

The Importance of Brand in Ready Made Garment Consumption

Asst.of Prof.Dr. Ece Nüket ÖNDOĞAN
Ege University

Summary

The aim of this study is to determine the effect of brand on the preference of consumer buying decision in the ready made garment sector. For this reason, the ready made garment sector which is important in terms of the world and Turkish economy are addressed.

In marketing especially ready made garments, it is the world's biggest brands that affect the consumer buying decision and fashion. However, these businesses too have used the concepts of brand and fashion up to the point of having the most powerful position. For this reason, general information upon ready-made garment sector is given. Subsequent to which, the concepts of consumer, fashion, brand relationships and the effect of brand on consumer buying decision are also mentioned. Following these, the consumers' preferences in market via a survey, and in this context, the marketing studies have been analyzed on sectoral basis and suggestions are made.

Key Words: Brand, Consumer preference, Consumer behaviour, Fashion

1. INTRODUCTION

A brand is the feature of a product that is directly effective on consumer preference. It is vital to create an original brand so as to gain competitive advantage and remain permanent. Creating a brand is a fairly long and costly process. Thus, before creating the brand, a lot of attention is required since the brand value to be formed in the future will ease the marketing objectives.

The ready made garment sector which engages in contract manufacturing especially in Turkey has gradually given great importance to creating brand and brand value recently. It has also taken place in the process of creating brand while engaging in contract manufacturing. Thus, they have enormous knowledge of brand and brand value and give importance to the issue of brand in the globalising market. Among the problems that Turkish brands encounter are financing and design since the consumer preferences in the globalising market are in constant change, which requires the constant change of fashion and the diversification of design.

In the globalizing market, in order to gain competitive advantage and rank as the leading brand among its competitors, it is necessary to create fashion rather than to follow it. In this study, the importance of fashion and brand is analyzed and consumer preferences are intended to be determined. In the end of the study, suggestions regarding the sector are presented.

2. THE READY MADE GARMENT SECTOR

The ready made garment sector is one of the sectors in the world where international competition is the fiercest. Therefore, branding is of much importance in terms of its effect on the consumer. In the ready made garment sector, the brand provides image and guarantee for the consumer and is distinctive in their buying decisions (Öngüt, 2007). Even if a business, which doesn't fulfill marketing practices, provides quality product or service, it can't survive in market since marketing is concerned with specifying people's necessities, demands and social needs (Kotler, 2003).

Consumer preferences, which are of high importance to ready made garment sector, gained even more importance after the industrial revolutions. The advent of the First Industrial Revolution was in the years 1760-1850 in England with the textile, steam engine and iron production. The Industrial Revolutions have been the turning points of history (Akbulut, 2011). Following the Third Industrial Revolution, mass production surpassed supply demand and also, the marketing philosophy changed. Due to which, a competitive environment comes along. Until 3-5 years ago while the Third Revolution was at issue, now a concept Industry 4.0, also named the Fourth Industrial Revolution, has been on the agenda because of the fact that economy, information and communication technologies and internet are rapidly developing (Güçlü, 2016). As a result of this rapid change, so as to protect the brand values, firms constantly improve their brand strategies while following the consumer buying preferences.

3. BRAND

3.1. THE CONCEPT OF BRAND

Providing that it ensures differentiating a business's product and service from that of another, a brand is the combination of anything that can be a letter, logo, form (İşgör, 2001). A brand is a distinguishing name or symbol (logo, trading name, packaging design) that aims to define the product and services of the vendor and

make both of which different from those of its competitors (Aaker, 1991). The more consistent the worth paid for the brand, the more trust the product gains in the eyes of the consumers. If the brand fails to keep the promise of being beneficial, then a problem occurs (Borça, 2002). Therefore, a brand is among the bases of decision-making in terms of the consumer (Kerin, 2003). A strong brand stands out in a densely crowded marketplace (Wheeler, 2013).

The worldwide prestigious brands in the Ready Made Garments sector (Gucci, Christian Dior etc.) dominate the market. Other brands follow the prestigious ones. Whichever brand has the biggest effect on consumer preference is the one that is permanent and dominates in the market.

3.2. BRAND IDENTITY

A brand includes its functional or symbolic values distinctively together or separate. By this way, it gains an identity. Brand identity is tangible and appeals to senses (Wheeler, 2013). Brands, such as Prada and Hermes symbolize qualities like classiness, wealth, prestige. Brands, such as Levi's Jean, Nike, Adidas and Lee Cooper reflect symbolic values like coolness, individuality and youth (Hankinson&Cowking, 1996). A brand creates benefit by achieving an identity for the brand. By using brands, consumers gain social belonging (Özçelik&Torlak, 2011).

Brand identity empowers the corporate identity in which it takes place. A product or brand collection improved by a corporate business is much easier to keep in mind. Although firms such as Benetton, Esprit Body Shop and Levis that have a corporate identity have ordinary products, with their values, norms, habits and traditions, they have a distinctive corporate culture.

Firms must explain their missions clearly to the consumer. By this way, the product can be accepted by the consumer easily. However, mottos regarding the identity of the firm intend to reflect the mission; that is, Fashion is Vakko, Unconditional Customer Satisfaction (Beymen), Relaxed Elegance (Sisley), Jeans that built America (Lee), United Colors of Benetton. The values of a product are within the brand and the symbolic identity of the brand positions the product in the market.

3.3. THE PROCESS OF CREATING A BRAND

The process of creating a brand requires a conscious and systematic marketing and investment. The sustainability of the brand image necessitates constant innovation as there is no assurance as to its trouble-free survival for 60 years (Grumbach, 2003). When creating a brand, the target group and how to address to it should be clearly determined. Thereafter, products appealing to the target group and brand should be produced. A brand must have an identity, an appeal, behind which there has to be a designer. Design and brand philosophy are important in creating a brand. A brand should be easily read, distinguished, hard to copy and affect the subconscious of the consumer. It can only be distinguished from its competitors this way. Behind the designer must be the businessman. Without a designer, there can't be a businessman (İpekçi, 2003). It is necessary that a firm be strong and has a powerful vision at first to create a strong brand.

3.4. FORMING A BRAND IMAGE

A brand image is the sum of the meaning consumers identify with the product and what the consumers make of it. In forming the brand image, factors such as product, firm, packaging, the name of brand, advertisement and advertising channels have position. Brand image refers to consumer perceptions and encompasses a set of beliefs that consumers have about the brand (Nandan, 2005).

When becoming a world brand, the negative image of a country has adverse effects on branding (Ege, 2003). In global market, the firms need to show constant effort to maintain their registered trademark image, promotion and leadership (Certeler, 2001). The business should envision in the long term and make future plans for the fashion and brand concepts. By this way, it features the correct brand and its powerful sides (Orakçioğlu, 2002). A brand shouldn't merely be considered in the scope of quality.

3.5. BRANDING IN READY MADE GARMENT SECTOR

In ready made garment sector, brand image is an important factor that affects large groups. A brand performs the basic functions regarding the publicity of ready made garment products and distinguishes them from other products. Various qualifications such as ready made garment brand, changing fashion, clothing style, the design, the model, the ornament, the color and the cut are all intertwined. A brand creates demand, is effective in promotion, builds customer loyalty, prevents risk of profit loss, attracts the product to marketing channels and has positive effect on price stability. Mediators as well prefer to sell branded product (Bedük, 2002). Firms are known by their brands. Therefore, the business should deeply analyze to what extent it has been perceived by the target group and the effect of which while determining their strategy and objectives (Gedik, 2001).

4. CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR

4.1. CONSUMER

A consumer is an individual who has the power of buying and acts upon it so as to supply the personal or family needs (Kaya, 1990). In modern marketing, businesses consider consumer preferences while forming their marketing and production policies in order to be able to compete. As for brand, it is among the most effective on consumer preferences. The effect of brand functions on consumer response constitutes a highly important subject when analyzing the value the brand has for the firm (Bélen del Río & et al., 2001). For consumers, a brand is the easiest way of knowing a product since it reveals the origin of the product and conveys quality assurance and guarantee (Çabuk & Ar, 2006).

In addition to personal qualifications, a brand also represents consumers' aim and social trends since some consumers primarily prefer products that reflect their essential necessities, then desires and finally themselves in social environment. Yet, some consumers incline towards products and brands that primarily make them different from other consumers. What matters here for businesses is being able to predict beforehand as to which consumer inclines towards which product brand.

4.2. FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE BUYING BEHAVIOUR

In consumption, consumer preferences, buying habits and behaviour are of importance. Consumers that turn their necessities and desires into demand, develop positive or negative attitudes regarding the product and brands in fierce competition. These attitudes towards buying have a distinctive role on further consumer consumption behaviour and preference. Consumer behaviours are "methods consumers use when deciding upon buying product and service, the factors that influence them and that determine how they will perform consumption behaviour and personal behaviours that direct marketing activities" (Karabulut, 1990). For constant demand in the target market, consumer necessities and desires are important in terms of consumption behaviour and businesses.

The individual has to be aware of the lack of his/her necessity or desire in order to consume. Every individual displays different behaviours regarding his/her necessity and desires. Therefore, when determining consumer buying behaviour, factors such as culture, demographic qualifications, learning, perception, personality, motivation, attitude, and the group one is surrounded by, all should be taken into consideration. The qualifications of consumers and their decision-making lead them to the buying decision. The task of the marketer is to determine the factors that make consumers decide to buy. Consumers consume the brands that best satisfy them economically and psychologically.

Many personal and environmental factors influence consumer buying behaviour. There are two kinds of environmental factors which are marketing and other environmental factors. Marketing factors are the core elements such as product, price, distribution and advertising which also form the marketing combination. As for other environmental factors, they are economic, technological, political, cultural, demographical and geographical, and the qualifications of the group they are surrounded by. The primary groups like family, colleagues and neighbours are ones that the individual is informally a member of. Secondary groups are occupational unions, chambers of commerce, various associations and social groups (Pride & Ferrell, 1985). Personal factors based on consumer can be stated as cultural, social, personal and psychological. When decision-making upon buying, the consumer buys in accordance with all of these factors, and this forms the buying behaviour model. In buying behaviour model, consumer decisions have effect on product, brand, choice of vendor, buying time and quantity (Kotler, 2000). Every buying behaviour leaves a mark on the consumer positive or negative. Thus, the individual acts upon these in further consumption behaviours. Therefore, the clarity of the message in advertising, similarities of messages, the individual's level of interest, the consistency of the message with the individual's cultural and value judgements are taken into consideration (Stanton, Etzel & Walker, 2004).

When businesses have sufficient information as to consumers and their brand preferences, they determine their strategies more easily. In this case, the consumer easily manages his/her preferences as well. There are many factors that influence consumer brand preference in buying which are as such; the demographic qualifications of consumer, their desire and necessities, their perception of the brand, their attitude towards other brands, the cultural features of the environment, social class and the qualification of the reference group, under what condition the consumer decides, the efficiency of the producer's marketing and advertising strategy, brand image and so on. For instance, some of the consumers may prefer to wear a shirt while others may prefer to wear a sweater. At this point, there is a linear relationship between the quality, severity and the perception of the necessity and the promise of the brand.

Consumers generally prefer the product and brands they believe that make them gain an identity or status. Besides this, consumers don't always make a brand preference. They may also buy any brand due to saving time and effort or because of its low cost. However, whether the product is a luxury, an essential necessity or idiosyncratic also influence the preferences in the decision making process.

5. FIELD STUDY

5.1. THE OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This field study was done to examine the effect of brand and fashion on consumer preference of ready made garments. A survey was conducted in the study. It was intended to determine the effects of demographic factors (income, sex, occupation) on consumers' buying ready-made garments. For this purpose, a field study of ready-made garment consumers was made via a survey.

Owing to the limited financial and personal facilities, the consumers residing in Izmir were taken into consideration. As for a sample group, malls that have branded products and consumers that shop at central businesses were selected. Simple random sampling method was used as a sampling method. The possibility or chance of every individual in the main group being accepted to the scope of sample is the same for the simple random sampling method and the sample individuals are selected by a pre-existing approximate possibility randomly (Kurtuluş, 1998). In the survey, if one person refused to answer or his/her answers contradicted with each other, the survey was repeated with randomly selected individuals.

In the study, some hypotheses were suggested upon the effects of fashion and brand on preferences. The study was intended to be evaluated according to these hypotheses that led to the results of which. For this purpose, a study was conducted and evaluated according to the following hypotheses:

- a. Demographic qualifications have effect on buying habits
- b. The environment is a factor in buying behaviours
- c. Consumers generally prefer branded products

5.2. METHOD OF STUDY

A descriptive approach was preferred in the survey regarding consumers. Descriptive studies are studies that are conducted to define situations and events. The reason why descriptive study was conducted in this study was to determine the tendency of consumers to consume branded products and their buying habits. For this purpose, in order to make it easy for consumers to define themselves, definitive questions were asked. The relationship among the variables was examined in accordance with the answers. The concept of brand was firstly explained in the survey through which it was aimed to make the consumers give more conscious answers. The questions of the survey were regarding the consumers' demographic qualifications, consuming habits, their mostly preferred brand, personal and environmental factors that influence their buying a product, the frequency of shopping for ready-made garments and how they were affected by the combination marketing in buying.

5.3. FIELD STUDY AND ANALYSIS METHOD

The interviewers were firstly trained about brand and buying habits in the study. The results of the evaluation were found with SPSS and the surveys that couldn't be evaluated were exempted from the study and new surveys were conducted instead. According to the survey data the effects of income, education, sex and marital status in consumers' buying preferences were examined. The SPSS statistical program was used for statistical evaluation. Frequency distribution for each question in the evaluation was found. Then, the relationships among demographic qualifications were examined according to the Chi Square method. This method was preferred due to the fact that the majority of variables were found to be in nominal (classification-categorical) scale and that the relationship between the two nominal variables could be measured with the Chi method (İkiz et All., 2000).

5.4. SURVEY FINDINGS

5.4.1. Consumer Findings

In the survey, the demographic qualifications of the consumers were determined first. Findings are shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1. The Demographic Qualifications of the Respondents of the Survey

Demographic Qualifications	%	Demographic Qualifications	%
Sex		Occupation	
Woman	55	Unemployed	9
Men	45	Housewife	15
Age	%	Student	18
>20	26	Official	21
20–35	24	Laborer	13
36–55	30	Business Owner	24
<55	20	Income	TL
Education	%	>1.500	19
Primary Education	6	1.500–2.500	31
Secondary Education	35	2.501–5.000	41
Higher Education	49	<5.000	9
Post graduate	10		

When the environmental factors that influence the buying decision of consumers during a purchase of a product are examined, it was found that they were mostly influenced by family and that this influence was followed by friends and advertisements. However, when factors regarding the buying decision of a product were analyzed, necessity took the first place and was followed by other factors (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2. Environmental&Product Related Factors that Influence the Buying Decision

Environmental factors that Influence Consumer Buying Behaviour	%	Product Related Factors that Influence Consumer Buying Decision	%
Family	40	Necessity	50
Friends	28	Price	21
Advertisements	22	Brand	17
Other Factors	10	Fashion	12
Total	100	Total	100

The answers of consumers as to how much of the whole budget they put aside for ready-made garments is given in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3. Consumers' Percentage of Budgeting for Ready Made Garment

The percentage of Consumers who budget for Ready Made Garment %	The budget Put Aside for Ready Made Garment %
>10	38
10–30	30
31–50	14
<50	19
Total	100

It is seen in Table 5.3 that less than 10% of the consumers put aside the most budget for ready-made garment. This is the consumer group that has the highest level of income. It was also observed that the majority of consumers considered brand as a prestige when asked about brand in ready-made garment. This conclusion was followed by product quality, price and fashion (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4. The First Four Factors That Come to Mind Regarding Brand

Factors	%
Prestige	52
Quality	20
High Price	18
Fashion	10
Total	100

When asked as to when consumers take the risk of paying a lot of money for a brand, more than 50% of them answered "always". This was followed "occasional", "never" (Table 5.5.).

Table 5.5. The Consumers' Percentages of Paying for Brand in Ready Made Garment

Preference	%
Always	17
If s/he likes it a lot	54
Occasionally	20
No	10
Total	100

It was seen that the consumers who take the risk of paying a lot of money for brand are usually at high level of income and reside in large cities. The brand mania of consumers is parallel with their level of incomes. In ready-made garment, the age group of 15-55 prefer brand the most. However, in terms of sex, it is seen that women attach more importance to brand than men do. When factors that influence consumer preference of branded products were analyzed, the top five factors were found to be respectively trust, prestige, habit, superiority complex and advertisement (Table 5.6.).

Table 5.6. The First Five Factors That Influence Consumer Ready-Made Garment Preference

The Factors of Consumer Brand Preference	%
Trust	34
Prestige	28
Habit	18
Superiority Complex	12
Advertisement	8
Total	100

Having asked whether the consumers used imitation brands or not, it was seen that 53% of them inclined towards imitation brand. The usage of imitation brand and the level of income are inversely proportional. As the level of income decreases, the inclination towards imitation brands increases. As for the high level of income group, an inclination towards the imitation of expensive brands is seen (Hermes, Channel, Prada etc.). Considering the consumption of each product group, it is seen that as the level of income decreases, consumers incline towards cheap brands.

5.4.2. Chi Square Results of the Consumer Surveys

Considered as to have influence on consumption habits regarding branded products, between demographic qualifications such as income and education, cross tabulations were used and the relation between which was examined according to the Chi Square (X^2) method. The values were examined as to whether there was a statistical significance among them. Most of the variables obtained are found in nominal (classifier- categorical) scale. Since the method that can be used to measure the relationship between two nominal variables is Chi Square, it was preferred in the analyses.

In order to determine how the level of education affects consumption habits, it was correlated with the environmental factors that influence the consumer in buying a product and education. The relationship between the influence of education and family on buying was found to be significant as a result of the Chi Square test ($p=0.003<0.005$) and it was seen that education changed the effect of family. It was observed as a result of the Chi Square test that there was a significant relationship between the level of education and friend_influence ($p=0.005$). There was a significant relationship between the level of education and the degree of response to advertisement ($p=0.003<0.005$). As the level of education increases, the prioritization of one's own opinion increases as well. There was a significant relationship between the level of education and the prioritization of one's own opinion ($p=0.004<0.005$).

There was no significant relationship found between the level of education and brand, price, necessity, usefulness, whether the product is imported or imitated and advertisement. When the level of education and the possibility of paying a lot of money on branded products were intercrossed, there was a significant relationship between education and paying a lot of money ($p=0.002<0.005$). Inversely correlated with the consumers' level of the education, the possibility of paying a lot of money on branded products varied.

When the level of income and the possibility of paying a lot of money were intercrossed, a significant relationship between income and the possibility of paying a lot of money was observed ($p=0.003<0.005$). Related to the increase in consumers' level of income, the possibility of paying a lot for branded products varied. A small portion of consumers at each level always take the risk of paying a lot of money.

6. DISCUSSION, RESULT AND SUGGESTIONS

In this study, it is seen that income stands out in consumer preference of branded products. As a result of this study, it was observed that during the purchase of branded products, the behaviour of consumers were not dependant on only one factor but also, demographic factors such as income, education, environment. When buying branded products, consumers firstly consider the necessity, price and brand. The consumer group who values brand is of high level income. The consumers who are of low level income prefer brandless or cheap branded products. The change of preferences according to the level of income forces businesses to work on branded products more. Following the market segmentation, businesses create sub-brands for target groups.

Factors such as aging and superiority complex all bring about the biggest competitive advantage to branded products. The biggest problems faced when selling branded products are as such; high tax, bureaucratic obstructions, legal restrictions, foreign trade, currency fluctuations and legislative misalignment.

The frequency of consumer consumption of branded products according to the level of income is directly proportional. As the income and education level increase, brand mania increases as well. As the education level increases, consumers put their opinions in first place when buying a product. Price is an important criteria for consumers to evaluate the product. Education as well, is an important criteria that determines consumer consumption habits since, thanks to education, the level of awareness increases. Factors such as the globalization of marketing, regulations, inflation, economic and political structure, currency fluctuations, qualified personnel in the sector, the efficiency degree of competition in market all force businesses to create markets. In global marketing, the increase of multinational firms is creating a hard time and is challenging for local brands. The imitations of foreign and local brands are demanded according to the level of income. Therefore, this has effect on the competitive power of branded products. Because of this, small and middle scale businesses that form the whole industry should be supported regarding branding and their incentives be increased. So as to minimize spare capacity in the sector, businesses should be supported and encouraged in terms of technological renewal.

Businesses should be trained about feasibility study and the areas of faulty corporations should be detected in the very beginning and measures be taken. Research Development and branding studies should be focused on. It is required that serious investments be made and support given to branding. In order to create a new and

permanent brand at market, more and braver innovations, an integrated marketing communication, new work models and resources should be rescheduled.

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