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**Revista de cercetare și intervenție socială**

ISSN: 1583-3410 (print), ISSN: 1584-5397 (electronic)

Selected by coverage in Social Sciences Citation Index, ISI databases

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Revista de cercetare și intervenție socială, 2016, vol. 53, pp. 132-144

The online version of this article can be found at:

*www.rcis.ro, www.doaj.org and www.scopus.com*

Published by:

Expert Projects Publishing House



On behalf of:

„Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University,

Department of Sociology and Social Work

and

Holt Romania Foundation

REVISTA DE CERCETARE SI INTERVENTIE SOCIALA

is indexed by ISI Thomson Reuters - Social Sciences Citation Index

(Sociology and Social Work Domains)



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# The Role of Brand Image in Buying Attitude of the Consumers: Northern Part of Cyprus Model

Mustafa PORTAKALCI<sup>1</sup>, Esra Aydin KILIC<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

The aim of this study is to analyze how the brand image and advertisements affect consumers' decisions on buying. In this study, 480 people at the age of 18 and above, who were decided by using non-stochastic sampling method have been included, and consumers' "demographic information", their "view about the product" and their "view about the advertisements" have been tried to be determined. During the study, independent samples T Test, one way ANOVA, Mann-Whitney U Test and Kruskal-Wallis H Test have been applied for the contrast analysis; and Correlation Analysis is utilized to determine the relationship between sub-dimensions. The data we obtained after the study showed that there are crucial variations between demographic aspects and sub-dimensions; also, it was confirmed that there are positive relationships among the sub-dimensions. As a result, it can be said that the aspects of product and sales are a kind of inseparable whole with advertising media and design; and, this shapes the buying attitude of the costumers.

*Keywords:* globalization, brand, brand image, advertisement, consumer purchase behaviour.

## Introduction

Technological development and its effects in all fields have also stimulated the manufacturing types to change. Thanks to these developments, there has been a large amount of mass production and there have been lots of products similar to each other in the market. Furthermore, with the effect of globalization, there has been a matter of exorbitant production and sale. Due to this situation, it has

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become obligation for the companies to maintain profitability by standing out among their rivals who manufacture similar products. Therefore, because of the increasing rivalry, the companies tend to brand with the aim of standing out amongst the other similar products and creating a difference. The companies, who manage to make their products different from the others' thanks to branding, can not only increase their reputation in the competition environment yet also have a chance to be able to gain ground in international markets. Moreover, it is intended to provide the consumers to develop positive attitudes towards the brand during the promotion process of the marketing activity. One of the activities being done during the promotion process is the advertising. It is tried to create positive image and brand loyalty in the advertisements.

In this study, it is aimed to determine how the brand image affects on consumers' buying decision; what the consumers think about the product and the advertisements; which factors, especially, are on the front burner in consumers' preferences. In this direction, a field research was conducted in Northern Cyprus, and questionnaire technique was utilized in the research. The survey was conducted on 480 people, who were decided by the non-stochastic sampling method, from Nicosia, Kyrenia and Famagusta by using face-to-face interview method. The data obtained from the research results was evaluated by utilizing statistical package program.

### **Relation between Globalization and Branding**

Despite the fact that 'the globalization' is a often-heard and often-used term in human life, there is no clear definition of this term. The globalization means, that the World turns into a monopolar village being abstracted economically, politically and culturally although there are still boundaries physically (Usiner, 1993: 169). The globalization has had effect also on the marketing activities of the companies as well as in every field (Giddens, 1999: 56). The activities which have had increasing changes as a result of industrial movements, and which increase its effect in every field have stimulated the rivalry. The states have increased relationship between each other and the effect of commercial side of the globalization has become impetus after collaborations in foreign economy (Yalcintas, 2006: 23). They have been carrying on, now, with their activities in an international extent, and they have been creating a common marketing implementation with their product and service models for all the societies around the world. The operations which have had a new identity concept have created strategies which could meet various habits and demands by searching the markets of the societies from different cultures (Yukselen, 2006: 12). In other words, the operations have developed international strategies in order to be able to keep pace with the economy of the world changing in consequence of globalization movement, and

they have been trying to be effective in the markets of the societies with different cultures and habits (Erbay, 1996: 3). The operations, which are able to utilize the technological developments of globalizing world in a proper way in their marketing strategies, not only have succeeded in how to get at the consumers but also have been able to meet demands of the consumers. (Tolunguc, 2000: 53).

Lo (2016) studied was to develop the approach for optimizing a product design and determining the degree of customer satisfaction with mathematical formulas. The process of globalization has provided the local operations to get a multinational structure, and also, it makes the operations powerful in global markets (Cottrill, 1998: 36-40). There is a crucial change in the number of the companies operating under the title of “multinational” in parallel with the development in the globalization (Oymen, 2000: 42); moreover, it is affected by the globalization process, and also, it contributes the increase in rapid of the globalization process. At this point, the importance of the brands has increased as a result of the grow in the product range emerging because of dominance of the globalization and the free market economy, and as a result of the actions the consumers present for being conscious consumer (Isgor, 2001: 15). The researchers like Aaker & Keller (1990), Brodie (1993), Dacin & Smith (1994), Herr (1996), Iversen (2003), Chen & Liang (2016), Marangoz, (2007) interestingly notes that brand is not that much of an important factor for the customers decisions anymore. There are certain different points that can affect customer behaviour. Lee *et al.* (2015) usability is a distal determinant of customers decisions, exerting its influence indirectly through the mediators of satisfaction and trust.

### **The Relation of Globalization, Media and Advertisement**

The globalization of our world has provided the countries to develop in every field and has caused the societies to have much more expectations by being conscious (Wernick, 1996: 64). The changes in the consumers being conscious have affected also the marketing strategies of the companies towards the consumers. Communicating with the consumers in a right and useful way, and for the companies, obtaining efficiency can be enabled through the activities named “integrated marketing communication” (Brassington & Pettitt, 1997: 5). The integrated marketing communication is the activities that the companies reach to the consumers with a complete planning model by using its resources in a best way and by increasing efficiency on communicating (Matthew, 1994:45). International higher education marketplace, colleges and universities gained a lot from the benefits of successful branding during the recent years (Hemsley-Brown *et al.*, 2016). Lately the Green products and services for instance are designed to meet customer demand, stimulate growth, and increase brand trust of customers, thus creating a situation that is mutually beneficial for consumers and enterprises

(Tu *et al.*, 2016). The products of the companies, who utilize the integrated marketing communication activities efficiently, are bought by the consumers, and after this situation gains continuity, the companies maintain the continuity (Bozkurt, 2010:17-31). Therefore, with the integrated marketing communication, the companies enable their brands to be bought by the consumers by using various media tools (Ar, 2007: 137).

Utilizing power of the media, which are a kind of necessity in marketing strategies for the companies in order to reach the consumers, is really important for the companies to obtain success. Because the concept of consumption, which is well-know necessity in the society, comes into prominence much more in our daily lives by the effect of the media and, especially, the advertisements (Wells, 1995: 483). Consumers should be satisfied with the brand they will buy and they should trust in that brand (Tek & Ozgul, 2008: 344). On the other hand, it is important for a brand aiming to maintain the continuity to be symphasized by the consumers the advertisements are essential for the brands. Because the advertisement become a kind of oppourtunity, which cannot be missed, during the processof reaching the consumers and promoting their brands to the consumers (Ozdemir, 1999: 62).

### **Brand Image**

The “brand” is a complement of activities such as letters, numbers, logos, and packages etc. That makes a company’s products different from the rival companies’ products (Kotler & Gary, 1989: 248). The term “image” can be defined as all the attitude, idea and impression of the individuals about a situation or object (Barich & Kotler, 1991:5). The brands used by the consumers make it easy to represent their own personalities to the others (Ceritoglu, 2005:138). Thus, the brand enables the consumers to have a new identity as well (Karacan, 2006: 18). While creating brand loyalty, it is considered that the consumers have brand loyalty when they prefer the same brand regularly (Akat & Taskin, 2006: 135). It is important to take into consideration the important factors while creating brand image (Uztug, 2003: 14). Some of these factors are related with the products, and some of them are related with the consumers. Rather than advantage a product has, its meanings are more important for the consumers. This meanings the product has commune with the brand image (Odabasi & Oyman, 2003:370).

In the literature, examined research on brand image; It is understood that the impact on the brand image and consumer buying behavior (Lutz *et al.*, 1983; MacKenzie *et al.*, 1986; Mitchell Olson 1981; Belch & Belch, 2009; Yagci & Ilarslan, 2011).

## **Methodology**

In this study, the questionnaire technique has been used to obtain data which will help to determine the consumers' view about brand and brand image, and how this affects their buying attitude. The survey was conducted on 480 people, who were decided the 0,00028 of the total population by the non-stochastic sampling method from Nicosia, Kyrenia and Famagusta by using face to face interview method. The data obtained from the research results was evaluated by utilizing statistical package program.

### ***Population and Sample***

There are consumers at the age of 18 and above who were chosen randomly in Nicosia, Kyrenia and Famagusta where business and population density are. In the research, the number of the consumers was limited, and thus, 480 people, who are the 0.00028 of the total population, were included in the research. It is elaborated that the number of female and male consumers is near to each other, and as a result, %56 female consumers and %44 male consumers were interviewed in the research.

### ***Data Gathering Method and Tools***

In this study, the questionnaire technique has been used to obtain data which will help to determine the consumers' view about brand and brand image, and how this affects their buying attitude. The survey consists of three sections. In the first section, there are questions about the demographic information (such as sex, age, educational background, marital status, sufficiency of the income, where the participants live in etc.) relating to consumer associations.

In the second section, 14 statements were relayed with the aim of determining the role of brand image in consumers' buying attitude. In order to detect whether the consumers agree with the statements or not, and what their agreement degrees are, the consumers' views were evaluated in accordance with "Absolutely Agree" and "Absolutely Don't Agree" within the context of 5 point likert scale. In the third section, 17 statements were relayed in order to determine what the consumers think about the advertisements, and these statements were also evaluated within the context of 5 point likert scale as in the second section.

### ***Data Analysis***

With the aim of testing validity and reliability of the research, the survey was first conducted to 277 people, and head values of their statements were evaluated with factor analysis. The statements of which the head values were under 0,40

were not included in the research. Coefficient of consistence was counted as *Cronbach Alpha* for the reliability of the survey. In the research, the correlations between substance points, and the statements were evaluated by analyzing the power of the substance.

As the result of the evaluation for detecting the consumers' views about the product, the statements saying "It is an effective factor whether the product is local or not for my buying attitude." and "It is an effective factor whether the products matches up with my life style or not for my buying attitude.", which were not comprehended by the consumers and of which factor load was under 0,40, were not included in the research; and it was confirmed that the reliability co-efficient of other 12 questions was 0,77. Moreover, the statements which were created for measuring consumers' view about the product were divided into two sub-groups as Aspects of the Product (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6) and Aspects of the Sale (7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12).

On the other hand, there was not found any statement, of which factor load was under 0.40, among the 17 statements created for the detection of *consumers' views about the advertisements*. Overall reliability co-efficiency of the statements consisted in this section was confirmed as 0.76. The statements in this scale were divided into 3 sub-groups as *Advertising Tools* (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7), "Advertising Type" (8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13) and "Advertisement Design" (14, 15, 16, 17).

Factor analysis was implemented by using varimax rotation and principal components method related to the two dimensions included in the questionnaire as; *opinion of consumers regarding the product* and *opinion of consumers regarding the advertisement*. The applicability of factor analysis was checked with the Barlett Test whereas the sufficiency of sampling volume was checked with the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value. Barlett and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) tests whether the structure of scale is suitable for factor analysis, item factor weights were analysed (Bastas, 2016).

In the research, parametric and non-parametric tests were utilized in both comparing the quantitative parameters between each other and comparison in groups (for %95 reliability level). Moreover, there were made suitable tests related to the normal distribution and homogeneity of the data in the research; and parametric or non-parametric tests were preferred in accordance with levels of p values whether they are more or lower than 0,05. In this regard, while comparing the consumers' views in accordance with the individual aspects, independent samples T test was applied for free samples (for two groups) and one way ANOVA test was applied (for the groups more than two); and also, Tukey test was applied during dual comparison of the groups that there were founded differences after the one way ANOVA test. While comparing the sub-dimensions related to the consumers' educational background, Mann-Whitney U Test was applied in the comparison of two groups independent from non-parametric tests, and Kruskal-

Wallis H test was applied in the comparison of groups more than two which were independent from each other.

## Discussion

The findings obtained from the research results have been evaluated in two groups as *The consumers' views about the products* and *The consumers' views about the advertisements*.

### *The Consumers' Views about Products*

According to the factor analysis results of the statements in the scale of consumers' views about the products, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value has showed the sufficiency of sample size (KMO=0,882), and Bartlett Test has showed practicability of the factor analysis ( $\chi^2=1185,140$ ;  $p<0,001$ ). The related scale includes in 2 factors (*Product's Aspects and Sale's Aspects*) which explain %73,797 of the total variance; and the general reliability co-efficient of this scale has been counted as (Cronbach's Alpha)  $\alpha=0,772$ . In regard of the city parameter, when we evaluate the consumers' answers about both the aspects of the products and the sub-dimensions of the sales, it has been found that there are meaningful differences just between the age groups 18-27 and 28-37. Therefore, it can be said that the age group between 18-27 do their shopping without caring so much because of being young. From another point of view, when we compare the consumers' views about the aspects of product and sale in the related scale and where they live, the ones who live in Nicosia have the highest average about the product in the sub-dimension of *Aspects of the product* while the ones live in Famagusta and Kyrenia have lower average. At this point, it can be said that the consumers' live in Nicosia have different views from the others live in Famagusta and Kyrenia. It has been found that consumers' views about the product show difference just in the sub-dimension of the aspects of the sale with regards to their occupations. Therefore, it can be said that the workers are more careful about the aspects of the sales, and they care about the services such as promotions related to the product, reliability, guarantee, availability and service much more.



Table 1. *The Factor Analysis of The Statements in The Scale of Consumers' Views About The Product*

Statements	Factor 1: Product' Aspects	Factor 2 Sale's Aspects	$\bar{x}$ /ss
1.The country where the product was produced is effective on my buying attitude.	0.692		2.06/1.17
2.If the product is trend, it affects my buying attitude.	0.652		4.60/0.82
3.How much the brand of the products is known affects my buying attitude.	0.627		4.65/0.49
4.The package of the product affect my buying attitude.	0.585		4.31/0.96
5.The logo, emblem of the product affects my buying attitude.	0.585		4.73/0.44
6.Product's facility of payment affects my buying attitude.	0.562		4.71/0.45
7.The cost of the product affect my buyin attitude.		0.759	4.76/0.44
8.Whether the product has guarantee and service facilities affect my buying attitude.		0.500	4.64/0.51
9.Being able to buy the product through reliable payment systems affect my buying attitude.		0.771	4.62/0.48
10.The availability of the product affects my buying attitude.		0.563	4.75/0.44
11.Whether the product is sold on the Internet affects my buying attitude.		0.602	1.69/0.46
12.The promotions (such as gift card etc.) given together with the product affect my buying attitude.		0.755	4.73/0.45
$\bar{x}$ /ss	4.18/0.45	4.20/0.29	
Eigenvalues	2.298	2.192	
Variance Disclosure Rate	38.292	35.505	
Cumulative Variance	38.292	73.797	
Reliability of the Sub Dimension (Cronbach's Alpha)	0.810	0.709	
Reliability of the General Scale (Cronbach's Alpha)	0.772		

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) =0.882

Bartlett test: $\chi^2=1185.140$ ;  $p=0.000$

### ***The Consumers' Views about the Advertisement***

When we evaluate the factor analysis of the statements in the scale of the consumers' views about the advertisement shown in *Table 2*, the sufficiency of the sample size has been detected with Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin (KMO=0,869); and the practicalability of the factor analysis has been detected with the Bartlett Test ( $\chi^2=1180,889$ ;  $p<0,001$ ). The scale includes 3 factors (advertising tools, advertising type and advertisement design) which explain %79,975 of the total variance. General reliability co-efficient of this scale has been counted as (Cronbach's Alpha)  $\alpha=0,767$ . Since the consumers' views about the advertisement have been analysed under the sub-dimensions related to advertising tools, advertising type and advertisement design there are certain differences which have been detected.

Results after comparing the educational backgrounds of the consumers and the statements related to the advertisement. Except for the advertisement design, there have been found significant differences between advertising tools and advertising type. For the sub-dimensions which showed differences, let us mention about the first one *Advertising Tools*: The differences founds between the illeteral ones and university graduates; between literal ones and elementary school graduates, secondary school graduates, high school graduates; and lastly, between high school graduates and university graduates. Similar attitudes were found in the study by Heng and Karpudewan (2015) especially on the effect of gender. Another supporting study was done by Buil, Catalan and Martinez (2016) corporate brand identity management influences employees' commitment with their organisations, as well as their brand performance and satisfaction.

When we analyze the *Advertisement Types* according to where the consumers live in, except for the "advertising tools" sub-dimension, there have been seen meaningful differences in the other two sub-dimensions. In this regard, the findings about the "advertising type" showed that the consumers live in Nicosia are affected by the advertising type much more than the others living in Famagusta and Kyrenia.

The differences, according to the monthly incomes, in the answers of the consumers given for the statements about the advertisement have been detected in the "advertising tools" sub-dimension. When we analyze the sources of this differences, we found that there are differences between the consumers with 3001TL and above monthly income and the consumers with 1501-2250TL monthly income. The results showed that the ones with higher monthly income are affected less by the advertising tools.

Table 2. *The Factor Analysis of the Statements in the Scale of Consumers' Views about the Advertisement*

Statements	Factor 1: Advertising Tools	Factor 2: Advertising Type	Factor 3: Advertisement Design	$\bar{X} / ss$
1.The ads in the magazines and newspaper affect my buying attitude.	0.549			4.63/0.48
2.The ads on the Internet affect my buying attitude.	0.505			4.19/1.01
3.The ads in the outdoor media affect my buying attitude. (billboard, boards, wall ads, moving and colorful ads, lightened boards/plaques/plates)	0.553			4.69/0.66
4.The ads in the TV and radio affect my buying attitude.	0.617			4.66/0.47
5.Mail advertising affects my buying attitude.	0.484			1.60/0.48
6.Catalogue, manuals and brochures belonging to the product affect my buying attitude.	0.661			4.71/0.45
7.The usage of the product in dramas, movies, music videos affects my buying attitude.	0.515			1.76/0.51
8.Product's being recommended by related institute affects my buying attitude.		0.906		4.84/0.36
9.Presenting the documents about the quality of the product in the ads affects my buying attitude.		0.432		4.67/0.47
10.Promotion of the product by famous people in the ads affects my buying attitude.		0.651		1.79/0.43
11.Being showed the tests about the before and after process of the product in the ads affects my buying attitude.		0.630		4.60/0.58
12.Usage of attractive men and women affects my buying attitude.		0.538		1.92/0.36
13.Usage of babies and children affects my buying attitude.		0.429		1.78/0.56
14.Delivery of the product's testers affects my buying attitude.			0.776	4.68/0.46
15.The slogans used in the ads affect my buying attitude.			0.611	1.62/0.30
16.Stating the cost of the products in the ads affects my buying attitude.			0.687	4.71/0.45
17.Images, graphics and photos used in the ads affect my buying attitude.			0.659	4.60/0.82
$\bar{X} / ss$	3.75/0.32	3.26/0.23	3.98/0.35	
Eigenvalues	2.178	1.504	1.427	
Variance Disclosure Rate	31.119	25.070	23.786	
Cumulative Variance	31.119	56.189	79.975	
Reliability of Sub-dimension (Cronbach's Alpha)	0.865	0.724	0.765	
Reliability of General Scale (Cronbach's Alpha)				0.767

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)=0.869

Bartlett test:  $\chi^2 = 1180.889$ ;  $p=0.000$

## Conclusions

In today's world where the rivalry has increased economically and the trade has gained speed, brands have emerged as a result of the increase in the products and services. After the branding, the companies have added significant features to their products in order to make the consumers buy. At this point, realizing activities which would increase the value of the brands and affecting the consumers' buying attitude positively by leaving positive brand image in consumers' minds have become crucial for the companies.

The results of this research have been obtained after analyzing the relationship between the sub-dimensions relating to the consumers' views about the products and the advertisement. In this regard, it is revealed that the inter-relationship of sub-dimensions in the product scale, the inter-relationship of sub-dimensions related to the advertisements and the relationship between the sub-dimensions related to the product and the advertisement are positive-directed. This situation shows that the advertisement and the product are an inseparable whole. It is confirmed that just advertisement aspects or just product aspects are not effective on the consumers' buying attitude; unlike, both of them together shape the consumers' buying attitude. Especially, if we analyze the sub-dimensions which have strong and very strong relationship levels, it can be said that this situation happens between the aspects of product and sale and advertising tools and advertisement design; and also, between aspects of sale and product, advertising tools and advertisement design. Thereby, it can be stated that the aspects of the product and sale have integrity with advertising tools and advertisement design, and this shapes the consumers' buying attitude. If we analyze in the respect of advertising type, we can say that there is positive relationship only between the advertising type and advertisement general aspects. And this means that the advertising type is not sufficient alone. Therefore, applying the advertising type together with its complements advertising tools and advertisement design would provide crucial advantages for the companies. It would help to develop more qualified marketing arguments if the companies evaluate and consider these scientific findings in their marketing policies in order to maintain economic continuity.

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