

A STUDY ON DETERMINING THE LIFESTYLES OF CONSUMERS WHO BUY GLOBAL BRANDED PRODUCTS

Arzu DENİZ*, Leyla GÖDEKMERDAN** ve Alpaslan YÜCE***

Abstract

In today's markets, as a result of rapidly increased competition, owing to increasing number of product, resembling the product's features each other, daily emerging new brands, consumers act more conscious in preference of brand/product. In order to direct these preferences, marketers must consider many factors together and try to identify consumers lifestyle. Lifestyle is one of the variables that marketers use for this aim and the important factors effecting consumer's brand choice. Here with in this study, it is aimed to determine lifestyles of consumers who choice global brands in Erzurum. As a result of the research, lifestyles of consumers who choice global brands were determined as experiencers, strivers, markers, achiever-thinkers and believers.

Key Words: Global brand, life style, Consumer behaviour

Küresel Markalı Ürünleri Satın Alan Tüketicilerin Yaşam Tarzlarını Belirlemeye Yönelik Bir Araştırma

Özet

Günümüz pazarlarında rekabetin hızla artmasının bir sonucu olarak ürün sayısının artması, ürün özelliklerinin birbirine benzemesi, her gün yeni markalar ortaya çıkması nedeniyle tüketiciler artık ürün/marka konusunda daha bilinçli davranmaya başlamıştır. Bu tercihleri yönlendirmek için pazarlamacılar birçok faktörü bir arada değerlendirmeli ve tüketicileri tanımaya çalışmalıdır. Yaşam tarzı pazarlamacıların bu amaçla kullandığı ve tüketicilerin marka tercihini etkileyen önemli faktörlerden biridir. Bu çalışmada Erzurum'da yaşayan ve global marka tercih eden tüketicilerin yaşam tarzlarının belirlenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda global marka tercih eden tüketicilerin yaşam tarzları deneyimciler, gayret edenler, üretkenler, başarılı-düşünürler ve inananlar şeklinde belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Global marka, Yaşam tarzı, Tüketici davranışı

INTRODUCTION

Today, marketers, who want to get different competition advantage, also make use of psychographic parameter with demographic and economic specifications in order to determine why and how consumers buy from target

* Research Assistant, Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences, Department of Business, Gümüşhane University, Gümüşhane.

** Research Assistant, , Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences, Department of Business, Atatürk University, Erzurum, Turkey.

*** Assistant Dr., Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences, Department of Business, Kafkas University, Kars, Turkey.

market in more detail. Life style is a kind of variable which is often used for this purpose. It helps to describe what, how people do, what it means to do this for him and the others. Life style effects which product consumer will buy or not, which trade mark or shop consumers will choose, how consumers use the product and dispose. From this point of view, in research, it has been tried to determine the life style of consumers who prefer global brands. In the first part of the research, theoretical information related with subject, in the second one of the research analyses and comments of obtained data are presented.

I. THEORETICAL FRAME

A. BRAND PREFERENCE

Brand is a term, symbol, noun or the combination of all those which are produced by any business or presented to the marked by many brokerage houses, provides identity for services and makes the concerned product different from its rivals (Kotler,1984: 482; Benett,1988: 301).

Brand provides benefit for consumer to make it easy to choose, give information and trust in terms of quality, refund, maintenance, to provide security in order to reach their wishes when it is about spare parts, increase the quality of presented products by keeping pressure for producers and brokehouses by the way of rivalry and to make products buy one more time (Tuna,1993: 24; Mucuk, 1990: 122). But it makes consumers by surprised and prevents consumers to choice rationally, since the same product is presented by different brands to market. In this sense, brand preference is an action of creating identity by making an emotional and cultural bond between brand and customers.

In traditional consumer behavior literature, consumption and buying facts are described as behaviors aimed at exact goals (Schiffman-Konuk, 2000: 87). Actually, buying fact is no more than solving a problem. Consumers try to provide things which they need. Purchasing help consumers to eliminate or decrease the psychological and physiological stress caused by intrinsic motivators which occurs by various reasons. In its present condition, buying is no more than solving a problem and decision making consists of moving decision making process under certain circumstances. Accordingly, consumers are regarded as to be rational problem solvers using carefull thinking process.

In traditional purchasing decision process, it is assumed that consumers use basic economic principles. According to this, consumers are rational decision makers and select products and services which meet their needs, have minimum costs and satisfy them. (İslamoğlu, 2003: 30).

Brand preference is one of the behavioural dimension of consumers related with brand. There are many factors for consumers to choose a particular brand (Tuna, 1993: 26). While consumers make selection among various products or brands, they prefer chosing the product or brand which will provide maximum profits for them (Demir,1999: 1). Factors such as the features of consumers' needs, perception of brands by consumers, brand image, existing consumer attitudes

towards alternative brands, effectiveness of firms' marketing and advertising strategies, demographic features, life styles of consumers, cultural features of environment, social class and reference groups, consumer life period etc. have an effect on consumer brand preference (Güneri, 1996: 69).

B. LIFE STYLE

Life style is one of the psychographic variable which effect the consumer's behaviour and simply is related with how an individual lives on. In a broad meaning, it is a way of life indicating how people spend their time and energy, what kind of things they give importance around, what they think about people and the world around (Berkowitz, 1997: 25).

Human is a function of his individual characteristics which already exist in human nature, life curve and is formed with social activity (Firat, 2003: 34). It helps to describe what, why people do and what doing this means for themselves and the others (Chaney, 1999: 14; Mowen, 1993: 177; Blackwell et al., 2001: 72).

Life style is effected from past experience, demographic feature, beliefs and attitudes and personality. Even the individuals having the same level of education and income and growing similarly may have different life style. For this reason, life style is an important indicator revealing that people who have similar demographic and economic feature do not have the same point of view about life. Because consumers' whose lifestyles, attitudes, beliefs, world-view and needs are similiar, accordingly have similar behavioural pattern (Solomon, 1996: 588, Chaney, 1999: 14, İslamoğlu, 2003: 30).

When the research about life style are analysed, it has been seen that generally the topics such as determination the consumer's profile, tarket market choice, presentation of a new product, brand/product choice are evaluated (Kabakçı, 2001: 12; Shao, 2002: 20; Witchel, 2002: 273; Firat, 2003: 34; Lin, 2003:7; Arıker, 2005: 46).

The following methods are the most used measurement scales. These are named as; activities, interests and opinions (AIO), Rokeach Value system (RVS), list of value (LOV), values and life style (VALS) and values and life style 2 (VALS2)

The most known and used life style measurement method is value and life styles. Value and life styles is a kind of psychographic research method which is prepared for dividing consumers in to market parts, placing products which are appropriate for the features of each consumers in parts and determining communication strategies aiming for this purpose (Lin, 2003: 9). VALS scale was improved by Arnold Mitchell in 1970's and was officially applied by a company named SRI Consulting Business Intelligence International in 1978. Mitchell who used a long questionnaire form with 2000 persons aimed at measuring how the individuals' needs and values effect their attitudes and behaviours divides the consumers into nine different parts. Some changes were made on this first VALS scale and VALS2 scale, which is used today, was improved. The need for

improving a second scale came into existence because of the fact that the fashion of trends based on the first VALS was out of use and emerging some disproportionalities in distribution of population to market segments. (Piiro, 1991: 6; Hoyer and MacInnis, 1997: 430). Eight different life style groups were determined by means of this improved scale, VALS2 life style groups have been prepared by being based on two basic factors. These factors are the source of consumers and individual intentions (Hoyer and MacInnis, 1997: 430). Consumers' ways of expressing themselves in market determine their motive and sources (Ariker, 2005: 48). According to VALS2 life style, groups are innovators, thinkers, achievers, experiencers, believers, strivers, makers and survivors. (www.sric-bi.com/VALS/types.shtml, 07.03.08).

Innovators: Innovators are successful, sophisticated, take-charge people with high self-esteem. Because they have such abundant resources, they exhibit all three primary motivations in varying degrees. They are change leaders and are the most receptive to new ideas and technologies. Innovators are very active consumers, and their purchases reflect cultivated tastes for upscale, niche products and services.

Image is important to Innovators, not as evidence of status or power but as an expression of their taste, independence, and personality. Innovators are among the established and emerging leaders in business and government. Nonetheless, they continue to seek challenges. Their lives are characterized by variety. Their possessions and recreation reflect to a cultivated taste for the finer things in life.

Thinkers: Thinkers are motivated by ideals. They are mature, satisfied, comfortable, and reflective people who value order, knowledge, and responsibility. They tend to be well educated and actively seek out information in the decision-making process. They are well-informed about world and national events and are alerted to opportunities to broaden their knowledge. Thinkers have a moderate respect for the status quo institutions of authority and social decorum, but are open to consider new ideas. Although their incomes allow them many choices, Thinkers are conservative, practical consumers. They look for durability, functionality, and value in the products they buy.

Achievers: Being motivated by the desire for achievement, achievers have goal-oriented lifestyle and a deep commitment to career and family. Their social lives reflect this focus and are structured around family, their place of worship, and work. Achievers live conventional lives, are politically conservative, and respect authority and the status quo. They value consensus, predictability, and stability over risk, intimacy, and self-discovery. With many wants and needs, achievers are active in the consumer marketplace. Image is important to achievers; they favor established, prestige products and services that demonstrate success to their peers. Because of their busy lives, they are often interested in a variety of time-saving devices.

Experiencers: Experiencers are motivated by self-expression. As young, enthusiastic, and impulsive consumers, experiencers quickly become enthusiastic

about new possibilities but are equally quick to cool. They seek variety and excitement, savoring the new, the offbeat, and the risky. Their energy finds an outlet in exercise, sports, outdoor recreation, and social activities. Experiencers are avid consumers and spend a comparatively high proportion of their income on fashion, entertainment, and socializing. Their purchases reflect the emphasis they place on looking good and having "cool" stuff.

Believers: Like thinkers, believers are motivated by ideals. They are conservative, conventional people with concrete beliefs based on traditional, established codes: family, religion, community, and the nation. Many believers express moral codes that are deeply rooted and literally interpreted. They follow established routines, organized in large part around home, family, community, and social or religious organizations to which they belong. As consumers, believers are predictable; they choose familiar products and established brands. They are generally loyal customers.

Strivers: Strivers are trendy and fun loving. Because they are motivated by achievement. Strivers are concerned about the opinions and approval of others. Money defines success for strivers who don't have enough income to meet their desires. They favor stylish products that emulate the purchases of people with greater material wealth. Many see themselves as having a job rather than a career, and a lack of skills and focus often prevents them from moving ahead. Strivers are active consumers because shopping is both a social activity and an opportunity to demonstrate to peers their ability to buy. As consumers, they are as impulsive as their financial circumstance will allow.

Makers: Like experiencers, makers are motivated by self-expression. They express themselves and experience the world by working on it-building a house, raising children, fixing a car, or canning vegetables-and have enough skill and energy to carry out their projects successfully. Makers are practical people who have constructive skills and value self-sufficiency. They live within a traditional context of family, practical work, physical recreation and have little interest in what lies outside that context. Makers are suspicious of new ideas and large institutions such as big business. They are respectful of government authority and organized labor, but resentful of government intrusion on individual rights. They are unimpressed by material possessions other than those with a practical or functional purpose. They buy basic products in that they prefer value to luxury.

Survivors: Survivors live narrowly focused lives. With few resources with which to cope, they often believe that the world is changing too quickly. They are comfortable with the familiar and are primarily concerned with safety and security. Because they must focus on meeting needs rather than fulfilling desires. Survivors do not show a strong primary motivation. Survivors are cautious consumers. They represent a very modest market for most products and services. They are loyal to favorite brands, especially if they can purchase them at a discount.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. AIM OF THE RESEARCH

One of the important factors directing the daily life of consumers and effecting their behaviours is life style. It is an important psychographic variable used mostly and guiding to marketers in the workings carried out to determine and evaluate consumer's attitudes and manners. This factor is one of variables taken account of determining consumer's profile, market parting, appropriate target market preference, presenting new product, choosing an appropriate communication line for target market (Kabakçı, 2001: 11; Shao, 2002: 22; Witchel, 2002: 275; Fırat, 2003: 36; Lin, 2003: 9; Arıker, 2005: 48). Also, as it is mentioned in literature part of the research, life style is one of the important factors effecting the brand preference of the consumers. Marketers can understand why consumers prefer which brand by determining life style of them and improve better strategies. From this point of view, in this research it is aimed to determine the life style of the consumers who prefer global brand. So it is aimed to provide information to marketers about, target consumers buying global brands, determining marketing activities and recognitioning their markets.

B. THE SAMPLE

The universe of the research consist of the consumers who are 18 years old and over and live in Erzurum - prefer Coca Cola for drink. As sampling method, convenience sampling method has been chosen. Sample size has been regarded as 400. Questionnaire study was held between March 10-22 2009. Totally 420 questionnaire were done and because of misfilling, 400 questionnaire left.

Before preparing an exact questionnairy form and gathering information, there were 20 people who were studied with pre-questionnairy process. They were asked to assess their scale statements about life styles. After these regulations, necessary corrections were made and form was revised.

The scope of research consists of consumers who are 18 and over and living in Erzurum. Coca Cola, which is the most valuable brand of the world, has been choosen as global brand since 2008. (http://www.interbrand.com/best_global_brands.aspx, Data accessed, 05.07.2009). For this reason, results can not be prevented for the other product groups.

C. THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Data were gathered by using survey method with face to face. In survey form, there are 2 groups of questions. The first group of them were prepared in order to determine the life style of the people who answer the questions and the second one of the questions were prepared in order to determine the demographic features of the participants. The life style of the participants were tried to be understood by VALS 2 scale. Questions related with life style were asked by means of 5 point Likert scale (5=I totally agree, 1= I never agree). Data were

analysed by the way of SPSS 13.0 Statistics programme. In analyses of data, descriptive statistics and and factor analysis were used.

D. FINDINGS

Demographic and economic features of survey participants are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic and Economic Feature of Survey Participants

Demographic and Economic Feature					
Gender	(f)	(%)	Marital Status	(f)	(%)
Female	189	47,2	Married	193	48,2
Male	211	52,8	Single	207	51,8
Age	(f)	(%)	Education Level	(f)	(%)
18-24	243	60,75	Primary	12	3
25-31	76	19	Secondary	102	25,5
32-38	38	9,5	Univrsiy	213	53,25
39-45	26	6,5	Master	73	18,25
46+	17	4,25	Occupation	(f)	(%)
Income	(f)	(%)	Official	38	9,5
1000 TL and under	56	14	Student	178	44,5
1001-2000TL	212	53	Artificer/Merchant	72	18
2001-3000TL	89	22,25	Housewife	36	9
3001-4000 TL	28	7	Private Sector	55	13,75
4001 YTL +	15	3,75	Retired	21	5,25
			Total	400	100

As it is seen in table-1 52,8 % of survey participants are male, 51,8 % are single, 60,75 % are between 18-24 age, 53,25 % are university graduate, 53 % earn between 1001-2000 TL and 44,5 % are student.

Frequency of buying Coca Cola and the reason of buying were asked to participants, and answers are shown in Tablo 2 below.

Table 2: Frequency of drinking Coca Cola of Survey Participants and Reason of Choosing This Brand

Frequency of drinking coke	(f)	(%)
Everyday	252	63
Often	95	23,75
Sometimes	37	9,25
Seldom	16	4
Reason of Coca Cola Preference	(f)	(%)
Taste	123	30,75
A Global Brand	102	25,5
Habit	87	21,75
Advertisement	46	11,5
Price	29	7,25
Other	13	3,25

As you see at Table 2, 63% of answerers drink Coca Cola everyday. Moreover, 30,75% of the respondents prefer Coca Cola due to taste, 25% of them prefer Coca Cola since it is a global brand.

Variance, factor density, variance percentage and eigenvalue of life style factors are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Life Style Factors

Variations	Factor Density	Variance Percentage	Eigenvalue
Factor 1: Experiencers		29,779	6,725
I like having much enthusiasm in my life	0,752		
I like having variety in my life	0,713		
I always look for big excitement	0,704		
I usually look for excitement	0,692		
I like doing new and different things	0,672		
I like trying to do a thing I have never done before	0,632		
I like trying new things	0,629		
I like extraordinary things and people	0,607		
Factor 2: Strivers		7,461	2,537
I like wearing in the latest fashion	0,798		
I wear more fashionably than the others	0,777		
I like being thought as a person wearing in a fashionable style.	0,770		
I follow the latest products and trends	0,675		
To be honest, I like showing off.	0,633		
I see myself as an intellectual.	0,422		
Factor 3: Makers		6,441	2,190
I like dealing with wood, metal or the things like these and doing something.	0,766		
I like doing things requiring hand skill and handcraft.	0,692		
I like doing things requiring hand skill and things I can use.	0,681		
I am good at maintaining and repairing machines or mechanic things like engine.	0,634		
Factor 4: Achievers and Thinkers		5,920	2,013
I like gathering information about art, culture and history.	0,506		
I like pioneering people around	0,497		
I really like being responsible for a group.	0,463		
I am more skillful than many people.	0,420		
A woman keeps a successful life only if she provides a happy housing for her family.	0,720		
Government should promote religious teaching in schools.	0,701		
There are a lot of TV programmes which are immoral.	0,652		
As it is mentioned in Kur'an, the world was created within six days.	0,531		

Factor analysis were applied VALS2 that was used to determine the lifestyle of respondents. In result of this analysis, 5 factors were obtained from 35 items. 9 items haven't taken place under any factor. Alpha coefficient of used scale is 0,830.

The items that have 0,40 and over factor density were taken into consideration. These factors explain the 54,22% of total variance. (KMO: 4768,776, Barlett Globality Test: 561,000 $p < 0,001$).

In literature, there are six life style such as innovators, thinkers, achievers, experiencers, believers, strivers, makers and survivors in VALS2 scale. When we look at the end of descriptive factor analyses, the life style of answerers are determined as experiencers, strivers, makers and achievers –thinkers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this research, which was carried out in order to determine the life style of the consumers who prefer global brands, the results were found below:

The most of the survey participants are males, between 18-24 year-old, single and university graduates. They are university students in terms of occupation. Their income average is between 1001-2000 TL.

Factor analyses were applied to scale in order to determine the life style of the answerers. As a result of the survey, the life styles of the survey participants are defined as experiencers, strivers, makers, achievers –thinkers and believers.

In consideration of obtained findings, It can be suggested that;

Life style is one of the important factors effecting consumer's behaviour. By using data about the life style of consumers, marketers can choose appropriate communication strategies, position their products in compliance with these features and so they can effect the attitude of consumers aimed to global brands.

According to results of the research, the consumers who prefer global brands have different life style. Coca Cola, which was chosen as global brand by us, appeals to different consumers. The market of this brand is made up by consumers who show off, look for practicality and functionality, are more conventional and conservative and the consumers who prefer prestigious products. It is useful for marketers to divide these people into groups in accordance with life style and improve different marketing strategies for each group. The strategies which accord with the life style of consumers are to be more effective. Suggestions related with these life styles are offered below:

Experiencers are young, willing and heady consumers. They look for variety and excitement and they prefer new, extraordinary and risky. In order to draw consumers' attention, marketers may point out that brand is preferred by young people through advertisement, and they may emphasize excitement, risk and extraordinary being. Moreover empiricists like gym, spor and other social activities. They can get benefit from these social activities in order to make brand popular and have a stand.

Strivers generally shop very carefully and they give importance to the others' opinion. If marketers can provide a positive word of mouth with their activities, they can make these consumers buy the desired brand. For such consumers, shopping means a social activity and an opportunity to show people what they buy. Generally, they don't have a plan before shopping. Marketers can

make these shopping increase by caring the design of the global brand in shopping malls, focusing on the activities in shop area and providing target product to be tried by consumers.

Makers look for practicality and functionality. They want to find their product everywhere. Marketers can provide the availability of the product everywhere in order to make such consumers go on buying and make them loyal customer. Additionally, they are doubtful about new ideas and big institutions. More information about product content can be given to these buyers in order to decrease their suspicions towards trying this product.

Achievers – thinkers are well-educated, well-informed and they are searcher people. Image is very important for these people. For this reason, they prefer prestigious, quality and security proved products. Marketers can emphasize that brand is a prestigious, quality and global one in order to make these consumers buy these products both in advertisements and sales promotions.

Believers are more conventional and conservative people. Customs, family, religion and society are crucial for these people. Their incomes and education levels are low. For this group, advertisement related with mentioned global brand can be provided in a more conventional, appropriate for the terms of family and society and articulate way. As they have limited income, their attention may be drawn to sales promotions as discounts, price campaigns

Life style is an important factor for big or small firms' determining marketing activities. So firms that target consumers who buying global brands must search their customers' life styles and direct their activities to their life styles. If most of population are experiencers, marketers may organize social activities or do sponsorship for brand promotion and positioning. Because experiencers like social activities.

If most of population are strivers, marketers must try to provide a positive word of mouth advertising. So consumers will often buy the brand. Additionally, marketers may increase selling global brands by caring global brand's design in shopping centre and increasing point of sale activities.

If most of population are makers, marketers must give more information about product because of makers care product's functionally and practicality. So they may decrease consumers' suspicious towards products.

If most of population are achievers – thinkers, marketers must focus on prestige and quality. They use these features in sales promotions, advertisements etc. Additionally they can use famous and prestigious persons like artists, actors in advertisements.

If most of population are believers, marketers must care social norms, customs, family. They must offer products that are appropriate for family, religion, customs, society. They must emphasize these features in marketing activities as sales promotions, advertisements.

However, there is a limitation in the study. The questionnaire was conducted to consumers who live in Erzurum. Because of this limitation are cost and time. So the results couldn't have been generalized.

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