TÜRK OTOMOTİV SEKTÖRÜNDE KURUMSAL MARKA KİŞİLİĞİNİN MÜŞTERİ MEMNUNİYETİ VE SADAKATİ ÜZERİNE ETKİLERİ

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ÖZET

Bu çalışma dört otomobil üreticisi Renault, Ford, Fiat ve Toyota'nın kurumsal marka kişiliklerinin müşteri memnuniyeti ve sadakati üzerine etkilerini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Otomotiv sektöründeki rekabetin artması ile birlikte müşteri algıları ve tercihleri daha sofistike hale gelmiş ve stratejik anlam kazanmaya başlamıştır. Müşteri memnuniyeti ve sadakati firmaların rekabet gücünü artırmakta ve uzun vadede başarıya ulaşmalarını kolaylaştırmakta olduğundan, bu çalışmada dört otomobil markasının kurumsal marka kişiliklerinin müşteri memnuniyeti ve sadakati üzerine etkileri araştırılmıştır. Kapsamlı bir literatür araştırması sonucunda kurumsal markaları kurumsal marka kişiliği olarak ve insan kişiliği olarak presente edecek kişilik tanımları listesi elde edilmiştir. Bu kişilik tanımları listesi 350 denekten toplanan birincil verilerin kantitatif analizi ile test edilmiştir. İstatistiki analiz sonuçları bazı kurumsal marka kişilik boyutlarının müşteri memnuniyeti ve sadakati üzerinde önemli etkileri olduğunu meydana çıkarmıştır. Bu çalışma Türk otomotiv sektöründe kurumsal marka kişiliği ile müşteri memnuniyeti arasındaki ilişkiye işaret etmekte ve bazı kurumsal marka kişilik özelliklerinin farklı etkileri olabileceğini göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kurumsal Marka Kişiliği, Müşteri Memnuniyeti, Müşteri Sadakati, Türk Otomotiv Sektörü

THE EFFECTS OF CORPORATE BRAND PERSONALITY ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY IN TURKISH AUTOMOTIVE SECTOR

ABSTRACT

This study involves in investigating the effects of corporate brand personalities of four car manufacturers, Renault, Ford, Fiat and Toyota on customers' satisfaction and loyalty. As the competition is becoming fiercer in automotive sector, customer perceptions and preferences are also becoming more complicated and strategic. Since customer satisfaction and customer loyalty are the key factors on leading companies to hold stronger competitive positions and achieve long-term success, the effects of corporate brand personalities on customer satisfaction and loyalty of these four car brands' customers are considered significantly important and investigated in this study. Through a comprehensive investigation of literature, a list of personality items are prepared to describe corporate brands in aspects of both corporate brand personality and human personality representation. These items are tested by means of an empirical analysis of primary data collected from 350 respondents. The findings of statistical analysis indicated that some of corporate brand personality dimensions had significant impacts on customer satisfaction and loyalty. This paper provides empirical validation of the relationship between corporate brand personality and customer satisfaction and loyalty in Turkish automotive sector by demonstrating the influence of particular corporate brand personality items elements may have different effects.

Key Words: Corporate Brand Personality, Customer Satisfaction, Customer Loyalty, Turkish Automotive Sector

INTRODUCTION

Due to the today's dynamic and complex global environment such as emergence of new markets, mergers and acquisitions, increasing number of companies and their numerous products and services, occurrence of financial and political crises, companies need to improve the understanding of their customers' needs and expectations. More sophisticated customers and their varying demands force companies to focus on different ways of creating competitive advantages in order to fulfill their expectations and make them loyal to their companies. In this respect, the importance of brand personality and how brands are perceived by customers have started to be recognized by companies for building and maintaining effective relationships with their customers as unique strategic advantages for competition.

Although there is recognition of the importance of brand personality and corporate brands to organizations, little is known about the impacts of corporate brands on customer perceptions, satisfaction and loyalty. Many previous studies have tried to establish an understanding about the multidimensional nature of corporate brands but the relationship between corporate brands and consumer behaviour is a less touched area till today. Recently, researchers started to investigate the relationship between corporate brands and customer behaviours (Souiden, Kassim and Hong, 2006; Da Silva and Alwi, 2006; Turkyılmaz and Ozkan, 2007). However, these attempts only partially explained the impacts of corporate brands on customer satisfaction and loyalty. Additionally, the extant studies often reduce the corporate brand to a single dimension like corporate personality (Davies and Chun, 2002). Corporate branding can boost sales, transfer the positive associations of the partner brands to a newly formed co-brand and consequently enhance brand equity and loyalty (Ueltschy and Laroche, 2004). Kowalczyk and Pawlish (2002) indicate that a firm's corporate brand is becoming increasingly important as a source to be exploited in attaining sustainable competitive advantage especially in competitive sectors like automotive industry.

Corporate name may involve the products' image and consequently have certain influences on consumer evaluation as suggested previously by Aaker (1991) and Keller and Aaker (1997) who argue that corporate brand influences consumers' evaluation of the brand.

Based on the findings of previous research in corporate branding area, there are several motivations for conducting this study. One is based on the importance of automotive sector for Turkish economy which can be considered as a locomotive for most of the remaining sectors in Turkey (Kekre, Sarpca, Ulusoy and Altintas, 2006). The other motivation is the vitality of corporate brand personality for companies for their survival and competition in the long run.

According to the OSD (Automotive Industry Association) data, retail sales in domestic markets shrinked by 4.2% and total domestic automotive wholesale also fell by 4% in 2007. The only items that posted an increase were passenger cars and midibuses. As opposed to past changes, passenger cars showed an outstanding performance with 50% increase. In the global market, the automotive sector was first weakened by the expensive automobile fuels linked to the 2003- 2008 oil crisis in the United States and this crisis extended to the world later causing customers to turn away from large sport utility vehicles (SUVs) and pickup trucks to passenger cars (Findikcioglu and Yildirim, 2008). Since passenger car segment had a rising performance in 2007 both in domestic and global sales, the customer group of passenger cars is decided to be selected in this study. The scope of the study concentrates on the four automotive manufacturers; Renault, Fiat, Ford and Toyota who realize the highest passenger car domestic retail sales between January and December 2007 in total. These four brands constitute nearly 50% of total domestic retail sales in 2007.

This paper investigates the effects of corporate brand personality on customer satisfaction and loyalty in one of the most competitive sectors in Turkey, automotive sector. In particular, the objectives of this paper are to:

- Establish psychometric properties of the corporate brand personality.

- Explore if corporate brand personalities affect the perception of four car brands' customers' satisfaction and loyalty.

- Ascertain the most influential personality attributes of corporate brands on customer satisfaction and loyalty.

The above mentioned objectives of the study have important theoretical and practical contributions to the marketing area. Current knowledge about the relationship between corporate brand personality, customer perceptions and loyalty is limited and a focus in this respect will enable organizations to identify the corporate brand personality attributes that most impact customer satisfaction and loyalty. Till today, most past research has largely centered on specific aspects of corporate branding rather than taking an organization-wide perspective and investigating the aggregated effect of corporate brand personality attributes (Chernatony and Harris, 2000). This study will have important practical implications for managers indicating potential benefits of corporate brand personality attributes on customer satisfaction and loyalty which include economies of scale in marketing and lower advertising and promotion costs. In automotive manufacturing sector, organizational performance can be boosted by lowering the cost of serving loyal customers who also become less sensitive to price and favorable word of mouth publicity. So, the task of

marketers in companies is to understand their corporate brand personality values which are perceived and most demanded by their customers in creating satisfaction and loyalty.

Besides these managerial contributions, this study has also theoretical contributions via the use of human personality trait metaphors. Human Personality Trait Scales like Corporate Character Scale (Davies, Chun, Da Silva and Roper, 2004) and Brand Personality Scale (Aaker, 1997) propose a projective technique that asks respondents to imagine that the company comes to life as a person. This kind of research is thought to be very important (Sirgy and Samli, 1985) stating that managers need to realize that symbolic representation of the companies play a significant role in satisfaction and loyalty behaviours. So, managers should gather information about how customers see their companies in personality terms. Besides, the advantage of using this methodological approach is proposed as a creative form of research in theoretical literature by asking respondents to imagine that the company was alive, respondents were asked to think of corporate brand differently through personality traits (Franzen and Bouwman, 2001). Furthermore, Davies, Chun, Da Silva and Roper (2003) recommend that in order to understand the corporate brand image of a company, researchers should adopt the metaphor of personality traits scale as an alternative measure to the corporate brand image. Another theoretical strength of corporate brand personality research is that it is more stable over time because of being consisted of symbolic values instead of cognitive ones (Porter and Claycomb, 1997; Franzen and Bouwman, 2001). Marketers use corporate brand personalities as their guide when they advertise their brand value or message to their customers to create satisfaction and loyalty (Mcenally and De Chernatony, 1999). So this type of research is extremely important for both theoretical and practical marketing area.

The paper is constructed in the following way: First, a review of literature is provided and followed by methodology part including sampling design, questionnaire and data analysis procedures. Then, findings and discussion of the empirical part are presented. Conclusion part is provided ending with the limitations and suggestions for future research.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Corporate Image and Corporate Branding

Several definitions of corporate image can be found in marketing literature. Researchers define corporate image as "mental representations of companies relative rather than absolute" (Hardy, 1970, pg.70), "impression an entity makes on the minds of people" (Dichter, 1985, pg.75), public's perception of a company - the preconceived ideas and prejudices that have formed in the minds of customers (Gregory, 1991) and "as the whole of all sensory perceptions and thought interrelationships associated with an entity by one individual" (Enis, 1967, pg.51). Aaker (1996) defines it in terms of the net affective or

emotional reactions - good or bad, weak or strong - of customers, investors, employees and the general public to the company's name.

Set of corporate image definitions reveals three commonalities: first, that image is an impression or perception located in the minds of stakeholders; second, that different groups of stakeholders form different images and third, that image is an 'overall' or gestalt impression. Definitions of corporate image state that image is perception in minds of stakeholders but this perception may differ from one to another. This indicates the "cognitive" and "evaluative" dimensions of image. Image is defined as a "*cognitive*" map of all the information that an individual or a constituent group has about the company. This cognitive part is objective form in perceptions of stakeholders. But on the other hand, each party evaluates cognitive information and perceive subjectively. This is the *"evaluative"* component that generates affect-related responses regarding the image. In other words, when a current or potential customer (representing one constituent group or stakeholder) refers to a company as having a positive company image, he is not only referring to his collection of objective information (the *cognitive* component) but also the evaluation of the objective information makes him "feel" about the company (the *evaluative /affect* component) (Gupta, 2002).

Since, the way the organizations manage their interactions with their stakeholders has a bearing on the strength of their image, organizations strive to deliver consistent performance to all the stakeholder groups (Frost and Cooke, 1999). Therefore, the stakeholder theory suggests that firms broaden their objectives to include other goals in addition to profit maximization. The four common stakeholders of a firm are the customers, employees, stockholders and the suppliers or vendors. Researchers recently have also added the community to the company's stakeholder groups. Each group depending on its stake or interest interacts differently and consequently builds a somewhat different image of the firm (Dowling 1988; Young 1996). The importance of customer group as a stakeholder is significant because long term success of a company is closely related to its ability to adapt to customer needs and changing preferences. So, the perception of the stakeholder, customers becomes a very important issue in terms of a company's success (Takala, Bhufhai and Phusavat, 2006).

While corporate image is the way of people perceive the company, brand image is the total perceptions about the brand as reflected by brand associations held in consumers' memories (Karaosmanoğlu, 2001). In some of the sectors and companies, corporate images of companies may be different or stronger than images of their brands while brand images might be more dominant in other cases. Brand image affects corporate image because people evaluate companies based on their judgements about the product brands or the corporate name.

Automotive sector mostly carries the effects of both corporate images and brand images being quite in parallel and interact with each other continuously and interdependently introducing the concept of corporate branding. Chernatony and Riley (1998) stresses that corporations have started to link their brands with corporate values, putting more emphasis on corporate rather than line brand building by a move towards corporate branding in sectors like automotive and electronics. A company can distinguish and differentiate itself in the minds of all of its stakeholders by establishing a corporate brand.

In the last 30 years, branding has begun to move up the corporate agenda and is increasingly recognised as a strategic tool that can generate and support value creation (Knox and Bickerton, 2003). Traditional product brand management has changed by the increasing influence of the organization behind the brand and an increasing acceptance of its role in the creation of economic value. Worcester (1986) provides evidence of a strong correlation between company familiarity and favorability while research by Keller and Aaker (1992) highlights the positive impact of the corporate brand on new product introductions and product brand extensions.

The concept of the corporate brand has recently risen in both academic and practitioner fields, with a number of authors pointing to the potential economic value inherent in managing and developing the brand at the level of the organization (Fombrun and Van Riel, 1997; Greyser, 1999; Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 1999). A corporate brand is an organizing proposition that helps to shape an organisation's values and culture (Mitchell, 1999) and a strategic tool of management which can guide the organizational processes that generate and support value creation (Urde, 1999).

A corporate brand provides an umbrella of trust for the company in extending its product or service line and even diversifying into dissimilar products and services. Corporate brands are also transferable assets; they can be bought and sold; they may also be coveted as in the struggle by Mercedes Benz and Volkswagen over the Rolls Royce car. Another example from automotive sector is Ford group, which has acquired Aston Martin, Jaguar, Porsche and Volvo. Ford company's acquisition of these brands are more effective in terms of cost, time and risk aversion than attempting to build up new high prestige brands (Balmer and Greyser, 2003).

Creating competitive advantages and managing them efficiently supports the survival and growth of automotive companies in today's world. Companies need to screen and review their competencies, their customer and competitive profiles as well as their product and services to maintain an optimum cost-benefit balance. Since the variety of products and brand alternatives are growing rapidly, automotive companies have to satisfy different needs and higher expectations of consumers and they are obliged to be more open, dynamic, integrated into global markets. So, the importance of corporate branding have

been more recognized by many of the companies in automotive sector in the forms of building unique strategic advantages for competition in the developing context of EU (European Union) harmonization.

2.2. Corporate Personality

Personality concept should be defined first in order to better analyze corporate personality concept. Aaker (1975) states that human personality is a combination of human traits and social agents as parents, friends being in relation with the individual. Bernstein (1984) claims that corporate personalities differ from human personalities in two ways: The first difference is that corporate personality influences many groups such as colleagues, customers, suppliers while a human personality affects only the individual himself. The second difference is that there is a greater control over a corporate personality. A person can not control his personality as a company.

In literature, many authors recognized the fact that companies do have corporate personalities (Olins, 1978; Bernstein, 1984; Gray, 1986). According to Olins (1978), a group develops a personality and then this personality is later projected as an identity being different and greater than the sum of personalities involved. Each organization has a corporate personality, which has been constructed by a specific identity, knowledge and essence (Olins, 1989; Selame, 1997; Ackerman, 2000). Corporations can be influenced by both their own general corporate personalities and by the personalities of individuals who represent the organization. On the other hand, marketers use brand personalities or corporate image dimensions as their guide when they advertise their brand value or message to their customers (Meza, 2001). This also indicates the significance of this study as investigating the effects of corporate brand personality on customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Balmer (1995) views corporate personality as a composite of values and beliefs which determines organization's corporate identity. Baker and Balmer (1997) describe corporate personality as the main ideologies within the organization that underlines corporate mission and philosophy. Brand personality is the human characteristics or traits that can be attributed to a brand. It has been recognized in the theoretical literature and proved in empirical researches that customers perceive brands as possessing personality features (Kapferer, 1998; Keller, 2003). Brand personality represents non-product related features important for the development of relationship with customers. Kapferer (1998) identifies brand personality as one of the key dimensions of brand identity and defines it in terms of human personality features.

Brand personality can be measured in different ways but assessed more definitely through adjective checklists or ratings. Aaker (1997) conducted a research project looking at brand

personalities that provides an important link into the personality of a number of well known brands and created a reliable, valid and generalizable scale of brand personality that had a substantial impact on branding literature. A number of studies on brand personality have been based on Aaker's scale (1997) and Duarte and Davies (2002) who measured Ford brand image using this Corporate Personality Scale in automotive industry. Corporate brand personality is an important concept but it encompasses multi dimensions beyond personality factor alone. Corporate Brand Personality can be measured via human personality traits according to some researchers like Davies, Chun, Da Silva and Roper (2001). Trait scales like Corporate Character Scale (Davies et al., 2001) or Brand Personality Scale (Aaker, 1997) propose a technique that asks respondents to imagine the company as a person.

2.3. Brand Personality and Corporate Brand Personality

Since the last quarter of twentieth century, position of brands and branding changed completely. Brands became dominant in the minds of consumers and increasingly in the minds of other audiences of corporation, including shareholders and employees. The brand, traditionally aimed at the customer has increasingly taken over the corporation itself. Corporations have always dealt with a multiplicity of stakeholders: employees, shareholders, financial community, suppliers and collaborators, government and other regulatory bodies (Ollins, 2000). So, brands are increasingly divorced from products/services which they were originally associated and establishing their own personalities. Brand personality can be defined as the human characteristics that are attributed to a brand while the corporate brand personality is a form of brand personality of a company defined in human characteristics of the organization as a whole (Keller and Richey, 2006). Brand Personality and Corporate Brand Personality are both abstract and intangible aspects of branding and recent brand image studies have been centred on more affective and emotional attributes by using metaphor of personality traits to portray brand image (Keller, 2003). Malhotra (2005) explains that for decades, consumer perception research was mostly cognitive in nature by use of brand attributes and tangibles. But in the last two decades and more recently, increasing number of scholars acknowledged importance of affective and emotional aspects in consumer behaviour (Burk and Edell, 1989; Holbrook and Westwood, 1989) as in case of corporate brand image and corporate brand personality studies (Aaker, 1997; Keller, 2003; Ailwadi and Keller, 2004). Aaker (1997) suggests that symbolic use of brands is common because consumers often imbue brands with human personality traits as naming Coca Cola "cool".

What a company is and how it presents itself to the consumer are its corporate brand personality. Corporate brand personality is a form of brand personality specific to a corporate brand. Although the concept of brand personality is relevant to both product

brands and corporate brands, the two types of brands differ in terms of how the brand personality concept is applied. A corporate brand is distinct from a product brand in that a corporate brand can encompass a much wider range of associations based on people and relationships; programs and values; and corporate credibility. Consequently, corporate brands will typically have a set of personality traits that is broader and differently composed than the set of personality traits for each product brand owned. So, corporate brand personality has a more wholistic view of the corporation when compared to product brand personality (Keller and Richey, 2006).

A successful company must carefully manage its corporate brand personality enabling it reflect the corporate values of the organization. A company 's corporate brand personality traits perceived by its customers and the general public should be aligned with the company's internally espoused values.

In this study, corporate brand personality concept is considered within the reflected part of the corporate identity including corporate values, corporate philosophy, corporate mission and corporate culture to its external stakeholder, customers. So, corporate brand personality traits constitute a more affective basis to evaluate corporate brand in the eyes of customers and its effects on perceptions like satisfaction and loyalty. Analyzing the human characteristics attributed to car brands; Renault, Fiat, Ford, Toyota indicate the symbolic representation of these companies in the eyes of customers. This contribution of the study enables marketers to choose the appropriate marketing and communication strategies for increasing satisfaction and loyalty level of their customers.

2.4. The Relationship between Corporate Personality, Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty

Andreassen and Lindestadt (1998) report that corporate image serves as an important factor influencing the perception of quality, consumers' evaluation of satisfaction and loyalty. Although there exists a satisfactory level of studies supporting the argument that corporate image affects customer satisfaction and loyalty, little is known about the impacts of corporate brands on customer perceptions, satisfaction and loyalty. While there exist some frameworks for a general understanding of multidimensional nature of consumer brand personalities (Keller, 2003) and corporate brand personalities (Urde, 2003), the empirical support into the relationship between corporate personality attributes and customer satisfaction and loyalty has been also scarce in literature. This paper focuses on the corporate brand personality part of a larger research study which investigates the effects of a compherensive set of corporate image dimensions on customer satisfaction and loyalty. The following propositions are formulated to examine the role that corporate brand personality play in customer satisfaction and loyalty:

P1: Corporate brand personality positively affects customer satisfaction.

P2: Corporate brand personality positively affects customer loyalty.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Sampling Design Process

The type of the research design is determined as descriptive which is performed by means of survey method based on a structured questionnaire with selected scaling technique and conduction with respondents personally with a great majority. The original study was conducted to measure effects of corporate brand image of four car brands; Renault, Fiat, Ford and Toyota on customers' satisfaction and loyalty. In the original study, every corporate brand image dimension was investigated in terms of its effects on customer satisfaction and loyalty as a whole. However, this paper has taken only the corporate personality part of the study and concentrated on brand personality perceptions of customers and the effects of brand personalities on satisfaction and loyalty levels of customers.

The target population of this study is selected as people living in Istanbul who are currently users of one of the four car brands; Renault, Fiat, Toyota and Ford. The reason in selecting current user group in these brands, current customers in other words, is that the study investigates effects on customer satisfaction and loyalty which include propensity to repurchase and resistance to switching to competitors. In automative sector, these four car manufacturers have nearly 50% of the passenger car sales as of 2007 year end according to ODD figures (Automotive Distributors Association) and automotive sector is one of the biggest exporters of Turkey by exporting nearly 80% of its production. The below table represents the first top ten automotive brands who realize highest units in domestic passenger car sales in year 2007 according to ODD (Automotive Distributors Association) data (**www.odd.org.tr**, 2008).

TABLE 1: Top Ten Brands of Highest Domestic Passenger Car Sales in 2007

Brand	Local	Imported	Total
Renault	54.291	5.630	59.921
Fiat	27.875	8.641	36.025
Ford	0	32.756	32.756
Toyota	6.059	23.526	29.585

Opel	0	27.761	27.761
Volkswagen	0	26.739	26.739
Hyundai	16.547	9.783	26.330
Honda	15.968	6.134	22.102
Peugeot	0	13.417	13.417
Kia	0	10.319	10.319

Source: ODD (Automotive Distributors Association) data, Statistics, Sales figures January-December 2007, **http://www.odd.org.tr**

As these four brands reflect nearly half of the domestic passenger car market, the sampling unit of this research is defined as customers, current users of these four brands and nonprobability sampling method with convenience sampling technique is applied. Since the objective is to measure effects of corporate brand image including corporate brand personality on customer satisfaction and loyalty for four car brand customers in Istanbul, the sampling unit is based on convenience by use of students, members of different professional groups and occupations, neighbours and others.

A total of 500 questionnaires have been distributed by convenience sampling on May 2008 and 440 have been returned with a response rate of 88%. 400 questionnaires, which are nearly 80% of the total distributed number, are submitted to respondents personally and interviewed face to face in their homes or offices enabling to provide clarifications to them when needed. The remaining 100 questionnaires are distributed to some respondents via e-mail in order to reach them easier and quicker and shorten the time of data collection period but only 40 of them are returned with a response rate of 40%. Total data collection process is approximately two months duration period between May and June 2008.

3.2. The Questionnaire

This paper is constructed by focusing on the corporate brand personality part of a wider study which had an objective of investigating the effects of all corporate image dimensions on customer satisfaction and loyalty. Since the original compherensive study aimed at investigating the effects of all dimensions of corporate brand image, the total questionnaire was consisted of six parts. However, this study concentrates on the parts of it which are related with corporate brand personality dimensions. So, five parts of the total original

questionnaire are used in this paper which include general characteristics and demographics of the sample group, measurement of corporate personality and personification dimensions, customer satisfaction and loyalty levels.

The first part of the questionnaire has both open-ended and close-ended entrance questions enabling us to know the respondents' general car usage habits and preferences. This part also has open-ended elimination questions like Question 1 and Question 3 to make us know if the respondent is appropriate for the objective of our study. The respondent is kindly requested to end filling the questionnaire if he/she is not within the criteria of research objective which is being a driver or current user of one of the four car brands; Renault, Fiat, Ford or Toyota in Questions 1 and 3. Questions between 4 and 7 have both open-ended and close-ended multiple nominal scale questions investigating the respondent's car ownership status, duration time of driving the currently owned car brand and previously owned car brand.

The second part of the questionnaire consists of 9 corporate brand personality definitons as reliable, customer oriented, local, technological, socially responsible, dynamic, leader, experienced and modern. The respondents are expected to choose the number between 1 and 5 considering the producer company of the car brand they are already using and evaluating it with the appropriate corporate personality definition on a semantic differential scale of itemized scaling technique; an interval scale measurement type.

The third part of the questionnaire includes 9 human personality definitions. The respondents are expected to choose the number between 1 and 5 by assuming the car brand they are already using as a "person" according to human personality definitions as sporty, passive, intelligent, rude, bold, cool, exciting, creative, elegant on a semantic differential scale of itemized scaling technique; an interval scale measurement type. This part is based on the idea of "Personification" attached with the previous "Corporate Personality" part.

Corporate brand personality and personification definitions are adjectives selected from different studies of Da Silva and Alwi (2006), Anisimova (2007), Karaosmanoglu (2001), Schultz, Hatch and Larsen (2000) and Aaker's Big Five Brand Personality Scale (1997) based on the criterias of nature of customer evaluations in automotive sector, relationship between customer perceptions and product attributes, benefits and attitudes. Since the study's interest is to evaluate customer perceptions of corporate brand personalities of four car brands and how these perceptions of corporate brand personalities may affect customers' satisfaction, response and intention to act such as intent to repurchase, different items from previous similar studies are adopted consistent with the sector and subject similarities. Although literature highlights multifaceted nature of corporate branding concept, this study concentrates on the perception and effects of a single dimension of corporate brand image concept, corporate brand personality in this paper.

The fourth part of the questionnaire includes 17 statements concerned with opinions about satisfaction and loyalty status of customers. Respondents are expected to choose the number option between 1 (Disagree) to 5 (Totally Agree) according to the level of their agreement/disagreement with each statement again with no options of "no idea" or "neither important nor not important" in a "forced rating scale". These statements are proposed to measure the effects of corporate brand personality dimensions on customer satisfaction and loyalty by using a Likert scale of itemized scaling technique; an interval scale measurement type. These statements are adapted in the questionnaire by the authors inspired by studies of Da Silva and Alwi (2006) and Souiden *et al.* (2006).

The last part of the questionnaire is related with demographic information and general profile of the respondents as age, gender, marital status, education level, number of children, working status, income and residence.

3.3. Data Analysis Procedures

Data is analyzed through 15 version of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) computer program. In this study, the statistical methods of frequency analysis, factor analysis, reliability analysis, multiple regression analysis, independent sample t-test and Anova (analysis of variance) test are used. Significance level of 0.05 is considered for statistical analyses.

3.4. Findings

3.4.1. Descriptives

The first entrance question of the questionnaire is the main elimination question for this study which is: *"Do you drive car?"*. Since the research objective is to determine the effects of corporate brand personality on customer satisfaction and loyalty for four car brands, the most important prerequisite for the respondents to participate in this study is *"being a car driver"* at first. The questionnaires are collected from 440 respondents living in Istanbul and 93,86 % of them are presently drivers while only 6,14 % of them are non-drivers. Since this question is the first elimination question of the questionnaire, 27 non-driver respondents are requested to end the questionnaire after this because of being inappropriate for the research criterias. In order to determine the duration of experience of driving car, Q2 is asked to the respondents. The duration of driving experience of the respondents shows that 31,48 % of the respondents have less experience, 26,15 % of them have moderate experience and the remaining 42,37 % of them have deep experience in driving cars. Other elimination question of the questionnaire for this study is: *"What is the brand of your car"*. 350 out of 413 respondents are appropriate for the research criterias by using one of these brands; Renault, Fiat, Toyota or Ford. So, 84,74 % of the driver

respondents is the user of one of these four brands being the real target sample group of the research study. Remaining 63 respondents are requested to end the questionnaire after this since they are not related with research objectives. When the ownership of cars is analyzed, 53,43 % of the respondents drive their own car, while 26 % drive their families' and 16 % drive company cars. Another question measures the duration of respondents' driving experience in their current car. 44,29 % of the respondents are using their car since 1 or 2 years, 38,29 % of the respondents are using since 3 to 5 years and the remaining 18,42 % are using for more than 5 years.

General profile of respondents in the study in terms of demographic characteristics such as gender, age, marital status, education level, working status, occupation and income level are presented in the below Table 2 .

TABLE 2: Demographic Characteristics of the Sample Group

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	164	46,9	46,9	46,9
Male	186	53,1	53,1	100
Total	350	100	100	
Age	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
18-22	15	4,3	4,3	4,3
23-30	114	32,6	32,6	36,9
31-40	156	44,5	44,5	81,4
41-70	65	18,6	18,6	100,0
Total	350	100,0	100,0	
Marital Status	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Single	172	49,1	49,1	49,1
Married	178	50,9	50,9	100
Total	350	100	100	
Education Level	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Elementary	27	7,7	7,7	7,7
High School	75	21,4	21,4	29,1
University	192	54,9	54,9	84
Master/Doctorate	56	16	16	100,0

Total	350	100,0	100,0	
Working Status	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Yes	312	89,1	89,1	89,1
No	38	10,9	10,9	100,0
Total	350	100,0	100,0	

3.4.2. Factor and Reliability Analysis Results

18 adjectives of Corporate Personality and Personification attributes are analyzed for factor and reliability analyses. As the result, none of the items are eliminated and 4 factors are found in total. After these analyses, reliability tests are conducted for each factor seperately. Cronbach's coefficient alpha values are computed to test the internal consistency of factors. So, after the analysis of four factors through reliability tests, none of the factors have Cronbach values < 0,70 and none of them was removed. The newly developed 4 factors are renamed in parallel with the literature review. The below Table 3 presents the new factors:

TABLE 3: Corporate Personality and Personification Dimensions

Factor Name	Factor Loading	% of Variance Explained	Cronbach's alpha value
Factor 1: Attractiveness (7 items)			
Refined	0.787		
Reckless	0.783		
Cool	0.760		
Exciting	0.706	22.97	0,885
Elegant	0.704		
Sporty	0.668		
Modern	0.612		
Factor 2: Closeness to Customer (4 items)			
Reliable	0.785		
Local	0.643		
Experienced	0.603	13.35	0,736
Customer oriented	0.575		

Factor 3: Business Intelligence (4 items)			
Bold	0.767		
Intelligent	0.755	12,55	0,709
Creative	0.715		
Technological	0.491		
Factor 4: Competence (3 items)			
Socially Responsible	0.761		
Dynamic	0.701	11.24	0,721
Leader	0.600		

3.4.3. Regression and Mean Analysis

No support is found for hypotheses testing the effects of corporate personality attributes as "Attractiveness", "Closeness to Customer" and "Competence" on customer satisfaction and loyalty. However, it is tested and supported that:

H1: Business intelligence positively affects customer satisfaction.

H2: Business intelligence positively affects customer loyalty.

Since Sig 0,009 < 0,05 Ho is rejected, it's supported that "Business intelligence" attribute positively affects customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

Then, the total data is seperated on bases of customers of four different car brands and regression analyses are conducted for each data set to find out if there exist any significant diffferences with regard to effects of corporate brand personality dimensions on customer satisfaction and loyalty levels of four car manufacturers' brands, Renault, Ford, Toyota and Fiat. The effects of four corporate personality dimensions are investigated on four car brands seperately. The results indicate that "Business Intelligence" attribute affects customer satisfaction for only Ford brand and affects customer loyalty for only Renault brand significantly.

3.4.4. Corporate Personality Comparison of Four Brands

When overall mean ranking of corporate personality attributes are analyzed, Toyota is observed as having the highest ranking at four attributes of attractiveness, closeness to customer, business intelligence and competence. Ford is following Toyota brand having the second highest ranking, Renault has the third ranking being followed by Fiat as the lowest one

FIGURE 1: Corporate Personality Comparison of Brands
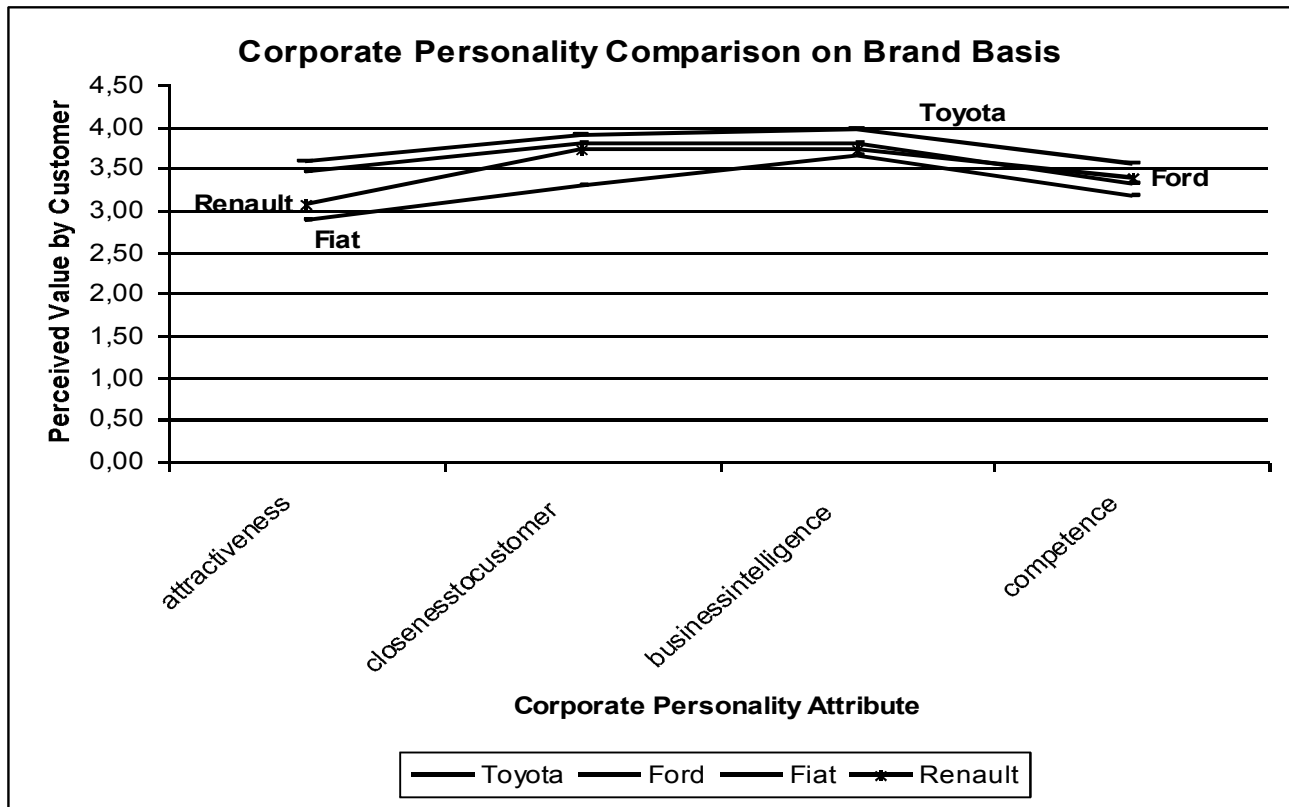
4. DISCUSSION

According to Davies and Chun (2002), corporate brand image can be measured via human personality traits. These trait scales may include corporate character scales or brand personality scales proposing a projective technique asking respondents to imagine that company as a person. These kind of researches are thought to be very effective by Sirgy and Samlı (1985).

The finding that "Business Intelligence" is influential on customer satisfaction and loyalty is in parallel with literature in terms of measurement technique of corporate brand image effects. Aaker (1996) suggests that product-related characteristics (cognitive elements) can be primary drivers of brand personality and cognitive thinking can take place first through functional reason then leads to emotional and affective reason. This in turn may lead to overall evaluation and overall satisfaction. Aaker (1996) also suggests that symbolic use of brands is possible because consumers often tie brands with human personality traits. This study's result also concurs with Schultz and Ervolder's (1998) assertions regarding the increasing breakdown of boundaries between external and internal corporate brand constituents like corporate personality. Additionally, this study gives a contribution by indicating the highest significance of "Business Intelligence" factor, including bold,

intelligent, creative and technological traits which have significant effects on customer satisfaction and loyalty of car products in Turkish automotive sector.

Since electronics and computer technologies are intensely employed during production processes in automotive sector and products can be frequently renewed or totally changed, the sector is in a continuous restructuring and development period in the last ten years. In order to survive in such a sector of intense competition, companies have no choise than implementing latest technologies as fast as possible and almost all of the companies competing in the sector have modern machinery, latest technology, foreign licence and quality control mechanisms. So, it is not contradictory to have "Business Intelligence" as the most significant factor of corporate personality in effecting customer satisfaction and loyalty of the sample group in this study. The brands being intelligent, creative and technological in customers' perceptions gain the prize of satisfaction and loyalty in the long run. The results are consistent with previous research that found technological brand functionality play an important role in consumer evaluations of durable products (Brucks, Zeithaml and Naylor, 2000) and product innovativeness determines the success of technological companies (Tickle, Keller and Richey, 2003).

When each car brand is investigated separately, it is observed that "Business Intelligence" factor mostly affects customer satisfaction for Ford brand and affects customer loyalty for Renault brand. That gives the implication to the managers of Ford company that business intelligence creates satisfaction but is not permanently influential enough to create loyalty for Ford customers. On the other hand, Renault brand has more power to sustain the "Business Intelligence" perception by its customers in affecting the creation of customer loyalty.

In order to compare four car brands in terms of corporate personality attributes, the mean values of attributes for each brand are investigated. When the findings presented at the corporate personality chart in Figure 1 are examined, Toyota seem to have the highest mean scores in all attributes, attractiveness, business intelligence, closeness to customer and competence. In attractiveness, closeness to customer and business intelligence, Toyota is followed by Ford by second mean ranking and then by Renault and Fiat consecutively. Only in competence, Renault stands at the second ranking followed by Ford and Fiat. Fiat has the lowest ranking at all attributes.

The highest ranking position of Toyota in all attributes of corporate brand personality indicates the lack of customers' perception in differentiation. The customers have an overall perception of the "being the best car brand" for Toyota but do not make very sensitive comparisons and differentiation in terms of corporate personality attributes between brands.

These findings related with Toyota's leadership at all corporate personality attribute perceptions partially support the findings of a previous image study conducted by Karaosmanoğlu (2001). Karaosmanoğlu (2001) has also compared the perception of corporate image dimensions among Toyota, Renault, Tofaş and Hyundai and the perceived image of Toyota was higher in some of the dimensions like quality, higher technology, after-sales, safety, sales personnel, prestige, innovativeness, financial performance, work environment, management, sales force in her findings.

Ford is at the second ranking in three of attributes, except competence attribute being at the third ranking. These findings give Ford managers the implication that they should communicate the reliability and competence attribute of their cars more effectively and they should give more emphasis on presenting and marketing themselves to their customers as innovative, technological and customer oriented to attain a customer company identification more in reaching customer satisfaction and loyalty consecutively.

5. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Although this paper aims at making several contributions to consumer research in the area of corporate branding, there are a few limitations that emerge from this study which may present opportunities for future research. The first limitation of this study is that it is based on a sample group of customers from four car manufacturers which constitute nearly 50% of domestic passenger car sales in 2007. However, this study is not able to give a full picture of the whole domestic car market and reflects only half of it. Secondly, the brands of these four car companies, Renault, Fiat, Ford and Toyota are all foreign company originated although they realize local manufacturing activities in Turkey. So, the corporate brands investigated in this study in terms of corporate personality attributes are not originally created and developed in local companies.

For future research, a research with a larger sample size including drivers of all car brands may be suggested in order to yield more sophisticated outcomes reflecting the whole of domestic car market in Turkey. This research may also be conducted in other cities of Turkey enabling a comparison between the findings of different populations of interest. It is possible that attributes and perceptions may differ among geographical locations and urban or rural areas. Besides a similar study may be applied by concentration on the differences of demographic characteristics of car drivers like gender, age, marital status and education. As the last suggestion, the difference between the perceived corporate brand personalities and the ideal corporate brand personalities of four car brands may be investigated as the topic of another study. In such a study, before analyzing the difference between the ideal and perceived personalities, the ideal corporate brand personalities should be defined accurately after a series of exploratory research activities like interviews with managers, pilot surveys and focus groups with customers.

CONCLUSION

The goal of this paper is to determine the influence of corporate brand personality constituents on customer satisfaction and loyalty for four car brands' customers. The results reveal that for complex and infrequently purchased durables such as cars, corporate brand personality is a predictor of customer satisfaction and loyalty. "Business intelligence" attribute appears as the most significant factor among corporate personality attributes. The results support the idea of the importance of creativity, technology and intelligence for corporate brands in order to maintain the competitiveness and survival in the long run. Organizations are obliged to strengthen their creative, intelligent and technological sides and communicate effectively to their customers in order to obtain satisfaction and loyalty in automotive sector.

This study gives significant linkage that support marketing strategies on positioning of corporate brands by showing that internal values (core values and corporate personality) are important paths to consumer satisfaction and loyalty. Beyond conventional marketing mix, car manufacturers need to raise customer awareness of their corporate values and organizational culture. Managers should further promote their corporate identity and personality in consumer markets to enhance loyalty in order to prevent consumer switching behaviours of their customers by the increasing product and price parity in the industry.

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APPENDIX I – Survey Instrument in Turkish

ANKET FORMU

Bu anket formu akademik bir araştırma çalışmasının istatistiksel uygulama bölümüne aittir. Sizden alınacak tüm bilgiler tamamen gizli tutulacak ve sadece akademik çalışma için kullanılacak olup, adınızı/soyadınızı belirtmenize gerek yoktur. Sağlıklı bilimsel veriler elde edebilmek için her soruyu dikkatle okuyup cevaplandırmanızı rica eder, akademik çalışmaya katkıda bulunduğunuz için teşekkür ederiz.

BÖLÜM I

1. Araba kullanıyor musunuz?
o Evet
o Hayır

Cevabınız Hayır ise anketi sonlandırınız.

2. Cevabınız evetse, kaç yıldır kullanıyorsunuz? ....

3. Kullandığınız arabanın markası nedir? ....

4.

Eğer kullandığınız arabanın markası Renault, Fiat, Ford, Toyota araba markalarından biri değil ise anketi sonlandırınız.

5. Kullandığınız araba kime ait?
o Kendinize
o Ailenize
o Çalıştığınız şirkete
o Diğer ....
o

6. Kullanmakta olduğunuz otomobili kaç yıldır kullanıyorsunuz? ....

7. Bu arabadan önce kullandığınız otomobil var ise, markası neydi? ....

Lütfen aşağıdaki soruyu kullandığınız araba size veya ailenize ait ise cevaplandırınız.

8. Arabanızı sıfır mı yoksa ikinci el olarak mı satın almıştınız?
o Sıfır
o İkinci el

BÖLÜM II

Aşağıdaki bölümde çeşitli kurumsal kişilik sıfatları yer almaktadır. "**Kullanmakta olduğunuz araba markasının üretici firması**"nı herbir kurumsal kişilik sıfatında hangi tarafa yakın buluyorsanız bu yakınlık derecesine göre değerlendirerek <u>uygun kutulardaki sayıları çarpı ile işaretleyiniz.</u>

Güvenilmez	1	2	3	4	5	Güvenilir
Müşteriye Uzak	1	2	3	4	5	Müşteri Odaklı
Yerel	1	2	3	4	5	Küresel
Teknolojik	1	2	3	4	5	Teknolojik Değil
Topluma duyarsız	1	2	3	4	5	Topluma duyarlı
Durağan	1	2	3	4	5	Dinamik
Takipçi	1	2	3	4	5	Lider
Deneyimli	1	2	3	4	5	Deneyimsiz
Demode	1	2	3	4	5	Modern

BÖLÜM III

Aşağıdaki bölümde çeşitli insan kişilik sıfatları yer almaktadır. "**Kullanmakta olduğunuz araba marka**"sını "**Kişi**" gibi düşünecek olursanız, herbir sıfat bazında derecesine göre değerlendirerek uygun kutulardaki sayıları çarpı ile işaretleyiniz.

Sportif Değil	1	2	3	4	5	Sportif
Pasif	1	2	3	4	5	Atak
Zeki	1	2	3	4	5	Akılsız
Kaba	1	2	3	4	5	Zarif
Cesur	1	2	3	4	5	Korkak
Havalı değil	1	2	3	4	5	Havalı
Sıkıcı	1	2	3	4	5	Heyecan verici
Yaratıcı	1	2	3	4	5	Basmakalıp
Sıradan	1	2	3	4	5	Elit

BÖLÜM IV

Bu bölümde araba ile ilgili çeşitli ifadeler ve görüşler yer almaktadır. Bu ifadeler içinde yer alan "**bu araba**" deyimi "**halen kullanmakta olduğunuz araba**" yı, "**bu firma**" deyimi ise "**halen kullanmakta olduğunuz araba markasının üretici firması**" nı ifade etmektedir. Lütfen halen kullanmakta olduğunuz araba ile ilgili aşağıdaki ifade ve görüş cümlelerine **katılma derecenizi** uygun kutuyu çarpı işareti ile işaretleyerek belirtiniz.

	Katılmıyorum	Az katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Çok katılıyorum	Tamamen katılıyorum
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Bu araba ile ilgili şikayetim oldu ve ilgili merciye ulaştırdım					
Bu araba beni yansıtıyor					
Her zaman bu markayı kullanmayı düşünürüm					
Bu araba beklentilerimi karşılıyor					
Bu arabanın markasını beğeniyorum					
İlerde yeni bir araba alacak olursam yine bu markayı tercih ederim					
Bu arabayı satan firma rakiplerinden üstündür					
Bu firmanın arabalarını tavsiye ederim					
Bu arabanın fiyatı daha yüksek olsa bile yine bu arabayı alırdım					
Bu araba ile ilgili şikayetim yok					
Bir arabadan beklediğim özellikler bu arabada var					
Bu araba ile duygusal bağım var					
Bu arabadan genel olarak memnunum					
Bu araba ile ilgili şikayetim oldu ama bunu kimseye iletmedim					
Bu arabayı yakın çevreme önermek isterim					
Bu arabanın fiyatı ne olursa olsun gelecekte yenileyecek olursam yine aynı markayı alırım					
Bu arabayı kullanmaktan mutluyum					

BÖLÜM V

Yaşınız: ....

Cinsiyetiniz:
- o Kadın
- o Erkek

Medeni Durumunuz:

- o Evli
- o Bekar

Eğitim düzeyiniz:

- o İlköğretim
- o Lise
- o Üniversite
- o Yüksek Lisans-Doktora

Şu an evinizde sizinle birlikte yaşayan çocuk sayısı:

- o Bir çocuk
- o Birden fazla çocuk
- o Çocuk yok
- o

Çalışıyor musunuz?

- o Evet
- o Hayır

Cevabınız evet ise, ne iş yapıyorsunuz? ....

Aylık geliriniz: (net)

- o 500 YTL'den az
- o 500 YTL-1.000 YTL arası
- o 1.001 YTL-3.000 YTL arası
- o 3.001 YTL-5.000 YTL arası
- o 5.000 YTL'den fazla

Hangi semtte oturuyorsunuz? ....

Zaman ayırarak çalışmamıza katkıda bulunduğunuz için teşekkür ederiz.

APPENDIX 2. Survey Instrument in English
QUESTIONNAIRE IN ENGLISH

This questionnaire belongs to the statistical application part of a research study. Your name/surname is not requested and all the information gathered from you will be kept confidential and used for only academic purposes. We will appreciate for your attention and interest in reading and answering all of the questions carefully and thank you for your support and participation in this research study.

PART I

1. Do you drive car?

o   Yes
o   No
o

If your answer is No, please end the questionnaire..

2. If your answer is Yes, how long have you been a driver? ....
3. What is the brand of your car? ....

If the brand of your car is not one of the brands; Renault, Fiat, Ford, Toyota, please end the questionnaire.

4. Who owns the car you are driving?

o   Yourself
o   Your family
o   Your company
o   Other ....
o
5. How long have you been driving your car? ....

6. What was the brand of the car you were previously driving before this one, if there was any? ....

Please answer the question below only if the car you are currently driving belongs to yourself or your family.

7. How did you buy your current car? Was it new or second hand?
o   New
o   Second hand

PART II

In the below part, there are various corporate personality definitions. Please choose and mark the best number for you between 1 and 5 by considering **"The producer company of the car brand that you are already using"** and evaluating it according to the compliance with the appropriate corporate personality definition in the scale.

Unreliable	1	2	3	4	5	Reliable
Not customer oriented	1	2	3	4	5	Customer oriented
Local	1	2	3	4	5	Global
Technological	1	2	3	4	5	Not Technological
Not Socially responsible	1	2	3	4	5	Socially responsible
Static	1	2	3	4	5	Dynamic
Follower	1	2	3	4	5	Leader
Experienced	1	2	3	4	5	Not Experienced
Old-fashioned	1	2	3	4	5	Modern

PART III

In the below part, there are various human personality definitions. By assuming that **"The car brand you are already using"** is a **"Person",** please choose and mark the best number for you between 1 and 5 according to the compliance with the appropriate human personality definition in the scale.

Not Sporty	1	2	3	4	5	Sporty
Passive	1	2	3	4	5	Reckless
Intelligent	1	2	3	4	5	Stupid
Rude	1	2	3	4	5	Refined
Bold	1	2	3	4	5	Fearful
Stuffy	1	2	3	4	5	Cool
Boring	1	2	3	4	5	Exciting
Creative	1	2	3	4	5	Cliche
Ordinary	1	2	3	4	5	Elegant

PART IV

In the below part, there are some statements and opinions about using a car. Among these statements, the phrase of **"this car"** is used to express **"the car you have already been using"** and the phrase of **"this company"** is used to express **"the company which produced the car brand you have already been using".** Please choose and mark the best number for you ranking from 1 to 5 according to the level of your agreement/disagreement with these statements.

	Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree	Totally Agree
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
I recommend the cars of this company.					
I would still buy this car, even if its price was higher.					
I have no complaint regarding this car.					
This car has all the characteristics which I expect from a car.					
I have an emotional attachment with this car.					
I am pleased with this car in general.					
I had a complaint regarding this car but I did not transmitted this to any authority.					
I like to recommend this car to my close environment.					
This car reflects me.					
I always think to use this brand.					
This car fulfills my expectations.					
I admire the brand of this car.					
I will prefer this brand again if I buy a new car in future.					
The company selling this car is					

overtaking its competitors.					
If I buy a new car in future, I will prefer the same brand regardless of its price.					
I am happy to use this car.					
I had a complaint about this car and transmitted this to the related authority.					

PART V

Age: ....

Gender:

- o Female
- o Male

Marital Status:

- o Married
- o Single
- o

Education Level:

- o Elementary
- o High School
- o University
- o Master/Doctorate

The number of children living at your home together:

- o One
- o More than one
- o None

Are you working?

- o Yes

o   No

If yes, what is your job? ....

Monthly income: (net)

- o   Less than 500 TL
- o   Between 500 TL-1.000 TL
- o   Between 1.001 TL-3.000 TL
- o   Between 3.001 TL-5.000 TL
- o   More than 5.000 TL

At which district do you live? ....

Thank you for your participation in this study...