idealized" group to which they believe they do not yet belong. As stated by expectancy theory, EU-related behavior by Turkish travel agencies can be predicted once we know the values that people attach to certain outcomes. The values attributed to EU membership and its components are shown in Figure 2. Travel agencies are choosing between alternative EU-related actions that are compatible with their goals. For example, a travel agency is choosing between two actions (supporting or not supporting Turkey's EU membership bid), and each action has an alternative economic and political outcome.

The hierarchical model of consumers' goals posits travel agencies' expectations from Turkey's EU membership prospects into three levels: goals of *being*, goals of *doing*, and goals of *having*. *Being* an EU member state and being supportive of Turkey's EU membership prospects lie at the top of the hierarchy in

terms of representing life themes, values, and life projects. Concerns related to *doing*, such as gathering information, making use of the information related to the EU and tourism, and harmonization with the *acquis communautaire* lie at a lower goal level. The consumption intentions of the travel agencies, which indicate the motives behind their engagement in Turkey's EU membership, appear simply as a desire for an increase in the importance of the tourism industry, in the number of tourists, in the number of mergers, and in the significance of travel agencies and tour operators in the tourism industry. Besides, making themselves heard in the same way as European tourism organisations and implementing a tourism policy in parallel with EU tourism policies are part of the consumption intentions of travel agencies. Current concerns and consumption intentions are represented within the scope of goals of "doing".

Goals of "having" indicate shorter term and less abstract goals such as "benefits sought" and "features preferred". The economic and political aspects of EU membership represent economic and political benefits sought from EU membership, such as *having* an increase in the flow of direct foreign investment into Turkish tourism and an increase in the quality of Turkish tourism and political stability. The last goal level, "features preferred", simply explains which concrete characteristics of EU membership draw the attention of travel agencies toward the EU and makes them willing to support Turkey's EU membership perspective. The expectation of financial support from the EU for Turkish tourism is an example of this.

This paper, having analyzed the goal hierarchy in the attitudes of travel agencies towards the EU and tourism-related issues, identifies the factors that play a role in the development of the Turkish economy and the Turkish tourism industry alongside the factors that contribute to the development of Turkish tour operators and travel agencies. Results indicate that travel agencies expect an increasing role for the actors in the tourism industry on the path to accession. Membership to the EU is expected to affect Turkey's economic development in the following areas: economic relations, the composition of the tourism industry, and the development of travel agencies. Within EU membership perspective, tour operators are mostly affected by the development of travel agencies and the effects of EU membership on the composition of tourism industry. Development of tour operators and travel agencies, effects of EU membership composition of tourism industry along with the political aspects of EU-Turkey relations membership play role on the development of Turkish tourism. These critical issues should be taken into account in formulating tourism policies. It is hoped that these findings shed light upon further avenues of research into the sectoral aspects of the EU membership perspective.

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