

Examination of Secondary School Students' Brand Awareness, Brand Loyalty, Brand Functions, and Factors Affecting Brand Loyalty According to Levels of Playing Team and Individual Sports

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Abstract

This research aims to determine the brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand functions, factors affecting brand loyalty and the preference criteria for product purchase (sports shoes) of secondary school students who do team and individual sports, and to determine whether these criteria make a difference according to the sports branches they play (team and individual). The sample of the study consists of a total of 250 students [n(male=185), n(female=65)], 150 of whom play team sports (football, volleyball, basketball, handball, folk dances) [n(male=118), n(female=32)] and 100 of whom play individual sports (taekwondo, kickboxing, badminton, fitness, wrestling, fencing) [n(male=67), n(female=33)], studying at high schools affiliated to the Konya Provincial Directorate of National Education in the first half of the 2019-2020 academic year. The mean age of the students participating in the research is 16.48±1.16, and the income level of their families is 2393.12 TL. It can be said that the income level of the families of the students participating in the research as of the period of application of the scales is at the level of the minimum wage. 34.8% (n=87) of the students participating in the research were in the 9th Grade, 27.2% (n=68) in the 10th Grade, 29.2% (n=73) in the 11th grade, and 8.8% (n=22) in the 12th grade. As data collection tools in the research, Brand Awareness Scale, Brand Loyalty Scale, Brand Functions Scale, Factors Affecting Brand Loyalty Scale, and Preference Criteria in Product Purchase Scale were used, which were translated into Turkish by Erdoğan (2012) by making use of many studies in the literature and whose validity and reliability studies were conducted after language validity was ensured. As a result of the research, it was determined that the mean score of the students, who play team sports, from the related scales is higher than the students, who play individual sports. It was determined that the mean score of the students, who play team sports, from the Brand Awareness and Brand Loyalty Scale is significantly higher than the students who play individual sports, and it was also revealed that compared to the students playing individual sports, the mean scores of the students, who play team sports, from the "image function and social function" sub-dimensions of the Brand Functions Scale were significantly higher, that their mean scores from the "diversity/innovation seeking" sub-dimension of the Factors Affecting Brand Loyalty Scale were significantly higher, and that their mean scores from the "well-known brand/high image criterion, innovative/fashionable criterion, and social circle/friend criterion" sub-dimensions of the Scale of Preference Criteria for Product Purchase (Sports Shoes) were significantly higher.

Keywords: Sports Marketing, Brand Awareness, Brand Loyalty, Secondary Education Students, Team Sports, Individual Sports.

INTRODUCTION

The trademark (9), which means "a special name or sign that is used to identify a commercial good and to distinguish it from its like", is a concept aimed at giving an advantage to that product or service.

When the brand is consumed, it makes individuals and various social groups feel a sense of passion, and individuals or groups attribute a whole of meaning to that brand and that brand takes on the quality of value (10). The common point of almost all brand definitions, which are not very different from each other in the relevant literature, is customer perception (3).

Changes in the field of marketing, changes in the conditions in the markets in which businesses operate, cause an increase in the demands and needs of consumers and consumers expect an added value. Due to the aggravation of competition conditions and in order for the business to be in a sustainable position in this intense period, businesses aim to create a brand and expand it to reach the consumer. Businesses try to create a quality perception in the minds of consumers by giving a meaning to the product they offer, even if it is not visible (5). A bond is formed between the brand and the business. The purpose of the products offered by the brands is to affect the consumer emotionally and psychologically. The more people prefer the brand, the more it benefits the size of that brand (4). In addition to contributing to the satisfaction of tangible needs such as tangible-physical product features for consumers, brands also have important functions in terms of meeting their psychological side needs (3).

Brand functions are important to firms as they play a major role in consumers' response to brand-related marketing activities (6). In the related literature, the functions of the brand in terms of consumers have been handled differently by the researchers. In this study, the functions of the brand in terms of consumers were examined in three dimensions as image, marking/classic and social function.

The concept of brand awareness means not only the recognition of brands by name or image, but also the recognition of their perceptual images as brand identities (2). Brand awareness perceptions of young people begin in childhood. Creating brand awareness among young consumers, whose importance is increasing in terms of marketing, and the brand gaining a strong place in their memories play an important role in the long-term success of brands (2).

Brand loyalty, in its most basic sense, is the promise to repurchase a preferred product or service on a consistent basis in the future (7). According to another definition, brand loyalty is the intention perceived to maintain relationships with a particular brand and supported by various behaviors (8).

Brand loyalty in sports can be expressed as loyalty to a sports product, and it has a special importance for various sports organizations, especially for sports teams. According to Gladden and Funk (2001), there are two obvious reasons why brand loyalty is so important to sports teams. First, brand loyalty allows fans and indirectly the media to follow the team consistently, even when the team's performance is disrupted. The second is that brand loyalty enables possible product extensions different from the core product [Cited by Erdoğdu (3)]. Beech and Chadwick (2007) stated that brand loyalty is important and unique for sports teams due to the very low probability of loyalty passing to an rival team (1).

As a result, the high interest of the young target audience, who will be the consumers of the future, towards the brands, giving importance to the brand in their purchases (especially in the products they use and perceive as high importance) and the conclusion by studies that brand habits acquired at an early age continue until adulthood (2) make it necessary to investigate the brand loyalty behaviors of young consumers and their determining/influencing factors.

In the light of this information, it was aimed to examine the brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand functions and the factors affecting the brand loyalty of secondary school students according to their level of playing team and individual sports.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Population and Sample

The sample of the study consists of a total of 250 students [n(male=185), n(female=65)], 150 of whom play team sports (football, volleyball, basketball, handball, folk dances) [n(male=118), n(female=32)] and 100 of whom play individual sports (taekwondo, kickboxing, badminton, fitness, wrestling, fencing) [n(male=67), n(female=33)], studying at high schools affiliated to the Konya Provincial Directorate of National Education in the first half of the 2019-2020 academic year. The mean age of the students participating in the research is 16.48±1.16, and the income level of their families is 2393.12 TL. It can be said that the income level of the families of the

students participating in the research as of the period of application of the scales is at the level of the minimum wage. 34.8% (n=87) of the students participating in the research were in the 9th Grade, 27.2% (n=68) in the 10th Grade, 29.2% (n=73) in the 11th grade, and 8.8% (n=22) in the 12th grade.

Data Collection Tools

As data collection tools in the research, Brand Awareness Scale, Brand Loyalty Scale, Brand Functions Scale, Factors Affecting Brand Loyalty Scale, and Preference Criteria for Product Purchase Scale were used, which were translated into Turkish by Erdoğan (2012) by making use of many studies in the literature and whose validity and reliability studies were conducted after language validity was ensured.

Brand Awareness Scale: is a scale, which is a five-point Likert type ("1=strongly disagree", "5=strongly agree"), and composed of 5 statements (for example, "I usually buy brands from famous companies", "well-known brands are best for me") and one dimension, and it was developed to determine the brand awareness of secondary school students in general without considering any product group.

Brand Loyalty Scale: is a scale, which is a five-point Likert type ("1=strongly disagree", "5=strongly agree"), and composed of 6 statements (For example, "all kinds of sneakers I own are from the same brand", "when my sneakers get old, I will buy the same brand of sneakers") and one dimension, and it was developed to determine the brand loyalty behaviors of secondary school students in sports shoes.

Brand Functions Scale: is a scale, which is a five-point Likert type ("1=strongly disagree", "5=strongly agree"), and composed of 14 statements [For example, "become cooler among my friends thanks to the "brand-name products" I use(image function)", "I think "brand" indicates which company produced the product(marking/classic function)", "I am usually interested in the same kinds of sports as my friends who use the same "brands"(social function)"] and 3 sub-dimensions [Image function(7th,8th,9th,10th,11th,14th Items), marking/classic function(1st,2nd,3rd,4th,6th Items), social function(5th,12th,13th Items)], and it was developed to determine the perceived brand functions of secondary school students without considering any product group.

Factors Affecting Brand Loyalty Scale: is a scale, which is a five-point Likert type ("1=strongly disagree", "5=strongly agree"), and composed of 13 statements [For example, "I'm so used to my current sneakers, I'm too lazy to try another brand(brand habit)", "if a new sneaker brand comes out, I will try that brand(diversity/innovation approach)", "I believe my current sneaker brand is the right choice(emotional commitment to the brand)", "I only buy the sneakers I like at the time of sale(sensitivity to price cuts and promotions)"] and 4 sub-dimensions [Brand habit(3rd,8th,9th,11th Items), diversity/innovation approach(2nd,4th,5th Items), emotional commitment to the brand(1st,10th,13th Items), sensitivity to price cuts and promotions(6th,7th,12th Items)], and it was developed to determine the factors affecting the brand loyalty of secondary school students in sports shoes.

Preference Criteria for Product Purchase Scale: is a scale, which is a five-point Likert type ("1=strongly disagree", "5=strongly agree"), and composed of 23 statements [For example, "It must be suitable for my foot health(Functionality Criterion)", "It must be a well-known brand(well-known brand/high image criterion)", "It must be fashionable among young people(innovative/fashionable criterion)", "it must be a shoe that my friends will also like(social circle/friend criterion)"] and 4 sub-dimensions [Functionality Criterion(3rd,4th,5th,6th,7th,10th,23rd Items), well-known brand/high image criterion(1st,2nd,12th,13th,17th,20th,21st,22nd Items), innovative/fashionable criterion(14th,15th,16th,18th,19th Items), social circle/friend criterion(8th,9th,11th Items)], and it was developed to determine the preference criteria of secondary school students in the purchase of sports shoes (3).

Analysis of the Data

During the analysis of the data, the frequency and percentage distributions describing the personal characteristics of the secondary school students constituting the sample of the study were determined in accordance with the purposes of the research. The arithmetic mean and standard deviation values of the answers given by the secondary school students, who play team and individual sports, to the scales were calculated and the direction of their distribution was determined.

Whether the data showed a normal distribution was examined with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test,

and since the data showed normal distribution as a result of this examination, the comparison of the means of the students playing team and individual sports from the scales was tested with the parametric

test (t-test). $\alpha=0.05$ was chosen for the level of significance in the study.

RESULTS

Table 1. n, and SD Values of the Students who Play Team Sports and Individual Sports from the Scales of Brand Awareness, Brand Loyalty, Brand Functions, Factors Affecting Brand Loyalty and Preference Criteria for Product Purchase

	Students Playing Team Sports			Students Playing Individual Sports			
	n	\bar{X}	SD	n	\bar{X}	SD	
Brand Awareness Scale	150	3.36	0.91	100	3.07	0.84	
Brand Loyalty Scale	150	3.30	0.92	100	3.06	0.85	
Brand Functions Scale	Image Function	150	2.85	1.11	100	2.39	1.00
	Marking/Classic Function	150	3.55	0.98	100	3.47	0.90
	Social Function	150	2.84	1.01	100	2.57	0.92
Factors Affecting Brand Loyalty Scale	Brand Habit	150	2.96	0.85	100	2.91	0.73
	Seeking Diversity/Innovation	150	3.03	0.84	100	2.77	0.84
	Emotional Commitment to the Brand	150	3.52	1.01	100	3.41	0.86
	Sensitivity to Price Cuts and Promotions	150	2.99	0.81	100	3.00	0.80
Preference Criteria for Product Purchase (Sports Shoes) Scale	Functionality Criterion	150	3.94	1.12	100	3.89	1.02
	Well-Known Brand/High Image Criterion	150	3.39	0.85	100	3.00	0.81
	Innovative/Fashionable Criterion	150	3.51	0.93	100	3.14	0.93
	Social Environment/Friend Criterion	150	3.52	0.96	100	3.24	0.89

It was determined that the mean scores of the answers given by the students playing team sports to the questions of Brand Awareness [$\bar{x}=3.36$] and Brand Loyalty Scale [$\bar{x}=3.30$] include the option "Doesn't matter", that their mean scores from the "marking/classic function" sub-dimension of the Brand Functions Scale include the option "Agree [$\bar{x}=3.55$]" and their mean scores from the sub-dimensions of "image function [$\bar{x}=2.85$] and social function [$\bar{x}=2.84$]" include the option "Doesn't matter", that their mean scores from the "emotional commitment to the brand" sub-dimension of the Factors Affecting Brand Loyalty Scale include the option "Agree [$\bar{x}=3.52$]" and their mean scores from the sub-dimensions of "brand habit [$\bar{x}=2.96$], seeking diversity/innovation [$\bar{x}=3.03$] and sensitivity to price cuts and promotion [$\bar{x}=2.99$]" include the option "Doesn't matter", and that their mean scores from the sub-dimensions of "functionality criterion [$\bar{x}=3.94$], innovative/fashionable criterion [$\bar{x}=3.51$], and that their mean scores from the social circle/friend criterion sub-dimension of the Preference Criteria for Product Purchase (Sports Shoes) Scale include the option "Agree [$\bar{x}=3.52$]" and their mean scores from

the sub-dimension of "well-known brand/high image criterion [$\bar{x}=3.39$]" include the option "Doesn't matter".

It was determined that the mean scores of the answers given by the students playing individual sports to the questions of the Brand Awareness [$\bar{x}=3.07$] and Brand Loyalty Scale [$\bar{x}=3.06$] includes the option "it doesn't matter", that their mean scores from the "marking/classic function" sub-dimension of the Brand Functions Scale include the option "Doesn't matter [$\bar{x}=3.47$]", and their mean scores from the sub-dimensions of "image function [$\bar{x}=2.39$] and social function [$\bar{x}=2.57$]" include the option "Don't agree", that their mean scores from the "emotional commitment to the brand" sub-dimension of the Factors Affecting Brand Loyalty Scale include the option "Agree [$\bar{x}=3.41$]" and their mean scores from the sub-dimensions of "brand habit [$\bar{x}=2.91$], seeking diversity/innovation [$\bar{x}=2.77$] and sensitivity to price cuts and promotion [$\bar{x}=3.00$]" include the option "Doesn't matter", and that their mean scores from the functionality criterion sub-dimension of the Preference Criteria for Product Purchase (Sports

Shoes) Scale include the option "Agree" [\bar{x} =3.89]" and their mean scores from the sub-dimensions of "well-known brand/high image criterion [\bar{x} =3.00],

innovative/fashionable criterion [\bar{x} =3.14] and social circle/friend criterion [\bar{x} =3.24]" include the option "Doesn't matter".

Table 2. t Test Results of the Students who Play Team Sports and Individual Sports from the Scales of Brand Awareness, Brand Loyalty, Brand Functions, Factors Affecting Brand Loyalty and Preference Criteria for Product Purchase

		Sports Branch	n	\bar{X}	SS	t	P
Brand Awareness Scale		Team Sports	150	3.36	0.91	2.475	0.014*
		Individual Sports	100	3.07	0.84		
Brand Loyalty Scale		Team Sports	150	3.30	0.92	2.076	0.039*
		Individual Sports	100	3.06	0.85		
Brand Functions Scale	Image function	Team Sports	150	2.85	1.11	3.355	0.001*
		Individual Sports	100	2.39	1.00		
	Marking/Classic Function	Team Sports	150	3.55	0.98	0.654	0.514
		Individual Sports	100	3.47	0.90		
	Social Function	Team Sports	150	2.84	1.01	2.177	0.030*
		Individual Sports	100	2.57	0.92		
Factors Affecting Brand Loyalty Scale	Brand Habit	Team Sports	150	2.96	0.85	0.478	0.633
		Individual Sports	100	2.91	0.73		
	Seeking Diversity/Innovation	Team Sports	150	3.03	0.84	2.389	0.018*
		Individual Sports	100	2.77	0.84		
	Emotional Commitment to the Brand	Team Sports	150	3.52	1.01	0.893	0.373
		Individual Sports	100	3.41	0.86		
Sensitivity to Price Cuts and Promotions	Team Sports	150	2.99	0.81	-0.021	0.983	
	Individual Sports	100	3.00	0.80			
Preference Criteria for Product Purchase (Sports Shoes) Scale	Functionality Criterion	Team Sports	150	3.94	1.12	0.343	0.732
		Individual Sports	100	3.89	1.02		
	Well-Known Brand/High Image Criterion	Team Sports	150	3.39	0.85	3.593	0.000*
		Individual Sports	100	3.00	0.81		
	Innovative/Fashionable Criterion	Team Sports	150	3.51	0.93	3.075	0.002*
		Individual Sports	100	3.14	0.93		
Social Circle/Friend Criterion	Team Sports	150	3.52	0.96	2.259	0.025*	
	Individual Sports	100	3.24	0.89			

As can be seen in Table 2, mean scores of the students playing team sports from the Brand Awareness [$t(248)=2.475$; $P<0.05$] and Brand Loyalty Scale [$t(248)=2.076$; $P<0.05$] was found to be significantly higher than the students playing individual sports, and it was also revealed that compared to the students playing individual sports, the mean scores of the students, who play team sports, from the "image function [$t(248)=3.355$; $P<0,05$] and social function [$t(248)=2,177$; $P<0,05$]" sub-dimensions of the Brand Functions Scale were significantly higher, that their mean scores from the "diversity/innovation seeking [$t(248)=2,389$; $P<0,05$]" sub-dimension of the Factors Affecting Brand Loyalty Scale were significantly higher, and that their mean scores from the "well-known brand/high image criterion [$t(248)=3,593$; $P<0,05$],

innovative/fashionable criterion [$t(248)=3,075$; $P<0,05$], and social circle/friend criterion [$t(248)=2,259$; $P<0,05$]" sub-dimensions of the Scale of Preference Criteria for Product Purchase (Sports Shoes) were significantly higher.

DISCUSSION

In this study carried out to determine the brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand functions, factors affecting brand loyalty and the preference criteria for product purchase (sports shoe) of secondary school students who play team and individual sports, and to identify whether these criteria make a difference according to the sports branches they play (team and individual), the following results have been achieved:

The brand phenomenon has become an important value that empowers the product or

service in the global trade market. With globalization, the brand has gone beyond being a concept used only for a product or service. It is seen that the brand phenomenon is more closely related to tangible values. What we call a brand stands out as a material value. It is seen that there are many studies in the related literature to determine brand loyalty, brand functions, and variables that affect brand loyalty. Generally, the approach in these studies is to investigate whether brand loyalty, perceived brand functions, and the variables affecting brand loyalty make a significant difference according to the gender, age, and whether or not they do sports.

In this study, by adopting a different approach, it is aimed to determine whether the participants' status of playing team and individual sports affect their brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand functions, factors affecting brand loyalty and preference criteria in product purchase.

The party that generally benefits from the brand phenomenon is the sports clubs operating in team sports. As a matter of fact, successful sports clubs, which are among the actors of the global economy, have now become brands. Football clubs such as Real Madrid, Barcelona and Manchester United are sports clubs with fans from all over the world. Such strong sports clubs benefit from brand communication at a high level. To give an example, fans from all parts of the world strive to identify with such sports clubs by providing visibility with the jerseys of sports clubs. Sports clubs that stand out with their team sports can also strengthen their bonds with their fan bases at the other end of the world through social networks. In this process, it is seen that the sports clubs that collect the most income are the clubs that stand out in team sports. The fact that sports clubs that have been successful in the fields of football, basketball and volleyball in Turkey also come to the fore in being a brand, and that sports clubs that have been successful in the field of football, basketball and volleyball around the world show themselves as brands, can explain the relationship between the success of these clubs and being a brand (10).

In parallel with the explanations in the related literature, in the present study, it was determined that secondary school students' perceived brand functions, brand awareness levels in general, brand loyalty, variables affecting brand loyalty, and their perceptions of preference criteria in product purchase differed in favor of those who play team sports

according to the variable of playing team and individual sports.

In other words, it was determined that secondary school students who do team sports have higher approaches *"they usually buy the brands of famous companies, the best ones are well-known brands, they would prefer to buy an expensive branded product instead of buying an unbranded cheap product, all kinds of sports shoes they have are from the same brand, they can recommend the sports shoe brand to everyone around them, there is no way that they will give up their sports shoe brand, when their sports shoes get old, they will buy the same brand of sports shoes again, they feel cooler among their friends thanks to the branded products they use, they have a different place in the eyes of their friends, they get on well with their friends who use the same brand, they are generally interested in the same type of sports branches with their friends who use the same brands, They listen to the same kind of music, they follow the same fashion in clothing, they pay attention to the fact that it is a well-known brand and a brand that they have known for a long time, they should be excited when they wear the shoes, it should have a high image, it should be fashionable among young people, it should be a brand that suits them and their friends will like, etc."* than secondary school students who do individual sports.

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