

Impact of Brand Experience Built by GSM Operators in Turkey on Young Consumers' Brand Loyalty

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Abstract

The concept of brand loyalty is a subject of intense interest in the marketing literature. The aim of this study is to determine whether the consumers' brand experience in GSM sector has an impact on their brand loyalty. The study consists of two main parts. In the literature section, which attempted to constitute the conceptual framework, the definitions of brand experience and brand loyalty are made and the importance of brand loyalty for businesses are emphasized. The hypotheses in order to test the effects of the factors of which brand experience is comprised within the conceptual framework on brand loyalty are analyzed by using a sample consisting of 446 participants who have had experiences with GSM operators. The study results reveal that emotional, sensorial, cognitive and behavioral consumer experiences of GSM operators have significant impacts on both cognitive and emotional brand loyalty. It is seen that emotional, sensorial, cognitive and behavioral consumer experiences are effective on cognitive consumer loyalty; while emotional experiences have no statistically significant impact on behavioral loyalty. The conclusion section of the study presents proposals for business executives, marketers and marketing researchers along with the evaluation of mentioned impacts.

Key Words: Brand Experience, Brand Loyalty, Young Consumers', GSM Operators, Turkey.

Introduction

Marketing academicians and executives who settled for creating and managing demand (Cemalcılar, 1999), however adopted the classical marketing discipline that defines consumers as rational and benefit-oriented individuals have focused on a narrow competition throughout the 20th century (Schmitt, 1999; Babacan and Onat, 2002; Torlak, 2008). Schmitt (2008), unlike the conventional marketing that do not fully understand consumers, states that experiential marketing based on creating valued customer experience examines social behaviors of the individuals as well as consumer psychology (Schmitt, 2008). Consumers not only expect that their needs and desires are met, but also hope for a pleasant consumption (Walls et al., 2011; Kabadayi and Alan, 2014). Today, many firms embrace a product-oriented approach rather than consumer-oriented one (Carbone, 1998, p. 62). Marketing has evolved from a production-oriented into a consumer-oriented concept. Commodity which is important in production-oriented marketing approach was replaced with experience in consumer-oriented marketing approach. Consumers acquire the tendency to consume a product or service not just because of advantages they provided, but also due to pleasant experiences in left in their memories (Pine and Gillmore, 1999; Baudrillard 1998; Aykaç and Kervenoael,

2008). The way experiences create unique and memorable feelings by taking personal characteristics of consumers into account serves well to differentiate it from three economic factors (commodity, product, service) and to create differences compared to its competitors (Oh et al., 2007).

Since experiential marketing has no clear definition to be accepted by everyone yet, it relates to many relevant concepts, such as user experience, product experience, brand experience, customer experience, experience-driven design, experiential marketing, experience economy, equivalent experience, etc. Although the names of the concepts vary, it would be possible to discover common meanings when examined separately. In order to comprehend and to clarify the concept of experience that attains an important place in marketing, many marketing academicians have studies on the topic (Kabadayı and Alan, 2014; Özgören, 2013; Woodruffe-Burton, Wakenshaw, 2011; Nusair, Parsa, 2011; Luo et al., 2010; Sheu et al, 2009; Yuan, Wu, 2008; Günay, 2008a,b; Yalçın, Çobanoğlu and Erdoğan, 2008; Aykaç and Kervenoael, 2008; Mossberg, 2007; Oh et al., 2007; Altunışık, 2007; Kırım, 2006; Quan and Wang, 2004; Torlak, 2004; Pine, 2002; Berry et al., 2002; Mathwick et al., 2001; Schmitt, 1999; Gilmore, Pine and Gilmore, 1999; Pine and Gilmore, 1998, 1999; O'Sullivan and Spangler, 1998; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Bitner, 1992; Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982). Deneyimsel tüketimin kuramcılarına (Pine ve Gilmore 2001; Schmitt, 1999) göre, deneyim; yaşanılan, maruz kalınan ve karşılaşılan şeylerin sonucunda oluşmaktadır ve pazarlama tüketicileri için deneyimler yaratmayı amaçlamalıdır (Odabaşı, 2007). According to experiential consumption theorists (Pine and Gilmore, 2001; Schmitt, 1999), experience is focused on consumer experiences which occur as a result of encountering, undergoing or living through things (Odabaşı, 2007). All companies offer products or services, but to ensure that the consumers being accompanied by an experience that cannot be deleted from their memory is the hardest part of this business (Kotler, 2005: 30).

In matter of experience creation, businesses primarily need to determine what consumers really want and what kind of sacrifices they endure. In this respect, it is thought that making surprises that consumers never expected and being able make them happy in exchange for the sacrifices they endured could be decisive in businesses' success in the global marketplace (Songur et al, 2012; Schmitt, 1999). Experiential marketing is an important marketing approach which can be utilized for attracting new consumers to the brand while keeping the existing customers at hand by staging memorable experiences for every product they purchase (Yelka, 2000; Gortes, 2004; Uygur and Doğan, 2013). Therefore, any company considering the future may be able to shift the strategic resources at hand toward managing consumer experiences to create value for themselves and thus they will also be able to claim higher values from the consumers (Özgören 2013; Raghunathan, 2008; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004, p.12). According to Schmitt, the consumers of the company which can stage experience will be loyal to the company and they may also be willing to pay a high value for this experience (Schmitt, 1999). Turkcell, Vodafone, Turk Telekom and totally 44 small-sized operators (telkoder.org.tr, 03/21/2016; tr.wikipedia.org; 03.11.2016) have increased the level of competition in the market and GSM operatorship has become one of the most important sectors in Turkey. The importance of brand loyalty begins to increase day by day in GSM operator sector where an intense competition is being experienced (Türker ve Türker, 2013). Recent developments in information and communication technology, increased consumer welfare and information, changes in consumer demand, increased competition in the services sector, as well as developments in communication intertwined with entertainment have led to recognition of experience in the GSM sector (Knutson et al., 2006; Pine and Gilmore, 1998; Schmitt, 1999b; Brakus et al., 2009). Smart mobile phones developed by technology companies have brought forth numerous GSM operators to enter into human life even more than ever. Many firms tend to create more value through a variety of experiences with the instrument of smart mobile phones.

In order to develop loyal consumers, it is crucial to design a memorable brand experience by fostering an increased sense of authenticity and individuality. Brand experience which can be built on the long-term is an ongoing experience set that commences before the purchasing process to last afterwards and its effect remains active for years to come. Brand experience is interpreted in a conceptual way as sensorial,

emotional, cognitive and behavioral attitudes reminded by brand-related stimuli such as identity, packaging, communications and environments. It is not possible to create consumer loyalty by competing with standard products and services. Brand experience directly affects the consumer satisfaction and consumer loyalty, while it has rather indirect impacts on the brand identity (Brakus, Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2009). Under these conditions, the GSM operators are obligated to provide their prospective customers with memorable brand experiences in order to retain them and to develop customer loyalty (Türker and Türker, 2013). Hence, this study will seek to answer to the question: "Have brand experiences created by GSM operators in Turkey any impact on brand loyalty of the users?"

Brand Experience

Experiential Marketing concept was first coined by Pine and Gilmore in their study entitled "Welcome to the Experience Economy" published in 1998 and then by Schmitt in his study entitled "Experiential Marketing" published in 1999. The concept attracted intense interest of many academicians and practitioners (Uygur and Doğan, 2013). Due to the lack of traditional utility and benefits of marketing in meeting the needs of the consumer, marketing and consumer research literature has shifted to studies addressing consumer experience and hedonistic consumption throughout the last 30 years (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982; Schmitt, 1999a; Kabadayı and Alan, 2014). Schmitt (1999) claimed that an opposing view is brought in the traditional marketing literature along with a new marketing approach named "Experiential Marketing". The study also states that the traditional marketing tends to act in accordance with the assumption on which the consumers make rational decisions by comparing prices of the products of their choice with benefits of which they are aware (Odabaşı, 2007).

The experiential marketers, on the other hand, describe the consumer as rational and emotional individuals who are primarily preoccupied by exhilarating experiences (Schmitt, 2005). The way how consumers have experiences on either a brand offering them a lifestyle as a part of their identities or a service with which they are provided and how well those experiences would yield benefits in terms of competition is the cornerstone of brand experience. For instance, the term brand experience also stands for the experience of different products belong to the brand. Many different factors, such as perception of the brand, how it gets a place in people's lives and how the users of the brand feel they belong to a group shape the brand experience. "Brand experience includes not only the interaction with the brand products but also covers interaction with products and services. Brand experience is a broader concept of user experience" (Effie et al., 2009). Brand experience is one of the most important concepts that Schmitt (1999) introduced to the experiential marketing literature (Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2013). Brakus et al. (2009: 53) conceptualized brand experience as "subjective, internal consumer responses (senses, emotions, and cognitions) and behavioral responses caused by brand-related stimuli that are parts of the brand's design, identity, packaging, brand communication and surroundings." (Owren, 2014; Aşkın and İpek, 2016).

Today, the most of the studies performed about experience tend to focus on utilitarian product features and experience of the product category rather than experience provided by the brand. Consumers are exposed to utilitarian product features whenever they initiate research, go shopping or use the brand. However, they will also be addressed by a variety of stimuli such as colors (Bellizzi and Hite 1992; Gorn et al., 1997; Meyers-Levy and Peracchio 1995), shapes (Veryzer's and Hutchinson, 1998), fonts, background design elements (Mandel and Johnson 2002), slogans, mascots and trademark characters (Keller 1987) that define the brand. Visual parts of the brand such as design and identity of the brand (name, logo, tag), packaging and marketing communications (advertising, brochures, website) and the environment would also contribute to the marketing and sale of the brand. Subjective and internal consumer responses (emotional, sensory and cognitive) associated with the brand are the elements used to conceptualize the brand experience (Brakus et al., 2009). The experiential marketing concept, that has been used as a strategic weapon to create competitive advantages since it was introduced to the literature by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), is also discussed in the study of Pine and Gilmore (2008) for the first time by putting forward the "experiential aspects of consumption". By offering unique experiences to consumers,

experiential marketing is underlined to be an effective strategy that can be used to create a competitive advantage in the market (Pine and Gilmore, 1998: 98). It is proven by academic studies that brand experience which was introduced to the literature immediately after experiential marketing concept plays an important role in creating consumer satisfaction.

Since most of the performed studies on brand experience analyze the relationship among brand experience, consumer loyalty and consumer satisfaction through strategic modules of brand experience, these modules are given a great emphasis in the field of experiential marketing (Brakus et al., 2009; Chang and Chieng, 2006; Nadiri and Günay 2013; Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010). Today, consumers not only want to purchase goods and services to satisfy their needs and desires but they also want to acquire the emotional experience that occurs in the buying process (Morrison & Greene, 2007; Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010; Walter, 2013). Consumers prefer to buy the Starbucks experience by paying twice as much instead of consuming coffee products in a more traditional cafe (Walter, 2013). How the consumer experience towards a brand is formed? How brand experience is measured? Does brand experience affect consumer behavior? Does brand experience have an impact on consumer loyalty? Marketers and practitioners look for answers to these questions.

Brand Loyalty

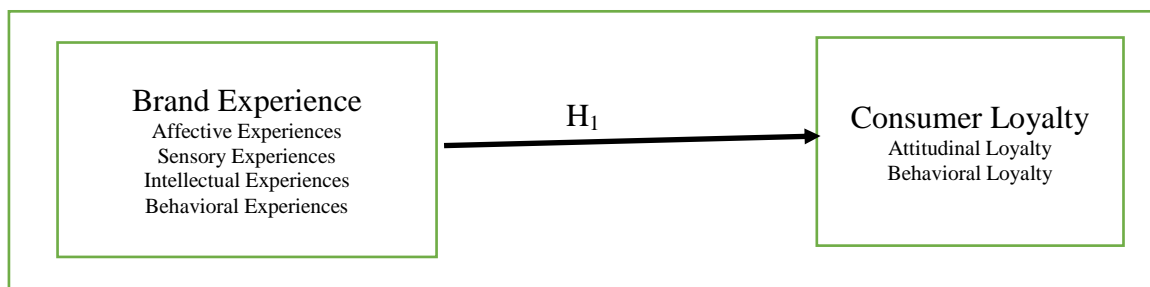
Every business wants to create loyal consumers to their brand. In this respect, a stability would be reached to protect the existing market share (Yalçın and Ene, 2013). Companies aim to reveal the emotions that can perpetuate the brand by sorting all kinds of contact points where the consumers are interacted in order to create a holistic consumer experience and to strengthen brand loyalty. Each interaction is to communicate with the user, every detail, every aspect of marketing, images, icons, layout, or button that the user is confronted with plays an important role in the connotation and the judgment about the company. Marc Gobe (2010) discussed the emotional economy, at this point, in which the people are more interacted with the brand. Leadership brands do connect best through the heart, and yet they are supported with the mind. Emotional brands do not only support who we really are, but they also permit the physical transformation into what we desire to be (Kathman, 2010). Oliver (1997) described the loyalty as consumers' consistent willingness to purchase goods and services without changing their purchasing decisions in spite of external factors (Kwong and Candinegara, 2014). Another definition of consumer loyalty merely defines loyalty as "attitude and behavior" (Rai and Medha, 2013).

Brand loyalty is an indication clearly linked to future profits of the brand equity (Aaker, 2009). Brand loyalty is defined by Dick and Basu (1994) as the strength of the relationship between an individual's relative attitude and continuous patronage (Kim, Lee and Suh, 2015). Brand loyalty shows the consumers' degree of passion and devotion to the brand (Aaker, 1991). In this respect, a brand provides its consumer with noticeable, distinctive features or brand value that would steer the consumer's preference towards itself and it can create a powerful brand with loyal consumers only if it relates brand experience with high level of satisfaction (Elden, 2009). One of the goals the companies want to reach along with experiential marketing is to build brand loyalty in consumers with the help of special and unforgettable experiences (Tosun and Elmasoğlu, 2015; Aşkın and İpek, 2016). Businesses will be able to survive as long as they can satisfy their consumers. Satisfaction is considered a central concept of the marketing literature by Oliver (1997), as well as it is regarded as an antecedent of for the loyalty (Grah and Tominc, 2015; Oliver, 1999). Even though not every satisfied customer would be a loyal customer, customer satisfaction is an increasing factor of consumer loyalty (Türker and Türker, 2013). According to Chitty, Ward, and Chua (2007), brand loyalty can be examined from two main perspectives, such as "attitudinal and behavioral" (Jacoby and Chestnut, 1978; Yalçın and Ene, 2013; Rai and Medha, 2013; Kim, Lee and Suh, 2015). These two perspectives can be used separately to measure consumer loyalty, as well as being used in combination for mixed studies encountered in the literature (Aşkın and İpek, 2016).

Behavioral loyalty refers to strong repeat-purchasing trends, while attitudinal loyalty indicates the emotional and psychological aspects of loyalty (Donnelly, 2009). Behavioral perspective is all about the commitment to purchase. In other words, purchasing behavior is subject to repeat and it can be based on the consumer's past experiences with the brand. According to the perspective which examines loyalty in terms of its behavioral dimension, brand loyalty represents "the frequency of consumers purchase, the amount of purchase or repetitive purchasing behavior". The content of attitudinal perspective is consisted of commitment, trust, and emotion. The attitudinal perspective of brand loyalty evolves in the course of "the intention of purchasing, the preference of company as primary choice, the resistance against the better alternatives, the willingness to pay higher or additional fees for products or services, and the willingness to recommend". The mixed perspective also examines in terms of "the consumers' positive attitude toward the brand as well as their repetitive purchasing behaviors". Therefore, the notion that either behavioral or attitudinal approach alone is insufficient to disclose the brand loyalty and the necessity to evaluate both approaches are also mentioned frequently in the literature.

Relationship Between the Experience and Brand Loyalty

Service experience occurs whenever the consumers interact with a store's physical environment, its staff, and its policies and practices (Hui and Bateson 1991; Kerin, Jain, and Howard 2002). Thus, researchers can examine how the variables such as store atmosphere and sales staff would have an impact on experience (Arnold et al., 2005; Boulding et al., 1993; Jones, 1999; Ofir and Simonson, 2007). There are many studies on the interaction between the consumers and sales staff and how that interaction would guide the consumers' emotions and attitudes towards the brand (Grace and O'Cass, 2004). The experience is unveiled when the consumers begin to consume the products. Consumer experience is multi-dimensional and its hedonic dimensions include feelings, fantasies, and entertainment (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). Many research studies on consumer experience have annotated hedonic purposes that occurred during and after consumption (Arnould and Price, 1993; Celsi, Rose, and Leigh, 1993; Holt, 1995; Joy and Sherry, 2003). In summary, experiences can be created in a wide variety of settings. Many experiences occur whenever consumers go shopping, make purchases and begin to consume the products. Experiences may also occur whenever consumers are exposed to marketing communications including media commercials and the Internet websites. It is possible to access a large number of studies that investigated the possible impact of the brand experience on the brand loyalty in the literature (Brakus et al., 2009; Chang and Chieng, 2006; Ramesesh and Stein, 2014). In those studies, it is emphasized that the brand experience would contribute to long-term relationships which can be established among the brands and the consumers (Chang Chieng, 2006) and it would have a positive effect on both attitudinal and behavioral brand loyalty perspectives (Ramesesh and Stein, 2014). Upon examining the studies which addressed to subdimensions of the brand experience separately, consumer experiences are seen to be highly effective in developing brand loyalty (Nysve et al., 2013; Nysve and Pedersen, 2014). However, there have been some other studies which revealed that the brand experience has also indirect effects as well as indirect impacts on loyalty (Aşkın and İpek, 2016; Kim, Lee and Suh, 2015; Ding and Tseng, 2015; Francisco-Maffezzolli et al., 2014). Due to this fact, the model and hypothesis of the study is as follows:



H1: The brand experience has a positive impact on the brand loyalty.

Methodology

Objective

The widespread use of mobile phones along with rapid increase in the number of GSM operators in Turkey has demonstrated the necessity for measuring the brand loyalty in this area. This study aims to measure the effect of brand experience which is being developed by the leading GSM operators operating in Turkey, namely; Turkcell, the Turkish Telecom and Vodafone, on brand loyalty.

Survey Design

Upon the assumption that mobile phones are being used more consciously by especially the younger population, university students have been identified as the main body of research. The study is conducted in November 2015 by utilizing a face-to-face survey technique applied to the undergraduate and graduate students of Nigde University. The survey questions are prepared by making use of the relevant literature. In this context, first of all, a scale for determining brand loyalty component developed by Şimşek and Noyan (2009), Back and Parks (2003), and Mano and Oliver (1993) have been adapted for this study. In order to measure the brand experience, on the other hand, the brand experience scale developed by Brakus et al. (2009) with 4 dimensions and 12 variables is used. Both are prepared on basis of 5-point Likert scale (1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neutral, 4- agree, 5- strongly agree). The survey consists of three parts; the brand experience scale used in the first part and the brand loyalty scale is used in the second part. In the last part, questions related to demographic characteristics of the respondents as well as their GSM operators are given.

Sample and Data Collection

After the decision that research study to be performed in the GSM sector is made, Nigde University students who ever had a brand experience with at least one of the three leading GSM operators mentioned above are defined as the target audience. Depending on duration of the research its budget constraints, convenience sampling has been identified as the sampling method of the research.

Research data were collected by face-to-face survey technique in November 2015. Snowball non-random sampling is preferred as the method to be applied in the survey. Initially, 500 survey questionnaires are filled out with this method, but following the elimination of questionnaire forms with missing data, only 446 survey questionnaires are found to be suitable for further analysis.

The response rate is 89.2% and this figure is thought to have sufficient power to represent the statistical population. Demographic breakdown of the sample categorized by gender indicates that the respondents of either gender are almost homogeneously dispersed and 53.6% of the sample is consisted of females. 84.1% of the study sample is constituted by the consumers under 25 years old. In respect to income level of the respondents, it is seen that 45.3% of them have a monthly income of ₺1500 or less. The percentage distribution of GSM operators with which the respondent students have had brand experiences are 44.5%, 29.6%, and 25.6% for Turkcell, Turk Telekom and Vodafone, respectively.

Analysis and Findings

The two different scales used in this study are considered in terms of their reliability and then an exploratory factor analysis is performed for the brand experience and brand loyalty scales. Reliability and validity of the test results for the scales used within the context of in the research are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Exploratory Factor Analysis:
Revealed Brand Experience Dimensions and Reliability Test Results

Factor	Std. Factor Load	Alpha	AVE	Mean	Std. Dev.
Brand Experience		0,85	0,72		
<i>Sensory Experience</i>	0,85			3,7	1.23
	0,80			3,84	1.26
	0,76			4,43	1.33
<i>Affective Experience</i>	0,82			3,29	1.24
	0,80			3,65	1.22
	0,77			3,66	1.33
<i>Intellectual Experience</i>	0,82			4,43	1.36
	0,78			3,35	1.27
	0,74			3,03	1.19
<i>Behavioral Experience</i>	0,80			3,59	1.33
	0,78			4,15	1.30
	0,72			4,71	1.33
Brand Loyalty		0,957	0,56		
<i>Attitudinal Loyalty</i>	0,80			3,91	1.30
	0,78			3,74	1.39
	0,74			3,14	1.24
	0,71			3,53	1.23
	0,67			3,43	1.20
<i>Behavioral Loyalty</i>	0,80			3,84	1.26
	0,72			4,25	1.19
	0,68			3,66	1.33
	0,55			4,43	1.36

The reliability of the brand experience scale (with an average of 3.82) used in the study is estimated as 0.85. The reliability analysis results for the scale used in the study is evaluated in commensurate with Cronbach's Alpha coefficient showing the internal consistency of the variables. In cases where the Cronbach's alpha coefficient (which ranges from 0 to 1) of 0.60 or less, the results for the reliability of internal consistency is not satisfactory. In general, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient value of 0.7 is accepted as the lower limit of acceptability. As the number of the variables increases, the reliability of the scale also increases since the correlation coefficient between these variables is higher (Hair et al., 1998). Therefore, the reliability of the study that aims to measure the brand experience appears to be sufficient. The reliability of the scale used to measure behavioral intentions (with an average of 3.77) is calculated as 0.825.

In addition, the variance values described in both scales have been calculated as 0.72 and 0.56 which exceeds the acceptable lower limit of 0.70 for social sciences (Nunnally, 1978). In the first analysis, the expressions which assumed low factor loadings are excluded from the model in accordance with the recommendations of Hair et al. (2011; 2014, 102). As a result, recommended limit for factor loading of 0.60 is exceeded for all statements and it is shown in the table. As a result of exploratory factor analysis, one of the variables that make up the emotional loyalty scale (*I feel more connected to GSM operator "X" than other operators.*) is excluded from the study due to having a factor loading less than 0.50. In the study, the regression analysis is utilized in order to estimate the impact of the consumers' brand experiences with GSM operators on their loyalty. The effects of brand experience that consumers have with GSM operators on their cognitive and behavioral loyalty are examined. Upon examining the analysis results, the correlation coefficients of emotional, sensory, intellectual and behavioral experience with cognitive loyalty and with behavioral loyalty are estimated as 0.742 and 0.937, respectively. (Since such high level of correlation

coefficient with behavioral loyalty would indicate a multicollinearity problem, CI is checked along with VIF and Tolerance values. For either of those three values, no multi-linearity is found). Both correlation coefficients indicate the presence of a strong relationship between experience and loyalty. According to the coefficients of determination; emotional, sensory, intellectual and behavioral experience has explanatory power of consumer's cognitive loyalty and behavioral loyalty at 0.55% and at 0.877%, respectively. The first stage of hypothesis is fulfilled, in other words, there is an impact on consumer loyalty. But, in order to figure out whether this impact is significant, it is mandatory to observe the ANOVA table. The ANOVA tables of both scales show that these effects are also significant. The standardized factor loadings (β) used to estimate the effects of consumer brand experiences with GSM operators on cognitive and behavioral loyalty, and their significance levels (p) indicate that H1 hypothesis claiming a significant interaction between brand experience and loyalty has been accepted. Making probabilistic estimates and future projections is also one of the goals of the regression analysis. Thus, a mathematical regression model should be realized as follows:

$$\text{Attitudinal Loyalty} = 7.065 + 0.607 (\text{Affective Experience}) + 0.330 (\text{Sensory Experience}) + 0.258 (\text{Intellectual Experience}) + 0.087 (\text{Behavioral Experience})$$

$$\text{Behavioral Loyalty} = -5.337 + 0.066 (\text{Sensory experience}) + 0.158 (\text{Intellectual Experience}) + 0.921 (\text{Behavioral Experience})$$

It would be possible to estimate the consumer's attitudinal and behavioral loyalty, once any information about the mathematical regression model and its dimensions is gathered. As far as the beta coefficients are considered, t statistics of affective experience is found to be insignificant. Likewise, the beta coefficients indicate that the affective experience has the highest impact on attitudinal loyalty compared with other experience dimensions, while the behavioral experience has very strong effects of on the behavioral loyalty.

Conclusion

Today, the majority of the studies on experience tend to focus on utilitarian product features and experience of the product category rather than brand experience. The consumers are exposed to utilitarian product features as soon as they begin to research, go out shopping or use the brand. However, they also get involved with a variety of brand-related stimuli, such as colors defining the brand (Bellizzi and Hite, 1992; Gorn et al., 1997; Meyers-Levy and Peracchio, 1995), shapes (Veryzer and Hutchinson, 1998), fonts, background design elements (Mandel and Johnson, 2002), slogan, mascot and trademark characters (Keller 1987). This study on brand loyalty is of the first order of importance due to the fact that it points out the concepts on which businesses need to concentrate in creating brand loyalty. Nonetheless, the scope of the study is limited by the nature of the survey data collected from university students who have consumer experiences with GSM sector. It is also crucial to examine the factors that may affect brand loyalty trends for other segments of the community beside university students.

Furthermore, adaptation of the study topic to different sectors with the prediction that it would lead to different behavioral impacts is another point of importance for brand loyalty. Design and identity of the brand (name, logo, tag), packaging and marketing communications (advertising, brochures, website) and tangible parts such as the environment would contribute to sales and marketing of brands. In all of those details, consumers are directed not only to make rational decisions but also to make emotional ones. In many studies on this subject verify it. Those studies construct a basis for the performance of this study aiming to investigate the brand experience impacts on brand loyalty. The aim of this study is to examine whether the brand experiences have effects on brand loyalty. To become a global brand; it is crucial to develop great brand experience by entering the consumers' world of emotions. Brand experience, which can be built in the long-term and begins long before the purchasing process to last until the end, is an experience set and its effects would continue for many years. The brand experience serves as a reminder of

the brand as a sensory, emotional, cognitive and behavioral attitude with the help of various stimuli such as, identity, packaging, communications and the environment. Companies aim to reveal the brand-related emotions that can be experienced in the best way possible in order to create a holistic consumer experience and to strengthen brand loyalty brand by sorting all kinds of point of interaction with the consumer (Arnould and Price, 1993; Celsi, Rose, and Leigh, 1993; Holt, 1995; Joy and Sherry, 2003). Experiences can also occur indirectly when the consumers are exposed to marketing communications, including advertising and websites. Each and every interaction is to communicate with the user; every detail, every aspect of marketing, images, icons, layout, or button plays an important role in the association that the user is confronted about the company. It is not possible to create customer loyalty by competing with standard products and services. It is a well-known fact that the brand experience directly affects the consumer satisfaction and brand loyalty. Sensory experience is the creation of stimulating sensory experiences for the consumer's senses of hearing, sight, touch, taste. In this way, products can be differentiated by added values (such as aesthetics or excitement) against their competitors. Emotional experience is the creation efforts burdened by the companies in order to move the emotions of consumers.

The creation of emotions necessitates determination of the stimulus to be used to develop an emotion along with empathy with the consumer. In the intellectual experience, providing the consumers with their cognitive and problem-solving experiences for brands and products is essential. With behavioral experience, interactions aiming at physical behavior of the consumers and lifestyles are offered (Kabadayi and Alan, 2014). The findings of the study are expected to provide important contributions to managers in the GSM sector. According to the results of the study, experiences with the brand are thought to lead to strengthening of emotions that consumers felt towards the GSM operators. In addition, GSM operators may develop strategies by taking the sub-components of brand experience into account in order to provide the consumers with different experiences. The study statistically supports the positive relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty.

However, they will also be addressed by a variety of stimuli such as colors, shapes, fonts, background design elements, slogans, mascots and trademark characters that define the brand. Visual parts of the brand such as design and identity of the brand (name, logo, tag), packaging and marketing communications (advertising, brochures, website) and the environment would also contribute to the marketing and sale of the brand. GSM sector managers who are aware of the fact that the brand experience directly affects brand loyalty can utilize a variety of stimuli such as colors, shapes, fonts, background design elements, slogans, mascots and trademark characters that define the brand as well as visual parts of the brand such as design and identity of the brand (name, logo, tag), packaging and marketing communications (advertising, brochures, website) and the environment in order to strengthen consumer loyalty. Furthermore, GSM operators may provide their consumers with experiences by creating brand communities. The relationship between the brands and the consumers can be strengthened by the brand experience and can become a long-term state. Consequently, managers of GSM operators expect the development of strategies for strengthening brand loyalty to affect brand loyalty positively in the long-term. The study also has some limitations due to lack of time, access and financial reasons. Although the use of convenience sampling in data collection provides benefits in terms of fast access to participants and lower costs, this method constitutes sampling limitations for the study. Also, the implementation of the study only to GSM sector constitutes a limitation in terms of generalizability of the study results to other sectors. For future studies to be held, the interactions among sub-components of brand experience and brand loyalty are suggested to be examined separately. In addition, brand personality and image established through positioning (for example, having the most extensive reception area, high speed internet connection, being a worldwide brand, the variety of products) are thought to be effective in caring for emotional experiences to consumers. In addition, research studies on how experience can be affected by such variables as customer representatives at call centers, internet website designs, store atmosphere and salesperson would be performed in the GSM industry both together or separately.

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