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CONSUMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS BRAND EXTENSIONS: AN ANALYSIS ON FOOD AND TEXTILE INDUSTRIES IN TURKEY

Abstract:

Brand extensions refer to use an established brand name in new product or product categories and are extensively applied as a marketing strategy. Brand extension success factors vary according to cultures. Consumers' attitude towards extensions is modified on the basis of their cognitional reactions and relations between the parent brand and extended product and/or product categories.

This study aims at conducting an exploratory research and revealing the relationship between the parent brand and the extended brand. More specifically, the impact of parent brand loyalty on the extension is explored. Therefore, the main objective is to evaluate the attitudes of consumers towards brand extensions through brand loyalty. The study analyzes consumers' attitudes towards brand extensions specifically in food and textile industries. This is in particular to portray that consumers respond positively to brand extensions in various industries due to different motivations.

During the methodology application process, in-depth interviews were carried out with 16 participants who were selected from employees working for public and private institutions in Ankara, the capital of Turkey. The interviews were conducted in two stages. During the first stage, the interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes and consisted of open-ended questions about participants' brand choices, reasons for choosing the brands they use. The goal was to evaluate their brand loyalty levels. In addition, the participants were provided with the definition of brand extension and their reactions towards extension were noted. In the second stage, the participants were asked to evaluate their attitudes towards brand extensions in food and textile industries along with the factors that have impact on their evaluations. The participants were specifically observed in terms of their approach to brand extensions where the extension was in a totally different sector from the parent brand.

The results indicate that brand awareness has a significant impact on brand extensions with regards to quality and trust. However, this impact is at the highest level when the extension is within the same sector with the parent brand. Whenever the extension is in a different sector, consumers not only have negative attitudes toward that extension but also become suspicious about the parent brand. Thus, quality and trust are pivotal factors influencing consumers' positive attitudes towards brand extensions.

Keywords:

brand extensions, consumers' attitudes, quality, brand, trust.

JEL Classification: M30, M31, M39

Brand extensions are explained as using an established brand name for new products or product categories and widely used in marketing practices (Henseler et al, 2010).

The main objectives of brand extensions are ensuring that consumers would accept new products and therefore contribute to the success of new products. In addition to this, marketing expenses are lowered and profitability of the new product is increased by means of brand extensions (through Henseler et al, 2010, p. 6).

With these qualities, brand extensions have recently been subject to researches in the field of marketing. These researches have focused on identification of success factors of brand extensions and evaluation of these success factors in terms of cultural effects, cognitive reactions of consumers and relations between product categories.

Nevertheless, as the study carried out by Völckner and Sattler (2007) has already stressed, to generalize the success factors of brand extensions to rapidly changing consumer product categories, real life products and to apply them in different main brand products, to different consumer groups are subject to a question mark.

In this context, this study titled as, ***"Consumers' Attitudes Towards Brand Extensions: An Analysis On Food And Textile Industries In Turkey"*** aims at conducting an exploratory research for analyzing consumers' attitudes towards brand extensions in the light of the relation between the main and extended brand.

Moreover the study also does research in food and textile and clothing sectors bearing in mind that, consumers' attitudes towards brand extensions would be affected from different factors in different sectors and hence the factors that lead to positive opinion for brand extensions in these sectors are try to be revealed.

Literature Review

A Successful Brand Extension

Henseler et al, (2010, p. 6) have found out that 82 % of new products are put into market under existing brand names which means that the brand extension strategy is being adopted. Nevertheless along with the popularity of this strategy, the failure rate is 80 % (through Henseler et al, 2010). This is why it is important to figure out the factors that would make brand extensions successful.

Accordingly, following are the success factors figured out by *Aaker and Keller* in 1990:

1. The extent to which the abilities/assets relevant with the main product could be transferred to the extended product category (harmony)

2. The perceived quality of the main brand (quality)

3. Interactions with the quality of the main brand and the level of complementarity or substitution of the product categories subject to brand extension and the main brand (harmony x quality)

4. The perceived difficulty of designing and producing the product category of the extended brand

Due to the fact that the study conducted by Aaker and Keller in 1990 focused on consumers based in the United States of America, many studies were realized to replicate this study in various countries of the world and aim at identifying factors among cultures. Although these studies were able to reveal some differences among various cultures and countries, success factors of Aaker and Keller are still considered to be applicable for brand extension strategies.

The Effect of Cultural Factors on the Success of Brand Extensions

Reactions of consumers to brand extensions have been analyzed in terms of both cultural aspects and the relation between the consumer and the brand. These analyzes have mostly focused on exploring Aaker and Keller's success factors in the view of cultural aspect.

According to this, Völckner and Sattler (2007) have argued that the success factors are applicable for limited product categories and sample composition. Sunde and Brodie (1993), applied success factors in New Zealand and found out that the factors are acceptable for observed basic relations in general. However, the validity of the factors has relatively been limited in some aspects.

In the framework of studies taking into consideration the cultural differences, Nijssen and Hartman (1994), applied success factors in the Netherlands and revealed out that the quality of the main brand has a direct effect on consumers' attitudes towards brand extensions.

Patro and Jaiswal (2003) evaluated the evaluations of consumers regarding brand extensions in Indian markets and found out that both quality and harmony have direct and strong effect but no finding was obtained about the interaction between these two factors.

The studies to evaluate success factors in various cultures have produced different results. Therefore, it has been proven that consumers from different cultures give differing reactions to brand extensions. In this regard, it can be concluded that the success factors of Aaker and Keller can vary from consumer to consumer and can be under the impact of different conditions.

Consumers' Attitudes Towards Brand Extensions

The studies on consumers' attitudes towards brand extensions have been developed around their reactions to brand extensions and their relationship with the brand. In this framework, Kim et al have emphasized in their studies in 2014 that the quality of the relationship between the consumer and the brand affects their decisions regarding brand extensions. It was revealed that this is valid especially when there is harmony between the brand and the extended product.

Fedorikhin et al (2008) have highlighted that consumers' attitudes towards brand extensions stem from brand loyalty rather than harmony and consumers react positively to brand extensions and take purchasing decision if the harmony between the main product and the extended product is strong and moderate. Moreover, they have argued that consumers provide positive feedback for their environment about brand extensions and forgive more easily the possible mistakes when there is strong harmony.

There are studies that analyze consumers' approach to brand extensions in the light of cognitive paradigms (Czellar, 2003). Accordingly, there is mutual interaction between the perception of the harmony between the main brand and the extended brand by the consumer and development of their first attitudes towards extensions and their market behavior. In this direction, the characteristics of consumers are the determinants of their attitudes towards brand extensions.

Additionally, Kim and John conducted a research in 2008 and have figured out that the level of consumers' interpreting their environment has a moderating effect on the importance of the harmony between the main product and the extended product.

Consumers' Attitudes Depending on the Type of Brand Extensions

Among the factors that have impact on consumers' approach to brand extensions the relationship between the main product and the extended product is of importance. At the studies carried out in this field, it has been observed that vertical brand extensions have negative impact on consumers' evaluations about the main brand (Kim et al, 2001). This impact decreased when the perceived distance between the main brand and the extended product increased.

In addition to this, it has been found out that consumers value less the luxury brands' low level extensions and take less purchasing decisions (Riley et al, 2013).

The similarity between the main product and the extended product has been effective on consumers' evaluations (Gierl and Huettl, 2011). In this context, when there is a high level of similarity between the main brand and the extended product, consumers have positively evaluated the product.

Bao et al (2010) have emphasized in their study that the difference between the consumers' perception of difficulty in designing and manufacturing the main product and the difficulty in manufacturing and designing the extended product is taken into consideration. At this study it has been argued that differences in the difficulties between the main product and the extended product negatively affect the evaluations about extensions in particular when the quality of the main product is high.

Hem et al (2013) have found out in their study that brand awareness, similarity perception and proximity between the main product and extended product categories have impact on consumers' approach to brand extensions.

Bhat and Reddy (2001) have highlighted that the associations between the main brand and brand extensions are strong and consumers' having positive image in their minds, are of importance in terms of the success of brand extensions.

Using single brand name in many product categories has also been analyzed (Swaminathan, 2003). According to this, it has been argued that extended products are effective in purchasing the main brand and hence there is a mutual relationship between the main brand and the extended brand.

There are also studies that compare the factors related to brand extensions in terms of service and product retailers. At the study carried out by Pina et al through this purpose in 2013 the harmony between the main brand and the extended brand has been essential however it has been revealed out that brand image is also important about the main brand's selling either product or services. The brand image has been considered more important in case of product selling brands. Whenever the main brand and the extended brand are in different sectors, the impact of brand image has been observed to be lower.

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In addition to these, Kapoor and Heslop (2009) have emphasized in their study that it is also possible to evaluate brand extensions independent from the main brand. According to this it has been figured out that, individual evaluations result in positivism about the brand. If the extended brand is in a competitive position, the harmony with the main brand has a less critical role.

Purpose of the Study

The studies in the field of brand extensions have been executed on the basis of the success factors identified by Aaker and Keller and these factors have been evaluated in the view of different cultures, different products and consumers. Since there is still room for exploration in the area this study targets at the evaluation of the relationship between the main and the extended brand.

In this framework, the objective of the study is to analyze the consumers' attitudes towards brand extensions with regards to brand loyalty. In this context, it is aimed at finding out the relationship between brand loyalty and brand extension, if there is any and revealing the direction of the relationship.

In other words,

- whether brand extensions result in brand loyalty or not

  or

- brand loyalty make reactions to brand extensions positive or not

are explored.

Besides, since it is considered that consumers may react to brand extensions in different sectors in a different way due to different reasons, applied research is undertaken. In this direction, two sectors are taken as examples, food industry and textile and clothing industry, and the factors that prevail when consumers react to brand extensions in these sectors are revealed.

Methodology

So as to reach the purposes of the study, face-to-face in-depth interviews were carried out with 16 participants in Ankara, the capital of Turkey. Those 16 participants were selected from people working at public and private institutions based in Ankara.

Among 16 participants, 7 were women and 9 were men. Therefore the percentage of women participating at the study was 44 and the percentage of men participating at the study was 56. The range of the participants' age was 28-45 and average age was 35. The average age was 33 for female participants and 36,5 for male participants.

The education level of participants at the study was high. Specifically, 44 % of the participants held a graduate degree. The remaining 56 % had bachelor's degree. Taking at a glance at the education level on the basis of sex, 29 % of female participants held graduate degree and 71 % of them has bachelor's degree whereas 44 % of male participants held graduate degree and 56 % of them had bachelor's degree.

The income level of the participants was at the interval of 2000 - 4000 Turkish Liras (TL) monthly. The rate of the participants having monthly income of 2000 – 4000 TL was 44 % and 71 % of them are female and 29 % of them are male. Monthly income of 56 % of the participants were 4000 TL and above. The rate of female participants was 22 % and that of male participants was 78 % in this income category.

Attention was paid to achieve a balanced number of female-male participants and a variety in the range of ages while choosing the participants in parallel with the aims of the study. Participants' having high level of income and education is compatible with the objectives identified at the study. This is particularly important for participants having brand awareness and ability to consume branded products and/or services.

Face-to-face in-depth interviews were executed with the participants and each of the interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes. The interviews were carried out in two stages and participants were asked open-ended questions about their brand preferences, brands they consume regularly, their reasons for preferring branded products and/or services during the first stage. They were also asked to evaluate their level of brand loyalty.

Participants were then provided with the definition of brand extensions both in a written and verbal form. At this point, they were asked questions regarding their awareness about brand extensions and their reactions to the extension activities of the brands they consume. Besides, there was a question on whether the brands that use brand extension strategy would result in purchasing decision or not. Participants were asked to explain their positive or negative replies with their explanations and/or reasons.

The second stage of the interviews included the participants' evaluation of their views on brand extensions in food and textile industries as "positive" and "negative". Therein, the factors that could have impact on possible views regarding brand extensions were listed and the participants were asked to evaluate these factors. The questions raised were to measure the attitude in case the brand extension is in the same sector with the main brand and is in a different sector from the main brand. Among these questions, a recently popular strategy, selling retail products in cafés and restaurants, was also included for taking the participants' evaluations.

In order to facilitate the evaluations of the participants, the common and widely marketed brands in Turkey were given as examples. For instance, Pınar was chosen from food industry, Big Chefs was chosen from restaurant sector, Koton, Mango and Nike were chosen among the brands from textile and apparel industry. In both sectors, the participants' opinions if and when these brands listed above would apply brand extensions in sectors different from their main sectors were aimed to be measured. Participants' views were taken whether brand loyalty, brand trust, quality, prestige/social status would be effective in their reactions to brand extensions in both cases, when the extension is in the same sector with the main brand and when the extension is in a different sector from the main brand or not.

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Finally, participants were encouraged to be creative and requested to provide any type of product and/or service which they wish the brands they consume would apply extension strategies to.

The questions asked to the participants were developed in a deductive fashion where they were first asked about their opinions on general concepts and then their reactions were taken regarding the subject on the basis of real life examples. Those replies and opinions of the participants have been typed down and developed as filled questionnaire forms.

The questions raised to participants in two stages, both, are listed in Table-1.

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Table – 1: Questions Raised to the Participants During In-Depth Face-to-Face Interviews

First Stage Questions

Do you prefer branded products or services when purchasing? (Yes/No) Why?
Is/are there a/any brand(s) that you frequently purchase, follow and/or like? (Yes/No) Why?
If yes, what is/are the name(s) of this/these brand(s)?
Do you consider yourself as loyal to this/these brand(s)? (Yes/No/Indecisive) Why?
Have you ever heard the term “brand extension”? (Yes/No)
Do/does the brand/brands you consume market other products/services under the same brand name in other words apply brand extension strategy? Explain your opinion about it (positive/negative) and give reasons for your opinion.
Will your opinion be positive or negative if the brand extension is within the same sector with the existing product/service of the brand, why?
Will your opinion be positive or negative if the brand extension is in a different sector from the existing product/service of the brand, why?
Do you raise positive opinion about a brand when it applies brand extension strategy and does it affect your purchasing decision/brand preference? (Yes/No) Why?
Is there a product/service/sector that you wish the brand/brands you consume would apply brand extension to? If yes, can you please name it/them?

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Second Stage Questions

Questions	Positive	Negative
Your opinion about a brand in food industry like Pınar applying brand extensions in food industry		
Your opinion about a brand in food industry like Pınar applying brand extension is a sector different than food industry		
Is brand trust effective in your opinion about brand extensions in food industry?		
Is brand quality effective in your opinion about brand extensions in food industry?		
Is your brand loyalty effective in your opinion about brand extensions in food industry?		
Your opinion about retailing products in restaurants or cafés, like selling olive oil in Big Chefs Restaurant		
Your opinion about a brand in textile and clothing industry applying brand extension strategy and selling cosmetic products, like Mango/Koton selling cosmetic products (such as perfume&make-up)		
Your opinion about a brand manufacturing sports shoes applying brand extension strategy and selling cosmetic products, like Nike's selling cosmetic products (such as perfume&shampoo)		
Is brand trust effective in your opinion about brand extensions in textile and clothing industry?		
Is brand quality effective in your opinion about brand extensions in textile and clothing industry?		
Is brand loyalty effective in your opinion about brand extensions in textile and clothing industry?		
Is brand prestige/social status effective in your opinion about brand extensions in textile and clothing industry?		

Findings and Discussion

Findings from the First Stage

1- Brand preference when purchasing products and/or services

81 % of the participants have stated that they prefer branded products or services when purchasing. The rate of those who do not look for branded products or services were 19 %. This rate totally belongs to female participants. In other words, while all male participants by 100 % prefer branded products or services, this rate is 57 % for female participants.

For those participants who do not prefer branded products or services, brand is not a preferential matter of choice in their purchasing decisions instead they value more benefiting from the experiences of other consumers who have previously consumed the product or the service.

Among the reasons for branded products' preference, quality was ranged as the top. 75 % of the participants have named "quality" while listing the reasons. Along with this, other reasons for preferring branded products listed by the participants are as following:

- Trust
- Customer satisfaction
- Capture a trend and a style
- Durability
- Visual beauty
- Qualified
- Product satisfaction
- Suitable with the taste
- No problem expectations
- Respect for consumer rights
- Corporate support
- Fast and consumer oriented after sales services

There was one participant who declared that he preferred unbranded products or services by comparing price and performance. Another participant claimed that she was totally against brands and considered the existence of the brands as a threat to small enterprises.

2- Whether there is brand frequently purchased/liked/followed or not and whether there is feeling of loyalty with the brand or not

88 % of the participants stated that there was or there were some brand/brands that they frequently made purchasing decisions, followed and/or liked. The remaining 12 % highlighted that they did not have any brands they consume, follow or like. The rate of male participants who frequently make purchasing decisions, follow and/or like a brand or some brands is 89 % whereas this rate for female participants is 86 %.

About participants' loyalty feelings towards their brands, those who reply positively account for 44 %, negatively 31 % and the rate of those who could not decide was 25 %.

Among the participants who frequently make purchasing decisions, follow and/or like a brand or some brands, the rate of those who feel themselves loyal to their brands was 50 %, other 29 % replied negatively and 21 % were indecisive.

The participants claimed that they would be open to try other brands as long as the quality and the style of these brands suit with their tastes, they could prefer other brands due to price and quality and that their brand preference could differ in a certain period of time.

The participants who had positive replies to loyalty listed their reasons as frequent and continuous purchasing, brands' specialization, quality, no problem expectations, customer satisfaction, long term relation with the brand and preference facilitation.

The table below gives the brands named by the participants as the brands they frequently consume, follow and/or like.

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Table 2 – Brands Referred To During Face-to-Face Interviews

Brand	Frequency of Reference (number)
Sek Süt	1
Algida	1
Fender Musical Instruments Corporation	1
Pınar	4
Eti	3
Keskinoğlu	1
Nivea	1
Gillette	2
Prima	1
Selpak	1
Starbucks	1
Efes Pilsen	4
Coca-Cola	1
Marc Jacobs	1
Lancome	1
Yves Saint Laurent	1
Adidas	2
Nike	3
De facto	1
Kemal Tanca	1
Altınyıldız	1
Boss	1
Diesel	1
Garnier	1
Neutrogena	1
Mango	2

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Brand	Frequency of Reference (number)
Nine West	2
Clinique	1
Yapı Kredi Yayınları	1
Erikli Su	1
Calvin Klein	1
Giorgio Armani	1
Lacoste	2
Cumhuriyet Sucuk	1
Et Balık Kurumu	1
Tekirdağ Rakı	1
Apple	1
Oracle	1
İpekyol	1
Twist	1
Zara	1
Koton	1
Puma	1
Jimmy Choo	1
The Body Shop	1
Mac	1
Panasonic	1
Samsung	2
HP	1
Fabrika	1
Network	1
Ramsey	1
Sütaş	1
Polonez	1
Estee Lauder	1
Guess	1

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Brand	Frequency of Reference (number)
Fossil	1
DKNY	1
Vestel	1
Mavi	1
Arçelik	1
Sarar	1
Toyota	1
Honda	1
Shell	1
Turkish Airlines	1

3- Awareness of brand extensions and whether the brands purchased use brand extensions or not

After being provided with verbal and written definitions of brand extensions, the participants were asked whether they had ever heard the brand extension concept or not. As a result, 38 % of the participants declared that they had not heard about brand extensions before whereas 62 % of them stated that they had heard it before. The rate of male participants among those who were familiar with the concept was 60 % and this rate was 40 % for women. Among men who participated at the study, the rate of those who heard about brand extensions before was 67 % and among women who participated at the study, the rate of those who heard about brand extensions before was 57.

Of the participants who account for 38 % of total participants and consist of those who had not heard the brand extension concept before, 67 % said that the brands they used applied brand extension strategies. These participants listed extension's not being in a very different sector, the size of the brand, applying extension strategy for the first time or not, as determinants of their positive or negative approaches for brand extensions.

On the other hand, 60 % of the participants who account for 62 % of all participants and have declared that they had been familiar with the brand extension concept, said that the brands they used applied brand extension strategies. These participants mostly evaluated their attitudes towards the extension strategies of the brands they use as positive.

Additionally there was a participant who evaluated the brand he used positively because it did not apply extension strategy. This participant based his argument on the fact that a brand could be memorized easily when there is one certain product. Another participant said that she did not follow any brands because she believes that brands are a matter of threat for small enterprises at the market. Two participants commented on brand extensions positively when there are supplementary product groups and added that they did not approach positively to extensions in different sectors as they preferred specialized brands in certain categories.

One other participant evaluated positively the extension strategy of the brand he follows when the extension does not affect the quality of the main brand and extends its specialization to the extended products. There was another participant who did not even know whether the brands he used apply such a strategy or not. Among the participants, there was one who perceived extension as deterioration in quality and availability in price.

4- Positive/negative opinion on brand extensions

The participants were asked whether their opinions would be negative or positive depending on the brand extension being in the same or different sector from the main product or service.

The table below summarizes the replies given by the participants.

Table 3 – Variance of Opinions on Brand Extensions Regarding the Sector of Extension

Participant	Sex	Age	Opinion when the extension is within the same sector	Opinion when the extension is in a different sector	Reason-Explanation
1	Female	32	Negative	Negative	Brand extension is a risk for the enterprise and creates unfair competition for other enterprises in the market.
2	Male	28	Positive	Negative	Positive for the same sector due to brand trust but if the extension is in a different sector there may be deterioration in brand prestige and brand trust.
3	Male	41	Negative in terms of quality; positive in terms of price	Positive	Brand quality serves as a positive reference in extensions in different sectors. But extensions in the same sector are regarded as deterioration in quality.

Particip ant	Sex	Age	Opinion when the extension is within the same sector	Opinion when the extension is in a different sector	Reason-Explanation
4	Female	42	Positive	Positive	The brand will try to keep the same level of standard for the sector where the extension is applied so as to protect its prestige.
5	Female	37	Positive	Negative	Positive opinion about extensions in supplementary products though negative opinion about extensions as each sector is considered to require different level of expertise.
6	Female	32	Positive	Negative	Similar level of quality and experience is expected when the extension is in the same sector. In this way products would be complementary. But the opinion is negative for extensions in different sectors as

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Participant	Sex	Age	Opinion when the extension is within the same sector	Opinion when the extension is in a different sector	Reason-Explanation
					experienced brands are preferred in different sectors.
7	Male	32	Positive	Negative	Different products of the brand liked would like to be tried but if the sectors are different the opinion would not be as positive as it was for extensions in the same sector.
8	Male	37	Positive	Negative	When the extension is in the same sector, the recognition of the sector and achievements obtained in meeting the expectations of the consumers prevail. In different sectors there will not be specialization. Extensions in different sector are regarded as promotion

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Particip ant	Sex	Age	Opinion when the extension is within the same sector	Opinion when the extension is in a different sector	Reason-Explanation
					strategies developed by the brand for its main product.
9	Male	41	Positive	Indecisive	As the product consumed is seen as the best in the sector, its similar product in the same sector will be a matter of choice.
10	Male	31	Positive	Positive	There is brand trust when the extension is in the same sector. However final decision is taken after trial. The opinion will not be negative if the extension is in a different sector but the final decision is up to trial, as well.
11	Male	39	Positive	Positive or negative depending on the sector	For the brand that is considered to be appropriate in terms of quality or price-performance same perceptions are

Participant	Sex	Age	Opinion when the extension is within the same sector	Opinion when the extension is in a different sector	Reason-Explanation
					kept for extended products in the same sector. In different sectors, if there is complementarity between products or similar technologies are used, the opinion will be positive. On the other hand, brand extensions is unrelated sectors will raise negative opinion.
12	Male	35	Positive	Indecisive	In the same sector, current experiences are taken as reference and the opinion will be positive. In different sectors it depends on the general power of the brand. The decision is taken depending on whether there is a risk or not.

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Participant	Sex	Age	Opinion when the extension is within the same sector	Opinion when the extension is in a different sector	Reason-Explanation
13	Female	31	Positive	Negative	As the brand is deemed to be the expert in the sector, the opinion will be positive when the extension is in the same sector. When the extension is in a different sector, the brand is considered to step away from its area of expertise and thence the opinion will be negative. This type of extension can even be considered as a signal of the brand's failure.
14	Female	28	Positive	Negative	In the same sector, the brand is believed to pursue its quality. When the extension is in a different sector the opinion will be negative due to the fact that a brand is not believed to

Participant	Sex	Age	Opinion when the extension is within the same sector	Opinion when the extension is in a different sector	Reason-Explanation
					capture the same level of quality in every sector.
15	Male	45	Positive	Indecisive	The opinion about extensions in sectors which the brand is specialized in. For different sectors, the participant is indecisive.
16	Female	31	Positive	Negative	Extension in the same sector is a fact that increased brand trust. Brand trust will be more when the extension is in the same sector in comparison with that in a different sector.

5- The effect of the brand's applying brand extension strategy on attitudes towards and purchasing decision of the brand

50 % of the participants gave negative replies on whether a brand's applying brand extension strategy results in positive opinion about the brand and affect the purchasing decision or brand preference or not. This group of participants which consists of 50 %

of female participants and 50 % of male participants emphasized that the brand's endeavors towards different product and services would confuse the consumers' minds, the sector in which the extension would be established stated importance, the extension strategy were not a factor that would change their habits, instead price-quality was more important. The remaining 50 % including 1 indecisive participant discussed that the brands that apply brand extension strategy would leave positive impression on them and it would have impact in their purchasing decisions/brand preferences. Therein the quality and the image of the brand, interest in the extended product, the understanding that brands should renew themselves and extension's taken as a signal for brand's being innovative, different and attractive were dominant factors.

Findings of the Second Stage

During the second stage, consumers were asked if their attitudes towards brand extensions in food and textile and apparel industries would be either "positive" or "negative". At this stage, the brand, Pınar was given as an example of a brand in food industry and the reactions were taken whenever Pınar makes extensions within and outside the food industry. It was also asked whether brand trust, loyalty and quality factors were effective regarding brand extensions in food industry. Moreover the participants' views were taken about selling retail products at restaurants and/or cafés. The example chosen for the participants was Big Chefs Café.

Mango and Koton were provided as examples in the textile sector for the participants and their opinions were taken about these brands' applying extension strategies to cosmetics sector. Again in this industry, Nike was given as an example and the reactions were taken if Nike made extensions to the cosmetics sector. It was also asked whether brand trust, loyalty, quality, brand prestige/social status factors were effective in opinions regarding brand extensions in textile and apparel industry.

The replies given by the participants are presented in the table below.

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Table 4 – Categorization of the Participants' Replies to the Questions of the Second Stage on the Basis of Sex

Questions	***Positive***		***Negative***	
Sex (F-Female, M-Male)	***F***	***M***	***F***	***M***
Your opinion about a brand in food industry like Pınar applying brand extensions in food industry	6	9	1	0
Your opinion about a brand in food industry like Pınar applying brand extension is a sector different than food industry	1	3	6	6
Is brand trust effective in your opinion about brand extensions in food industry?	5	8	2	1
Is brand quality effective in your opinion about brand extensions in food industry?	5	8	2	1
Is your brand loyalty effective in your opinion about brand extensions in food industry?	2	5	5	4
Your opinion about retailing products in restaurants or cafés, like selling olive oil in Big Chefs Restaurant	5	7	2	2
Your opinion about a brand in textile and clothing industry applying brand extension strategy and selling cosmetic products, like Mango/Koton selling cosmetic products (such as perfume&make-up)	1	2	6	7
Your opinion about a brand manufacturing sports shoes applying brand extension strategy and selling cosmetic products, like Nike's selling cosmetic products (such as perfume&shampoo)	1	0	6	9
Is brand trust effective in your opinion about brand extensions in textile and clothing industry?	5	6	2	3
Is brand quality effective in your opinion about brand extensions in textile and clothing industry?	5	6	2	3
Is brand loyalty effective in your opinion about brand extensions in textile and clothing industry?	3	4	4	5

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Questions	***Positive***		***Negative***	
Sex (F-Female, M-Male)	***F***	***M***	***F***	***M***
Is brand prestige/social status effective in your opinion about brand extensions in textile and clothing industry?	3	5	4	4

The participants were also asked whether there were brands and products they wished there were extensions to. 85 % of the participants told that they did not have such a wish. Still two male participants (aged 41 and 35) expressed their wishes for extensions such as TV under Apple brand, cheese under Tekirdağ Rakı (Turkish alcoholic beverage brand) brand, mineral water under Erikli (Turkish water brand) brand, tie under Lacoste brand and cafés under Penguen/Uykusuz magazines (Turkish comics magazines), cards, posters and souvenirs under Yapı Kredi Yayınları (Turkish publishing company established under an extension from the bank, Yapı Kredi Bankası).

Conclusion

This study titled as ***"Consumers' Attitudes Towards Brand Extensions: An Analysis On Food And Textile Industries In Turkey"*** aims at conducting an exploratory research for analyzing consumers' attitudes towards brand extensions and the relationship between the main and extended brand.

During the analysis of the findings of the study, the evaluations were made on the basis of the sex of the participants. As the range of ages of the participants is not very wide and the income level of the participants is closer to each other, the aim was to explain how the participants' views differ between female and male participants.

The participants of the study are adults and have income level that is above the average therefore their brand awareness and usage rate of branded products and services are high. The participants have specifically indicated that consuming branded products in food industry states importance and health issues such as allergic

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concerns require the use of branded products that represent “quality” in cosmetics sector and textile and clothing industry.

The participants did not consider themselves as loyal to brands they frequently consume, follow and like. They instead think of brand loyalty as “unreasoning obedience”. In the light of this view, the participants of the study have declared that they prefer experiencing different brands rather than being loyal to a brand.

The participants named 66 brands during the in-depth interviews. These brands encompass almost all sectors and include both Turkish and foreign brands. This proves that Turkey is an attractive market for brands with its huge population and consumers’ high brand awareness.

Among the brands named by the participants, the brands which were listed more than once were focused in food industry and they are Pınar, Eti and Efes Pilsen. Still it will not be realistic to call any brand dominant through the list since the participants mentioned many different brand names. Therefore this certainly serves as a proof that consumers who have income level and education level above the average have sound brand information and preference.

The study also provides information regarding the participants’ views and level of awareness regarding brand extensions. Most of the participants have awareness of brand extensions and give positive reactions to extensions as long as they are in the same sector with the main brand. This finding of the study is an evidence for harmony factor of brand extensions’ success factors. Nonetheless whenever the extension is in a different sector from the main brand, the participants become suspicious and even have negative attitudes towards extensions.

The study reveals that the participants have brand trust for specialized brands and quality is considered an important determinant in the establishment of brand trust. The participants base their final purchasing decisions on their experiences and take the brands they are familiar with as a reference point.

With regards to considering brand extensions as a factor for brand preference, half of the participants had positive opinions whereas the other half had negative. Although brand extensions may serve as an indicator, what literally matters for the participants is the quality of the brand and brand trust.

The findings obtained throughout the study in terms of food and textile and clothing industries are listed below:

1. All male participants had positive opinions about extensions of a brand in food industry in the same industry and 86 % of female participant were in favor of this.

2. The rate of participants who had negative opinions about extensions of a brand in food industry in a different industry was 67 % for male participants and 86 % for female participants.

3. 89 % of male participants and 71 % of female participants had positive opinions about brand trust having an impact in attitudes towards brand extensions in food industry.

4. 89 % of male participants and 71 % of female participants had positive opinions about the quality of the brand having an impact in attitudes towards brand extensions in food industry.

5. 71 % of male participants and 44 % of female participants had negative opinions about brand loyalty having an impact in attitudes towards brand extensions in food industry.

6. 71 % of female participants and 78 % of male participants had positive opinions about selling retail products at restaurants and cafés.

7. 78 % of male participants and 86 % of female participants had negative opinions about extensions of a brand in textile and clothing industry in to cosmetics sector.

8. All male participants and 86 % of female participants had negative opinions about extensions of a sports brand to cosmetics sector.

9. 67 % of male participants and 71 % of female participants had positive opinions about brand trust having an impact in attitudes towards brand extensions in textile and clothing industry.

10. 67 % of male participants and 71 % of female participants had positive opinions about the quality of the brand having an impact in attitudes towards brand extensions in textile and clothing industry.

11. 56 % of male participants and 57 % of female participants had negative opinions about brand loyalty having an impact in attitudes towards brand extensions in textile and clothing industry.

12. 57 % of male participants and 56 % of female participants had positive opinions about the prestige/social status of the brand having an impact in attitudes towards brand extensions in textile and clothing industry.

All male participants at the study had positive views regarding brand extensions of brands in food industry in the same industry but had negative views regarding sports brands' extensions in cosmetics sector. Female participants had similar views in the same direction but with lower percentages.

Mostly the views of male and female participants were in the same direction and their percentages were close to each other. Moreover most proximate views of male and female participants were about selling retail products at restaurants and cafés, brands' extensions in textile and clothing industry to cosmetics sector, factors like brand trust, quality of the brand and brand loyalty being effective in opinions towards extensions in textile and clothing industry.

The results achieved through in-depth face-to-face interviews during the study with regards to positive opinions about extensions of brands in food industry in the same industry imply that brand extensions strategy can successfully be applied in food industry. On the other hand, cosmetics sector was considered as a different sector from textile and clothing industry and the participants had negative opinions about extensions of the brands in textile and clothing industry to cosmetics sector. This was also the case for food industry whereas participants had negative attitudes towards extensions of the brands in food industry to different industries.

The evaluations regarding the impact of brand trust, quality of the brand, brand loyalty, prestige/social status in brand extensions are summarized in the table below.

Table 5 – Evaluation of the Brand Extensions by the Participants According to the Factors Listed in the Questions

Factors/Sectors	Food Industry	Textile and Clothing Industry
Brand Trust	Positive Female % 71 Male % 89	Positive Female % 71 Male % 67
Brand Quality	Positive Female % 71 Male % 89	Positive Female % 71 Male % 67
Brand Loyalty	Negative Female % 71 Male % 44	Negative Female % 57 Male % 56
Brand Prestige/Social Status	-	Positive Female % 43

Factors/Sectors	Food Industry	Textile and Clothing Industry
		Male % 56

Among these factors, brand trust and the quality of the brand stand out as effective factors for both female and male participants. The approximate percentages of female and male participants herein can be explained as a result of evaluating quality and trust factors as complementary to each other. This is also because the participants indicated that they believed the brands they trust was of quality and those brands of quality would result in brand trust for them.

On the other hand, brand loyalty was not considered as a moderating factor that would result in positive reactions to brand extensions. Especially a majority of female participants responded negatively to the possible impact of brand loyalty in their attitudes towards brand extensions in food industry.

On a final note, this study reveals that consumers prefer branded products and/or services but they do not solely limit themselves to these products and/or services. They seem to be open to trying new brands. Nonetheless, brand awareness, the quality of the brand and brand trust are perceived essential in shaping attitudes towards brand extensions. However, this effect is observed if the brand extension is in the same sector with the main product and/or service. Whenever the extension is in a different sector from the main brand, attitudes towards brand extensions become negative and consumers become suspicious about the main brand. Quality of the brand and brand trust are the main factors that result in positive attitudes towards brand extensions in the same sector with the main brand.

Limitations and Future Research

This study is based on in-depth face-to-face interviews executed with people living and working in Ankara, the capital of Turkey. Along with the exploratory research done at this study, it was aimed to find out the attitudes of Turkish consumers towards brand extensions and the direction of the relationship between brand loyalty and brand extensions. In addition to this, although the participants have stated that they preferred branded products and services, they did not evaluate themselves as loyal to a brand. Moreover a clear consensus could not be reached about a direct relationship between brand extensions and brand loyalty.

Due to the fact that the participants have emphasized that they would react positively to the extensions by the brands they consider of quality and trust in the same or different sector, it would be appropriate to do a research to statistically measure consumers' loyalty and relate this loyalty level with their reactions in case of these brands' extensions. That study would take the findings from this exploratory study and carry out a descriptive research. The main hypothesis could be "Consumers loyal to a brand, react positively to brand extension". For this purpose brand loyalty scale developed by C. Whan Park, Deborah J. MacInnis, Joseph Priester, Andreas B. Eisingerich, Dawn Iacobucci in their article titled as "Brand Attachment and Brand Attitude Strength: Conceptual and Empirical Differentiation of Two Critical Brand Equity Drivers" could be used.

One other finding of the study encourages the sale of retail products in cafés and restaurants. Further research could be done to find out the product categories to sell in cafés and restaurants.

Further research should take into consideration all consumers living in different provinces of Turkey. However, if the age range is taken similar to that in this study, it will be beneficial in terms of brand awareness. Further research should also include consumers at university level. Similarly, it will be preferable to have similar income level with that in this study but different education level could be taken into consideration.

The findings of the exploratory research of this article are considered to make contributions and give valuable insights for both academicians and marketers who intend to focus on brand extensions especially in Turkish market.

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