BRAND LOYALTY: AN ALTERNATIVE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION ON CUSTOMERS OF SPORTS CENTERS

Umut Davut Basoglu
Nisantasi University,
College of Physical Education and Sports,
Turkey

Abstract:

In the study, it is aimed to examine the relationship between the brand loyalty of the individuals, who go to sports centers, with different variables. The descriptive screening model was used in the study. The survey provided a total of 407 participants, including men (f = 229) and women (f = 178) who use Istanbul Sports Centers in European part of Istanbul. The survey form, prepared for this research, consists of two parts. In the first part, there are closed-ended questions to measure the demographic characteristics of the participants. In the second part, the Brand Loyalty Scale (BLS) developed by Özdemir and Koçak (2012) is employed. Frequency, percentage, arithmetic mean and standard deviation are used in assessing the demographic characteristics. Independent sample t test for binary comparisons and one way ANOVA for independent multiple comparisons are also utilized. In addition, Post-Hoc tests are applied to determine the groups differences involved in the variance analysis. Moreover, Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of Brand Loyalty Scale is found to be 0,934. We find that there are statistically significant differences amongst the brand loyalty levels of age groups. In addition, we also see that there are statistically significant differences amongst the brand loyalty levels of income groups of the participants. As a result, brand loyalty of individuals varies according to their age and income levels. As the age and the level of income increases, brand loyalty seems to decrease.

Keywords: exercise, sport, brand, brand loyalty

1. Introduction

The concept of "brand", as an important determinant of customer purchasing behavior, is becoming increasingly important in the recent times. For companies it is of strategic importance to place the brand's life in the memory of the customer in the long term, address the targeted message correctly, and also to address the target group in order to strengthen brand image and provide brand loyalty (Acuff, 1997).

Nowadays, companies that want to maintain their sustainability, develop an understanding towards the importance of creating an image of the company and the brand as a result of long-term efforts in the customer mind. What is important for businesses is how their target groups perceive themselves and how they behave towards their products and brands (Erdoğdu, 2012).

One of the most important functions of brands in terms of customers, is to decreasing risks for the customers. The image, the promised and beneficial benefits of the brand reduce risks such as the functional risk (the product's performance is inadequate), financial risk (the product is not paid for money), physical risk (the use of the product poses a health risk), social risk (disturbing the use of the product), psychological risk (product use negatively affects the psychology of the user) and the temporal risk (the time spent alternatively due to the dissatisfaction created by the use of the product). In other words, the customer thinks that he / she does not face the risks mentioned above because of the trust towards the brand. In short, branded products enable customers to feel more comfortable and happy with their symbolic meanings, as well as reducing the mental and physical efforts that otherwise customers will puzzle their brain with the probability of product obsolete and brand inflation (Tosun, 2010).

When choosing among many branded products, the customer considers various factors such as product characteristics, image and quality of the product obtained for the price. Satisfaction after purchase leads to a new habit by directing the customer to repurchase (Schwarz and Hunter, 2008). Participants using locally managed recreational areas have found that health status is an effective component of the well-being and the well-being of the sportive diversity, activities and staff in choosing recreational areas for the very best (Kırtepe, 2017). The customer's loyalty to branding comes from a conscious decision, supported by a positive attitude towards the purchase of the same brand. The customer continues to behave for a long time in purchasing the same brand repeatedly (East, 1997; Solomon, 2008).

In this context, it is aimed to investigate the perceptions of brand loyalty of the individuals going to sports centers based on different demographic variables.

2. Material and Methods

Research model, the screening model is used to investigate the brand loyalty of the individuals going to sports centers based on different variables. The screening model is a research approach aimed at describing an existing situation as it exists. The research topic is tried to be defined as it is within its own circumstances and as it is. General screening models are screening regulations on a group, sample taken from all or the universe in order to make general judgment about the universe consisting of a variety of components (Karasar, 2005). A total of 407 individuals, including men (f = 229) and women (f = 178) who use Istanbul Sports Centers in European part of Istanbul

Scale, the survey form, prepared for this research, consists of two parts. In the first part, there are closed-ended questions to measure the demographic characteristics of the participants. In the second part, the Brand Loyalty Scale (BLS) developed by

Özdemir and Koçak (2012) is employed. BLS consists of a total of Likert type 15 items ("1 = Absolutely disagree" and "7 = Absolutely agree") and 5 sub-dimensions These sub-dimensions are; brand satisfaction, brand trust, brand sentiment, behavioral brand loyalty, attorney brand loyalty.

Analysis, Frequency, percentage, arithmetic mean and standard deviation are used in assessing the demographic characteristics. Independent sample t test for binary comparisons and one way ANOVA for independent multiple comparisons are also utilized. In addition, Post-Hoc tests are applied to determine the groups differences involved in the variance analysis. Moreover, Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of Brand Loyalty Scale is found to be 0,934.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1: Gender distributions of the participants

Variable		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Male	229	56,3	56,3	56,3
	Female	178	43,7	43,7	100,0
	Total	407	100,0	100,0	

According to the table 1; 229 (56,3%) of the participants were male and 178 (43,7%) were female.

Table 2: Age distributions of the participants

Variable		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	<18	71	17,4	17,4	17,4
	18-24	109	26,8	26,8	44,2
	25-31	83	20,4	20,4	64,6
	32-38	58	14,3	14,3	78,9
Age	39-45	43	10,6	10,6	89,4
	46-51	25	6,1	6,1	95,6
	52-58	11	2,7	2,7	98,3
	>58	7	1,7	1,7	100,0
	Total	407	100,0	100,0	

According to the table 2; (17.4%), 18-24 years of age 109 (26.8%), 25-31 years of age 83 (20.4%), 32-38 years of age 58 (% 14,3), 39-45 years 43 (10,6), 46-51 years 11 (2.7%) and 58 years old and 7 years old (1.7%).

Table 3: Education level distributions of the participants

Variable		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Primary education	50	12,3	12,4	12,4
	High school	161	39,6	39,9	52,2
Education	Associate Degree	50	11,5	11,6	63,9
	Bachelor Degree	117	28,7	29,0	92,8
	Master degree	27	6,6	6,7	99,5
	Ph.D	2	,5	,5	100,0
Total		407	100,0	100,0	100,0

Table 3 show that the 50 participants (12,3%) have primary education, 161 participants (39,6%), have high school education, 50 participants (11,5%) have associate degree, 117 participants (28,7%) have bachelor degree, 27 participants (6,6%) have masters degree and finally 2 participants (0,5%) have Ph.D. degree.

Table 4: Income level distributions of the participants

Variable		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	<1000	62	15,2	17,8	17,8
	1001- 2000 TL	111	24,8	29,0	46,8
	2001-3000 TL	122	25,1	29,3	76,1
Income level	3001-4000 TL	59	12,3	14,4	90,5
	4001-5000 TL	34	3,4	4,0	94,5
	>5000	18	4,4	5,2	99,7
	Total	407	100,0	100,0	

Table 4 shows the income level distributions. According to the distributions; income levels of participants who are in the 1000- or less TL is 62 (15.2%), 1001-2000 TL is 111 (24,8%), 2001-3000 TL is 122 (25,1%), 3001-4000 TL is 59 (12,3%), 4001-5000 TL is 34 (3,4%), and the number of participants with an regular income per month over 5001 is 18 (4.4%).

Table 5: Exercise frequency distribution of the participants

Variable		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1 Day	5	1,2	1,2	1,2
	2 Days	139	34,2	34,3	35,6
	3 Days	103	25,3	25,4	61,0
Exercise Frequency	4 Days	117	28,7	28,9	89,9
	5 Days	25	5,7	5,7	95,6
	6 Days	8	2,0	2,0	97,5
	7 Days	10	2,5	2,5	100,0
Total		407	100,0		

Table 5, shows that 5 participants (1,2%) exercise every day per a week, while 139 participant (34,2%) exercise 2 days; 103 participants (25,3%)exercise 3 days; 117 participants (28,7%) exercise 4 days; 25 participants (5,7%) exercise 5 days, 8 participants (2,0%) exercise 6 days, and 10 participants (2,5%) exercise every days per a week

.

Table 6: Examination of brand loyalty of the participants by gender

Variable		n	Mean	Std.	t	p
Brand loyalty	Male	227	83,34	15,77	0,88	0,57
	Female	177	81,95	15,44		

Table 6 shows that that the brand loyalty of the participants do not have statistically significant difference according to gender

Table 7: Examination of brand loyalty of the participants by age

Variables		n	Mean	Std.	F	p	Post-Hoc
	<18 [1]	71	84,00	14,34			
	18-24 [2]	109	85,11	12,89			1-5
	25-31 [3]	83	84,61	14,09			
Age	32-38 [4]	57	78,84	16,54	2,757	,008*	2-5
	39-45 [5]	42	75,38	21,64			
	>45 [6]	42	83,33	16,40			3-5
	Total	404	82,73	15,62			

Table 7 reveals that that brand loyalty levels of the participants significantly differ due to the age. This statistically difference is caused by age groups of 17 and 6, 18-24 and 25-31 and 39-45 years.

Table 8: Examination of brand loyalty of the participants by income level

Variable		n	Mean	Std.	F	p	Post Hoc
	<1001 [1]	62	85,70	12,65			
	1001- 2000 TL [2]	101	82,25	14,08			
	2001-3000 TL [3]	100	84,73	16,96			1-5
Income level	3001-4000 TL [4]	50	86,72	12,49	2,944	,008*	4-5
	4001-5000 Tl [5]	14	72,78	19,90			
	>5000 [6]	18	78,64	14,78			
	Total	345	83,60	15,08			

Table 8 shows that brand loyalty levels of the participants significantly differ due to the income level. This statistically significant difference is caused by the groups of participants that have income level between 1001-2000 TL, 3001-4000 TL and 4001-5000 TL.

4. Conclusion

The literature on brand loyalty emphasizes that the age and gender are important variables for contemporary sports customer (Stevens and Lathrop, 2005). In this context, research on brand loyalty of university students with young population highlights the fact that brand loyalty of females is higher (Polat et al., 2017). However, contrary to the extant literature, our findings provide no empirical evidence in support of the antecedent role of gender for brand loyalty. Another study on brand loyalty, conducted on a much homogenous group, reveals that male participants are more loyal customers (Göksu 2010).

Moreover, the findings show that age is a determinant of brand loyalty for sports center customers. Based to the fact that young people expects more; brand loyalty is expected to be lower. And as the age goes on, brand loyalty increases (Catlin, 2004). Many studies indicate that age directly influences brand loyalty and the brand loyalty of the young population is weaker (e.g. Göksu, 2010; Stevens and Lathrop, 2005; Yoh et al., 2006, Çift and Cop, 2007). However, our findings result with vice versa: the brand loyalty of the younger participants seems to be stronger for our sample. We believe that

young people are influenced by each other in their social lives. So this contrary result may be explained by the popular social trend towards engaging in physical activities among the youngers. Also, preferences for physical activity of the elders may differ and even decrease due to the appearance of physically different needs such as orthopedic disorders as well as the emergence of different socialization facets.

Finally, the results of this paper shows that brand loyalty levels significantly differ due to the income. We find out that individuals with low income are more loyal to the brand. This finding suggests that, as the level of income increases, the individuals who have the more purchasing power may alter their preferences and quests for different kinds of physical activities. For instance, rich people may prefer to hire private coaches.

As a sum, brand loyalty of sports center customers varies according to age and income levels. As the age progresses and the level of income increases, brand loyalty seems to decrease.

References

1. Acuff DS, 1997. What Kids Buy and Why: The Psychology of Marketing to Kids. New York: The Free Press.
2. Catlin J, 2004. Brand loyalty comes with age. Brand Strategy, 181(4), 42.
3. Çifci S, Cop R, 2007. Marka ve marka yönetimi kavramları: üniversite öğrencilerinin kot pantolon marka tercihlerine yönelik bir araştırma. Finans Politik & Ekonomik Yorumlar, 44(512), 69-88.
4. East R, 1997. Customer Behaviour: advances and applications in marketing. London: Prentice-Hall.
5. Erdoğdu M, 2012. Aktif olarak spor yapmanın genç tüketicilerin marka bilincinin oluşmasına ve marka sadakatine etkisi. Doktora Tezi: Kırıkkale Üniversitesi Sağlık Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Anabilim Dalı.
6. Göksu F, 2010. Spor ürünlerine yönelik marka sadakati üzerine bir araştırma. İstanbul Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Hakemli Dergisi, 1(39), 43-58.
7. Karasar N, 2005. Bilimsel Araştırma Yöntemleri. 15. Baskı, Ankara: Nobel Yayınevi.
8. Kırtepe, A., Altungul, O., & Karahuseyınoglu, M. F. (2017). Preference Reasons for Recreational Areas Which Belongs to the Local Administrations. Journal of Education and Training Studies, 5(11), 73-81.
9. Özdemir M, Koçak A, 2012. İlişkisel pazarlama çerçevesinde marka sadakatinin oluşumu ve bir model önerisi. Ankara Üniversitesi, SBF Dergisi, 67, 2, 127-156.
10. Polat, E., Yalçın, A., Yıldız, K., ve Sönmezoğlu, U. (2017). Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Spor Ürünlerine Yönelik İlişkisel Pazarlama Çerçevesinde Marka Sadakatlerinin İncelenmesi. CBÜ Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Bilimleri Dergisi, 12 (2), 58-70. 67 CBÜ Bed Eğt Spor Bil Dergisi / CBU J Phys Edu Sport Sci 2017: 12(2)

11. Schwarz EC, Hunter JD, 2008. Advanced theory and practice in sport marketing, San Diego, CA: Elsevier.

12. Solomon MR, 2008. Buying, having and being. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall

13. Stevens J, Lathrop A, Bradish C, 2005. Tracking generation Y: A contemporary sport customer profile. Journal of Sport Management, 19(3), 254-277.

14. Tosun NB, 2010. İletişim Temelli Marka Yönetimi, Beta Yayım Dağıtım AŞ, İstanbul.

15. Yoh T, Mohr M, Gordon B, 2006. The effect of gender on Korean teens' athletic footwear purchasing. The Sport Journal, 9(1), 180-189.