

ASSESSING DRIVERS OF BRAND CHOICE PROCESS OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract:

Consumers are tending to the proprietary goods when they have difficulty in making purchase decision among the similar or different product categories. Customers become loyal and prefer the brands-they believe that these brands can meet individual needs and expectations. In this study, proportions spent on favourite brands of the university students in the six product category and attitudes related with some factors which can be effective in brand loyalty and brand choice process based on price insensitive were measured by using questionnaire. However, data provided was compared (using Analysis of Variance and T-Test for Independent Samples) by demographic characteristics of the students and was found out significant differences. According to the results, while shampoo category has the highest level of proportion spent on favourite brand, chocolate and shampoo have the least price insensitive in the product categories. In addition, It's identified that quality is the most effective factor in brand choice in terms of students.

Keywords: Brand, brand choice, brand loyalty, favourite brand, university students.

Öz

Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Marka Seçim Sürecinin Değerlendirilmesi

Tüketiciler benzer ve farklı ürün kategorileri arasında satınalma kararı verirken zorlandıklarından markalı ürünlere yönelmektedirler. Müşteriler bireysel gereksinim ve beklentilerini karşılayabileceğine inandıkları markaları tercih etmekte ve sadık kalmaktadırlar. Bu araştırmada, üniversite öğrencilerinin altı ürün kategorisinde favori markaya yaptıkları harcama oranları ve fiyata karşı duyarsızlıklarına bağlı olarak marka sadakati ve marka

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seçim sürecinde etkili olabilecek bazı faktörlere ilişkin tutumları anket kullanılarak ölçülmüştür. Ayrıca, elde edilen bulgular öğrencilerin demografik özelliklerine göre (Bağımsız Örneklemeler için Varyans Analizi ve T Testi kullanılarak) karşılaştırılmış ve anlamlı farklılıklar bulunmuştur. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre, favori markaya yapılan harcama oranının en yüksek olduğu ürün kategorisi şampuan iken fiyata karşı en duyarsız olunan ürün kategorileri ise çikolata ve şampuanıdır. Bununla birlikte, üniversite öğrencileri açısından marka seçiminde en etkili faktörün kalite olduğu belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Marka, marka seçimi, marka sadakati, üniversite öğrencileri.

INTRODUCTION

With the development of technology several new products and services have been added in consumer market. Companies are trying to set up bonds or commitments with consumers to develop suitable products while consumers have difficulty to decide which products (e.g. utilitarian and hedonic goods) are the best for them in the extensive competition. When consumers have been in difficulty to decide among similar and different goods offered to them. Kotler et al (2003) suggest that, in general, perceived value may well have a greater direct effect on brand preference than either satisfaction, loyalty or expected switching cost. There has been a positive relationship between the amount of customer benefit and the bond or commitment with customers.

A brand is traditionally defined; “the name, associated with one or more items in the product line, that is used to identify the source of character of the items” (Kotler, 2000: 396). Technically, whenever a marketer creates a new name, logo or symbol for a new product, he or she has created a brand (Keller, 2003:3). Brand sets up an emotional and cultural bond between the consumer and product. That is, as the offered benefits increase customer relation to the brand also increases. Branding has become an important tool for both companies and the decision makers. On the other hand, consumers all over the world have been in the complexity during their purchase process. Consumers have to make their choices (see Meyer *et. al.* 1997) from a group of brands they consider logical in the purchase complexity. The complexity of consumer decisions related with products or brands has increased (Bloemer and Kasper 1995). Lye *et. al.* (2005) argue that marketing managers need to understand the decision strategies and attributes that are important to customers for their product/brands and markets, then benchmark the consumer perceptions of their performance on these attributes against competitors to ensure their product/brand is not eliminated prior to the selection from within the choice set. Foxall (2003), Foxall and James (2001 2003), Foxall and Schrezenmaier (2003)

and Foxall et al.(2004) argued methods, which are discussed below, refined in choice experiments in behavioral economics and behavior analysis to investigate brand choice.

I. DRIVERS OF BRAND CHOICE PROCESS

Brands create value for customers in a number of ways, on both sides of the value equation. Brands reduce search costs by clearly identifying the product as different from others. Brands also offer an implicit assurance of a particular customer experience (Buttle, 2004: 240–241). Brands are considered neutral when buyers are aware of them but have not developed strong feelings either positive or negative, toward them (Lederer and Hill, 2001: 157).

In the marketing literature some drivers such as consumer characteristics, brand loyalty, brand quality and attributes, price sensitivity, sales promotions, reference groups, novelty, store environment and atmosphere, multi-brand preference availability, brand reputation and image, and time can have some important impacts in brand choice.

In consumer markets, the brand itself has considerable power to influence the purchase decision. If consumers are engaged by the powerful brand, this can lead to repeat purchasing frequency or relative volume of the same-brand which can be defined as loyalty (Beerli et. al.2004). Oliver (1999) defines loyalty as; a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same brand or same brand-set purchasing despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior. Loyalty is assessed on the basis of responses to the statement of asking the favorite brand name regardless of price (Knox and Walker, 2001).

Caruana (2002) accepts that loyalty consists of two dimensions: Both attitudinal and behavioral. According to Zikmund et al (2003:70) the attitudinal brand loyalty approach takes the view that loyalty involves much more than repeat purchase behavior. This view holds that brand loyalty must also include a favorable attitude that reflects a preference or commitment expressed over time. That is, brand loyalty is a behavioral response to an attitude toward a brand. Baldinger and Rubinson (1996) have stressed that highly loyal buyers tend to stay loyal if their attitude towards a brand is positive. In addition, the ability to convert a switching buyer into a loyal buyer is much higher if the buyer has a favorable attitude toward the brand. Kotler et. al. (2003) suggest that there may be little positive relationship between customer loyalty and current brand preference.

Brand loyalty driver is, as mentioned before, the positive attitude toward a specific brand that draws a customer to consistently purchase the brand when the customer needs a product in that product category. Although brand loyalty may not lead the customer to purchase a specific brand every time, potentially the customer considers that brand the most favorable or viable brand in the set of brands being considered for purchase. The customer prefers one brand over competing brands and will usually purchase that brand if available. If this brand is not available, the customer will usually accept a substitute brand (Ferrel et al. 2002: 122). Wood (2004) states that a brand-loyal person may have a positive attitude towards a brand, buy a brand in preference to others within the market and have continued allegiance to a brand over long periods of time. It's likely that few people would be classified as truly loyal when so many criteria have to be met. Wood (2004) examined brand loyalty and brand purchasing behaviour in the 18–24 year-old- students across product categories and found a significant statistical difference in the degree of brand loyalty. All product categories have loyalty behaviour as their primary dimension. The dimensions of brand selection and loyalty may vary by product type. Some works have identified the relationship between age group and brand loyalty degrees. For example Uncles and Ehrenberg (1990) looked at the older and younger people's purchasing habits and found that older people were more brand loyal. East et al.(1995) implied that customers who take into account intensively the price and low income groups are less loyal to the brand. The satisfied customers with switching costs have no reason to switch brands, although they are neither by motivation nor by instrumentality tied to the product. Despite this apparent indifference they are loyal, repeat buyers. The repeat buyer without switching costs and the price sensitive non-loyal buyer show rational behavior, if the price is the only relevant choice criteria, because products are perceived to be homogenous and the pure market contract is the usual contractual arrangement (Hougaard and Bjerre, 2003: 120). Switching or not switching is the extent of behavioral loyalty.

A satisfied customer, according to Gommans et al. (2001), tends to be more loyal to a brand/store over time than a customer whose purchase is caused by other reasons such as time restrictions and information deficits.

The relationship between price and quality have significant key drivers in brand selection (Davies and Brito 2004). Dodds et al. (1991) found that brand had a positive effect on perceptions of quality and value to buy. It's believed that price and quality are positively related. It's natural that customers would use price as an indicator of quality. Laroche et al. (2001) suggested that price-quality evaluations of competing brands have an impact on consumers' attitudes and intentions toward a focal brand, and competitive effects on attitude, intention, and brand choice formations can be partially explained by price-

quality evaluations. To be successful, product strategy and pricing strategy must work in harmony to maximize product differentiation and brand image (Ferrel et al. 2002: 124).

Several references have been made about price as an influence on brand choice. Customers who are low in involvement tend to be price sensitive, another factor which lessens loyalty toward the brand or organization. In contrast, customers who are involved with the product tend to be less price sensitive (Zikmund et al. 2003: 79, and see Hsieh and Chang 2004). Alvarez and Casielles (2005) state that “the price of products and brands at the moment of the purchase constitutes a variable of interest. Given the importance of price, consumers usually form a reference price, and they will act after comparing the price on offer with the reference price when they must take a decision. It’s possible to say that all customers don’t react in the same way.

Demographic and psychographic characteristics which have important effects in brand choice are the other drivers (Lin 2002). While demographic characteristics can provide marketers with customers’ some data such as gender, age, income etc., and psychographic characteristics describe lifestyle and personality of consumers, explore consumption models, and identify relevant brand attributes.

A significant portion of a company’s total marketing resources have been allocated for sales promotional tools such as premiums, rebates, coupons, and samples. If the customer is loyal, he is likely to stick to his brand even if the competition is cheaper, for he will focus more on the value-for-money ratio than purely on the price” (Rajola, 2003: 106). Customers react in different ways to promotional offers (see D’Astous and Jacob, 2002). Sales promotion techniques influence the consumer’s brand choice. It seems that the most frequently used promotions are based on price promotion (price cuts) that have more significant impacts on consumer attitude and behaviour than other sales promotion techniques have. That is, among those promotional tools, price promotion occupies an important place. Price promotion is a brand offered at a relatively low price in return for the purchase of one or more many brands.

Alvarez and Casielles (2005) state that sales promotions-one of the drivers- can help to decide which brand to buy when two brands are equally attractive to the customers. However, Dawes (2004), Kalyanaram and Winner (1995) state that repeated use of promotions can lower reference prices. While price discounting may generate traffic in a retail store such discounting may have negative effects on the brand’s quality and internal reference prices. In addition, Grewal et. al. (1998) state that price discounting may even hurt a store’s overall image.

The fact that advertising and promotion provide the introduction and familiarity is the first step, building preference and loyalty are the second steps which are a bit more sticky. (Macrae, 1994; Low and Fullerton, 1994). Managers of new brands might wish to seek communication mediums where they can present at least some rudimentary brand information, as the novelty of the brand will lead a substantial minority of viewers to process it and develop stronger attitudes towards the brand (Olson and Thjømpøe 2003).

Novelty is the other one important driver which has impact in the brand choice. Novelty means more than innovation, giving the customer new, strategic value (Gordon, 1998: 297). Olson and Thjømpøe (2003) suggest that providing information will not detract from the preferences built through the exposure effect, but that it may provide preference building advantages the group of consumers who are information seekers. They have also concluded that providing information in addition to the brand name and product category, however, did not enhance preference for the brand if the information was not processed. To the extent that this preference rating might translate into purchase behaviour. Increasing exposure would be more beneficial to new brand than well-established brands.

There can be a switching cost associated with change to the unfamiliar, the untried, or the new. There may be cost in time, money, personel, perceived, performance risk or social risk. The customer may think the new brand will not perform as well as the current brand.

The customers may believe their friends will not like the new brand as well (Zikmund et. al. 2003: 71). According to Zikmund et al (2003:71) people have a long history with a company. Elizabeth et al. (2002) state that there may even be intergenerational influences, that is, within-family transmission of information, beliefs, and resources from one generation to the next.

Brand reputation is the other driver which has impacts on brand choice. Brand reputation is defined as a perception of quality associated with the brand (Aaker and Keller 1990). Selnes (1993) examined the effects of product performance on brand reputation and loyalty, and found that brand reputation had a consistent and strong effect on loyalty. The perceived quality of a product is related to the reputation associated with the brand name (Zeithaml 1988; Craswell et. al. 1995). Selnes (1993) state that the ambiguity in the quality of the core product may affect the importance of building a strong brand reputation. The reputation of the brand is expected to operate as an indicator of core product's quality, and thus loyalty is expected to be driven by brand reputation.

Consumers may purchase more than one brand during their shopping and most individuals consume multiple brands-as a driver of brand choice process-during longer time periods (Baltas, 2001, 2004; Russell *et. al.* 1997). Singh et al. (2005) looked at the modelling preferences in multicategory brand choice. However, some authors (e.g. Manrai 1995, Roy *et. al.* 1996, Storbacka et al. 1994, Bettman et. al. 1998) have also maintain many approaches that define and measure the factors which have impacts on brand choice and preference. Baltas (2004) proposed the simultaneous choice model that describes consumer selection of multiple brands.

In the retail brand choice, store design and the atmosphere, furniture, shelves, light and colours, layout, staff' skills and friendliness are also important factors.

II. OBJECTIVE

A primary objective of this work is to identify the attitudes related with factors which can affect the brand choice and measure brand loyalty-which is one of them-by investigating price insensitive and the proportions spent on favourite brand in various product categories of respondents. In this general framework it was aimed to achieve sub-aims described below:

- To identify proportion spent on favourite brand in some product categories and to make comparison by demographic characteristics of the university students.
- To measure price insensitive of brand loyalty related with favourite brand among some product categories, and make comparison by demographic characteristics of the university students.
- To identify the attitudes related with factors which can affect the brand choice and measure brand loyalty of the university students

III. METHODOLOGY

III.1. Data Collection

In order to realize the aims mentioned above a complete questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire and the measures were taken from the study conducted by Wood (2004). The questionnaire consists of four sections. In the

first section some questions for identifying the demographic characteristics (gender, working position amount of monthly average expenditure, living area before higher education and education level of the hoseholders) of the respondents, in the second section the proportions spent on favourite brand in six product categories were taken place. In the third section, one item on a Likert scale was used to measure price insensitive of the favourite brand purchase in six product categories, and in the last section eleven items on a Likert scale were also used to measure attitudes associated with factors which can be effective in the brand choice and brand loyalty of the respondents.

III.2. Population and Sampling

The seniors in the department of business administration at the universities of Turkey made the population of the work. At the work, since the population volume was very wide and the distinction among the population units was far away, cluster sampling method was used and five universities (İstanbul University-İstanbul, Gazi University-Ankara, Hacettepe University-Ankara, Abant İzzet Baysal University-Bolu and Sakarya University-Adapazarı) were selected as cluster

Sixty questionnaire were distributed for the aim of pre-testing the questionnaire contents for each cluster in January 2005. After based on some mistakes and complexity collected during the pre-testing period, a complete questionnaire was developed. The survey was carried out in each cluster during the period of February 8 through May 25, 2005. Out of 570 questionnaires, a response rate of 92,98% (a total of 530) could be recollected, Among these 26 were omitted from the analysis because of the incomplete responses and the remaining 504 questionnaires were used for analysis.

III.3. Data Analysis Method

The students' demographic characteristics were given in frequency and percentage distribution way (Table 1). The proportions of spending on the favourite brand for each product category were identified via calculation of the means and standart deviation values. All items existing in the Likert scale were scored on a 7-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree=1" to "strongly agree=7". Analysis of varyans (ANOVA) were carried out so that we can identify whether or not there was any significant statistical difference, ($p < 0,05$) between the mean responses across product categories, and Benferroni method (see Field 2000) was used for multiple-comparision (Table 2.3.4).

T-test for independent samples was carried out in order to compare the proportions of spending on the favourite brand, price insensitive on the

purchase of favourite brand and the attitudes related with factors may have affects on brand choice by gender and work position variables. One-way independent samples ANOVA was conducted in order to compare by the monthly expenditure, living area (village, country town, city, metropol) before higher education and education level of householder variables. In addition, Tukey test was used as a multiple-comparison test to identify which group caused the differences among these groups (Table 5,6,7). Data provided in this study were analysed using SPSS 12,0 for Windows.

IV. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Respondents' demographic characteristics were analyzed for frequency anlysis and were shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics (n = 504)

Demographic characteristics		f	%	total	
				f	%
gender	male	274	54.4	504	100
	female	230	45.6		
working position	employed	74	14.7	502	99.6
	unemployed	428	84.9		
monthly expenditure (YTL)	<250 YTL	206	40.9	494	98
	250-500 YTL	239	47.4		
	>501 YTL	49	9.7		
living area before higher education	country	37	7.3	501	99.4
	town	149	29.6		
	province	162	32.1		
	metropolis	153	30.4		
householders' education level	primary education	313	62.1	503	99.8
	secondary and high school	130	25.8		
	higher education	60	11.9		

Among respondents, male was 54,4% (274), and female was 45,6% (230). It can be seen that respondents were most often without a work, coming from the province and metropol before higher education, the amounts of average monthly expenditure were under 500 YTL and their householders possess primary education degrees.

The mean proportion of spending on the favourite brand for each product category is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Proportions Spent on Favourite Brand by Product Category (n = 504)

rank	product	mean(\bar{X})	s.d.	F	p	Difference**
1	shampoo	61.45	34.20	21.01	0.000*	a
2	chocolate	53.29	35.17			b
3	jeans	51.28	26.41			b
4	perfume	50.58	32.42			bc
5	yoghurt	48.88	32.54			bc
6	sport shoes	45.98	26.14			c

* $p < .05$

** There is no significant difference among categories. which include the same letter

There is a significant statistical difference between the means proportions spent on favourite brand by product category ($F=21,01$; $p<0,05$). It can be seen from Table 2 that shampoo ($\bar{X}=61,45$) has the highest degree of proportion spent on the favourite brand loyalty and sport shoes ($\bar{X}=45,98$) has the lowest. The results of this multi-comparision indicate that there is not a significant difference among the means of proportion spent on chocolate, jeans, perfume and yogurt categories, and a significant statistical difference can be seen between these categories and sport shoes. On the other hand, the proportions of spending on perfume, yogurt and sport shoes categories are the lower than those of others.

The rank order of price insensitive favourite brand loyalty by product category is shown in Table 3, which includes the findings of attitudes about “I buy my favourite brand regardless of price” statement.

Table 3: Price Insensitive Favourite Brand Loyalty By Product Category (n = 504)

rank	Product	mean(\bar{X})	s.d.	F	p	Difference**
1	chocolate	4.62	2.07	15.05	0.000*	a
2	shampoo	4.61	2.06			a
3	yoghurt	4.52	2.00			ab
4	perfume	4.28	1.88			bc
5	jeans	4.01	1.83			c
6	sport shoes	3.99	1.93			c

* $p < .05$

** There is no significant difference among categories. which include the same letter

There is a significant difference among product categories ($F=15,05$; $p<0,05$). Thus, in terms of the favourite brand loyalty, chocolate ($\bar{X}=4,62$) and shampoo ($\bar{X}=4,61$) have the highest degree of price insensitive favourite brand loyalty across categories. Chocolate and shampoo take place in the first two ranks as shown in Table 1 and Table 2. It should be stated that price has been more considered in the jeans ($\bar{X}=4,01$) and sport shoes ($\bar{X}=3,99$) brand than to chocolate, shampoo, yogurt and perfume. No significant difference can be seen between yogurt and perfume categories in terms of price insensitive brand loyalty.

As seen in table 4, there's a significant difference between means of agreement level with these statements, which represent variables that affect brand choice of the students ($F=79,44$; $p<0,05$).

Table 4: Drivers Affecting Brand Choice (n=504)

Rank	Statements	Mean(\bar{X})	SD	F	p	Difference**
1	My primary factor is quality when buying a brand (quality).	5.24	1.81	79.44	0.000*	a
2	Brand I have preferred is more than one (multi).	4.78	1.71			b
3	Promotions have impact on my brand selection (promotion).	4.38	1.76			c
4	My brand selection is influenced by prestige and reputation (prestige and reputation).	4.32	1.85			c
5	My brand selection change for the case of novelty and variety (novelty).	4.26	1.75			c
6	My brand loyalty is largely based on price (price).	4.25	1.89			c
7	My brand selection addresses to me (image).	4.21	1.95			c
8	I buy my brand selection regardless of price (loyalty).	3.66	2.02			d
9	I usually buy the same brand since this saves me time (time).	3.64	1.79			d
10	My brand selection is based on what my friends buy (friends).	3.10	1.78			e
11	I buy the brand my parents buy (parents).	2.78	1.79			e

* $p < .05$

** There is no significant difference among categories which include the same letter

According to the means given in Table 4 while quality ($\bar{X}=5,24$) is the most affective criteria, multi-brand preference ($\bar{X}=4,78$) and promotions ($\bar{X}=4,38$) follow it. The strength of agreement with having friends ($\bar{X}=3,10$)

and parents ($\bar{X}=2,78$) are lower than any other as being the criteria of brand selection. According to the multi-comparison results, there's a significant difference between quality and the others, in the same way, between multi-brand preference and the others. On the other hand, there's no significant difference among the promotion, reputation, novelty, price and image, between loyalty and time, between friends and parents.

It can be seen from Table 5 that proportions spent on favourite brand indicated significant differences in jeans, shampoo, chocolate and yogurt categories by gender ($p<0,05$), and proportions spent by females are higher.

Table 5: The Comparison Of Proportions Spent On Favourite Brand By Demographic Characteristics

factors		Sport shoes	Jeans	Shampoo	Perfume	Chocolate	Yoghurt
Demographic Characteristics		\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}
gender	male	43.84	48.49	58.21	48.06	47.98	45.87
	female	48.64	54.79	65.27	53.49	59.60	52.33
	<i>t</i>	1.94	2.54	2.24	1.77	3.59	2.12
	<i>p</i>	.06	.01*	.02*	.07	.000*	.03*
working position	employed	44.92	49.22	61.15	48.23	50.34	46.95
	unemployed	46.23	51.77	61.43	50.94	53.64	49.09
	<i>t</i>	.38	.74	.06	.63	.71	.50
	<i>p</i>	.70	.45	.95	.52	.47	.61
average monthly expenditure	<250 YTL	40.28 a	45.11 a	55.96 a	43.47 a	50.42	46.11
	250-500 YTL	47.85 b	54.32 b	64.96 b	54.90 b	56.94	51.78
	>501 YTL	59.88 c	62.39 c	71.95 c	57.11 c	50.77	48.95
	<i>F</i>	11.64	10.97	5.97	7.37	1.93	1.51
<i>p</i>	.000*	.000*	.003*	.001*	.14	.22	
living area before higher education	country	33.90 a	51.09	55.72	43.43	41.51	50.90
	town	43.71 b	50.56	63.42	50.20	53.00	50.58
	province	45.84 b	48.91	60.87	48.70	54.48	48.27
	metropolis	51.06 c	54.74	62.00	54.91	55.38	47.41
	<i>F</i>	4.43	1.21	0.48	1.50	1.46	0.27
<i>p</i>	.004*	.30	0.69	.21	0.22	0.84	
education level of householder	primary education	42.53 a	47.44 a	61.53	47.52 a	53.22	49.39
	secondary and high school	51.67 b	56.86 b	60.27	55.33 b	51.47	48.45
	higher education	52.33 b	57.41 b	63.83	56.63 b	58.03	48.05
	<i>F</i>	6.54	7.37	.20	3.20	.67	.06
	<i>p</i>	.002*	.001*	.81	.04*	.51	.94

* $p < .05$

** There is no significant difference among group, which include the same letter

Proportions spent on favourite brand change by the amount of monthly average expenditure in the sport shoes, jeans, shampoo and perfume categories.

However, those who come from cities create an increase on the spending proportion in the sport shoes category. In addition, it's seen that proportions spent on favourite brand increase as the educational level of the householder increases in the sport shoes, jeans and perfume categories.

Table 6 indicate that there is a significant difference between sport shoes and yogurt by living area before university education; between sport shoes and jeans by amount of monthly average expenditure; between chocolate and yogurt by working position; among sport shoes, jeans, shampo and perfume categories by gender ($p < 0,05$).

Table 6: The Comparison Of Price Insensitive Favourite Brand Loyalty By Demographic Characteristics

Factors		Sport shoes	Jeans	Shampoo	Perfume	Chocolate	Yoghurt
Demographic Characteristics		\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}
gender	male	3.69	3.79	4.35	4.11	4.65	4.48
	female	4.35	4.26	4.92	4.49	4.59	4.56
	<i>t</i>	3.81	2.82	3.13	2.28	.30	.46
	<i>p</i>	.000*	.005*	.002*	.02*	.75	.64
working position	employed	4.13	4.09	4.71	4.33	5.15	4.97
	unemployed	3.96	3.99	4.59	4.27	4.53	4.43
	<i>t</i>	.68	.42	.45	.24	2.35	2.12
	<i>p</i>	.49	.66	.64	.80	.01*	.03*
monthly average expenditure	<250 YTL	3.69 a	3.78 a	4.46	4.11	4.63	4.49
	250-500 YTL	4.17 b	4.17 b	4.74	4.35	4.60	4.58
	>501 YTL	4.59 c	4.36 c	4.79	4.71	4.97	4.42
	<i>F</i>	5.86	3.39	1.16	2.22	0.68	.17
<i>p</i>	.003*	.03*	.31	.10	.50	.84	
living area before higher education	country	3.46 a	3.75	4.44	4.40	5.19	5.13 a
	town	4.02 b	4.01	4.78	4.34	4.87	4.82 b
	province	3.61 a	3.94	4.56	4.12	4.37	4.31 c
	metropolis	4.13 b	4.15	4.56	4.37	4.51	4.12 d
	<i>F</i>	3.24	.62	.49	.58	2.51	3.58
<i>p</i>	.02*	.60	.68	.62	.06	.01*	
education level of householder	primary education	3.95	3.99	4.59	4.21	4.72	4.59
	secondary and high school	4.08	4.00	4.67	4.56	4.36	4.30
	higher education	4.00	4.17	4.61	4.10	4.86	4.66
	<i>F</i>	.21	.24	.62	1.87	3.13	1.14
<i>p</i>	.80	.77	.94	.15	.06	.32	

* $p < .05$

** There is no significant difference among groups. which include the same letter

In these categories which indicate difference by demographic characteristics, it's seen that female to male, persons who work at any place to those who don't work at any place, those who have higher monthly expenditure to those who have lower monthly expenditure have a very high degree of price insensitivity in the favourite brand choice. In addition, in the sport shoes category, respondents who have been living in town and metropol; in the yogurt category respondents who have been living in the small areas show that the price is less important in the favourite brand choice.

In Table 7, by gender, reputation and prestige; by the amount of monthly average expenditure loyalty, multi-brand preference and price; by the living area before higher education loyalty; by the educational level of householder loyalty, price, parents and time showed a significant difference ($p < 0,05$).

Table 7: The Comparison of Attitudes Related With The Factors Affecting Brand Choice of The Respondents By Demographic Characteristics

Factors		Demographic characteristics										
		loyalty	multi	novelty	price	parents	image	promotion	time	quality	friends	Reputation and prestige
		\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}
gender	male	3.54	4.83	4.20	4.32	2.71	4.21	4.38	3.61	5.13	3.19	4.50
	female	3.79	4.72	4.33	4.17	2.87	4.22	4.35	3.66	5.36	2.99	4.11
	<i>t</i>	1.38	.72	.86	.83	.94	.09	.26	.28	1.41	1.25	2.40
	<i>p</i>	.16	.47	.38	.40	.34	.92	.79	.78	.15	0.21	.01*
working position	employed	3.66	4.98	4.49	4.38	2.83	4.13	4.65	3.63	5.22	3.19	4.45
	unemployed	3.67	4.74	4.22	4.23	2.77	4.24	4.31	3.62	5.24	3.10	4.30
	<i>t</i>	.01	1.11	1.19	.62	.29	.42	1.51	.01	.11	.06	.67
	<i>p</i>	.99	.26	.23	.53	.76	.67	.13	.99	.90	.95	.50
average monthly (expenditure)	<250 YTL	3.32 a	4.57 a	4.46	4.50 a	2.99	4.08	4.43	3.47	5.13	3.18	4.23
	250-500 YTL	3.83 b	4.79 b	4.16	4.12 b	2.68	4.20	4.32	3.75	5.27	3.10	4.26
	>501 YTL	4.44 c	5.38 c	4.04	3.75 c	2.58	4.83	4.40	3.81	5.45	2.95	4.91
	<i>F</i>	7.51	3.41	2.02	4.07	2.07	2.92	.19	1.52	.71	0.34	2.88
<i>p</i>	.001*	.03*	.13	.01*	.12	.06	.82	.21	.48	.70	.06	
living area before higher education	country	3.54 a	4.75	4.18	4.00	2.86	4.38	4.47	3.56	5.00	3.43	4.21
	town	3.42 a	4.71	4.22	4.31	2.83	3.89	4.40	3.45	5.03	3.31	4.24
	province	3.46 a	4.63	4.28	4.22	2.84	4.32	4.33	3.64	5.23	3.08	4.38
	metropolis	4.15 b	5.04	4.29	4.28	2.66	4.40	4.38	3.86	5.51	2.84	4.40
	<i>F</i>	4.31	1.68	.07	.29	.35	2.11	.07	1.33	1.99	2.22	.30
<i>p</i>	.005*	.16	.97	.82	.78	.10	.97	.26	.11	.08	.82	
education level of householder	primary education	3.46 a	4.76	4.32	4.40 a	2.60 a	4.17	4.30	3.48 a	5.14	3.17	4.21
	secondary and high school	3.89 b	4.73	4.02	3.71 b	2.81 b	4.27	4.50	3.81 b	5.31	2.92	4.40
	higher education	4.13 c	5.03	4.49	4.53 a	3.25 c	4.37	4.52	4.08 c	5.66	3.15	4.77
	<i>F</i>	3.96	.70	1.84	8.18	3.46	.32	.81	3.57	2.02	.91	2.35
<i>p</i>	.02*	.49	.15	.000*	.03*	.72	.44	.02*	.13	.40	.09	

* $p < .05$

** There is no significant difference among groups. which include the same letter

In contrast, novelty, image, promotion, quality and friends don't have a significant difference by any demographic variables ($p > 0,05$). When the means are examined in Table 7, reputation and prestige are more considered by females; loyalty is more considered by those who live in metropol. Additionally, as amount of average monthly expenditure of the students increases loyalty and multibrand preference are more considered. In contrast, it's identified that price is becoming less important. However, loyalty, parents and time are becoming more effective in brand choice as the educational level of householders increase. As seen in Table 7, surprisingly price is less important by the terms of the students whose householders' educational level is secondary or high school in brand choice.

CONCLUSION

Brand, which affect the process of customer purchase decision, is an important power. Brand loyalty is one of the methods of stating the customer satisfaction related with offered goods and services, and promotes repurchasing behaviour of customers.

As an inevitable result of product complexity in consumer market, consumers are tending to the brands when they come to the point of how these brands can meet their needs and expectations and to what extent consumers can benefit from one brand. Another matter of significance is to make a choice among alternative brands in similar and different product categories in process of brand purchasing and to evaluate lots of drivers which may be effective in brand choice. Our results are in line with the conclusions of some authors' studies. Consumers who suffer from market, product complexity, and equivalence of purchase options can have difficulty in deciding to purchase certain brand. Walsh and Mitchell (2005) suggested that female, older and less educated consumers are more market and product decision difficulty-prone. Vakratsas D. (1998) finds out that demographic variables (female head such as employment status, household size and household income) had interactive and significant effect on purchase acceleration of particular product categories.

D'Astous and Landreville (2003) point out that the ultimate objective of sales promotions is not only to impact positively on consumer reactions, but also, and most importantly, to stimulate brand purchasing behavior. Alvarez and Casielles (2005) conclude that price promotions influence buying and brand choice behaviour, and that price promotions have a greater impact on consumer behaviour than other promotions.

Expected switching cost can have some significant impact on brand preference. Kotler et al. (2003) conclude that For individual companies especially, expected switching cost had either a non significant or a small positive effect on brand preference.

Proportions spent on favourite brand in various product categories and degree of brand loyalty can show differences. Wood (2004) reached a similar conclusion in the context of brand purchasing behavior. Author states that there is a significant statistical difference in the degree of brand loyalty of 18-24 year-old students across product categories. In this study, it's identified that shampoo is the one which gets the highest spending proportion and sport shoes is the one which gets the lowest spending proportion in six product categories. It's identified that of proportions spent on favourite brand of the university students in the six product categories shampoo has the highest rate, sport shoes has the lowest rate. On the hand, proportions spent on favourite brand of students show differences by some variables associated with demographic characteristics. Degree of favourite brand loyalty of females are higher when compared with that of males in jeans, shampoo, chocolate and yogurt categories. However, as amounts of average monthly expenditure in sport shoes, jeans, shampoo and perfume categories increases, proportion spent on favourite brand also increases. Additionally, if university students' parents are graduated from primary school they spend less on their favourite brand in sport shoes, jeans and perfume category when compared with other students. Progressing towards city centers makes proportion spent on favourite brand higher. Wood (2004) similarly, indicated that favourite brand loyalty has significant differences between various product categories by consumers' some demographics characteristics.

In terms of favourite brand loyalty chocolate and shampoo are those at which they are most insensitive in price. Price as a driver of jeans and sport shoes purchase is much more taken into account when compared with other product categories. On the hand, in sport shoes, jeans, shampoo and perfume categories price is less taken into account by female students. Students employed show more price insensitivity to chocolate and yogurt categories when compared with those unemployed. As the amount of average monthly expenditure increases price is less considered in sport shoes and jeans category. Besides, because taste and flavour of yogurt is important for students from rural areas they show price insensitivity to yogurt.

While quality is the most effective driver in brand choice, it's followed by multi-brand preference. In brand choice parents and friends have less effects when compared with other drivers. Wood (2004) points out that quality is the strongest driver of some product. On the hand, the amount of monthly income

and expenditure's being limited, and their coming from different parts of Anatolia before higher education and householders' having lower educational level create differences in brand choice. While male students pay more attention to prestige and reputation, product loyalty level of those students who live in metropolises and whose householders's mostly expenditure figures are higher. Williams, T.G. (2002) states that men and women have different evaluative criteria importance levels. Women consistently attached greater importance to virtually all criteria across all products. As the amount of average monthly expenditure increases, preferred brand is more than one and as the amount of expenditure decreases price factor becomes more effective. Besides, for students whose parents have a higher education level, it's more effective to purchase the same brand with regard to saving time. In parallel to this, students whose parents have higher education level are more affected from their parents in brand choice. Some demographic and psychographic characteristics, according to Lin (2002) can be determinants in brand choice process.

NOTE:

Limitations And Directions For Future Research

In this study, the process of brand choice of university students in six product categories has been handled and compared according to some demographic characteristics. In the study, students' approach to demographic characteristics which may be effective in students' brand choice such as loyalty, price, quality, promotion, diversity has been studied. In other words, students' approach to these factors which affect brand in certain product categories has been defined and then compared according to demographic characteristics. Although the population handled in the study represents a certain group, future studies to be conducted on other consumer groups will be important in terms of revealing similar or different findings. For example, these factors which can be effective on brand choice could be compared by various occupation groups. Additionally, consumers' attitudes related with more different product categories than six product categories handled in this study can be measured in order to evaluate the process of brand choice. However, the effects of customer satisfaction on brand choice and brand loyalty can be investigated.

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