

## The role of Geographical indication in brand making of Turkish handicrafts

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### Abstract

*Handcrafts reflect the cultural, natural and historical features of a region and society. These handcraft products are also used as souvenirs. Turkey has a rich and culturally diverse potential for handcrafts. While especially carpets, rugs, and hand woven fabric, are found in all regions of Turkey, other products depend on the resources found in the region and include woodcraft, basketry, stone craft, precious metal crafts and ceramics. Through globalization and machine manufactured products, the production of handcrafts is decreasing. To allow handcrafts that make use of idle labor, spare time, and leftover resources and materials to develop and compete with imported goods, it is important to raise the producers' awareness of geographical indication. Geographical indication in handcraft goods affects brand making and trust on the market. This study, which focuses on the development of handcraft in Turkey, geographical indication practices, and its importance in marketing, reveals an increase in registration of geographical indication (GI) in handcraft products in Turkey. In fact, 30% of products registered with GI consist of handcraft products. GI should be considered an important instrument in making Turkish handcraft products a world brand.*

**Keywords:** Turkish handcraft, Geographical indication, Traditional, Brand, Marketing

Although handcraft is basically an activity that people involve in to meet their basic needs in their free time with simple tools and materials generally found in nature, it may also be a full time labor intensive occupation requiring creativity to produce functional, aesthetic and economical products. Through the rapid development in communication technologies, the world is becoming smaller and intercultural communication more widespread, which affects the development of handcraft negatively. Handcraft is losing or changing its function in daily life and therefore its transmission to future generation is of importance. Despite these negative developments in the field of handcraft, especially modern societies that have become bored with the monotonous industrial social structure have turned to art, history and ethnography, as is the case with Turkish society. Because of the effort spent to increase the economic revenue obtained from tourism, the so called smokeless industry, handcraft products have appeared on the agenda as souvenirs.

Handcraft is the most vivid and important document of nations' cultural identity. Handcraft goods gain their value through the material, pattern, production technique, skill of the craftsman who made them and the characteristics of the region in which they were made<sup>1</sup>. As such, they have an important role in transferring a nation's norms and values from one generation to the next<sup>2</sup>. For example, in Japan, traditional handcraft products such as the kimono, ceramics, and dye goods have been passed on along with the history and culture of each region<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, in many countries there are various

institutes and foundations that protect and promote their handcraft products. To illustrate, in South Africa the African Arts/Handicraft and Environmental Management Institute (AFHEMI) has operated since 1999. The AFHEMI Museum collection includes over two thousand traditional art objects, artifacts, antiquities and paintings, some of which are more than nine hundred years old. The objects are made of wood, bronze, copper, silver, brass, and fired clay. The collection includes ritual and ceremonial masks, statues, royal beds and utensils, healing art works and power mediums, and vectors of good omens and repellants of dangerous charms. The collection is also rich in traditionally hand-woven fabric, hand-embroidered cloth, mud cloth, tie-dyed fabric, batik, and beaded objects<sup>4</sup>. The S.P.I.R.A.L. Foundation is a non-profit organization that develops gift items that can be manufactured by rural villagers using local materials and traditional handicraft skills. The S.P.I.R.A.L. Foundation pays the villagers to produce these goods and then sells the goods to consumers and retailers in the developed world<sup>5</sup>. The other one is Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation (TRIFED) can play an effective role for promotion of tribal handicrafts in Andhra Pradesh in India<sup>6</sup>.

There is a high demand for handcraft products in the domestic and international market as they are made with completely natural materials and carry regional and traditional features in terms of color, design, pattern, shape, composition and sometimes production technique<sup>7</sup>. Although Traditional Turkish Handcraft plays an important role in the rural development and the development of small and medium size businesses in Turkey, its potential has not been sufficiently realized. Thus, the protection of traditional Turkish Handcraft needs to be seriously considered. As is the case with many traditional products, Geographical Indication (GI) is among the mechanisms that provide protection in the production<sup>8</sup> and brand making of traditional handcraft products.

### **Methodology**

This study is an exploratory research often relies on secondary research such as the review of available literature and/or data<sup>9,10</sup>. The study aimed to discuss on GI of traditional handicrafts in Turkey. To this purpose, laws are criticized in detail. The research results of related studies, reports and publications were used as secondary data sources.

### **History of Turkish handcraft**

When the Seljuk and other Turkish peoples settled in Anatolia in the eleventh century, their handcraft preserved their Asian cultural heritage but also was affected by the new cultural environment. Turkish handcraft that was shaped through cultural interaction until the present carries the features of a powerful past. A wide range of examples of manuscripts of different periods, rugs, ceramics, tiles, various forms of wood and metalwork exists. Moreover, Turkish rugs, tiles and ceramics have become world brands. Turkish handcraft spread over wide areas during the Ottoman Empire. The handcraft of the classical period reached a new aesthetic form under the influence of western arts. During both periods, several Turkish artists and craftsmen contributed to Turkish and world art with rich artwork. Through the centuries, this handcraft developed and changed and its fame reached the present. Therefore, handcraft has a cultural identity and is of economic value.

Despite precautions that were taken, Anatolia, which was an important transit route between the 16th and 19th century, started to lose its importance after the opening of the Suez canal, and the use of the steam engine in shipping, and in the 19th century also started to lose its importance as an international trade center of the Ottoman Empire. As handcraft centers were not on the new trade route and thus were far from the market, this caused problems that were aggravated by the use of air and seaways for transportation. As handcraft moved from the local to national and from the national to international platforms, it changed form under the influence of different tastes and started to degenerate; that is, modern lifestyles, technological development and fast communication devices caused a loss in the local cultural features of traditional handcraft. New machines led to a decrease in the practice of some handcrafts and in the 20th century, serial production through the use of

electrical power instead of man power resulted in a movement from handcraft to industrial arts. In this process, there was a movement from handicraft and handcraft expressed with terms such as work product, occupation product, cultural monument, and works towards artistic handcraft and fine art. At present, "industrial production" is associated with "factory" and "quality goods" are associated with "fabricated (standard) goods". However, handcraft is a type of industrial production. Handcraft products are liked because they carry the traces of the cultural features of the people that have lived in the area of production, because they are examples of good workmanship and because they have no manufacturing defects<sup>11</sup>.

Traditional Turkish handcraft is classified into 7 categories based on the materials used. These materials are listed below:

1. Fiber based handcraft (carpet weaving, rug weaving, shuttle weaving, embroidery, feltwork, hand dyed cloth work, knitwork, lace work, needle lace work, etc.)
2. Wood based handcraft (wood carving)
3. Stone based handcraft (ornamental stone work such as architectural stonework, meerschaum, Oltu stone and marble work)
4. Clay based handcraft (earth ware, tiles, ceramics)
5. Metal based handcraft (Iron, copper, brass, gold and silver work, glasswork)
6. Handcraft based on leather and other animal leftovers (leather work, horns and bone work, sea shell work, handcraft based on gut and other animal materials)
7. Handcraft products based on twigs, plant branches and wood strips (basket, mat and saddle making)<sup>12</sup>.

A closer analysis of Traditional Turkish handcraft provides a clearer picture of its features. Weaving is a very old and common handcraft in Anatolia and an important means of subsistence. Among the materials used are wool, Angora wool, cotton, animal hair, and silk. Lace is another form of handcraft, which is used not only for ornamental but also communicative purposes. Today in Anatolia, rims and motifs of lace are produced with different instruments, such as needle, crochet needle, or pin, and are named accordingly. Lace work is produced mostly in cities such as Kastamonu, Konya, Elazığ, Bursa, Bitlis, Gaziantep, Izmir, Ankara, Bolu, Kahramanmaraş, Aydın, Icel, Tokat, and Kutahya; however, it has lost its importance in people's daily life and continues to exist merely in hope chests.

In addition to lace, which is combined with traditional clothes, accessories also draw attention. All civilizations that lived in Anatolia produced artwork by combining precious metals with gems and semi-precious stones. The most important movement that came with the Seljuks is that of Turkmen accessories. During the Ottoman Empire, jewelry gained importance as the empire developed. After the bronze age, copper, gold, and silver were pounded and cast in Anatolia to produce handcraft products, but copper was most widely used. In Turkey, Architectural structure developed according to the Geographical features of the region and woodwork developed especially in the Seljuk period to reach its original character. Woodwork produced in this period includes mosque niches, mosque doors and cupboard lids, which were of superior quality. During Ottoman times, woodwork became simpler and appeared more on daily used objects such as tables, desks, drawers, chests, writing equipment, thrones, lecterns, Quran cases, dishes, spoons and on architectural objects such as windows, cupboard lids, consoles, beams, ceilings, niches, pulpits, and sarcophagi. Woodcraft is still practiced in cities such as Zonguldak, Bitlis,

Gaziantep, Bursa, Istanbul-Beykoz, and Ordu. Walking sticks that gained value according to their material were used for centuries and became more widely used in the 19th century. A handcraft that developed in parallel to architecture is tile work. Seljuk artists were very successful in especially animal figures. Ceramics art, which started in Iznik in the 14th century, in Kutahya in the 15th century and in Canakkale in the 17th century, through time reached its own unique colors, patterns and forms. Turkish tiles and ceramics have become known worldwide. Outstanding examples of glasswork

shed light on the history of glass art. Stained glass in its different forms developed in the Seljuk period. In the Ottoman period, Istanbul became the center of glasswork. The Çeşme-i bülbül and Beykoz techniques are among the techniques that have reached the present. İzmir-Görece glassworkers were the first to produce evil eye beads, which are still widely seen and used in Anatolia due to the superstition that they protect against evil looks. Therefore, they are pinned onto a visible place on clothes. Stonework holds an important place in traditional architecture as outer wall and inner wall decoration as well as grave decoration. This art branch is practised with different patterns and techniques<sup>13</sup>.

Using wicker, twigs, and hazelnut and willow branches baskets are made that are used to carry goods and food, or to use decoratively in the house. Throughout the period when saddles were made from felt, haircloth, and wood, feltwork was a side branch of animal husbandry. However, today feltwork has decreased significantly, mainly due to the change in lifestyle after industrialization. Handcraft is expensive because materials are expensive and production is a time consuming and labor intensive process, which negatively affects sales. As handcraft products are not daily used anymore, and as insufficient support is given to product design, the production of traditional handcraft decreases, which causes financial problems to producers of traditional handcraft products.

#### **Geographical Indication in Turkish handcraft**

In handcraft GI registration is interpreted as local agricultural-ecological and cultural characteristics<sup>14</sup>. Hence, GI registration should be increased in Turkish handcraft. Consumers' motivation to buy handcraft products are needs product price, product quality, product fame, other product qualities and habits. For example, consumers may prefer "Hereke rugs", "Yagcıbedir rugs", "Milas rugs", "Gordes rugs" when buying rugs and "Eskisehir meerschaum" when buying meerschaum. At this point, the importance of GI registration increases. In Turkey GI protection has been applied to handcraft products since 1996 in order to protect art products, to create continuity in the quality production of these and to contribute to rural development.

Geographical indication is a sign of that indicates an apparent feature, fame, or other characteristics of a product with reference to its origin such as the town, region, area, or country where it was produced<sup>15</sup>. In Turkey, Law No.5 on the "Protection of Geographical Indications" is in force and within the framework of EU integration laws, a new bill has been brought to parliament.

Geographical indication involves indication of source, quality and guarantee; protection of traditional knowledge, contribution to advertisement and promotion of a country and to rural development among other features<sup>16</sup>, which are listed below:

- *Indication of source* is used to show the geographical origin of a product rather than the institution or organization it was produced.
- *Differentiation* is used to distinguish a product from other similar type products on the market.
- *Indication of Quality and Guarantee* allows the continuity of the quality of a product and the consumers' positive perception related to a product. Unlike brands, Geographical Indication has to guarantee quality and reliability of a product. When on inspection a product is found not to meet the requirements stipulated in the GI registration, the product is not allowed to carry the indication any longer.
- *Protection of Traditional Knowledge*. Geographical indication implies that the features of a product are the result of not only the natural materials of a region but also the influence of cultural factors<sup>17,18</sup> and a knowledge accumulation of centuries, for example, the dye techniques used in handwoven carpets.
- *Advertisement and Promotion of the Country* creates the continuity of the fame of a product gained over the years. Furthermore, it contributes to the promotion of a country. This is because the GI of certain products includes a reference to the country of origin, such as Turkish coffee, Turkish delight, and are widely used abroad.

- *Rural Development.* As GI can only be used by its legal owners, and not by others, provides important privileges. To local producers of traditional handcraft who earn their living from it. This is advantageous for rural development.

In Turkey, there were 129 GI registered products in 2010, 39 (30%) of which are handcraft products (Table 1).

Table 1-Handcraft products registered with geographical indication in Turkey<sup>15</sup>

Registration number	Name of Geographical indication	Registration date
1	HEREKE SILK HANDWOVEN RUGS (100X100)	1996
2	HEREKE WOOLEN SILK HANDWOVEN RUGS (80X80)	1996
3	HEREKE WOOLEN HANDWOVEN RUGS	1996
4	SIMAV HANDWOVEN RUGS	1996
5	BUNYAN HANDWOVEN RUGS	1996
6	SIVAS HANDWOVEN RUGS (50X50)	1996
7	TAŞPINAR HANDWOVEN RUGS	1996
8	KARS HANDWOVEN RUGS	1996
9	TURKMEN HANDWOVEN RUGS	1996
10	PAZIRIK HANDWOVEN RUGS	1996
11	YUNTDAĞI HANDWOVEN RUGSI	1996
12	SÜMER KARS HANDWOVEN RUGS	1996
13	KULA HANDWOVEN RUGS	1996
14	BERGAMA HANDWOVEN RUGS	1996
15	MILAS HANDWOVEN RUGS	1996
16	DÖŞEMEALTI HANDWOVEN RUGS	1996
17	YAĞCIBEDİR HANDWOVEN RUGS	1996
18	YAHYALI HANDWOVEN RUGS	1996
19	ÇANAKKALE HANDWOVEN RUGS	1996
20	GÖRDES HANDWOVEN RUGS	1996
21	İNCE ISPARTA (HASGÜL) HANDWOVEN RUGS	1996
22	JIRKAN RUG	1996
23	EŞME-YÖRÜK RUG	1996
24	SÜPER İNCE RUG	1996
25	ESKİŞEHİR LÜLE STONE	1999
26	BAYAT TURKMEN RUG	2000
27	ERZINCAN COPPER WORK	2001
28	DAMAL DOLL	2002
29	SIIRT BLANKET	2003
30	SOĞANLI DOLL	2003
31	GÖRECE EVIL EYE BEADS (Figure 1)	2003
32	DEVREK WALKING STICK	2004
33	KÜTAHYA TILES (Figure 2)	2005
34	TRABZON FILIGREE AND MATTING (Figure 3)	2006
35	RİZE CLOTH (FERETİKO)	2005
36	ÇARŞIBAŞI CLOTH	2004
37	AFYON MARBLE	2003
38	BARTIN SILVER WIRE EMBROIDERY	2004
39	BOYABAT EMBROIDERY	2008

Source: <http://www.turkpatent.gov.tr/dosyalar/mevzuat/CografikKhk.pdf>, retrieved 25.03.2010

Of these GI registered handcraft products 82% are made of fiber, 5% are made of stone, clay and metal, and 3% are made of wood (Table 2). Of the products made of fiber, 21 are carpets, 4 are rugs, 3 are shuttle weavery, 2 are handmade dolls, 1 is a blanket, and one is embroidery. Other traditional handcraft products with GI indication are made of wood (walking stick), stone (meerschbaum and Afyon marble), clay (tiles), glass (evil eye beads), and metal (copper and gold work) (Table 2).

Table 2-Turkish Handcraft Products with GI

Types of handcraft	Product	Number of Registered Products	Share (%)
Fiber based handcraft	Carpets	21	54
	Rugs	4	10
	Cloth weaving	3	8
	Blankets	1	3
	Embroidery	1	3
	Handmade dolls	2	5
	Total	32	82
Wood based handcraft	Walking sticks	1	3
Stone based handcraft	Meerschbaum	1	3
	Afyon marble	1	3
Clay/glass based handcraft	Tiles	1	3
	Evil eye beads	1	3
Metal based handcraft	Copper	1	3
	Gold handwork	1	3
	Total	39	100
	Sum Total	129	

Source:<http://www.turkpatent.gov.tr/dosyalar/mevzuat/CografikKhk.pdf>, retrieved: 25.03.2010

Of the 114 products for which a GI registration application has been submitted, 11 are traditional handcraft products (%9, 6) (Table 3). Eight of these products are made of fiber (1 carpet, 1 rug, 3 shuttle weaving, 2 lacework, 1 embroidery, and 1 handmade doll). An application for GI registration has been submitted for one type of tile in the category of products made of clay and one type of basket in the category of products made of twigs and branches.

Table 3-Handcraft Products for which GI applications have been submitted (2010)

Name of Geographical Indication	Applied number	Share (%)
Bartın silver wire embroidery	1	
Beledi woven cloth	1	
Boyabat embroidery	1	
Eflani embroidered cloth	1	
Gönen needle Lace	1	
İznik tiles and ceramics	1	
Karakeçili rugs	1	
Karamürsel basket	1	
Keles dolls	1	
Tarsus needle Lace	1	
Uşak carpets	1	
Total	11	9,6
TOTAL	114	100,0

Source: <http://www.turkpatent.gov.tr/dosyalar/mevzuat/CografikKhk.pdf>, retrieved:25.03.2010

For handcraft products to become a brands there is a need for standardized and quality production process. GI registration of brands plays an important role in developing the image of traditional Turkish handcraft products in the world market and protecting them against imitative products. In developed markets consumers demand product safety, quality and standard increases, which has implications for brand making in traditional handcraft. In fact, consumers have 5 different attitudes to brands<sup>19</sup>. The first group of consumers change brands especially due to product price and are not loyal to brands. The second group of consumers does not change brands if they are satisfied with the product. The third group watches cost with changing brands. The fourth group value brands and perceive them as friends. The fifth group devote themselves to a brand. With a dynamic consumer masses it is a challenging task for firms to create market value and brand loyalty. Therefore, conducting consumer surveys may be useful for firms to achieve continuity in the market.

In the last 15 yrs and after the economic crisis in 2008, migration from the country to the city increased in Turkey. In order to stop migration, producers need to organize in the form of, for example, cooperatives<sup>20</sup> and the awareness of producers needs to be increased through publications on the benefits and necessity of GI registration to prevent the disappearance of traditional handcraft. Furthermore, studies need to be conducted to determine producer and consumer behavior with respect to GI in Turkish traditional handcraft as this area is unexplored.

### **Results and discussion**

Many local products in the world are known with their place of origin. Handcraft is among products that are called local or traditional products and they owe their fame and quality to the natural conditions<sup>21</sup> or cultural and traditional features of the place where they were made<sup>6,22,23,24</sup> (such as Czech crystal and Indian rugs). These products are protected against imitative products and unfair competition through GI registration at national and international level<sup>17</sup>.

Handicraft is important for rural tourism in many countries. For example, the greatest income was earned by wood carvers whose activities target tourists in Oku, Cameroon. The Oku handicraft cooperative markets local tourist craft items. Rural tourism can therefore act as an important alternative income generation activity in developing countries, especially where rural people cannot longer make a living as farmers due to a fall in the prices of agricultural produce. Local people could benefit much more by selling local food and handicraft<sup>25</sup>.

If economic conditions are not good, passing traditions from one generation to another can not satisfactory due to non availability of raw material, insufficient quantity, poor quality (as in Kullu district Himachal Pradesh<sup>26,27</sup>).

Males, females and/or children are employed in making handcrafts. Labour gender and age can be changed in different handicrafts. For example, child labourers in the handicrafts home industry on carpets and papier mache in Kashmir<sup>28</sup>. Unfortunately there are not detailed studies about these issues in Turkey, they should be studied for the structure of handicraft sector.

In Turkey, there are authentic regional production forms and rich regional production skills that are rooted in its long history and that are manifested in traditional handcraft products. Turkish traditional handcraft is a synthesis of the cultural heritages of several civilizations that have lived on its soil and they form a marvelous mosaic. All the features that form the assets of Anatolia have given Turkey a large number of regional products of superior quality. To protect this great regional product wealth there are legal regulations. Thirty-nine traditional handcraft products are registered. However, this national protection needs to be extended to international level.

Traditional handcraft products protected with GI registration are expected to provide social and economic benefits to Turkey. In fact, protection of handcraft creates employment and value added and thus plays a role in economic growth in rural areas, which in turn can reduce migration from the country to the city. The created value added may bridge the income gap between the rural and urban areas and at the same time have a positive effect on the income distribution between regions. At this point, handcraft producers need to organize and publications need to be spread on the benefits and advantages that GI brings to handcraft production and marketing. Furthermore, studies need to be conducted to evaluate producers' and consumers' attitudes toward GI.

### **Conclusion**

The transfer of cultural heritage for future generations and protection of handcrafts in communities are important. Geographical Indication (GI) is a crucial tool of branding and protecting of handcrafts. As in many countries, in Turkey, registered GI of handcrafts come into force according to regulations. But, there is no scientific study included marketing, branding, economic and consumers of handcrafts in Turkey. In this study, the article is tried to resolve this lack in Turkey and also aimed to provide some sources to researchers related to study about GI and handcrafts around the world. In addition, it is also aimed to create awareness on GI of handcrafts, and discussed GI's effects on handcrafts branding and brand value. In the next studies, it is suggested that consumers' behaviors must be investigated especially in Turkey.

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Fig.1 Görece Evil Eye Beads



Fig.2 Kütahya Tiles



Fig.3 Trabzon Filigree

Figs. 1-3 Examples of GI registered Turkish Handcraft Products