



Personalities of Brands Using Social Media Efficiently

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Abstract

Brand value means combination of constituents consisting of its functional benefit, emotional benefit, personal benefit and commitment supports, and brand characteristics has an important place among these constituents. Success and role of social media in reflecting characteristics of brands is an inarguable truth. In this study, the brands in social media preferred the most by young consumers that frequently uses social media are analyzed and personality characteristics of these brands are addressed. Findings of the study contain an evaluation on personality characteristics of the top three most preferred brands as Turkcell, Turk Telekom and Mavi Jeans. In the evaluation on these 3 brands, Aaker's (1997) scale where he associates brands with human-specific personality characteristics and used as the most applied scale in assessing brand personality has been used as the assessment tool. Finding of the study present personality profiles of the most popular GSM and fashion brands of social media.

Keywords: Social Media, Brand Personality, Brand Identity

Introduction

In today's communication world where digital revolution and transformation is constantly discussed and the intensive competition each brand has to experience, one of the key aspects brands apply for differentiation is stories they attribute to their brands and characteristics embraced in structuring brand image. Brand experiences of consumers confront us directly related with personality characteristics of brands reflected on them and the brand perception. It is now expected from each brand to become perceptively different and tell its personality characteristics for communicating its story to consumers through right expressions and right channels (Uztuğ, 2008, p.115). Brand has personality because people tend to associate human attributes with brands. Brands are often consumed in a social setting where a brand's personality creates brand differences that can satisfy people's self-expression and social needs (Xu et al. 2016, p. 436). People use brands to define how young or old they are, how masculine or feminine they are, how upscale or downscale they are, and how different or similar to members of their social groups. Social media is an effective marketing communications tool to express both personality and other important reflections of consumers lifestyle.

The brand personality characteristics assisting communicating stories of brands are the subject of this study. The ways for taking place in social media as one of the most important means of communication succeeded in taking place in our lives shapes the study method (Park et al. 1986). In the study, the first considered issue is the most used social media environments. It was also expected from the participants in AB SES group to indicate the brands they like and follow the most in social media environments such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. According to the results, these brands are Turk Telekom, Mavi Jeans and Turkcell.



Theoretical Background

Definition of Brand Personality and its Importance for Consumers

It has become almost impossible in current competitive conditions to create concrete, functional and physical differences between products and concordantly, these personality characteristics of brands and all kinds of concrete and abstract elements are added to the brand value (Aaker, 2014; Keller, 1993, p.5). Despite traditional ones, brands adopting new marketing trends as the main theme of this study are the brands sweeping in the path of success which correctly follow new trends, adopt digital transformation and succeed in establish the right connection with its consumers through a right channel and right story. At this point, brand personality is in the forefront among the concepts perceived for brand value constituents such as quality, brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand identity, brand positioning and brand association. As personality is important for individual existence, it is also equally important for existence of a brand (Tosun, 2014, p.94-95; Low and Lamb, 2010). Considering brand personality with regards to consumer behavior, it is observed in the brand image or brand identity studies in the literature that it is tried to establish a parallel structural relation between the personality characteristics of people and personality characteristics of brands for assessing personality of brands. Conducted studies prove this. (Aaker and Biel, 1993; Torlak and Kurt, 2005; Aaker, 1997, Dölarslan, 2012; Barrick and Mount, 1991;).

Brand personality characteristics are attributed to brands in a similar way to the consumer experience fields and it is ensured that the experience is more delightful and catching by presenting a brand as a person. Actually, social media presents multi-directional, interactive and advantageous environments for brands to create a field of experience. We can say that consumers feel pleasure establishing connections with brands or identifying brands with their personalities and like establishing a connection between the personality of a celebrity or role model with their personalities. Brand personality can be perceived as in direct interaction with personality characteristics of a role model using that brand; it can also be perceived by indirectly associating it with physical characteristics of a product, brand name, logo, price, point of sale and advertising method (Toprak and Kjurit, 2005, p.16). Concordantly, we see that the studies conducting brand personality analysis and scales developed for assessing brand personality have also been established based on personality characteristics of people.

Social Media and Its Role and Importance for Brand Personality

Today, the channel which can establish the strongest and the easiest bond between a brand and its target group is social media. Social media is a place where people exist in accordance with their fields of interest and expectations and reflect their own tastes, requests, ideas and objections. As brand personality makes sense for a non-living thing, it is quite important among all things we say (Aaker, 1991). Before, presenting brands in social media, brand personalities should be studied. Because, social media does not go through a single channel and content management is needed. While, conducting personality studies, you should think holistically, include interactive design and design innovatively in accordance with marketing trends. In this sense, the thing to be done by brands is to establish the right profile in social media, pay attention to cover photos, videos and language and give fast responses to comments by considering crisis management. In addition to this, following current developments and implementing a successful content management focusing on interactive designs are also important (Yener, 2013, p.90-91).

As mentioned by Uğur Batı, now there are several brand trends and even the eight of them is "Humanistic brands trend". (2015, p. 107-108.). Humanistic brands trend can be considered as one of the important marketing trends describing humanistic characteristics provided for brands by brand personality characteristics. Social media, internet and other digital environments confront us as means of communication expanding their domains fast in the entire advertisement sector and communication field



and assist in establishing bonds between target groups and brands within the context of "humanistic trends". In their brand structuring processes, the brands of our age frequently include social media contents and digital designs to become a love brand in Brandlove rank. (Bati, 2015, p.352). Moreover, several sector professionals indicate the digital transformation of advertising and recent studies on advertising draw attention to significance of this issue and even its efficiency as much as traditional advertising channels (also some opinions on much higher efficiency) through digital data. In this study, brand personalities of some of the most used brands of digital environments qualified as successful in social media are evaluated and the human characteristics used by these brands with the most popular media contents to structure their identities are seen.

Method of the Study

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to describe the personality characteristics of the brands considered by the young population between 18-25 ages living in Istanbul as the most efficient brands in using social media through the Brand personality aspects scale developed by Aaker. Answers for the following questions were searched for fulfilling this purpose;

- What are the SES group and demographic characteristics of participants of the study?
- What are the mostly preferred social media environments of the participants?
- What are the first three brands considered successful in social media by the participants?
- What is the rank by considering the personality characteristics of these 3 brands?
- Is there any meaningful gender-based difference in brand personality evaluations?

Research Model and Data Collection Process

This study is a qualitative research in survey model. Survey method was used as the data collection tool. The survey is a qualitative research technique where opinions, recommendations and experience of participants are shared on a particular subject. The first 7 questions in the survey were asked for determining the demographical and socio-economical statuses of the participants. In the 7th question, all social media websites were listed and it was asked if they use them or not. In the 8th question, the brands they follow in social media were asked. In the 9th question, personality characteristics identified in brand personality scale of Aaker were questioned by means of 5-point likert scale (Barrick and Mount, 1991). From this scale, 36 personality characteristics suitable for Turkish brands were included in the survey. The brand personality scale used in this study consists of 5 main aspects in the literature and sub-factors used for assessing these main aspects. These five main aspects are Sincerity, Enthusiasm, Sufficiency, Versatility and Fierceness. These characteristics were tested for assessing these aspects (cited in Özgüven and Karataş, 2010, p.144).

Sincerity:

Humble: Family oriented, small town-dweller, affordable price

Honest: Sincere, real, ethical, thoughtful, compassionate

Dignified: Original, unique, unageing, classic, old-fashioned

Cheerful: Emotional, friendly, sympathetic, happy

Enthusiasm:

Brave: trend, thrilling, extraordinary, ostentatious, provocative

Alive: Dashy, young, lively, sociable, adventurous

Huge Imagination: Unique, humorous, surprising, artistic, entertaining

Current: Independent, modern, innovative, aggressive

Sufficiency:

Reliable: Hard-working, secure, efficient, trustworthy, attentive



Smart: Technical, corporate, serious
Successful: Leader, confident, influential

Versatility:

Superclass: Ravishing, handsome, assertive, versatile
Charming: Feminine, smooth, sexy, kind

Fierceness:

Suitable for outdoors: Manly, western, vigorous, athletic
Tough: Strong, powerful, intelligent

Survey has been conducted by face-to-face interview technique. As it takes much time and expensive, 150 survey participants were determined by random sampling method from various departments of Uskudar University and selected from young people volunteered in participating the survey.

Validity and Reliability of the Study

Scale validity related with the validity of the survey is ensured as it is a survey used as a grand personality assessment tool developed by David Aaker in 1997 and used in several other studies. Survey data was entered into the SPSS package software and frequency analyses were conducted. Reliability analyses were conducted for 36 factors of each brand. Considering the scale reliability, Cronbach Alpha values were found 0.921 for Turkcell, 0.88 for Mavi Jeans and 0.906 for Turk Telekom and these values show that the scale is reliable.

Findings and Comments

Demographic Findings

According to the survey results, 50% of participants are female and 50% are male. The age range is in between 18 and 25. Number of family members is 4 with the highest 70%. Education level of young participants is at 80.7% graduate and 18.7% undergraduate.

Socio-Economic Findings

According to survey results, 56% of householders of participants have graduate level education while 39% high-school level education. 60% of householders of participants are salaried employees and 33% have their own businesses. Considering total income of families of survey participants, it is seen 26% is around 2300-3300; 49.3% 3300-4300 and 24.7% higher than 4300 Turkish Liras. According to this, SES distribution is as in Chart 4 (https://www.slideshare.net/hmehme/ses-2012?next_slideshow=1).

Chart 1 Social Economic Class

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A	39	26,0	26,0	26,0
	B	111	74,0	74,0	100,0
	Total	150	100,0	100,0	

Social Media Usage

The participants were asked about the social media environments they use the most. According to their answers; Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Foursquare took the top 5 in the list.



Chart 2 Instagram Usage

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	YES	141	94,0	94,0	94,0
	NO	9	6,0	6,0	100,0
	Total	150	100,0	100,0	

Chart 3 Facebook Usage

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	YES	136	90,7	90,7	90,7
	NO	14	9,3	9,3	100,0
	Total	150	100,0	100,0	

Chart 4 Twitter Usage

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	YES	109	72,7	72,7	72,7
	NO	41	27,3	27,3	100,0
	Total	150	100,0	100,0	

Chart 5 YouTube Usage

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	YES	141	94,0	94,0	94,0
	NO	9	6,0	6,0	100,0
	Total	150	100,0	100,0	

Chart 6 Foursquare Usage

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	YES	60	40,0	40,0	40,0
	NO	90	60,0	60,0	100,0
	Total	150	100,0	100,0	

3 Brands Followed the Most in Social Media

According to survey results, 129 from 150 participants follow Mavi Jeans brand with 86%, 93 participants follow Turk Telekom - Avea brand with 62% and 94 participants follow Turkcell brand with 62.7%.



Personality Analyses of the First 3 Brands

Turkcell Brand Personality Analyses Frequency Table (First 10)

Answers	Percentages
A Hard Working Brand	82,67%
A Smart Brand	82%
A Successful Brand	80%
A Merry Brand	78%
A Modernistic Brand	77,34%
A Self-Confident Brand	76,67%
A Free Brand	74,67%
A Dynamic Brand	71,34%
A Modern Brand	72%
A Well Apparent Brand	71,34%

Turk Telekom Personality Analyses Frequency Table (First 10)

Answers	Percentages
A Smart Brand	75,34%
A Successful Brand	74,67%
A Hard Working Brand	73,34%
A Merry Brand	72%
A Self-Confident Brand	70,67%
A Well Apparent Brand	69,34%
A Family Oriented Brand	68,67%
A Modernistic Brand	66,67%
A Virtuous Brand	66%
A Brave Brand	65,34%

Mavi-Jeans Personality Analyses Frequency Table (First 10)

Answers	Percentages
A Successful Brand	85,34%
A Well Apparent Brand	84,67%
A Smart Brand	84,67%
An Elegant Brand	84%
A Free Brand	84%
A Merry Brand	81,34%
A Creative Brand	81,34%
A Hard Working Brand	81,34%
A Modern Brand	80%
A Western Brand	79,34%

According to survey findings and considering percentages of 3 brands; Turkcell was assessed by 18-25 age AB SES group participants respectively as hard working, smart and successful; Turk Telekom respectively as smart, successful and hard-working and Mavi Jeans respectively as successful, well apparent and smart.

Gender-Based Evaluation of Personality Analyses



		An Old Fashion Brand	A Merry Brand	A Dynamic Brand	A Hard Working Brand	A Young Brand	A Smart Brand
Gender	Pearson Correlation	,179*	-,182*	-,178*	-,239**	-,198*	-,176*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,028	,026	,029	,003	,016	,031
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	17,000	-12,000	-11,000	-15,500	-13,047	-9,500
	Covariance	,114	-,081	-,074	-,104	-,088	-,064
	N	150	150	150	150	149	150
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).							
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							

According to the analysis based on the survey, Mavi-Jeans brand shows a positive relation ($p=0,028 < 0,05$) at 0.05 significance level in likert scale questions for the answer of "An Out of Fashion Brand". It shows a negative relation at 0.05 significance level for the answers of "A Good-Humored Brand", "A Lively/Cheerful Brand", "A Young Brand" and "A Smart Brand". It shows a negative relation at 0.01 significance level ($p = 0,003 < 0,01$) for the answer of "A Hard-Working Brand". It shows a positive relation at 0.179 significance level for the answer of An Old Fashion Brand, 0.182 for the answer of Good-Humored Brand, 0.178 for the answer of A Lively/Cheerful Brand, 0.239 for the answer of A Hardworking Brand 0.198 for the answer of A Young Brand and a negative relation at 0.176 significance level for the answer of A Smart Brand.

Results and Conclusion

Brand value is determined in accordance with its personality and bond established with its consumers. Brand value is determined by characteristics such as identity and personality and this makes it the first remembered brand in retrieval process. Brand personality has been evaluated in several studies based on several cultural elements. In this study, the evaluation is conducted based on Turkish culture by considering the first most preferred 3 brands in Social Media.

The study results indicate that if the personality analyses of the brands active in social media and considered successful with regards to their contents is taken into consideration, they generally show a successful identity and efficient stand as "hardworking", "smart" and "good-looking". Sometimes, in this age of digital transformation where borders between the virtual and real world become vague, showing such a successful personality characteristic in social media is very important for brands and considering the competitive conditions, it becomes an extremely significant for creating difference by becoming distinguished among others. These results also show that a consistent and rich content, an attractive design and an efficient social media language are necessary for brands to continue their existence and success in social media environment. Furthermore, it should be noted that the brands considered successful in digital environment are recognized as long as they are "good looking", "smart" and "creative".

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