

The Relationship Between The Affective Brand Experience, Brand Distinctiveness, Brand Attractiveness and The Brand Advocacy

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Extensive Summary

Intruduction

While many hybrid automotive manufacturers are in intense competition in the automotive market to find buyers, the Toyota Prius has achieved over 400,000 sales in the US. In fact, they announced such an achieve comes from the wishes of the users want everyone to know that they are driving just Prius.(Maynard, 2007). One of the critical points to create the loyal customers in brand management is to determine the most influential dynamics of the consumer decision making process. The figures for automotive market share indicate that Toyota has the highest share in the automotive market(<https://www.statista.com/statistics/316786/global-market-share-of-the-leading-automakers/>). The information conveyed by consumers about their previous experiences and experiences with the brand indicates the existence of certain dynamics that enable the brand to match the consumer identity. These are the features that makes the brand distinctive from others and perceived as more attractive from the competitors(Escalas ve Bettman, 2009; Lam, Ahearne ve Schillewaert, 2010). Consumers who perceive brand attractiveness highly and believe in the brand's distinctiveness from other brands are more loyal customers of the brand so they are more tend to be brand advocate that providing to be suggested by Word of mouth as it never catch on such a succes in any traditional marketing channel. Based on these assumptions, the research has been based on the relationship among the emotional brand experience, brand attractiveness and brand distinctiveness as an elements of the consumer brand identification and brand advocacy variables.

Research Methodology

Today, brand research focuses on the factors that are influential in the formation of consumers who are loyal and advocate to the brand even when consumers are exposed to messages from extremely intense branding activities. In the previous theoretical researches, the positive explanatory effect of the consumer-brand

identification on the brand loyalty was determined (So, King, Hudson ve Meng, 2017). This research is based on the fact that the consumer creates an emotional connection with the brand experiences and its relation with brand attractiveness, brand distinctiveness and the brand advocacy. Relational metrics of these brand items were applied on technology brands. In order to investigate the proposed conceptual model, Turkey aims to apply on the consumer mass to reflect the users of the products of the technology brands in Istanbul province. For this reason, graduate and doctoral students who are studying at İstanbul Arel University have been reached with convenience sampling method. The research sample is considered to be suitable for research because participants are active in business life, they have monthly regular income and at the same time the graduate program on different disciplines in the field of social sciences therefore the awareness about branding is high and there are preference tolerances. The data obtained as a result of the 371 available answer sets were analyzed with SPSS 21.0 and Amos 22.0 packet programs. The affective brand experience scale was adopted from Brakus et.al (2009), the brand attractiveness and brand distinctiveness scale was adapted from Currás-Pérez, Bigné-Alcañiz, and Alvarado-Herrera (2009), and the brand advocacy scale was adopted from the study of Stokburger-Sauer, Ratneshwar and Sen (2012).

Findings

Explanatory (EFA) and confirmatory (CFA) factor analyzes were applied to test the conceptual model of the study and it was tested whether variable measures were loaded into the relevant factors. According to this, the values related to the KMO value and the factor load indicating the suitability of the research variables to the factor analysis are within the expected values. Following the factor analysis, the structural equation model is used to test hypotheses.

The results indicate that goodness-of-fit statistics were overall above the satisfactory level, (RMSEA=0,052<0,080, GFI=0,931, NFI=0,982, CFI=0,979 \geq 0,90, SRMR=0,041<0,080) (Bagozzi et.al., 1991; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et.al., 1998). Both composite reliability values and Cronbach's Alpha values are good for model reliability. The result of the hypothesis results show that there is positive effect of the affective brand experience on brand distinctiveness (B=0,757, p<,01) and the brand attractiveness (B=0,501, p<,01). So H1 and H2 are accepted. Also there is positive effect of brand attractiveness (H4, B=0,524, p<,05) and brand distinctiveness (H3, B=0,607, p<,05) on brand advocacy collectively explaining 38% of its variance. Overall, H1, H2, H3 and H4 were accepted.

Discussion and Future Research

In this research, it has been find out that there is the relationship among the the affective brand experience, brand attractiveness, brand distinctiveness and the brand advocacy of the consumers are using the technology brands. As a result, brand attractiveness and brand distinctiveness, which are influenced by affective brand experiences, are among the factors that are effective in the formation of brand advocacy which has become a necessity in brand management in the competitive world (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012). The marketing world that is focused on brand experience is not a succes of product category (shampoo, soap, shaving cream, perfume, etc.). Focusing on the consumer's experience with the brand (such as the bath experience) enables the consumer to adopt their emotions in the decision-making

process unlike product-oriented strategies based on traditional perspective of product functions(Schmitt,2011). This approach by Schmitt suggests that consumers are not only dealing with rational choice, but are also driven by emotions, and point out that an eclectic and multidirectional research approach should be used to examine experiences that focus on customer introspection. While some opinions on brand experience point to products, packaging, communication, in-store interactions, sales relationships, activities as brand experiences, some researchers indicate that only interactions, associations or event content express the brand experience(Lasalle and Britton, 2002; Kishka, 2003; Gentile v.d., 2007). Brand experience includes specific feelings, emotions, cognitions, and behavioral reactions triggered by specific stimuli within the consumer's environment, rather than general evaluative judgments about the product or brand(Arnould, Price ve Zinkhan, 2002). This study has behavioral, sensual, intellectual, and affective dimensions of brand experience. Experience beyond affective brand experience can lead to experience without any link between brand and consumer(Thomson v.d. 2005; Park ve MacInnis, 2006; Park v.d., 2010; Brakus, 2009). Brand attractiveness and brand distinctiveness which are the subject of the research, are mostly emotional weighted consumer-brand identification components, so the affective the brand experience is included in the conceptual model. In previous studies, it was determined that brand distinctiveness which is the dimension of consumer-brand identification, has a positive effect on brand involvement(Stokburger-Sauer v.d., 2012). Brand involvement is based on needs, values and interests that motivate the consumer to the brand. In this study, it has been found that consumers who have affective brand experience have higher brand distinctiveness without the necessity of the presence of these motivational items. Beyond the concept of brand differentiation, which expresses the concept that differs from the brand's competitors, brand distinctiveness includes all the activities that make the brand more memorable in all channels where communicates with the consumer. In this context, consumers who have affective brand experience with the technology brand, will have higher brand distinctiveness. The brand attractiveness was evaluated as an important factor in the brand-consumer identification in the previous studies and the findings show that consumer self-evaluations will be higher when they thought the brand is attractive(Ahearne, Bhattacharya ve Gruen, 2005; Marin ve Maya, 2013). In this research, it has been determined that consumers who have affective experience with the brand find the brand more attractive. Finally, brand advocacy has been the subject of research at the level of the consumer, both as a result of the internal marketing activities at the organizational level in the literature(Katz, 1994; Mael ve Ashforth 1992). It has been revealed that consumers who are highly aware of brand attractiveness and distinctiveness in this study are more advocate of the brands. The study is unique in terms of bringing these variables together and conducting research on technology brands. The conceptual model is been suggested that testing involving different category brands in subsequent studies. While brand experience is measured only on the affective brand experience dimension, subsequent studies can be tested with the behavioral brand experience dimension, especially because of the actional end result nature of brand distinctiveness.