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Akin Koçak , Temi Abimbola & Alper Özer

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# Consumer Brand Equity in a Cross-cultural Replication: An Evaluation of a Scale

Dr Akin Koçak, *Ankara University, Turkey*
Dr Temi Abimbola, *University of Central England, UK**
Dr Alper Özer, *Ankara University, Turkey*

**Abstract** This paper aims to contribute positively to the now growing 'replicated studies' research. The replication of published empirical findings is an important means of developing robust and generalisable explanations in brand management.

The purpose of this is to replicate the consumer-based equity scale developed by Vazquez, Rio and Iglesias (2002) and to determine whether the scale could be applied to a different cultural setting. To achieve this, our research will: (1) replicate the four main dimension of Vazquez et.al. scale (i.e. product, functional utility, product symbolic utility, brand name functional utility, brand name symbolic utility); (2)identify the similarities and differences of the application of this scale in Turkey (a culture which is significantly different from that for which the scale was initially developed). Confirmatory factor analysis was used and the key findings from the study indicated that, although the scale fits the Turkish culture, it needed small changes.

**Keywords** Consumer brand equity, Replication, Functional utility, Symbolic utility

## INTRODUCTION

There are a growing number of studies on brand equity reflecting the continuing role of brands in developing and sustaining competitive advantage. Increasing number

*Correspondence details and biographies for the authors are located at the end of the article, p. 172.

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of studies in the literature mainly occurred due to the separating effect of product and brand on consumers' decision-making processes. These studies are on the conceptualisation and the measurement of brand equity. Even though the definitions of Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) are well received in the literature, there is as yet no clear consensus on how best to measure brand equity. One primary reason for this dissensus is that the aims and objectives of the measurement of Brand Equity (BE) differ. Differences in standpoints, as they relate to industry functions of firms represent another critical point in the variety of approaches for measuring brand equity.

These differences can be analysed from the dimensions of firms and consumers. At the firm level, brand equity is defined as incremental cash flows that accrue to the firm due to its investments in brands (Srinivasan, Park and Chang 2001). On the other hand, at the consumer level, brand equity needs a measure that assesses an individual consumer's brand equity (Yoo and Donthu 2001:2). In order to measure consumer-based brand equity, several different perspectives, approaches or methods have been developed and discussed in the literature (Kamakura and Russel 1993; Park and Srinivasan 1994; Swait, Erdem, Louviere, and Dubelaar 1993; Srinivasan et al 2001).

The scales used in measuring brand equity are generally based on brand awareness and consumer utility, however Vazquez, Rio and Iglesias (2002) mainly stressed the consumer benefit after purchasing.

## BACKGROUND

There are a number of definitions for empirical generalisations such as those developed by Bass (1995) and Uncle (2004), among others. In this article we have adopted Bass's definition of empirical generalisation and explained it as a pattern or regularity that repeats in more than one instance across different circumstances (Bass 1995).

Replication of published empirical findings is an important means of raising confidence about the external and practical applications of findings and reliability of published results. Replications help to guide against uncritical dissemination and acceptance of work in a way that peer review process alone may not be able to capture (Hubbard and Armstrong 1994). Arguably, one can say that replicability is regarded as one of the most important criterion of genuine scientific knowledge that any field can accumulate. This view also has an almost universal acceptance in marketing. As an important field in social sciences, the normative importance of replications is exemplified in the works of Aaker and Ford (1983); Aaker and Keller (1993); Bush, Hair and Solomon (1979); Foxall (1975) among others.

As Uncle and Wright (2004, p.5) explains, our ability to know whether an observed relationship is tenable or not, in a range of different conditions, enhances our ability to make practice and predictive use of the outcome. While the emphasis on original empirical research is laudable quite a number of scholars have called our attention to the fact that the inability to replicate research could impede knowledge development. The approach of this study in this article is to replicate and analyse the empirical study by Vazquez *et al*. (2002), looking for patterns or regularities that repeat over different data sets.

While generalisability is almost universally regarded as an important aspect of scholarly and knowledge gathering activities, replication of findings as a research

approach needed to build generalisable explanations is just beginning to accrue in marketing in general and brand management in particular. Arguably, there is paucity of replicated works in the general area of brand management with few exceptions such as the replication of Aaker and Keller's (1990) paper (e.g. Barrett et al. 1999; Bottomley and Doyle 1996; Sunde and Brodie 1993) and Ambler and Styles (1997) paper (e.g. Dall'Olmo Riley et.al. 2004).

Significant amounts of empirical research have accumulated on the topic of Brand Management in general and Brand Equity in particular, in the last two decades. Most of these empirical researches consist of 'original or 'novel' works looking for significant differences rather than significant similarities in unrelated data sets. Our standpoint in this article is that given the huge amount of published research in the general areas of brand management, corporate identity and reputation in the last decades, there is a paucity of replicated published research. Why is replication important in Brand Management Research and Brand Equity in particular? The importance of replications is predicated on key pivotal factors. First, that replication is vital to ensure external validity- the generalisation of findings from a sample to a larger population or other settings and populations other than those studied. This is crucial in assessing whether the outcomes of a result can be generalised beyond a particular context or an isolated situation. Second, replication is important from the point of view of practitioners. Findings from replicated work enhance our ability to make strategic decisions. It also advances the application of fundamental knowledge that has accumulated in marketing to real life situations.

## BRAND EQUITY AND MEASUREMENT OF BRAND EQUITY

Aaker (2001,165) defined brand equity as a set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand. These include the name and symbols that add to or subtract from the value provided by product or services to a firm and/or to that firms' customer. When the consumer based brand equity is taken into consideration, definitions are more consumers specific. Keller (1993, 8) defined consumer-based brand equity as the differential effect that brand knowledge has on consumer response to the marketing of the brand. The differential effect is determined by comparing consumer response to the marketing of a brand with the response to the same marketing of fictitiously named or unnamed versions of the product or service. Keller (1993:8) defined brand knowledge in terms of brand awareness and brand image. In the definition of Vazquez et al. (2002:28), it is "the overall utility that consumer associates to the use and consumption of the brand; including associations expressing both functional and symbolic utilities". According to Keller (1993, 2), "consumer-based brand equity occurs when the consumer is familiar with the brand and holds some favourable, strong and unique brand associations in memory". Aaker (2001) argues that brand equity sources are brand loyalty, name, awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and other proprietary assets. Srinivasan et. al. (2001) identifies clarify a measurement of brand equity by four sources; brand awareness, attribute perception biases, non-attribute preferences and brand availability.

Brand equity can be measured from both consumer and financial perspectives. When brand equity is measured by using annonymised financial data, it is defined as financial based brand equity. In contrast, when studies are performed at the individual consumer level through consumer surveys, consumer based brand equity is discussed (Pappu et al. 2005; Yoo and Donthu 2001). Measuring consumer based brand equity

is important for the firms' because decisions are often made according to the value of the brand to the customers. As Keller (1993) put it greater consumer based equity can lead firms to greater revenue, lower costs and higher profit and have the ability for an effective marketing mix.

There are different approaches to measuring consumer-based brand equity (Kamakura and Russel 1993; Park and Srinivasan 1994; Swait at al 1993; Srinivasan at al 2001). Kamakura and Russel (1993) developed a method that is based on the actual purchase choice data from a single-source scanner data. The authors constructed two measure of brand value: i) perceived quality, the value assigned by consumer to the brand after discounting for current price and recent advertising exposures; and ii) brand intangible value created such factors as brand name association and perceptual distortions.

Swait et al. (1993) proposed an approach to modelling and measuring brand equity based on consumer utility functions that account for brand name, price, product attributes, brand image and consumer heterogeneity effects. Their model expresses the utility difference, as a monetary equivalent, attributed by consumer to a brand.

Park and Srinivasan (1994) developed a survey-based method for measuring brand equity at the individual consumer level. The proposal approach used a survey procedure to obtain each individual's overall brand preference and multi-attributed brand preference based on objectively measured attribute levels. The approach provided an indication of the source of brand equity in terms of its attribute and non-attribute-based components. Lassar et al. (1995) developed a brand equity scale entailing five dimensions; performance, social image, value, trustworthiness, and attachment. Erdem and Swait (1998) viewed brand equity from a different perspective that is based on signalling theory of information economics. It is suggested that the content, clarity, and credibility of a brand, as a signal of the product's position, may increase perceived quality and decrease information costs and the risk perceived by consumers. These effects increase expected utility. Morgan (1999/2000) developed an approach that has two classes of equity components. First group of components are functionality and performance. The second group of components is defined as 'affinity'. Affinity has three factors; i) authority: the trust and respect commanded by the brand and perceived by customer, ii) identification: the degree to which the brand is regarded as having personal relevance, and iii) approval: meeting a person's perceived needs in social sense.

Culture is considered as a factor affecting brand equity. Some researches have documented cultural differences in product and brand evolutions (Samiee 1994; Zinkhan and Prenshaw 1994; Aaker and Maheswaran 1997; Aaker and Sengupta 2000; Holt 2002). Moreover, Aaker et al. (2001) examined Aaker's brand personality scale on samples taken from Spain and Japan. Furthermore, country origin effects on brand (Gürhan-Canlı and Maheswaran 2000; Lim and O'Cass 2001) and culture-of-brand origin (Lee and Ganesh 1999; Lim and O'Cass 2001) were also discussed in the literature. Kim et al. (2002:482) argue that customer value influence product attributes and consumption behaviour, and they consider customer values as output of culture. A scale developed by Yoo and Donthu (2002) includes the effect of culture on brand equity. Yoo and Donthu (2002) stated that cultural contexts significantly moderate brand equity formation in their research, which tested and compared their scale on US and Korean samples. They emphasised that in order to ensure success in building a strong brand, an understanding of the brand equity creation process in the target market is necessary (p:381).

The utilities that customers expect from the physical attributes of a product and

brand are considered in 'functional utility'. These will satisfy the certain needs of the consumers and are related to motives (Keller 1993). 'Symbolic utilities' are related to consumers' social and psychological environment allowing the consumer to experience positive emotions and help to communicate to certain social groups, values and personal features. The effect of symbolic utilities on consumer choice is raised from the social influences that affect the purchasing decisions of consumers for both product and brand (Jamal and Goode 2001:482; Bhat and Reddy 1998; Kim et al. 2002:481). Even though it is simply argued that product provides 'functional utility' and brand provides 'symbolic utility', some authors point out that both product and brand could provide both utilities (Keller 1993; Park and Srinivasan 1994; Vazquez et al 2002). Thus Vazquez et al. (2002) propose four dimensions to create a measure for utilities of the brand; functional utility of the product, 'symbolic utility' of the product, 'functional utility' of the brand name and 'symbolic utility' of the brand name.

Functional utility associated with the product refers to the utilities linked to physical attributes of the product. Here, the relationship between physical attributes, which satisfy certain needs and brand equity, is set. The main important factor for the consumers is the performance they expect from the product. Comfort, resistance and performance of the product are the examples of these utilities.

In symbolic utilities associated with product, some tangible characteristics are also offered, however, these attributes are related to needs of the psychological and social environment. These utilities usually correspond to non-product-related attributes of a product. As explained by Keller (1993) these are those attributes that are not related to the performance of the product. Rather, they are related to the symbolic utilities obtained by physical attributes such as quality, it can also be used for brand or product line extensions. User and usage imagery are formed directly from consumers' experiences and users transfer what they think about the product even when it is not about the performance. Escalas and Bettman (2003) also stresses that people use products as well as brands to create and represent self-images and to present these images to others or to themselves. Style, colour and design are the examples of these utilities.

Functional utilities associated with brand name are related to the functional or practical needs of consumers. Guarantee is an example of this kind of utility. Even though these utilities could be related to the physical attributes, such as resistance, it is mainly about the utilities consumers will benefit from the brand name of the product. In other words, consumers will consider these utilities as provided by the brand name.

Symbolic utilities associated with brand name meet the needs related to psychological and social environment and are mainly used for self-expression. Brands may offer consumers symbolic benefits because of brand's association with a particular image, which can be a life style or set of values. Consumers may value the prestige, exclusivity and fashionability of a brand because of how it relates to their self-concept (Keller 1993). Attributes consumer look for based on prestige are evaluated in this concept.

In this study, as well as in the study of Vazquez et al. (2002), consumer based brand equity measures are based on the utilities a product and brand will provide. These utilities are product utilities and brand name utilities that also comprise the functional and symbolic content of each utility. Product functional utilities include comfort, safety and duration. Comfort is measured with three items, safety is measured with four items and duration is measured by one item. Aesthetics is related

to 'product symbolic utility' and is measured with two items. Brand name functional utility includes guarantee and it is measured with four items. Symbolic utility of brand name includes social identification measured with four items, status measured with 2 items and 'personal identification' measured with 2 items. In their study (Vazquez et al. 2002), brand equity is perceived functional and symbolic utilities of both the product and the brand name. So, customer perceived value of a brand represents a multidimensional concept. It is supported by high correlation between the dimensions (Table 1).

## METHODOLOGY

In the first step of the study, product category and brand names were selected. Vazquez et al (2002) selected sport shoes as the product category for the analysis of their scale. We have selected the sport shoes as product category as well. This research project suggests that while we take the same product category into consideration, it will be easier to determine whether cultural effects have influence on the consumer based brand equity. Gürhan-Canlı and Maheswaran (2000), Aaker et al. (2001), and Yoo and Donthu (2002) also used the same product categories to test for cultural

**TABLE 1** Consumer Based Brand Equity Scale

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Product Utility** | Product Functional Utility | Comfort | C1 | Brand X is flexible |
| | | | C2 | Brand X is light |
| | | | C3 | It is easier to find the sizes of brand X |
| | | Safety | S1 | Brand X protect the foot better |
| | | | S2 | Brand X is more sensitive when walking |
| | | | S3 | Perspiration is lower for brand X |
| | | | S4 | Brand X grips the foot better |
| | | Duration | D1 | Duration for brand X is higher |
| | Product Symbolic Utility | Aesthetics | A1 | Brand X is more aesthetic |
| | | | A2 | Brand X has more colour options |
| **Brand Name Utility** | Brand Name Functional Utility | Guarantee | G1 | Brand X continuously improves its features |
| | | | G2 | Brand X is trustworthy |
| | | | G3 | Brand X offers good value for money |
| | | | G4 | Brand X has excellent quality |
| | Brand Name Symbolic Utility | Social Identification | SI1 | Brand X is fashionable |
| | | | SI2 | Brand X is used by my friends |
| | | | SI3 | Brand X has a good reputation |
| | | | SI4 | Brand X is one of the leading brands |
| | | Status | ST1 | Using brand X is symbol of prestige |
| | | | ST2 | Brand X is recommended by famous people |
| | | Personal Identification | PI1 | I find brand X attractive |
| | | | PI2 | Brand X is suitable with my lifestyle |

differences. In addition, this investigation believes that the selection of a well-known product category would avoid the halo effect. Since Leuthesser, Kohli and Harich (1995) defined the halo effect as a rater's failure to discriminate among conceptually distinct and potentially independent attributes, with the result that individual attribute ratings co-vary more than they otherwise would (p:58). Thus when consumers are unfamiliar with the product, the image may serve as halo effect by which consumer infer product attributes (Ahmed and Johnson 2002)

Because familiarity with the brands provides a link to brand associations (Yoo and Donthu 2001), it would be useful to determine the most familiar brands among students. For that reason, 50 undergraduate students were asked to list the brands which they purchased in the past, they own at the moment or they have knowledge about. The brands were selected from the list determined by the students. According to the students' list, the top five mentioned brands were Nike, Adidas, Reebok, Puma, and Kinetix. The students chose four global brands and one national brand among all the brands in the market. These brands were the most familiar brands among students who participated in the pilot study. In spite of providing familiarity, global brands cause the disadvantage of reflecting similarity among cultures. However, the current study attempted to follow the same standard as Yoo and Donthu (2001 and 2002) also use global brands for both testing their scale and comparing cultural differences.

In the second step, to determine consumer based brand equity scale, a questionnaire was used to survey the sample. Since the items were adapted from English language, first, the items were translated into Turkish. Then, one of the professors in the faculty was asked to translate the Turkish version into English to be sure that the translation would match the original one and will not lose its meaning. The questionnaire was administered to a sample of 1000 students in The Faculty of Political Science at Ankara University, Ankara, Turkey in November- December 2003. The Turkish version of the questionnaire was pilot tested to 30 MBA students to understand whether the questions expressed the statements clearly. According to the results of the pre-test, some corrections were made to reduce the ambiguity.

The questionnaires were self-administrated to the students during classes and after the explanations of professors who were trained to administer the questionnaire. Questionnaires were given to 1000 students excluding those who were questioned for pre-test). After elimination of questionnaires that contained inaccuracy responses, 761 usable questionnaires were returned - a response rate of 76.1 per cent. The items in the questionnaire were measured with a five-point Likert scale (ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). Brand and product category experiences were measured with yes/no questions.

## ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The consumer based brand equity scale was evaluated by a three-step approach. First, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was employed for classifying the items to reflect an underlying construct. Second, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed for acceptability of the data. Finally, validity and reliability of the scale were examined.

By applying exploratory factor analysis first, it was determined whether factor reduction is applicable to the data. Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were used to determine if the scale is appropriate for factor analysis. The value of KMO was .952, which is higher than suggested level of .60 (Gursoy and

Gavcar 2003). Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was 8692.961 and significance level value is 0.000, so factor reduction by exploratory factor analysis can be applied to the data. Thus, it has been realised that 22 items scale developed by Vazquez et al. (2002) was not appropriate for our sample. As a result, 16 items and 6 dimensions were obtained (Table 2). We eliminated the duration dimension of product functional utility and aesthetics dimension of product symbolic utility. Moreover one item (C3) of comfort dimension, one item (G1) of guarantee dimensions, and finally one item (S2) of social identification were eliminated. The new scale with 16 items and 6 dimensions obtained after the exploratory factor analysis was employed in this study.

LISREL 8.2 was employed to test whether the items of the new scale fit within the model (Jöreskog and Sörbom 1998). With the new 16 items and 6 dimensions, the scale presents satisfactory goodness of fit indexes. Chi-square is a measure showing if the model fit to the data. With the 41 degrees of freedom, the chi-square value ($X^2$) is equal to 516.03 ($p = 0.000$) and it can be said that, while small chi-square presents good fit and large chi-square presents bad fit to the data, our model fits to the data with the large sample, noting that chi-square value will be higher as the sample increase (Kelloway 1998). Generally, RMSEA and SRMR are expected to be lower than 0.10 and other indices to be over than .90 (Byrne 1998; Kelloway 1998). In our scale, RMSEA was .079 and SRMR was .054, and all the other indices were over .90 except AGFI, but it was close to the expected level of .90 (Table 3). Thus, the fit statistics suggested that the fit of the model was acceptable.

Regarding scale validity, factor loadings and t-values of the items were analysed. Factor loadings were between .68 and .90 and all the t-values were higher than the critical value (The lowest t-value was 20.30 for the variable SI1, thus, because all the loading are significant by being over than the expected level of .50 (Steenkamp and Trijp 1991) the scale validity was verified (Table 4). That means that all variables of the dimensions are significantly related to their specific construct. It can also be seen in this table that composite reliability coefficients of dimensions exceeded the recommended level of 0,7 (Shook et al 2004). Unidimensionality of each dimensions

**TABLE 2** Items in New Scale Obtained (Extraction Method: Principle Axis Factoring)

| | Variables | Extraction |
|---|---|---|
| **C1** | Brand X is flexible | 0.681 |
| **C2** | Brand X is light | 0.659 |
| **S1** | Brand X protect the foot better | 0.575 |
| **S2** | Brand X is more sensitive when walking | 0.631 |
| **S3** | Perspiration is lower for Brand X | 0.543 |
| **S4** | Brand X grips the foot better | 0.602 |
| **G2** | Brand X is trustworthy | 0.621 |
| **G3** | Brand X offers good value for money | 0.517 |
| **G4** | Brand X has excellent quality | 0.628 |
| **SI1** | Brand X is fashionable | 0.552 |
| **SI3** | Brand X has a good reputation | 0.637 |
| **SI4** | Brand X is one of the leading brands | 0.658 |
| **ST1** | Using Brand X is symbol of prestige | 0.624 |
| **ST2** | Brand X is recommended by famous people | 0.589 |
| **PI1** | I find brand X attractive | 0.662 |
| **PI2** | Brand X is suitable with my lifestyle | 0.608 |

were tested individually to see how they represent the constructs, and it was seen that no elimination of any dimension is required from the model. In other words, all of three constructs were acceptable. Scale for Comfort had the highest level of reliability (.98). Reliabilities for Safety (81.46), Guarantee (82.46), Social Identification (78.88), Status (70.22) and Personal Identification (80.03) had higher values than .70, and total composite reliability (92.81) of the model was acceptable.

After evaluating the reliability and validity of the scale, alternative models were tested. First, one-dimensional model obtained by combining the dimensions (Model 2) was tested. However, results indicated that the six-dimensional model (Model 1) indicated better fit than the model 2 ($\Delta X^2$ (Model 1-Model 2)= 1472.96). Second, the three-dimensional model (Model 3) obtained by combining functional utility variables for product and symbolic utility variables for brand was tested. In comparing, results indicated that six-dimensional model (Model 1) indicated better fit than the model 3 ($\Delta X^2$ (Model 1-Model 3)= 625.40). At last, two-dimensional model (Model 4) obtained by combining product utility variables and brand utility variables was tested and results indicated that Model 1 had a better fit ($\Delta X^2$ (Model

**TABLE 3** Value of Fit Indexes

| $X^2$ | 516.03 (df: 89) |
|---|---|
| **RMSEA** | 0.079 |
| **SRMR** | 0.054 |
| **GFI** | 0.92 |
| **AGFI** | 0.88 |
| **NFI** | 0.93 |
| **NNFI** | 0.93 |
| **CFI** | 0.94 |
| **IFI** | 0.94 |

**TABLE 4** Reliability and Validity Values of the Scale

| | Factor Loadings | SE | t-values | Alpha |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **C1** | 0.90 | 0.03 | 30.06 | 82.96 |
| **C2** | 0.85 | 0.03 | 27.50 | |
| **S1** | 0.75 | 0.03 | 23.52 | 81.46 |
| **S2** | 0.80 | 0.03 | 25.77 | |
| **S3** | 0.68 | 0.03 | 20.40 | |
| **S4** | 0.78 | 0.03 | 24.61 | |
| **G2** | 0.83 | 0.03 | 27.28 | 82.46 |
| **G3** | 0.76 | 0.03 | 23.76 | |
| **G4** | 0.85 | 0.03 | 28.30 | |
| **SI1** | 0.68 | 0.03 | 20.30 | 78.88 |
| **SI3** | 0.88 | 0.03 | 29.58 | |
| **SI4** | 0.87 | 0.03 | 29.10 | |
| **ST1** | 0.72 | 0.03 | 20.74 | 70.22 |
| **ST2** | 0.80 | 0.03 | 23.54 | |
| **PI1** | 0.87 | 0.03 | 28.13 | 80.03 |
| **PI2** | 0.80 | 0.03 | 25.04 | |

1-Model 4)= 765.68). These results point out that discriminant validity of the scale also verified. $X^2$ values of the alternative models are presented in Table 5.

As shown in Table 6, the model is explained by mostly C1, C2, SI2, SI3 and G4. In other words majority of the model's variance can be explained by comfort, social identification and guarantee (Table 6).

In a cross-cultural study, generating comparable data is necessary. Since the study is about the replication of the scale developed by Vazquez et al. (2002), all items are used as in their study. So, it is required to have the equivalence of the construct, measures and the samples.

Construct equivalence refers to cross-national differences in the meaning of concepts or constructs being investigated (Dadzie et al. 2002). To establish the construct equivalence, it is necessary to show that both studies express the constructs in similar ways. Construct equivalence exists if equal factor structures are obtained in different cultural populations (Herk et al. 2005). While we set the study on Vazquez's construct, it is a good way to minimise the construct inequivalence. Apart from this, a marketing professor who translated and back-translated the original scale, also verified that the concepts included in the research serve the same role in both countries.

An important issue is that of how best to reflect the same conceptual frame under different conditions of different countries. It should be noted that respondents' behaviours would differ according to conditions of different industries. Thus, while different industries are based in the studies, it is not possible to use a common frame of reference when responding to the items of a given instrument (Mavondo and Farrell 2000). As Millsap and Everson (1991) stated, the use of different frames of reference by diverse groups renders comparisons between groups impossible because scores on the instrument refer to different construct for each group. Supportingly, Akaah et al.(1988) states that different product-market environments suggest corresponding differences in attitudes, familiarity, and perceived relevance of marketing and its related concepts (Akaah et al. 1988). At this point, categorical equivalence should be mentioned. Categorical equivalence is related to the product category used in the

**TABLE 5** Alternative Models

| | $X^2$ |
|---|---|
| **One-Dimensional** | 1988.99 |
| **Three- Dimensional (PFU, BNFU and BNSU)** | 1141.43 |
| **Two- Dimensional (PU and BNU)** | 1281.71 |

**TABLE 6** Explanation Values of the Model (SMC: Squared Multiple Correlations).

| Variables | SMC | Variables | SMC | Variables | SMC |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **C1** | 0,81 | **G2** | 0,69 | **SI1** | 0,46 |
| **C2** | 0,72 | **G3** | 0,57 | **SI3** | 0,77 |
| **S1** | 0,57 | **G4** | 0,72 | **SI4** | 0,76 |
| **S2** | 0,65 | | | **ST1** | |
| **S3** | 0,46 | | | **ST2** | |
| **S4** | 0,61 | | | **PI1** | |
| | | | | **PI2** | |

study and comparability in product category definitions (Douglas and Craig 1983), meaning that product categories need not be similar across countries. In keeping with the need to simulate similar condition in replicated studies, the same product category is used in the current study. It should be expressed that while we have chosen the same product category, it is likely that some degree of differences will occur that could affect the comparability of the product from one study to another.

Functional equivalence relates to the question whether the concepts, objects or behaviours studied have the same role or function in all countries included in the analysis. To enhance functional and conceptual equivalence, original measures were translated to Turkish first, then translated back to English by a bilingual faculty professor who is a native speaker of Turkish language, to acquire exact meaning of the measures. Sufficient importance were given to the exact meaning of the measures rather than the exact translation in order to avoid the possible confusing or poorly worded expressions due to different structures of two languages. In addition, Douglas and Craig (1983) states that it is possible to minimise the inequivalence raised by language differences by the pretest, an in this study, pretest of the questionnaire was given to 30 MBA students in order to avoid the possibility of the scale inequivalence due to language differences and to determine whether the questions express the statements clearly. Then new translations were devised for the items that were thought confusing.

The data was collected from the students of The Faculty of Political Science at Ankara University. Faculty professors helped collect the data especially by explaining to the students how to fill out the questionnaires. The sample size of the study was similar and using university students, as a relatively more homogenous group, also minimises random error that might occur by using a heterogeneous sample (Durvasulava et al. 1993). Earlier studies also used students as their samples (Waller and Fam 2000; Waller et al. 2005) and student samples in cross-cultural comparison are thought as superior samples for establishing equivalence, controlling source of variation and isolating the cultural differences (Dant and Barnes 1988; Waller et al. 2005)

In measurement equivalence, each scale item must measure the underlying construct similarly across nations. This condition requires that respondents from different countries/cultures with the same values on some variables must score similarly for that particular variable and use the same scoring format throughout the study (i.e. there must be scoring format reliability) (Bhalla and Lin 1987; Douglas and Craig 1983). Environmental differences between developing and industrialised countries affect the respondents in evaluating marketing scales/measures mainly because respondents from developing countries are less familiar because of the level of marketing practice (Dadzie et al. 2002). In contrast to the eleven-point Likert scale of Vazquez et al. (2002), we used the five-point Likert scale because it is the commonly used measure for Turkish samples (Duman et al. 2004). There are other cross-cultural study that used the five-point likert scale with satisfactory results (Kaynak and Kara 2002; Rawwas et al. 2005; Waller et al. 2005). In addition, in some other cross-cultural studies, scales were transformed to different scale values because different respondents in different countries have different interpretations due to linguistic groupings (Dadzie et al. 2002). Pronounced cultural, linguistic, and individual differences probably will manifest themselves in the way scales are interpreted and scored.

## CONCLUSION

In this study, a scale developed on the bases of the functional and symbolic utilities composition of a brand in order to measure consumer based brand equity, was tested. The test was to determine whether the original scale developed and tested scale was appropriate for Turkey as a different culture.

As a result of exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, the study indicated that the 22-items scale was not appropriate for the sample of this study. After eliminating the items with low factors, acceptable model fit was obtained with the new 16-items scale. In other words, even though the original scale was not applicable, similar results could be obtained with changes. The balance of evidence suggests that different cultural conditions lead consumers to different evaluations. For the sample and selected product category in this study, comfort and social identification are main dimensions affecting the consumer based brand equity. It should be noted that the results might have been different if the sample had been selected from different education levels and geographic regions.

In the study of Vazquez et al (2002), all the items in the scale were reliable and valid, except one item in guarantee that was dropped from the scale after the confirmatory factor analysis. However, in this study, duration and aesthetics had low reliability scores and some measurement variables, namely C3 (easily finding the sizes of the brand), D1 (duration for brand), A1 (aesthetic of the brand), A2 (colour options of the brand), G1 (improvements in features of the brand), and SI2 (brand used by friends), were eliminated from the scale because of lower factor loadings. The differences between the original and current study probably occurred due to cultural differences as it is one of the main factors to determine consumer behaviour (Hafstrom, Jeanne L. et al. 1992; Chen et al. 2005). Consumers prioritise their own principles in the process of choosing particular products (Shaw and Clarke 1998) and may have different decision making styles because of population groups and cultures (Durvasula et al. 1993). Consumers' approach to variety also differs as Kim and Drolet (2003) showed that people from different cultures where different assumptions of choice show different levels of variety. Differences may also be raised because of the sample demographics. In contrast to the original study's proportional stratification of the population in terms of age and sex, the current sample was university students who were in the same age group and have high level of education. It is supported by Abdel- Ghany and Sharpe (1997) who found significant spending pattern differences between age groups in their study. In this study, one dimension, namely aesthetics, was not perceived important in evaluation of the consumer based brand equity, meaning that product symbolic utilities are not important for our sample. In the study of Vazquez et al (2002), product functional utility, as a multidimensional concept, comprised three subdimensions of comfort, safety and duration according to the reliability and validity analyses. However, in our study, duration had a low reliability score and was eliminated from the scale. Brand name symbolic utility is multidimensional also in our study as in Vazquez's et al. (2002), however, some items are lost after the analyses as mentioned above. One item in the subdimension of guarantee, "brand that offers good value for money" was dropped in the original study. In our study, this item was perceived important for respondents.

Our paper contributes to the understanding of differences across markets. This is an important issue for managers and decision makers in the global economy for two reasons. First, the prevailing wisdom in the development of a global brand is that consumer tastes across cultures are increasingly more homogeneous than they used

to be. Some of the factors responsible for this convergence are increase in travel, tourism satellite television, and particularly, the development of the Internet and its derivatives.

On the basis of the extant literature and existing findings by Vazquez et al., (2002), we tested the scope of consumer brand equity. This was carried out be examining whether an existing model (Vazquez et al 2002) could be applicable in a different sample. The study clearly demonstrates that brands need to be developed to suit the needs of different cultures. The implication of this include that while brands that are well known globally can travel well across cultures, they need to be flexible enough to reflect and adapt to variations in consumer preferences that may arise as a result of cultural differences.

Finally, researchers may want to refine and extend these exploratory and confirmatory findings with further development of measurement scales to build on what has already been tested in other markets and sectors. Although, consumers differ in style, taste and the evaluation approaches they use to assess brands as well as, the underlying factors are often drawn from relatively similar sources. However, there may be differences in the way they interpret attributes and the importance of the attributes. Our findings are consistent with the current state of knowledge suggests that there are partial consistencies in the way customers evaluate brands across cultures, but not enough to treat markets that may seem similar in the same way. Therefore, brand owners still need to revisit the variations that exist between seemingly similar markets, unless they can determine that such similarities have percolated beyond a known segment within the market.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS AND CORRESPONDENCE

***Dr Akin Koçak*** is an Assistant Professor of Marketing and Entrepreneurship at the Faculty of Political Sciences at Ankara University. He teaches marketing management, consumer behaviour, and entrepreneurship. His research interests are entrepreneurship, marketing of small and medium sized enterprises, marketing strategy and market orientation. He holds PhD from Ankara University. He has published in Marketing Intelligence and Planning, and International Journal of Entrepreneurship Behavior and Research. His Works have also been presented and published in various conference proceedings.

Dr Akin Koçak, Ankara Universitesi, Siyasal Bilgiler Fakultesi Ankara, 06590-Cebeci, Ankara, Turkey.

**T** +90 312 319 77 20 / 245
**F** +90 312 319 77 38
**E** kocak@politics.ankara.edu.tr

***Dr Temi Abimbola*** BA(hons), MBA, PhD
Temi Abimbola is an Associate Professor of Marketing at the Warwick Business School, UK. She was previously a Senior Lecturer at the UCE Business School, UK

and she worked with Shell UK (Downstream Oil) and Unilever Plc before embarking on her doctoral research in the area of consumer brand value perception. Temi lectures in the areas of Brand, Consumer Behaviour, Entrepreneurial Marketing and Management Research Methods. Her research activities are in the area of Branding in SME and Consumer Behaviour. Her work has appeared in the *Journal of Marketing Management*, *Journal of Brand Management*, and the *Journal of Place Branding*. Dr Abimbola is the founding coordinator of the Academy of Marketing's Brand, Identity and Corporate Reputation SIG. She is also the Regional Chair for the Academy of Marketing's UK Midlands and East Anglia Region.

***Corresponding Author:*** Dr Temi Abimbola, Marketing & Strategic Management Group, Warwick Business School, The University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL, UK

**T** +44 24 7652 2346
**F** +44 24 7652 4628
**E** temi.abimbola@wbs.ac.uk

***Dr Alper Özer*** PhD is Assistant Professor of Marketing at the Faculty of Political Sciences at Ankara University. He holds an MBA degree from University of New Haven, USA and PhD degree from Ankara University. He teaches marketing management, brand management, and services marketing. His research interests are marketing of small and medium sized enterprises, marketing in accounting firms and brand management. His works have been published in *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, and various conference proceedings.

Dr Alper Özer, Ankara Universitesi, Siyasal Bilgiler Fakultesi Ankara, 06590-Cebeci, Ankara, Turkey.

**T** +90 312 319 77 20 / 321
**F** +90 312 319 77 38
**E** ozer@politics.ankara.edu.tr