

## Evaluation of The Effects of Historical Urban Landscapes on Van City Identity

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### Abstract

This research aims to examine the effects of historical urban landscapes on urban identity in the city of Van (Türkiye), where concrete cultural landscapes that have hosted various civilizations are layered. The research was conducted through a literature review and after expert evaluation in the selection of historical urban landscapes, which are cultural landscape areas, and a photo-survey was conducted with 415 people with a user-oriented approach. In this way, city images, identity and memory spaces in minds were determined. City users it has been concluded that historical urban landscapes are the dominant elements in the formation of urban identity in the central districts of Van. In this sense, some suggestions have been developed for the protection and development of historical urban landscape elements that provide a connection with the past and are important and effective in the formation of urban identity for their sustainability with their surroundings.

### Keywords

Urban identity, Cultural landscape, Historical urban landscape, Van city image

### 1.Introduction

Rapid transformations in cities; It has led to the loss of place identity and ignoring of collective values and cultural heritage (Banderin and Oers, 2012). The real problem of identity erosion is not the change itself, but the uncontrolled and unplanned change (Oğurlu, 2014). Even though it may seem that there is no significant change when cities with an identity are observed for a while, changes are taking place. However, the changes are not noticeable because they are in line with the identity of the city (Oğurlu, 2014). According to the demographic data analyzed so far, the perception of urban identity is the personal inferences of city users in the form of their opinions, impressions and prejudices (Tolungüç, 1999), knowledge, beliefs, feelings and mental descriptions of the place (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999). In studies conducted by many different disciplines, it is thought that the factors that create the urban image are shaped by two important parameters: external stimulating factors and personal factors. While the first factor is the object or physical objects perceived from the outside, the second describes the socio-psychological characteristics

of the perceivers (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999). In short, urban image is the holistic perception that urban identity components leave on its users (Ker, 1998).

Adopted at the UNESCO General Conference on 10 November 2011, the HUL (Historic Urban Landscape) Recommendation calls on Member States to integrate the protection and management of cultural heritage in cities and settlements with policies and practices for sustainable urban development (UNESCO, 2011). Lynch (1960) argued that identity can be formed through differences rather than similarities. Erikson (1968) defines identity as "a subjective sense of self and continuity" (Keshtkaran, 2019). Factors that form urban identity; While natural environment data is related to topography, climate, water element, soil structure, vegetation and geological structure, the built environment also includes cultural landscapes created by the human element (Çöl, 1998; Carmona et al., 2003; Ocakçı and Türk 2012; Kaya, 2016; Kef, 2017). While describing the concepts of identity and image, Montgomery (1998) defines identity as 'what a place really is'. He expressed the image as "perception of space according to feelings" (Turan,

2010). Pocock and Hudson (1978) defined the images acquired about urban environments as personal thoughts. The most important areas that give originality to cities are historical urban landscapes (O'Donnell, 2008; Kaya, 2016). This study was prepared to identify the elements of Van city identity and to manage the historical urban landscape heritage resources correctly. The hypotheses put forward are; Hypothesis 1: The most dominant element of urban identity is historical urban landscapes. Hypothesis 2: Demographic data is effective in the perception of urban identity. Hypothesis 3: 'Experience in time and place' factors are effective in the perception of the artificial components that make up the urban identity. Hypothesis 4: City image is effective in the formation of urban identity.

## 2. Materials and Methods

The historical urban landscapes located within the borders of İpekyolu, Edremit and Tuşba districts, which are the central districts of Van (Türkiye), constitute the

main material of the study (Figure 1). Continental climate prevails in Van. There is a large difference in temperature and rainfall between seasons. Winters are harsh and long. The settlements close to Lake Van are milder due to the influence of the lake. Van is "one of the nine world cities that have the status of the oldest surviving city" (Tekin, 2005; Akgümüş, 2011).

However, since Van is a border city, it has experienced numerous wars and destruction throughout history. On the other hand, it is important in terms of blending different cultures brought by migrations (Ağaoğlu, 2007).

The method includes: determination of natural and cultural landscape features for the research area, data collection from relevant institutions, spatial determination, on-site analysis and photography between 9 and 16 hours, determination of historical urban landscapes presented to users in the survey as a result of evaluation of expert opinion, preparation of survey questions, urban planning. A

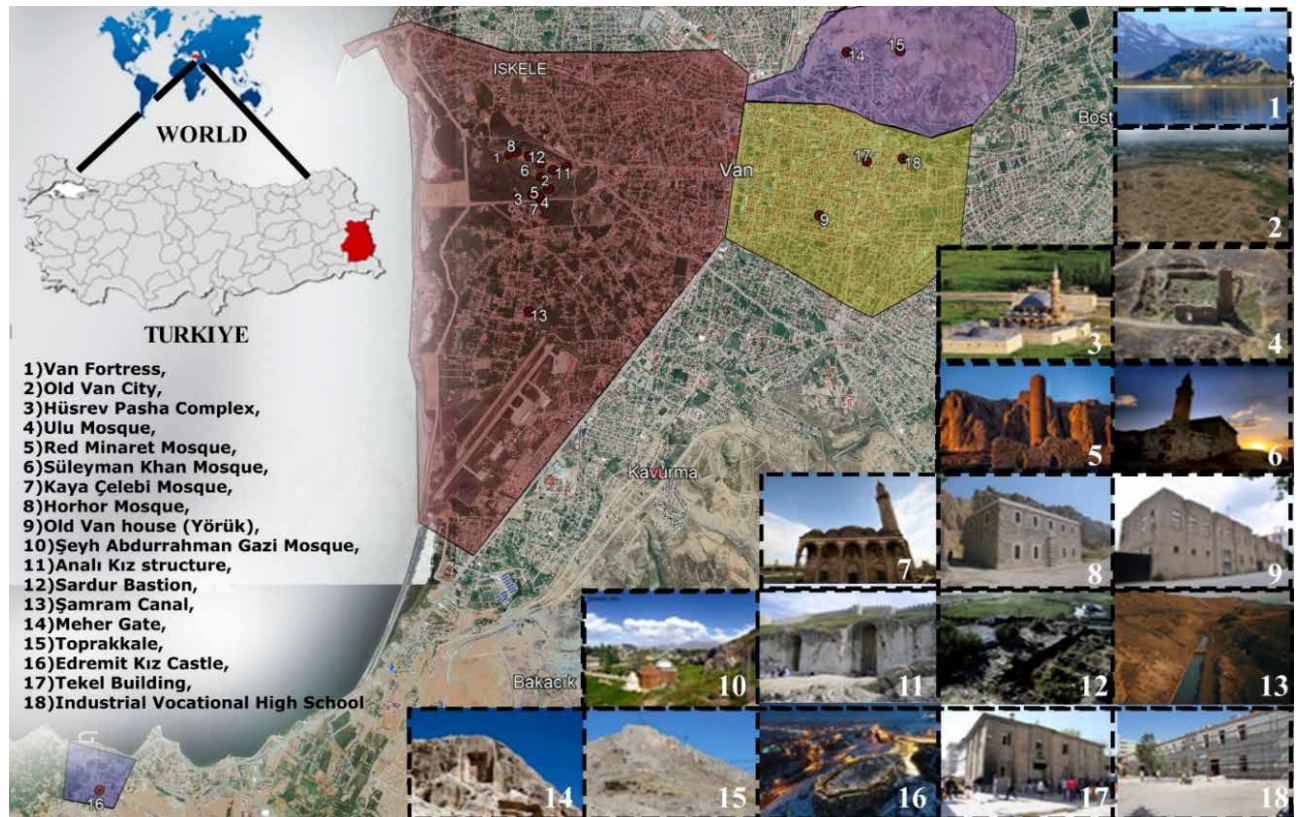


Figure 1. Location of study area and Historical urban landscapes of Van city

survey was conducted on 415 users, analysis of the data in the SPSS program, evaluation of the findings, discussion and development of suggestions in line with the results.

A total of 116 Immovable Cultural Assets to be Protected in Van Central Districts have been registered by the Van Cultural Heritage Preservation Regional Board Directorate. Within the scope of the study, 18 of them, which are located in the city of Van, are visible, known by many people and easily accessible by public transportation, were selected for evaluation.

The list of historical urban areas was asked to be evaluated in terms of visual landscape, accompanied by photographs, by a group of 5 experts. This expert group; It consists of 1 landscape architect, 1 archaeologist, 1 art historian, 1 city planner and 1 architect living in Van. In the evaluation made for the selection of historical urban landscapes, an 11-parameter scale was developed by Kaplan et al. (1989), Tveit et al., (2006), Hansen, (2014), Bereitschaft, (2017), Asur and Alphan (2018). These parameters; 1.Visual Scale (Openness, Visibility), 2.Historicity, 3.Effect on Urban Identity, 4.Spirit of Place, 5.Spatial Mobility, 6.Appropriation (Maintenance, Urbanity Consciousness), 7.Focal Center, 8.Creating Landscape, 9.Perceptibility, 10.Silhouette Effect and 11.Accessibility. Scoring was evaluated using a 5-point Likert scoring system, with 5 being the highest score, 3 being "I have no idea", "I am undecided" and 1 being the lowest score. Each historical area was evaluated according to 11 determined parameters.

The average score was accepted as 33, and out of 21 urban landscape areas, three historical landscape areas that were below the average were eliminated and the remaining 18 historical urban landscapes (Van Castle, Old Van City, Hüsrev Pasha Complex, Ulu Mosque, Red Minaret Mosque, Süleyman Khan Mosque, Kaya Çelebi Mosque, Horhor Mosque, old Van house, Şeyh Abdurrahman Gazi Mosque, Analı Kız structure, Sardur Bastion, Şamram Canal, Meher Gate, Toprakkale, Edremit Kız Castle, Tekel Building, Industrial Vocational High School) were taken into consideration in the survey question.

The number of surveys to be applied was determined by taking population data from TURKSTAT and the total population of Van Central districts (616,360 people). Cohen et al. According to (2000), the number of surveys to be conducted was determined as 384 people with a 95%

confidence interval. The survey was applied to 415 people. The studies of Kaya, (2016), Özman, (2018), Ziyæe, (2018) and Duymuş, (2011) were used in preparing the survey questions. Photos of the historical areas in the survey form were shown to the users and they were asked to make an evaluation. The data were analyzed using the SPSS program. The current historical urban landscape perception of city users was evaluated with survey data. In the first part of the survey, the demographic information of the users (place of birth, gender, age, marital status, education level, occupation, monthly income, duration of residence). In the second part, Van's urban function (a city with dominant natural elements, historical city, student city, agricultural city, industrial city, tourism city). In the third part, the visual contribution of historical urban landscapes to the urban identity of Van (The degree of impact of each landscape on urban identity was measured on a 5-point Likert scale; 1: Strongly disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: No opinion, 4: Agree, 5: Strongly agree). In the fourth part, an evaluation of where the guest who does not know Van would like to go in order to introduce Van, in the fifth part, suggestions for evaluating the identity of Van city (26 suggestions are included), in the sixth part, In the section, propositions (5 propositions) aimed at evaluating Van city identity in terms of image were questioned.

### 3. Findings and Discussion

According to the results of the first part of the survey, it is seen that half of the sample was applied to a group consisting of people who have been living in Van since birth, and the majority of the sample is made up of people who have been living in Van for a long time. It was observed that the sample consisted of young, educated, familiar with Van, civil servants with a middle income level, and mostly male participants.

In the second part of the survey, when the users were asked about their thoughts on "Van's urban function", the users said that Van was first a "city of history", then "a city with dominant natural features", and then a "tourism city". In addition, participants think that Van is definitely not an "industrial city" (Table 2). Van also has many socio-culturally meaningful historical landscapes such as the historical ruins of the Old Van City, Historical Van Houses, Zeve Martyrdom, and for this reason it is considered a historical city (Tekin, 2005; Kılıç, 2006) and is considered by the users

to be "History" as its dominant urban function. It has been revealed that it is perceived as "city".

Thanks to its topographic structure and geography, the city of Van has natural landscapes such as majestic mountains and Lake Van. Despite this, the history city function is perceived as more dominant. It is inferred from this that cultural landscapes created by nature and human hands have taken their place as a more dominant identity element in minds (Çöl, 1998; Karabulut, 2018; Kaya, 2016).

Van is thought to be a tourism city as the urban function that ranks third in perceptions for Van. According to Alaeddinoğlu (2006), in his doctoral thesis study in which he evaluated the tourism potential of Van; He emphasized that although Van's tourism potential is 50%, it cannot use this potential much. It is thought that Van has now started to create the perception of tourism in people's minds.

In the study, the hypothesis was checked by performing statistical analyzes in order to investigate the validity of the hypothesis "Demographic data is effective in the perception of urban identity". In this regard, it has been observed that the parameters "Place of birth, gender, profession, age, monthly income" play an active role on the perception of Van's functional urban identity. According to the data set, it was seen that the parameters "Marital status, duration of residence and education level" did not play an active role on the perception of Van's functional urban identity.

When the findings are examined, there is only a statistically significant mean difference (mean differences were tested with one-way anova analysis) between the statement "Van is an agricultural city" and the place of birth ( $\text{sig} < 0.05$ ), and the source of this is that the participants born outside Van say Van is an "agricultural city". It seems that he thinks that. Apart from this, it has been observed that the place of birth variable has no effect on the functional identity of the city. Van's function is perceived differently by outsiders compared to permanent residents.

There is a significant difference between the "Gender" variable and the "Urban function" perceptions with the expressions "Student city, agricultural city and industrial city" ( $\text{sig} < 0.05$ ). The reason for this difference is that "it has been observed that the functions of student city, agricultural city and industrial city are perceived more dominantly by male

participants. A significant difference was observed between different gender groups only in some functional urban identity elements of Van. This is thought to be because it is mostly practiced by a profession dominated by men. According to these data, the hypothesis that demographic variables have an active role in the perception of space is confirmed.

When looking at the average differences between "age groups" and the "Urban function" perceptions of the city of Van, only the statement "It is a student city" differs significantly ( $\text{sig} < 0.05$ ) and it is seen that the source of the difference is the 18-22 age range, which has a higher average. Accordingly, students perceive Van as a student city. In other words, occupation and age group play an active role in the perception of urban function.

No significant difference was found between their "marital status" and "Urban function" perceptions ( $\text{sig} > 0.05$ ). It is seen that marital status does not change the perception of Van's functional urban identity. At the same time, it was observed that educational background differentiation did not affect the perception of functional urban identity ( $\text{sig} > 0.05$ ). According to this data set, functional urban identity for Van is perceived equally by groups with different marital status and education levels.

A significant difference was found between the "occupation variable" and "Urban function" perceptions ( $\text{sig} < 0.05$ ). It was determined that students had a high average in the statement "It is a student city", and "Administrators" had a high average in the statement "It is an industrial city". The hypothesis that the occupation variable, one of the demographic variables, is effective on the perception of urban identity, has been confirmed.

A significant difference was found between the "Monthly Income" variable and "Urban function" perceptions ( $\text{sig} < 0.05$ ). Van is perceived as a "student city" by the group that does not have a monthly income. The average of participants with low income levels is high in the statement "It is an agricultural city". Individuals with high income have a high average in the statement "It is an industrial city". "Duration of residence" and "Perception of urban function" do not show a significant difference.

Functional ID Type	Average	SS
It is a city with dominant natural features	3.56	1.37
It is a city of history	3.61	1.37
It is a student city	2.63	1.27
It is an industrial city	2.12	1.08
It is an agricultural city	2.75	1.33
It is a tourism city	3.37	1.37

Table 2. Van's functional urban identity of the sample

In the third part, the participants were asked to what extent the historical urban landscapes previously selected by experts had an impact on urban identity, and they were asked to score on a 5-point Likert scale (Table 3). When the findings were examined, Van Castle was chosen as the most influential historical landscape with the highest average. It was followed by Edremit Maiden's Castle. Tekel Building was chosen after the Industrial Vocational High School as the historical landscape that has the least impact on the city identity.

The findings include the effects of urban landscapes on urban identity and the average differences between demographic variables, examined by independent sample T-Test and one-way anova analysis. According to these findings, among the demographic variables, there is a significant mean difference only between education level and the preference of landscapes that are effective in identity ( $f = 2.534$ ,  $sig < 0.05$ ). When the source of the difference is examined with PostHoc tests, it is seen that the difference arises from participants at "master's and doctoral" levels. The averages of the participants in this group are lower and statistically different than the other participants. According to this data set, as the level of education increases, the appreciation criteria of people who become more aware of the city become higher. It turns out that they are more difficult to like. The average differences between the demographic variables, place of birth, and the effect of historical urban landscapes on urban identity were examined by statistical

analysis method. With the birthplace variable, Old Van City, Red Minaret Mosque, Ulu Mosque, Süleyman Han Mosque, Kaya Çelebi Mosque, Horhor Mosque, Yörükler Old Van House, Şeyh Abdurrahman Gazi Masjid, Analı Kızılı Open Air Temple, Sardur Bastion, Şamram (Menua) Canal. A significant mean difference was detected between Toprakkale, Meher Taş Kapı, and Industrial Vocational High School ( $sig < 0.05$ ), and when the source of this difference is examined, it is seen that the participants whose place of birth is Van have a higher mean. Those born in Van seem to know and perceive better even the landscapes that are not visible. Participants who have been living in Van for a long time cannot perceive the historical landscapes as much as the original residents of the city, no matter how long they live. This confirms the hypothesis that local experience is effective in the perception of urban identity.

When looking at the effect of historical urban landscapes on urban identity with the gender variable, there is a significant difference between the Old City of Van, Red Minaret Mosque, Ulu Mosque, Süleyman Han Mosque, Kaya Çelebi Mosque, Horhor Mosque, Yörükler Old Van House, Analı Kızılı Open Air Temple, Hüsrev Pasha Social Complex and Toprakkale. A mean difference was detected ( $sig < 0.05$ ). Male participants had higher averages in the urban landscapes of the Old Van City, Red Minaret Mosque, Ulu Mosque, Süleyman Han Mosque, Kaya Çelebi Mosque, and female participants had higher averages in the landscapes of Horhor Mosque, Yörükler Old Van House, Analı Kızılı Open Air Temple, Hüsrev Pasha Complex and Toprakkale. It has a high average. Here, demographic data appears to be effective in the perception of urban identity, and it turns out that women prefer different places than men. Accordingly, female participants prefer more accessible, crowded places.

According to the results of the average differences between the "Age" variable and "The effect of historical urban landscapes on city identity", the age variable and Van Castle, Old Van City, Kaya Çelebi Mosque, Horhor Mosque, Yörükler Old Van House, Şeyh Abdurrahman Gazi Masjid, Analı Kızılı Open Air Temple. A significant mean difference was detected between Sardır Burcu, Şamram (Menua) Canal, Toprakkale, Meher Kapı and Industrial Vocational High School ( $sig < 0.05$ ). When the sources of mean differences are examined, the

18-22 age range has a high mean in Van Castle and Şamram (Menua) Canal, while the 40-49 age range has a high mean in Horhor Mosque, Şeyh Abdurrahman Gazi Masjid and Analı Kızlı Open Air Temple, and they think that these landscapes are the dominant identity place. It is envisaged that the Şamram (Menua) Channel will be preferred as the dominant identity element by the older age group. However, it is a surprising result that it is preferred as the dominant identity element by the 18-22 age group. When the reason for this differentiation is examined, it may be that active tourism and camping activities have been carried out in the relevant area for university student groups in the last few years. As age increases, it becomes clear that memory identity places are less known and perceived by society. However, as the awareness of memory places increases with age, it is inferred that previous generations did not tell the next generations about these places. At the same time, it seems that the promotion of historical urban landscapes is insufficient. It is thought that the places that are not perceived well even by many young people who are from Van and have been living in Van for a long time cannot be perceived at all by tourists coming to the city.

According to middle and high income participants, a differentiation was detected in the spaces where historical urban landscapes have an impact on urban identity. According to this data, the increase in income level is thought to be an important factor in the impact of Van's historical urban landscapes on the city identity. No significant difference was found between the "Marital status" variable and "The effect of historical urban landscapes on urban identity" ( $\text{sig} > 0.05$ ). It was observed that the change in marital status did not cause differences of opinion among the participants. No significant difference was found between the "educational status" variable and "The effect of historical urban landscapes on urban identity" ( $\text{sig} > 0.05$ ). It has been observed that the level of education is not effective in perceiving historical urban landscapes as an element of identity.

A significant mean difference was detected between the "Occupation" variable and "The effect of historical urban landscapes on urban identity" ( $\text{sig} < 0.05$ ). Accordingly, it is seen that the participants working as civil servants

have a high average in Yörükler Old Van House and Şeyh Abdurrahman Gazi Mosque, while the students have a high average in Şeyh Abdurrahman Gazi Masjid and Analı Kızlı Open Air Temple.

A significant difference was found between "Monthly income" and "Impact of historical urban landscapes on urban identity" ( $\text{sig} < 0.05$ ). Participants with average income have high averages in Old Van City, Yörükler Old Van House, Şeyh Abdurrahman Gazi Mosque, Toprakkale and Meher Kapı landscapes, while participants with high monthly income have high averages in Kızıl Minareli Mosque, Analı Kızlı Open Air Temple, Hüsrev Paşa Social Complex, Sardur Burcu and Industrial Vocational High School. A significant difference was found between "Residence period" and "Impact of historical urban landscapes on urban identity" in the sample city of Van ( $\text{sig} < 0.05$ ). It was seen that participants who have been residing in Van since birth have high averages in Kızıl Minareli Mosque and Ulu Mosque. It is observed that individuals who resided in Van for a period of 11 and 15 years have high averages in Süleyman Han Mosque, Kaya Çelebi Mosque, Horhor Mosque, Yörükler Old Van House, Şeyh Abdurrahman Gazi Mosque, Hüsrev Pasha Social Complex, Şamram (Menua) Canal, Toprakkale, Meher Gate and Industrial Vocational High School. It was observed that the participants perceived the city of Van better as the duration of residence in Van increased.

These data confirm the hypothesis that demographic variables have an active role in the perception of space. Among the historical urban landscapes in the central districts of Van, the first places thought to have the greatest impact on urban identity were found to be Van Castle, Edremit Maiden's Castle, Old Van City and Süleyman Han Mosque, respectively. The landscapes thought to have the least impact on urban identity were the Tekel Building and the Industrial Vocational High School.

Landscapes in the City Center	Average	SS
Van Castle	4,42	0,96
Old Van City	3,72	1,23
Red Minaret Mosque	3,54	1,16
Suleyman Khan Mosque	3,64	1,91
Kaya Çelebi Mosque	3,52	1,16
Horhor Mosque	3,36	1,16
Yoruks Old Van House	3,48	1,23
Sheikh Abdurrahman Gazi Masjid	3,62	1,18
Mother Daughter Air Temple	3,31	1,13
Hüsrev Pasha Complex	3,33	1,17
Sardur Bastion	3,67	1,12
Shamran Canal	3,24	1,13
Toprakkale	3,54	1,25
Meher Gate (Stone Gate)	3,37	1,17
Edremit Maiden's Castle	4,06	1,91
industrial Vocational School	3,03	2,74
Tekel Building	3,15	2,94

Table 3. Effects of historical urban landscapes on Van urban identity

In the fourth chapter, "Where would you take your guest who doesn't know Van to introduce him to Van?" The total answers to the question "Write five of them in order of priority" from the entire data set were evaluated and the promotional venues of Van province were determined according to the weighted answer. These are respectively; Van Castle, Akdamar Island and Church, Muradiye Waterfall, Kalecik Van Historical Houses and Çavuştepe Castle.

In the fifth section, participants evaluated 26 propositions for "evaluating the urban identity of Van" (Table 4). In the question that included propositions about urban identity, participants said;

The Old City of Van is where the history of the city began, Van has an identity unlike any other city, the history of the

city holds an important place in the collective memory, the historical areas in the city, the city of Van is a safe city, with an average of 3.5-3.6, close to the answer "I have no idea." scoring has been done. As can be understood from these answers, it is seen that there is no sense of a dominant identity of the city. In addition, city users are of the opinion that the city is not sufficient in terms of public transportation, that the construction around historical areas is not carried out in accordance with the urban identity, and that the city is not equipped enough for living. In addition, users think that Lake Van and the city of Van are integrated, that historical areas are symbols of the city but they are not focal points of the city, that city residents do not protect their historical and cultural heritage, and that historical areas are very deteriorated. The fact that the city cannot be recognized from an old photograph shows that users are not aware of Van's memory places and local architecture. There was a high level of participation in the proposition in the survey that traditional architecture should be at the forefront. This situation infers that the local residential architecture in Van has lost its visibility, thus the city has largely lost its identity and memory spaces.

In the sixth section, the averages of the statements in which the participants evaluated the "sample's perception of Van urban identity in terms of landscape" are included (Table 5). According to the findings, the sample answered "I have no idea" to the questions "Relaxing and breathing places in the city are not well known, I can recognize the city from an old photograph", and it is thought that the city does not have a clear image in the minds and therefore does not have a clear identity. It was observed that the participants gave consistent answers with this result that Van's urban function is thought to be a historical city in the first place. However, it has been observed that demographic data plays an active role in choosing the propositions about the city image in this section. As education level and financial earnings increase, the sample's agreement with the propositions in the question in this section decreases. A higher relationship was found especially in master's and doctoral graduates and those with high monthly income. According to this relationship, it is seen that people like it less as their income level and education level increases. The fact that individuals with higher education levels like places less supports the study of Oktay (2017).

Propositions for evaluating Van urban identity		Average	SS
1.	1. Traditional residential architecture should be at the forefront.	3,69	2,29
2.	Maintenance, repair and renovation works of historical areas are sufficient.	2,26	1,28
3.	Old Van City is where the history of the city began.	3,49	1,19
4.	Studies aimed at developing urban identity in Van are sufficient.	2,11	1,2
5.	Experts and city administration should work in coordination to develop Van's urban identity.	4,41	6,08
6.	High and dense construction is necessary for identity development.	2,68	1,45
7.	Historical buildings (historic urban landscapes) are symbols of the city.	4,32	2,78
8.	There should be large green areas in Van city center.	4,41	1,02
9.	Increasing the economic welfare of the city is necessary for the development of the city.	4,26	1,09
10.	The van has all the necessary equipment for living.	2,65	1,32
11.	New constructions around historical areas are in accordance with the urban identity.	2,61	1,49
12.	Van has an identity unlike any other city.	3,62	2,91
13.	It is easy and convenient to reach everywhere by public transportation.	2,53	2,89
14.	In historical areas, information and direction signs are sufficient.	2,42	1,18
15.	1The history of the city has an important place in social memory.	3,52	2,89
16.	The people of Van protect their historical and cultural heritage.	2,33	1,31
17.	The city of Van is integrated with its history.	2,64	3,08
18.	There should be various activity areas in historical areas.	3,95	1,19
19.	The historical areas (landscapes) in Van have been preserved intact until today.	2,33	1,22
20.	City and nature should be intertwined.	4,45	3,79
21.	Historical areas in the city are the focal points of the city.	3,51	1,33
22.	Iskele beach has an important place in Van's urban memory.	3,97	1,33
23.	The city of Van is a safe city.	3,58	1,27
24.	Interventions to improve the city are positive.	2,79	1,25
25.	Media should be used more actively in a positive way to promote the identity.	4,19	1,08
26.	Lake Van is integrated with the history of the city.	3,72	1,37

Table 4. Propositions for evaluating Van urban identity

Suggestions	Average	SS
city's focal points, landmarks, squares and routes are distinct.	2,82	1,58
I can recognize the city from an old photo.	3,13	1,24
The city has its own unique architecture.	2,81	1,33
There are places in the city to relax and breathe.	3,37	1,39
The historical past of the city is unimportant.	1,63	1,14

Table 5. Suggestions for evaluating Van city identity in terms of image

In this study, it was examined whether demographic variables, duration of living in the city and occupational parameters were effective in the preference of historical places that are thought to have an impact on the urban identity of Van. It was found that marital and educational status did not play an active role in the choice of identity places in the Van sample; It has been observed that parameters such as education level, place of birth, gender, age, profession, income and duration of residence play an active role in the choice of identity places.

The general results of the study revealed that the effects of historical urban landscapes, which provide city visibility in the perception of city users, on urban identity are important, and these results overlap with the studies of Karagüler and Korgavuş (2012), Kaya (2016), Acarlı (2017) and Aksoyak (2019). According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, the increase in income level (Şimşek et al., 2015) shows that people cannot naturally deal with elements such as aesthetic appearance, identity, and history only after meeting their basic needs.

Women prefer historical urban landscapes that have an impact on urban identity; While they preferred more accessible, familiar and safe places, men preferred places that were difficult to reach and could be considered more secluded. This supports the studies conducted by Rahm et al., (2021), Evensen et al., (2021), Aydın and Aşur (2024)

about women's desire for a safe environment outdoors.

When the dominant identity factor differentiation according to place of birth is examined, it is seen that the participants who have resided in Van since birth prefer the Red Minaret Mosque and the Grand Mosque. These areas are mosques from the Seljuk period that have relatively lost their visibility, and they only have ruined minarets. The fact that users from Van, who have lived in Van since birth, know these landscapes shows that the urban memory is still alive in the minds of the original inhabitants. However, no matter how long the users live in Van, they do not see these two mosques as elements of their identity.

For city promotion spaces, no participant mentioned urban furniture, socio-psychologically meaningful spaces of the city, the presence of squares, focal points of the city, and the differentiation of urban areas and rural areas. In this case, according to the answers given, it is thought that the image of the city is not clear in the minds of the users.

According to the survey results, although Van Castle ranks first in city identity and city promotion, users; It is interesting that he does not know the Old City of Van, the Sardur Bastion, the Suleyman Khan Mosque, the Grand Mosque of the Old Van City, the Red Minaret Mosque, and the Horhor Mosque. With the restoration works carried out in the area and the restoration of Hüsrev Pasha, Süleyman Han and Kaya Çelebi Mosques, these landscapes have an important place in the city identity and city memory.

According to the survey results, it has been seen that increasing the visibility of historical urban landscapes, using them as activity areas, and making environmental arrangements ensure the permanence and continuity of the city's values. However, the restoration work must be carried out under the supervision of experts and in accordance with the original. According to survey data, city users; The fact that the city is not equipped enough to live and that Van is definitely not an industrial city, that Van has not gained the identity of a tourism city although it is a historical city, and that it is not an agricultural city explains the reason for the migrations to and from the city. Although there is such a value as Lake Van, it is surprising that users do not have an idea about the existence of places to breathe and relax in the city. Having various activity opportunities in historical urban areas also makes the area interesting. Like the Edremit Maiden's Castle, the restoration of this castle,

which was not mentioned much until recently, ranks second among the places thought to have an impact on the city's identity, thanks to Seyir Tepe and its cafeteria, showing that it has been adopted as an identity in the city's memory. In addition, in the survey study, most of the users mention Edremit Seyir Tepe or its cafe as the city promotion venue at least as much as Edremit Maiden's Castle. In this context, it is seen that the landscaping of historical urban areas is of great importance. For this reason, similarly, other urban historical areas should be considered together with their surroundings and landscaping arrangements should be completed in accordance with the identity of the area under the supervision of experts. In addition, Tekel Building and Industrial Vocational High School are the two buildings with the easiest access in the city center. However, it is historical urban landscapes that have the least impact on urban identity. The reason for this is that landscapes and city users do not interact in any way. These buildings can be repurposed and landscaped for the city's culture and history so that they can take their place in the city's memory as a place of identity.

Within the scope of the results of the study, some suggestions developed to understand and give meaning to the Van city identity within historical continuity are listed below.

- Considering local and national identity values; It is thought that establishing a decision-making mechanism in which local governments, academics, opinion leaders who play an active role in the city and citizens have an active say will be the best approach for the decisions that need to be taken regarding the city.
- The integration of historical urban landscapes with each other and with the city should be ensured by evaluating the city on a holistic scale. For this purpose, cultural routes should be created.
- Creating training and activity routes for city users to promote identity spaces will have positive effects. Using the Şamram (Menua) Canal as a bicycle route will also bring the history of Urartian to life.
- It is difficult for city users to perceive the historical areas in Van Castle and its immediate surroundings. In these areas, emphasis should be placed on the presence of guiding and promotional objects.
- Local architecture can be revitalized with a modern style.

- Integrative landscape works can be carried out on the shores and coasts of Lake Van, which is integrated with historical urban landscapes.

- Considering urban historical areas together with their surroundings and completing landscaping arrangements in accordance with the identity of the area under the supervision of experts may lead them to take a more active role in the promotion of the urban identity.

- Building a comprehensive cultural center that provides opportunities to express the city, its past and history together with its structures, can be effective in promoting the city's identity.

#### 4. Conclusion

According to UNESCO's 2011 Recommended Landscape Decision for the protection of heritage areas, it has been said that when making development strategy plans of cities, a holistic approach within historical depth, which evaluates heritage areas together with their environment and the historical cultural values of the city, should be the basic principle. The structure and recommendations of the study were carried out in this direction. It is thought that the loss of visibility of urban identity, which is an important criterion of quality urban space, causes the quality of urban life to decrease and the city cannot be perceived correctly (Madran, 2011).

In this study carried out in this direction, historical urban landscapes with urban visibility and easy access in the context of visual landscape were determined by expert evaluation. The effects of selected historical urban landscapes on urban identity and their perceptions in the minds of city users; It was collected by survey method. The reliability of the survey was 80%, within the correct range for general acceptance. As a result of the survey, it was seen that current identity spaces and memory identity spaces differed, awareness of historical urban landscapes decreased, perspectives were tourism-oriented and not value-oriented. According to city users, the most dominant identity element is historical urban landscapes and Van's Functional Identity is that it is a City of History. In this context, it is thought that the first hypothesis of the thesis, "The most dominant element that creates urban identity is historical urban landscapes", which was put forward at the beginning of the study, is confirmed.

It was observed that Van Castle was the primary identity and promotion place in the perception of the participants. However, it has been observed that the historical landscapes around the Castle cannot be clearly perceived even by those born in Van. Additionally, it has been observed that the distinction between rural and urban areas is not clear in the minds of users. From this it is concluded that Van is a city that is still urbanizing. Different demographic characteristics affect perception at varying scales, and the effectiveness of these demographic data varies for each city. Each city should be evaluated in its own context. It is thought that the second hypothesis of the thesis, "Demographic data is effective in the perception of urban identity", is partially confirmed. When the oral history study and survey analyzed the relationship between duration of residence in the place and perception, it was seen that the "experience in the place" was effective in the perception of physical space with the time factor. It is thought that the 3rd hypothesis of the thesis, "The time factor and experience of the place are effective in the perception of the artificial components that make up the urban identity" is confirmed. The city image components of Lynch (1960) were not found in the answers given to the questions regarding promotional places and propositions in the survey questions. Lynch says that identity consists of collective images. Lack of clear images in minds affects the visibility of urban identity. For this reason, it is thought that the 4th hypothesis of the thesis, "Urban image is effective in the formation of urban identity", has been confirmed. The differences between memory places and current identity elements were evaluated. In this context, as stated by Silverman and Ruggles (2007), the presence of cultural heritage elements in the landscape is not sufficient to protect the cultural landscape and transfer it to future generations; these elements must be kept alive, remembered and used. Although there are 116 registered historical urban landscapes in Van city center, very few of them are known and perceived as an element of urban identity. Although 62 of these areas are located in Van Castle and its surroundings, many of them are unknown. It is seen that well-groomed and aesthetic areas that are strong in terms of visual landscape, accessible, renewed with their surroundings, and places that are promoted on social media and where activities are organized in these areas play an active role in the city identity.

In this sense, it is thought that it would be appropriate to carry out renovation works for the purpose of protecting and developing the sustainability of Van's historical urban landscape elements, which provide ties with the past and are effective in the formation of the city identity, together with their surroundings. As a result, it turns out that the identity of a city is formed through local values. In this context, based on the results of the study; In the sustainable management of Van Historical Urban Landscapes as living heritage within the framework of the UNESCO Historic City Landscape Recommendation, it is thought that local administrators, relevant stakeholders, even opinion leaders in the city and residents of the city should undertake important responsibilities that will support the strengthening of Van's urban identity.

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