SCALE DEVELOPMENT STUDY FOR DETERMINING THE BRAND EQUITY OF ACADEMICS

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AKADEMİSYENLERİN MARKA DEĞERİNİ BELİRLEMEYE YÖNELİK ÖLÇEK GELİŞTİRME ÇALIŞMASI

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Abstract

In today's competitive environment, with the concept of brand starting to find its place in every area of life, human brand has become one of the prominent fields of work. On the other hand, in parallel with the changes in the social structure, the branding of and the determination of brand equity of academics who are the soul of universities and the main human element, has become a necessity. In general, the knowledge of academics, their relationships with colleagues and students are accepted as determinants of brand equity. The purpose of this conceptually designed study is to develop a scale to determine the brand equity of academics. For this purpose, a comprehensive literature study was carried out and a model was put forward to determine the brand equity of academics. According to this model, a strong brand of academics is emerging through the combination of features such as performance and popularity. A scale was then developed to determine the brand equity of academics within the framework of the research model.

Keywords: Brand, human brands, brand equity, academic brands, brand equity of academics.

Öz

Günümüz rekabet ortamında marka kavramının hayatın her alanında kendine yer bulmaya başlamasıyla birlikte insan markası öne çıkan çalışma alanlarından biri olmuştur. Öte yandan, toplum yapısında ortaya çıkan değişimlere paralel olarak, üniversitelerin ruhu ve temel insan unsuru olan akademisyenlerin markalaşması ve aynı zamanda marka değerinin belirlenmesi de bir zorunluluk haline gelmiştir. Genel olarak, akademisyenlerin bilgi birikimi, çalışma arkadaşları ve öğrencileri ile olan ilişkileri marka değerinin belirleyicileri olarak kabul edilir. Kavramsal olarak tasarlanan bu çalışmanın amacı akademisyenlerin marka değerinin belirlenmesine yönelik bir ölçek geliştirmektir. Bu amaç doğrultusunda öncelikle kapsamlı bir literatür çalışması yapılarak akademisyenlerin marka değerini belirlemeye yönelik bir model ortaya konulmuştur. Bu modele göre performans ve popülerlik gibi özelliklerin birleşimiyle güçlü bir akademisyen markası ortaya çıkmaktadır. Daha sonra ortaya konulan araştırma modeli çerçevesinde akademisyenlerin marka değerini belirlemeye yönelik bir ölçek geliştirilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Marka, insan markası, marka değeri, akademik marka, akademisyenlerin marka değeri.

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GENİŞ ÖZET

Son yıllarda, marka kavramı, üretimden tüketime kadar süreç içerisinde oldukça fazla adı geçen bir olgudur. Geleneksel olarak, marka kavramı organizasyonlar, ürünler veya hizmetler ile ilişkilendirilir. Fakat küreselleşme, rekabetin artması, teknolojinin gelişmesi nedeniyle marka kavramının kullanım alanı genişlemiştir. Araştırmacılar sadece ürün ve hizmetlerin değil, organizasyonların, spor, sanat ve eğlencenin, coğrafi bölgelerin, fikirlerin ve hatta kişilerin bile marka olabileceğini belirtmektedir. Özellikle 1990'ların sonunda ortaya çıkan insan markası, araştırmacılar arasında popüler hale gelen ilginç konulardan biri olarak kabul edilmektedir.

İnsan marka değeri, modern zamanın pazarlama araştırmalarında temel konulardan biridir. Özellikle insan marka değerinin öneminin günden güne artması, bu konuda yapılan çalışmaları hızlandırmış ve birçok çalışmanın da temelini hazırlamıştır. Ürün veya hizmet markalaşması gibi insan markalaşması da bir bireyin güçlü yönlerini ve benzersizliğini hedef kitleye göstermesini gerektirir. Bir diğer ifadeyle, insan marka değeri, tıpkı ürün markaları gibi, tüketicinin markanın ne olduğu veya nasıl olduğu hakkındaki algılarının ve hislerinin bir yansımasıdır.

Günümüz rekabet ortamında siyasetçi, asker, sanatçı gibi geniş kitlelere hitap eden insanlar marka haline gelmeye, bu sayede geniş kitleleri etkilemeye ve kalıcı olmaya çalışmaktadırlar. Esas itibarıyla bireyin çalıştığı alanda ya da sektörde bilinir olmasını sağlayan marka kariyere dönük olarak bireyin avantajlı iş olanaklarına ulaşmasına katkı sağlamaktadır. İnsan markalaşması sadece belirli bir uzmanlığa sahip kişilerle sınırlı değildir. Aynı zamanda akademisyenler de uzmanlık alanları, demografik bilgileri, araştırmaları ve yayınları, öğretim ve yönetim deneyimi gibi markalarını tanımlayabilecek çeşitli özelliklere sahip oldukları ve marka olarak yönetilebildikleri için pazarlama çalışmaları kapsamında bir marka oldukları kabul edilmektedir.

Marka değeri, akademisyenlerin hedeflerine ulaşmalarını sağlamak için bir araç olarak kullanılabilir. Güçlü bir akademisyen markası en azından tüketicilere (öğrenciler) hizmetten neler bekleyebileceğini söyler. Bu çalışmada Rosen (1981) ve Adler (1985, 2006) insan markası ile ilgili çalışmalarını Keller'ın (1993) marka bilgisi çerçevesinde birleştiren Hofmann, Schnittkab, Johnenc ve Kottemannd (2019) çalışmasından yola çıkarak, üniversitelerin temel unsurları arasında yer alan akademisyenlerin marka değerinin nasıl oluşturulduğu açıklanmıştır. Öncelikle çalışma kapsamında akademisyenlerin marka değerinin belirlenmesine yönelik bir model ortaya konulmuştur. Bu modele göre performans ve popülerlik gibi özelliklerin birleşimiyle güçlü bir akademisyen markası ortaya çıkmaktadır. Yani, akademik performansı ve popülerliği daha yüksek olan akademisyenlerin markalaştığı söylenebilir.

Araştırma kapsamında ortaya konulan model çerçevesinde Amerikan üniversitelerinden biri olan North Carolina Üniversitesi tarafından akademisyenlerin değerlendirilmesinde kullanılan kriterler dikkate alınarak, akademisyenlerin marka değerini hesaplamak üzere H. Mustafa Paksoy tarafından bir ölçek geliştirilmiştir. Bu ölçek akademik yetkinlik, bilimsel yeterlilik ve popülerite olmak üzere üç temel boyut ve yirmi üç faktörden oluşmaktadır. Ayrıca ölçekte; "Akademik Yetkinlik Boyutu" 40 puan, "Bilimsel Yeterlilik Boyutu" 50 puan ve "Popülerite Boyutu" 10 puan olmak üzere herhangi bir akademisyenin "Marka Değeri" 100 puan üzerinden hesaplanması esas alınmıştır.

Bu araştırma akademisyenler ve üniversite yöneticileri için yeni bilgiler sağlamaktadır ve özellikle insan marka araştırmaları hakkında bilgi birikimine katkıda bulunmaktadır. Makalemizde elde edilen sonuçlara dayanarak, akademisyenlerin yetkinliği, bilimsel bilgisi ve popülaritesi bir marka yaratmak için gereklidir. Akademisyenlerin marka değerini belirlemeye yönelik farklı araştırmalar olsa da bu çalışma kendine özgün yapısı ile farklı bir bakış açısı sağlamaktadır.

Bu çalışma tasarımı ile ilgili bazı sınırlamalarla karşı karşıyadır. Ayrıca çalışma ülkemizin ve diğer ülkelerin yükseköğretim kurumları arasındaki sonuçların genelleştirilebilirliği ve geçerliliği açısından daha ileri düzeyde analizlere ihtiyaç duymaktadır. Bir başka ifadeyle marka değerlemede akademisyenlerin verilerinin alınması genelleştirilebilirliği ve geçerliliği açısından daha sağlıklı sonuçlar elde etmemizi sağlayacaktır.

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1. INTRODUCTION

With the effect of globalization, market conditions have started to change rapidly in recent years. In today's competitive environment, brand appears as an important concept. In fact, while brand was a concept that expressed simple signs arising from the desire to show the ownership of goods, today it has become a deep concept that includes a personality, an identity, and abstract and emotional meanings. In general, a brand may be defined as a "name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors" (Keller, 1993: 2). Brand refers to distinctive psychological, economic and functional benefits for consumers with a high level of awareness (Kuhn et al., 2008: 41).

The human brand, which emerged in the late 1990s, is an interesting topic that has become popular among researchers (Nessmann, 2010: 378). Traditionally, the concept of a brand has been associated with organizations, products, or services. However, the area of use of the concept of branding has expanded due to globalization, increased competition and the development of technology. In recent years, researchers point out that not just products and services, but organizations, sports, arts and entertainment, geographic regions, ideas and even individuals can be brands (Fournier, 2010: 37; Jillapalli and Wilcox, 2010: 2; Jillapalli and Jillapalli, 2014: 23). Branding, affecting consumers by establishing a brand identity and it is a powerful tool that allows you to eliminate opponents. In today's business world, where competition is intense, brand is not among the conditions of being successful just for businesses, products, organizations or services, but also for professionals, business people, and entrepreneurs (Hirschman 1987: 100; Ulrich and Smallwood, 2008: 30; Lunardo et al., 2015: 687).

Human brand equity is a concept frequently used today and expressed with different definitions (Yildiz ve Avci, 2019: 14). In the words of Thomson (2006: 105), every individual can be considered a brand within the scope of marketing work. In line with the researches in the literature, celebrity brands (for example, businesswoman and television personality Martha Stewart), athlete brands (eg. Michael Jordan) and CEO brands (eg. Steve Jobs) can be considered as human brands. According to Close, Moulard and Monroe (2011: 4) people can be branded because they are (1) strategically managed and (2) have brand characteristics. Human brands refer to well-known individuals who are the subject of marketing, interpersonal or inter-organizational communication (Thomson, 2006: 104).

With developing technology and intense competition, it has been realized that branding is required to distinguish between competitors, like products and services, to emphasize their differences, and to create positive connotations and connections in the minds of others. However, human brand research has been limited only to those with a particular expertise, such as politicians, sportsmen, artists and business people, CEOs and doctors, who seek recognition in their business and private life (Jillapallia and Jillapalli, 2014: 22; Hepekiz and Gokaliler, 2018: 764). However, human brands are not limited to people with a particular expertise. At the same time, academics are considered to be a brand within the scope of marketing studies as they have various characteristics that can define their brands such as their areas of expertise, demographics, research and publications, teaching and management experience, and as they can be managed as a brand (Close et al., 2011: 5).

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Today, the concept of brand is a phenomenon that is mentioned in the process from production to consumption. Brand equity has been considered one of the most important marketing concepts in both business and academic research since the 1980s (Lassar et al., 1995: 11; Keller and Lehmann, 2006: 740; Jung and Sung, 2008: 2). Brand equity is the value added to a service or product by brand name or brand symbol (Yoo et al., 2000: 195). In the most general sense, brand equity is expressed as a numerical value that reflects the power of the brand in the market and gives the owner competitive

advantages (Akbulut and Paksoy, 2007: 126). Creating a strong and unique brand is considered the goal of many organizations. A strong brand equity appears to provide a number of possible benefits, such as higher customer loyalty, less vulnerability to competitive marketing actions and marketing crises, and the ability to respond more appropriately to customers if prices decline or rise (Keller, 2001: 15).

Various models have emerged in studies on brand equity. In other words, a lot of research has been carried out on the conceptualization, measurement and management of brand equity, which is seen as an indicator of brand performance (Tascı and Bas, 2018: 713) and, as a result, many different perspectives have been put forward regarding the method and approaches for the definition, dimensions and measurement of brand equity (Lassar et al.,1995: 13; Keller and Lehmann, 2006: 744). It has many definitions and forms, such as brand value, positive impressions, attitudinal trends and behavioral preferences. In general, brand equity has been examined from three different perspectives: financial methods, consumer-based methods, combined methods (Kim et al., 2003: 336). Each method developed for brand equity valuation addresses a different criterion and gives results accordingly. In this context, there is no single truth in terms of brand valuation (Papatya et al., 2015: 38).

Financial-based methods used in studies based on financial measurements of brand equity do not take into account the feelings and thoughts of consumers regarding the brand (Keller and Aaker, 1992: 36). According to the brand equity literature, financial-based methods are transactions intended to reveal the present value of the future cash flow that a brand owner can generate from the use of a brand (Kim et al., 2003: 336; Bilgili et al., 2008: 22) and the cost of the brand is determined according to the cost of the brand, the market value, the alternative cost and the additional earnings generated by the brand (Akbulut and Paksoy, 2007: 127). Financial methods (Aydin and Ulengin, 2011: 60), which have gained importance since the 1990s, measure the result of consumer-based brand equity. These methods are based on the determination of brand equity by collecting all the costs involved in the marketing of a brand from its emergence, including even post-marketing activities (Ercis et al., 2013: 26).

The second perspective is that consumer responses to the brand name are evaluated. Consumer-based brand equity is based on what consumers learn, feel, see and hear over time (Kim and Kim, 2005: 117), so brand equity is what emerges in the minds of consumers (Marangoz, 2007: 461). In other words, brand equity can also be considered within the framework of marketing decisions (Kim et al., 2003: 336). From this perspective, brand equity is related to how products or service brands are perceived by customers, rather than tangible measurements. (Lassar et al., 1995: 13). Consumer-based brand equity is defined as the value added or increased benefits to a product by the brand name (Yoo et al., 2000: 195).

Aaker (1991) and Keller (2006) propose consumer behaviour-based computation, while Simon and Sullivan (1993) and Ambler (2008) propose a way to calculate and measure financially in the book The Marketing Book (Alsu and Palta, 2017: 176). However, in literature financial-based methods are criticized as they do not include all the factors that make up the strength of the brand, in particular consumer behaviour, and consumer-based methods are criticized as they do not consider the financial factors that form the market power of the business (Ailawadi et al., 2003: 3; Kim et al., 2003: 338). In reality, both methods must be used simultaneously in order for brand equity to be measured in full (Marangoz, 2007: 461). At this point, powerful methods were introduced by consulting companies that combined consumer-based methods and financial-based methods with comprehensive perspectives (Kim and Kim, 2005: 551). However, many details regarding the calculation of these methods are kept confidential by the consultancy companies (Kaya, 2002: 24).

One of the two most widely accepted brand equity models based on consumer perspective in literature is Aaker's (1991), while the other is Keller's (1993) model (Spry et al., 2011: 885). Aaker (1991) defined brand equity as a multidimensional concept consisting of "a set of assets and liabilities

that increase or decrease the value provided to the company and/or the company's customers with a product or service associated with a brand, name or symbol" (Pappu et al., 2005: 144). According to Aaker's (1996: 102-120) model, brand equity consists of five basic categories: brand connotations, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and other tangible assets (registered trademark assets such as patents and copyright). Aaker's top four categories (i.e. brand connotations, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand loyalty) are considered important dimensions of brand equity (Yoo et al., 2000: 196). On the other hand, Keller (1993: 2-3) has defined brand equity as "the differentiated effect of brand knowledge on the reactions of consumers to a brand's marketing activities". According to Keller's (1993) model, which formed the basis of this study, brand equity emerges as a result of consumers having a high level of awareness and familiarity with the brand and positive, strong and unique brand connotations in their mind. In Keller's words, brand awareness and brand connotations, which constitute brand equity, are based on brand knowledge. Brand knowledge, which Keller considers to be an important factor in establishing long-term and sustainable relationships with customers, is explained in terms of both product-related and non-product-related features as well as judgmental and emotional responses at the level of brand performance and image (Keller, 2001: 7; Keller, 2016: 3-4). Keller's (1993) basic framework of brand knowledge relates to product or service brands. In addition, Rosen (1981), Adler (1985, 2006) and Thomson (2006) provide insight into human brands. In this study, human branding will be combined in a general framework and the brand equity of academics will be explained (Hofmann et al., 2019: 2).

Theories on celebrities, such as artists, athletes, CEO and doctor, or the human brand extend as far back as Rosen (1981) and Adler (1985, 2006). While Rosen (1981: 845-846) discusses celebrity or human branding in terms of talent and performance, Adler (1985: 208, 2006: 3-4) refers to consumption capital (Stigler and Becker, 1977) and thus popularity as the main driving force. Essentially, Rosen (1981) believes that superior performance is decisive for the celebrity or human brand (Rosen, 1981, 845-846). Based on the concept of "consumption capital" put forth by Stigler and Becker (1977), Adler (1985) argues that appreciation (popularity) increases with knowledge (Adler, 1985: 208). Hofmann, Schnittka, Johnen and Kottemann (2019: 2) have matched product and human brand image that has not been studied or discussed in relation to each other in the literature until now, referring to their theories on celebrities or human brand joined by Nüesch (2008), dating back to Rosen (1981) and Adler (1985, 2006). More precisely, they relate performance and popularity to product and non-product-related features, explaining how different concepts are linked to each other and to the human brand. The conceptual framework regarding the human brand equity used by Hofmann et al. (2019: 10) in their studies is given in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Human Brand Equity
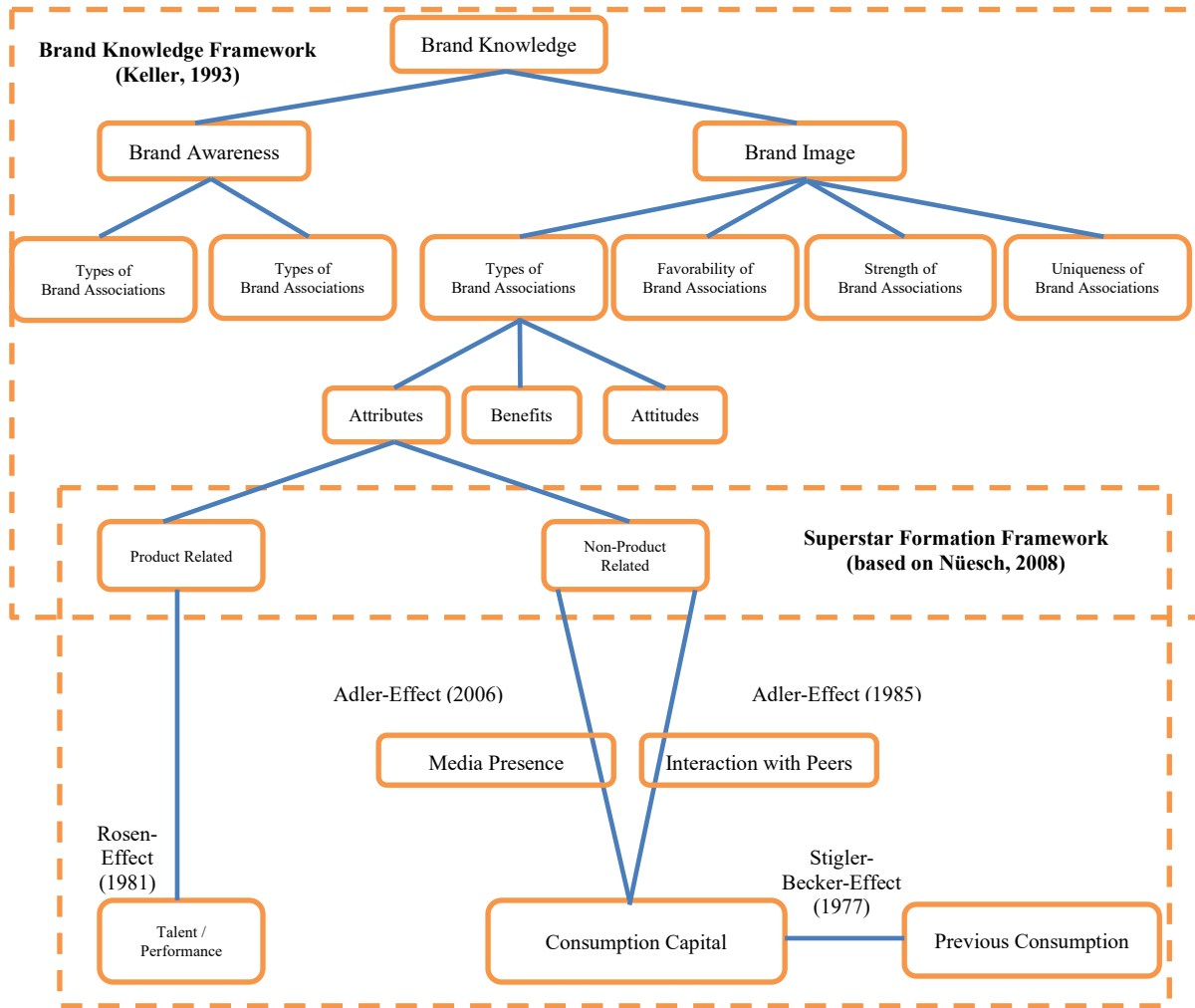
Source: Hofmann et al., 2019: 10.

As can be seen in Figure 1, brand knowledge that constitutes brand equity according to the brand knowledge plan (Keller, 1993: 2-7) is due to brand awareness and brand image. So much so that it relates directly to brand equity or all the information consumers hold about a brand. Brand awareness is a necessary condition for building information clusters and reflects the ability of consumers' ability to remember or recognize the brand. In economic terms, brand image shows the benefit consumers obtain by consuming the brand, indirectly reflecting their assessment of the brand connotations they make and combine. Keller (1993) differentiated many types of connotations, but combined most brand connotations in the form of a "features" structure. In other words, Keller (1993) classified brand characteristics as (a) product-related features, elements necessary to perform the product function sought by consumers, and (b) non-product-related features, elements related to the purchase or consumption of the product. These characteristics differ in their advantages and uniqueness and are related to how consumers perceive these product characteristics, whether they are related to the product itself or not. Product related specifications include technical or physical parts that directly determine the performance of the product. For human brands, they reflect primarily a performance-based component of brand image. Features that are not related to the product can also affect the brand image. But features not related to the product are only indirectly related to measurable performance components. These features are considered to be popularity-based features in terms of human brand equity (Hofmann et al., 2019: 2-3).

When Keller's (1993) brand information scheme is applied in the context of the academic brand, academic performance can be evaluated as a product-related feature, and the primary role is to

produce knowledge by improving the performance of academics to constantly improve their brands (Arai, 2013: 386). Performance-based characteristics are features related to human activities that promote the development of the human brand (Rosen, 1981: 846). It seems that the image of the academic brand depends on the perceived (academic) quality of the academic (Thomson, 2006: 106). The performance and image that constitutes brand meaning is the way that academics meet the functional and utilitarian needs of students such as knowledge, skills and competence (Jillapalli and Jillapalli, 2014: 24). Thus, the competence of academics refers to performance-related characteristics that depend largely on the perception of brand equity (Keller, 2001: 10; Kim et al., 2003: 336; Tascı and Bas, 2018: 713). Therefore, the proficiency of academics and the quality of teaching depend significantly on brand equity (Jillapalli and Jillapalli, 2014: 24). Accordingly, knowledge, skills and competence are recognized as an important brand feature in terms of academic and student relations.

Human Brands resemble hedonic (hedonistic) products, as their consumption tends to evoke emotions such as joy, fun, and pleasure, and tend to create a convex, nonlinear distribution (Hofmann et al., 2019: 3). Therefore, consumers face great uncertainty about the benefit they can gain before they experience consumption. In general, reducing uncertainty for consumers is one of the core functions of brands. Previous research confirms that human brands have similarly identifying and differentiating functions (Thomson, 2006: 113). According to Rosen (1981: 846), the performance characteristics of the human brand (for example talent, expertise) strengthen the brand image due to the substitution of talents. So, for consumers a poor performing politician, athlete, artist, CEO or physician is generally a bad alternative to those showing higher performance. In this case, consumers are rarely satisfied with the second-best option and concentrate their demands on the brand that offers the best performance (Hofmann et al., 2019: 3).

On the other hand, according to Keller's (1993) brand information scheme, other features that are not directly related to academic performance are seen as non-performance characteristics equivalent to non-product characteristics. Adler (1985, 2006) mentions Stigler and Becker (1977) when describing qualities based on popularity that determine the brand image of celebrities, and which express the ability of a celebrity to generate consumption capital. Whether academics have a good reputation or are recognized with certain skills and specializations in the context of higher education, refers to their popularity (Shafaei et al., 2019: 3). In fact, the academic's popularity is a necessary precursor in brand building efforts (Jillapalli and Jillapalli, 2014: 24). The presence of classical media (e.g., TV) and social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) are key elements that has increased the popularity of academics. Such elements create opportunities for differentiation, and thus create the necessary condition for an accumulation of consumerist capital related to popularity (equally capable), and thus will enable some academics to stand out.

Adler (1985: 208, 2006: 3-4) states that beyond performance, celebrity or human branding depends on popularity levels whose consumption capital was set by Stigler and Becker (1977). According to Adler (1985), the talent of a celebrity is a hidden trait that must be explored through personal and interpersonal learning processes. The appreciation (popularity) of a particular person grows along with the information (brand knowledge) that consumers acquire about them. For example, brand knowledge can be acquired through discussions about their abilities with friends or acquaintances, or by reading those who write about their abilities in newspapers and magazines without knowing the politician, athlete, artist, CEO or doctor themselves. It's easier for people to achieve media coverage when they're popular, and thus consumers prefer to consume what others consume as well. In other words, consumers accumulate prior knowledge about the human brand. Each consumption experience contains references to prior knowledge, increasing the current knowledge and ultimately the popularity of a human brand. Furthermore, interactions with other people with similar thoughts and media coverage of human brands can increase consumption capital. Economically, consumption capital accumulation arises from the cognitive and social forms of positive network externalities, and hence the marginal benefit of each consumption experience of a human brand depends not only on its ability, but also on the size of the network (Franck and Nüesch,

2012: 204). Research that supports the assumption of nonlinear correlation between the ranking of human brands and positive brand images according to Hofmann et al. (2019: 2) is rarer than research that confirms Rosen's (1981) performance-based approach.

3. SCALE OF BRAND EQUITY OF ACADEMICS

3.1. Need for Determining the Brand Equity of Academics

What makes a brand valuable? Brand equity is the added value a brand brings to the product (Park and Srinivas, 1994: 271). Brand equity, which is characterized as a means of gaining a competitive advantage in terms of marketing, comes across as a very important concept in academic research as well as in business (Lassar et al., 1995: 11; Keller and Lehmann, 2006: 740). Creating a strong and unique brand is the goal of many organizations. A strong brand equity appears to provide a number of possible benefits, such as higher customer loyalty, less vulnerability to competitive marketing actions and marketing crises, and the ability to respond more appropriately to customers if prices decline or rise (Keller, 2001: 15). As the concept of brand starts to find its own place in every aspect of life in today's competitive environment, human brand has become one of the prominent areas of work.

Human brand equity is a commonly used concept today (Ross, 2006: 261). Especially people who appeal to large masses such as politicians, soldiers and artists try to become a brand, thus affecting large masses and being permanent. Essentially, each individual carries a brand identity, whether they are aware or not. The individual's brand is a reflection of what they are and what they believe in. Branding, which ensures that the person is known in the field or industry, contributes to the individual's access to advantageous business opportunities in a career-oriented manner (Ulrich and Smallwood, 2008: 30). Human branding, such as product or service branding, requires an individual to demonstrate their strengths and uniqueness to the target audience (Shepherd 2005: 2; Labrecque et al., 2011: 39; Chen, 2013: 332). Research in the field of human branding argues that each individual who successfully implements the rules of branding in their own lives can more strongly influence broad audiences by becoming a brand (Thomson, 2006: 106). In personal branding literature, it is accepted that the branding of people is the key to personal and professional success (Tarnovskaya, 2017: 29). It is also stated that people within the personal branding movement are branding by putting forward their own performance (Lair et al., 2005: 308). Personal branding helps people stand out in a situation where there are similarities. Thus, the branding of academics, like other individuals, can increase their recognition in a particular field, bring an increase to reputation and credibility, and advance their careers (Harris and Rae, 2011: 16).

Higher education systems are considered as a source of qualified individuals and are considered to have an important place for countries in terms of increasing the welfare level of their citizens and competing in a global arena (Yildiz and Gizir, 2018: 744). Academics, as we will all agree, are enlightened, well-informed, well-educated, broad-minded individuals who create the dynamics of society's development, lead society and form the think tank of that society. Academics has three main tasks: education and training, scientific research, raising awareness of the society in its geography (Ortas, 2004: 11). Academics are vital to the success of higher education institutions. Although the academic community is subject to many criticisms, today academia is one of the most coveted professional groups (Paksoy and Guvenc, 2018: 95). Academics can raise the profile of higher education institutions and promote positive perceptions (Nixon et al., 20001: 229). Therefore, it is important to determine the brand equity of academics. Brand equity can be used as a tool to enable academics to achieve their goals. A strong academic brand tells consumers (students) what they can expect from the service. It is important to know that brands are not just a specific name and product packaging, and are also do not evolve from advertising or marketing strategies.

The main goal of higher education institutions is to produce knowledge. Generally speaking, the purpose of universities is to carry out teaching, research and community service activities at universal standards, to attain, produce, apply, disseminate the knowledge required for the social, cultural, economic, scientific and technological development of society and humanity, and to cultivate individuals equipped with such knowledge. In this process, universities have been one of the most questioned institutions in terms of their operations and performance. One of the most important factors required for higher education institutions to achieve their core goal is a strong academic brand with high performance. In other words, higher education institutions can benefit from academics with high brand equity in order to attract more students and be very different from their competitors. Reputation as a way of reflecting the perceptions of stakeholders is vital for higher education institutions to achieve success (Bendisch et al., 2013: 604). Higher education institutions are generally market-oriented and their clients are largely composed of students (Mourad et al., 2011: 406-407). It is very important that higher education institutions have and maintain a good reputation to please their customers. Perceived quality refers to the judgments of students and graduates about the overall excellence or superiority of academics in a higher education institution.

3.2. Research Model Regarding Academic Brand Equity

How can we determine the brand equity of academics? Academics strive to establish an identity in the national and international area to adapt to rapidly changing conditions. The success of an academic is not only about their ability to reveal their own talents, motivational elements and interests, but how effectively they regulate (i.e. branding) these characteristics (Lair et al., 2005: 308). Hence the measure of success reflects the performance-based characteristics of the human brand (Franck and Nüesch, 2008: 149). Gladden and Funk (2002) and Bauer, Sauer and Schmitt (2005) show that success is an important determinant of the human brand. Accordingly, academics worldwide are constantly developing their brands based on their academic achievements. Consistent with this, the success of academics may be one of the most important factors in creating brand equity over time (Gladden et al., 1998: 6). In addition, the establishment of an academic brand described as distinguished, intellectual, cultured, knowledge producing and expert person (Husu, 2001: 177) also depends on the conversion of social interaction and participation (Centeno and Wang, 2017: 134). Hofmann et al. (2019: 2) stated that the higher the performance of the human brand, the more likely the human brand is to be recognized, which improves the brand image based on popularity. Accordingly, the high performance-based characteristics of the academic brand increases the awareness of consumers (universities and students) about the academic brand, which may lead to increased consumption capital and thus popularity-based characteristics.

Figure 2: The Brand Equity of Academics
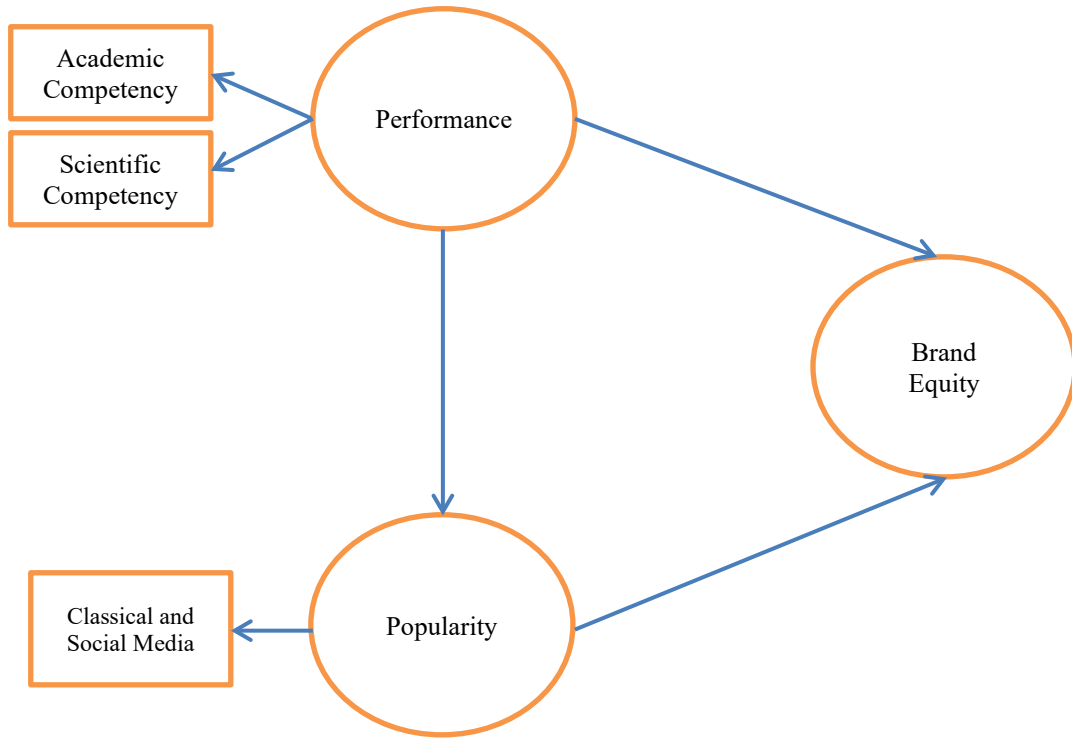
Note: Adapted from Hofmann et al. (2019: 5)

3.3. Scale Developed for Academic Brand Equity

The scale developed by H. Mustafa Paksoy within the framework of the theoretical model explained above for determining the brand equity of academics is presented below. The scale, which was developed by taking into consideration the criteria that should be taken into consideration during the evaluation of academics at the University of North Carolina, one of the American universities (The University of North Carolina, 2010; Esen ve Esen, 2015: 54), consists of three main dimensions: academic competency, scientific competency and popularity. At the same time, in the scale, the "Brand Equity" of any academic was calculated over 100 points, with "Academic Competency Dimension" 40 points, "Scientific Competency Dimension" 50 points and "Popularity Dimension" 10 points.

Table 1: Brand Equity Scale of Academics

DIMENSIONS	FACTORS		Degree of Weight of Factor
ACADEMIC COMPETENCY (Total Weight of Dimension is 40 points)	Title	Prof. Dr.	5
		Assoc. Prof.	4
		Dr. Faculty Member	3
		Faculty Member	2
		Researcher	1
	Term at University	1-5, 6-10, 11+	3
	Administrative Positions	Administration (Rector 5, Rector Asst. 4, Dean 3, College/Vocational School Director/Institute-Res. Centre Director 2 Department Head 1)	5
		Board Membership	1
	Courses (In the Last Four Years)	Doctorate	3
		Post Graduate	2
		Undergraduate	1
	Jury Memberships	ÜAK Associate Professorship (Each jury membership is 0.25 points, maximum 4 points)	4
		Doctorate (Each jury membership is 0.25 points, maximum 2 points)	2
		Master's Degree (Each jury membership is 0.25 points, maximum 1 point)	1
	Theses Supervised	Ph.D. (Each doctoral thesis is 0,50 points and a maximum of 3 points is awarded)	5
		Master's Degree (Each master's thesis is 0.25 points and a maximum of 2 points is awarded)	3
	Foreign Language Score	Between 55-70 1 point, between 71-85 2 points, between 86-100 5 points awarded)	5
	Disciplinary Action (-)	5 points are deducted for each disciplinary action.	(-5)
SCIENTIFIC COMPETENCY (Total Weight of Dimension is 50 points)	Books	Books in Foreign Language (Each book one point, maximum of 3 points)	2
		Book Translations (Each translation 0.50 points, maximum 1 point)	1
		Turkish Books (Each book 0,50 points, maximum of 2 points)	2
		Book Section (Each book 0,10 points, maximum of 1 points)	1
	Competition Jury Memberships	International (Each membership 0,50 points, maximum 2 points)	2
		National (Each membership 0,25 points, maximum 1 points)	1
	Patents / Awards	International (At least one Patent / Award)	2
		National (At least one Patent/Award)	1
	Scientific Meeting Organizing Committee	International (0,50 points for each chairmanship, maximum 2 points)	2
		National (Each board chairmanship 0,25 points, maximum 1 point)	1
	Journal Board Memberships/Referee	International (At least 1 membership/referee)	2

Table 1 (cont.): Brand Equity Scale of Academics

		National (At least 2 membership/referee)	1
	Journal/Book Editors	International (At least one editorship 2 points)	2
		National (At least one editorship 1 points)	1
	Journal Founding (Ownership)	International (At least one journal)	2
		National (At least one journal)	1
	Research Project (Manager, Executive, Researcher)	National (BAP, Other Institutions, at least one project)	1
		National (TÜBİTAK, at least one project)	2
		International (EU, World Bank, at least one project)	3
	Published Scientific Reports	International	2
		National	1
	Articles	Journals included in the "Science Citation Index" (Each article 1 point, maximum 6 points)	5
		International Index Journals (each article 0,50 points, maximum 2 points)	3
		National Referee Journals (each article 0,25 points, maximum 2 points)	2
	International Cited Impact Factor (by Google Scholar Database)	h-index (1 point between 1-3, 2 points between 4-6, 3 points between 7-9, 4 points 10+)	4
	Notices	International (Each paper 0,25 points, maximum 2 points)	2
		National (Each paper 0,10 points, maximum 1 point)	1
POPULARITY (Total Weight of Dimension is 10 points)	TV-Newspaper and Media Awareness (Participation in TV Program, Newspaper-News-Interviews, Participation in radio program or name subject of news media)	International (Each 0,50 points, maximum 3 points)	3
		National (Each 0,10 points, maximum 2 points)	2
	Internet Awareness	"Name mentioned on the internet" (0,50 point for each national site, 1 point for foreign site, maximum 3 points)	3
	Number of Followers in Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)	At least ten thousand followers on any social media account one point, no point for under ten thousand points	2
	TOTAL		**100**

4. CONCLUSION

The origin of the brand goes back to ancient times. Just like politicians, athletes, artists and business people, executives, physicians who have begun to implement the branding rules used in the commercial world in their own lives, academics have become brands with their works, having impact on wide audiences, aiming to be lasting in their fields.

The ever-increasing importance of human brand equity has accelerated the studies carried out on this matter and constitutes the basis of many studies. Human brand equity has taken its place as one of the fundamental issues in marketing research of modern times. The human brand, just like product brands, is a reflection of the consumers' perceptions and feelings about what the brand is or

how it is. Academics are among the main human elements of the university. Excellent universities can exist only with excellent academics. In this study, how the brand equity of academics is formed is explained. The relationship between academic competence, scientific competence and popularity of academics and brand equity has been investigated theoretically.

Within the scope of this study, a model for determining the brand equity of academics based on theories on celebrities such as artists, athletes, CEO and physicians in literature or on the human brand was put forward. According to this model, a strong brand of academics is emerging through the combination of features such as performance and popularity. It can be said that academics with higher academic performance and popularity are branded.

In order to calculate the brand equity of academics within the framework of the model set out in the scope of the research, a scale was developed by H. Mustafa Paksoy. This scale consists of three main dimensions of academic competence, scientific competence and popularity and twenty three factors. In the scale, the "Brand Equity" of any academic was calculated over 100 points, with "Academic Competency Dimension" 40 points, "Scientific Competency Dimension" 50 points and "Popularity Dimension" 10 points.

This research provides new information for academics and university administrators and contributes to their knowledge of human brand research in particular. Based on the results obtained in our study, the competence, scientific knowledge and popularity of academics are essential to creating a brand. Although there are different studies to determine the brand equity of academics (Jillapalli and Wilcox, 2010; Jillapalli and Jillapalli, 2014; Shafaei et al., 2019), this study provides a different perspective with its unique structure.

There are some limitations with this study design. Furthermore, further analysis is needed in terms of the generalizability and validity of results in terms of higher education institutions in our country and other countries. In other words, obtaining data from academics in brand equity calculation will enable us to achieve healthier results in terms of generalizability and validity.

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