



CUSTOMER PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES: A STUDY OF TURKISH BRAND TRUST

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Abstract

This paper aims to identify and reveal factors that are most important for consumer trust regarding Turkish brands. Until now little scientific attention from researchers have had this topic in the North Macedonia. This study also examines the functionality of concept of trust in the perspective of Turkish brands compare to other global brand environment. For this, a total of 415 participants have been participating in this research. In order to be relevant this research we have used both, qualitative and quantitative methods, respectively questionnaire on the other side Cronbach's Alpha and Independent simple test (t-test) to testify hypothesis. Based on the analysis, the study concludes that between consumers i.e. between male and female there is not difference on the Turkish Brand Trust, in the aspect of quality trust, price trust, origin trust, image trust and advertising trust. In practical side these findings have many utilities, in the managerial side, managers will have significant information which factors are relevant in the context of Brand trust, on the other side researchers will have which variables should take as relevant in further research regarding this topic.

Keywords: Brands, Brand Trust, Trust, Global Brands, Turkish brands

INTRODUCTION

The twenty first century, particularly the last decade of this century is famous in the context of global brands around the world. After the independence in 1991, North Macedonia followed free market economy. This was one great opportunity for both, consumer and companies to fulfill their needs i.e. capital for business and biological needs, desire and satisfaction for consumers with foreign products and brands. In the beginning was very difficult to enter in the Macedonian market, even that government has proclaimed free market conditions for foreign investors. This situation resulted in the restriction to imports with different methods like tax barriers, trade barriers and customs barriers. During the time Macedonia have been understood the reality of the free market and the advantages of this concept practically. Despite the many global brand that entered in the Macedonian market, part of these global brands also were and Turkish brands. In the begging consumers were not very satisfied with the Turkish brands, due to the low quality, bad perception and produced with not advanced technology. However, by the time consumers have changed the perception regarding Turkish brands in Macedonia. There are many reasons why consumers changed opinion about that, we can number several of them. First, improved quality dramatically, improved image of design and advertising.

Although brand concepts reflect both tangible (i.e., what the brand actually does) and intangible (i.e., the way people think about the brand abstractly) aspects of the brand (Keller 1993, 2007), over the years, both practitioners and academics have come to realize that establishing abstract brand concepts on the basis of motivational and emotional meanings induces more favorable consumer responses than focusing on superior functional attributes (Hopewell 2005; Monga and John 2010). According to Samuel and Douglas (2000) brands play key functions such as:

- Establish an identity for the company's product or products.
- Serve as a symbol that is easily recognized by consumers.
- Guide and simplify consumer choice.
- Differentiate one product offering from another.

The aim of this paper is to identify and reveal factors that are most important for consumer trust regarding Turkish brands in the North Macedonia,

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the general way based in many books and articles as Keller and Swaminathan (2020), Kepperer (1997) Tasci, Gartner, and Cavusgil, (2007), Kotler and Keller, (2012 and 2016), brand is powerful means of differentiation, and that differentiation is a significant competitive marketing strategy. A brand-understood to be *“a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a*

combination of them, [that] is intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or a group of sellers and to differentiate from those of competitors” (Kotler 1997, p. 443).

According to Keller (2008) the names given to products come in many different forms. For example, there are brand names based on people (e.g., Estee Paunder cosmetics, Porsche automobile, Ferrari automobiles, Citroën automobile, Benetton fashion, Boeing airplane, Bosch equipment, Calvin Clain fashion) places (e.g., Santa Fe cologne, Chrysler’s New Yorker automobile, and British Airlines, Turkish Airlines), animals or birds (e.g., Mustang automobiles, Dove soap, Greyhound buses), or other things or objects (e.g., Apple computers, Shell gasoline, and Carnation evaporated milk).

Brand trust literature

Based in the many academic literature trust has receive attention from scholars in the field of marketing, management even nowadays in psychology, economics and others applied areas. The research of trust concept comes from the analysis of personal relationship, in the field of social psychology, because it is considered an inherent characteristic of any valuable social interaction (Delgado and Munuera, 2001).

According to Doney and Cannon (1997) marketing research on trust primarily focuses on two targets of trust: supplier firms and their salespeople. Trust of a supplier firm and trust of a supplier's salesperson, though related, represent different concepts. For example, a long-term relationship with a trusted supplier could be jeopardized by a company representative who proves to be dishonest and unreliable (e.g., Kelly and Schine 1992). Conversely, highly trusted salespeople can preserve customer commitment during difficult times created by management policies that appear contrary to the customer's best interests (e.g, Schiller 1992). According to Dwyer et al. (1987) in channel settings, for instance, trust reduces tensions and conflicts between firms and facilitates information disclosure, thereby enhancing coordination and encouraging future transactions. On the other side trust plays a critical role in customer–firm relationships as well, for it enhances and maintains consumer satisfaction and loyalty (Sirdeshmukh et al. 2002). Trust is also vital in managing consumers’ concerns about revealing personal information over the Internet, the number one issue hampering the growth of e-commerce (Olivero and Lunt 2004)

Brand trust is defined as *“the willingness of the average consumer to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function”* (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001). On the other hand, Aker (1997) argued that measures trust under the dimension of sincerity, which is one of the five brand personality dimensions. This dimension as part or overall brand personality dimensions is made up of traits such as down-to-earth, honest, wholesome and cheerful. Davies *et al.*, (2004)

measures trust under the dimension of agreeableness with their measure for corporate image or character. So, in this case traits, like warmth, empathy, and integrity are used to represent trust. According to Urban *et al.*, (2000) brand trust is one of the strongest tools of making the relationship with the consumers on the internet and companies dominant marketing tools. Mitchel *et al.*, (1998) argue that before a consumer can trust a brand there must be an element of satisfaction with the brand. However, in this context there need to be a relationship or mutual trust between parties, respectively between consumers, organization and CEO (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Sometimes consumers are satisfied from global brands, but this doesn't mean that satisfaction is the key point to mean that consumers trust in the power of global brands. Meantime, authors Hess and Story, (2005) argued that satisfaction is necessary but is not sufficient for the formation of brand trust and not all satisfied consumers trust the brand. As well, a research demonstrate that brand trust can reduce the consumer's uncertainty, because consumers not only knows that brand can be worth trusting, but also they think that dependable, safe and honest consumption scenario as well is the important link of the brand trust (Ajrun and Morris, 2001). Nonetheless, Delgado *et al.*, (2003) stated that brand trust refers to consumer to contain explicit expectation to brand's credibility and intention. The most recent literature on trust generally is very omnipresent concept and scholars have divided in many filed to be much clear for readers, researchers, academics and students. They have scrutinized trust in the different dimensions such as trust in the relationship between buyer and seller, trust in the marketing, trust in products, trust in the producers, trust in a brand. All these concepts of trust are different in the context of explanation and the role that takes in the consumer perspective.

There are differences between trust as a general concept and brand trust. Exploring for these definition researchers will find many articles that explain the essence of this concept. Several authors define brand trust as a factor that makes an average user believe that brand will perform its stated purpose whatsoever (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001), as well, brand trust is important because they create customer relationship (Urban *et al.*, 2000). One important issue regarding brand trust is also the components of trust. According to Delgado *et al.*, (2003, p.3) definition of brand trust reflects to distinctive components: brand reliability and brand intentions. The collection of the comprehensive above-mentioned brand trust, the consumer is usually placed in the product scenario of numerous brands and likeness. When the consumer has the brand consciousness, it was worth trusting, dependable, security of and honesty that considers to purchase the brand's merchandise in the future.

In summary, brand trust is defined as addressed by Delgado *et al.*, (2003): The trusty expectations of the brand's reliability and intentions. Brand trust is therefore conceptualized as having two distinct dimensions that express different perspectives from which a brand may be

considered trustworthy. Symbolic brand in markets with high perceived risk need to provide trust which is achieved through developing perceptions of consumer-brand intimacy and emotional investment (Rosenbaum, Percy and Pervan, 2018).

Li et al., (2008) argues that brand trust exists when consumers place their confidence in a brand with respect to specific aspects of a brand such as performance competence and benevolent intentions. However, trust is still at the early stages of understanding within marketing and consumer research, in contrast to other disciplines and research traditions, such as psychology, sociology, and philosophy (Yannopoulou et al., 2011). In one research, Deari and Balla, (2013) came to conclusions that global brands are trusted from consumers despite their gender, age, income and education level, respectively demographic factors. In line with this issue, authors Balla and Deari(2015) found that five components that they have incorporated in the study named the first component product information, second component packing attraction, third component product promotion, fourth component location based on price, fifth component brand image explain 66.2 % of total variance for all variables in the model, in the choice of a brand based on product's attributes.

According to Sichtmann (2007) concept of trust has recently attracted researchers' increasing interest, there are very few empirical studies that focus principally on trust, while findings of relevant works are often contradictory, especially with regards to its determinants and antecedents. Aaker, (1991), argued that trust is seen as a vital component for the brand to build a lasting relationship with consumers. There is a question about the source of trust, in the research paper done by Delgado *et al.*, (2001) the source of trust is a process by which an individual attributes a trust image to the brand is based on his or her experiences with the brand. On the other side when it comes to the experience according to Keller (1993) it will be influenced by the consumer's evaluations of any direct or indirect contact with the brand. Gansen (1994) is going one step forward and emphasize that overall satisfaction generates trust because it indicates brand consistency in the fulfillment of its commercial promise and that the brand protects and takes care of the individual's welfare and interest.

Brand trust is in the early stage of research and there are few research articles that are dedicated to this field of marketing in the Balkan countries. We think this scientific paper will bring new information in this topic, respectively in the brand trust. As well brand managers, researchers and academics will have opportunities to get more information based in the date that generate new information based in the quantitative method.

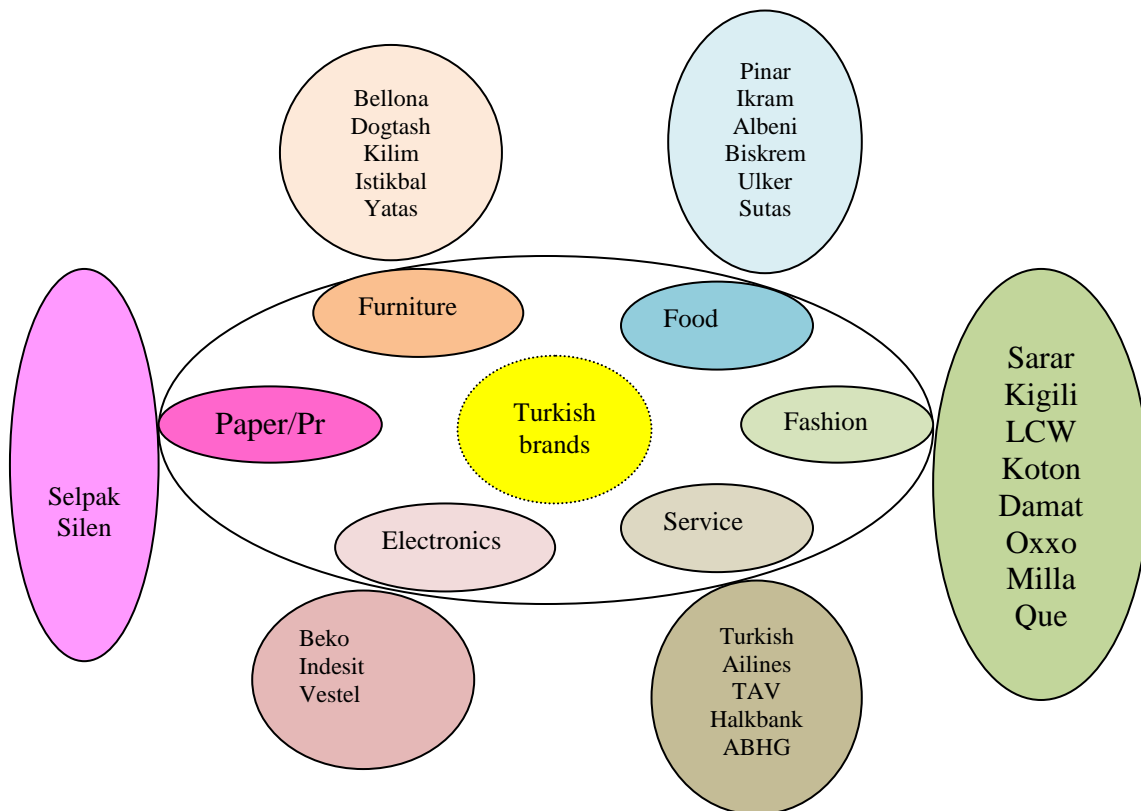
In the figure number one we have incorporate in the illustrative form the presence of Turkish brands in the North Macedonia. In each circle there are many Turkish brands who belongs to the group of brands, for instance in the category of furniture readers will find out

brands like Belona, Kilim, Istikbal, Yatash, Dogtas etc. In the same way there are grouped in the category of fashion e.i., Koton, LCWaikiki, Sarar, Kigili, damat, Machka, Tween, etc. As well as, in theoretical model are incorporated the rest part of Turkish brands, particularly brands who belongs to the products, services, electronics and paper products.

Research model and hypotheses development

The proposed theoretical model is designed in such way in order to clarify better the study of Turkish brand, as well as this theoretical model will be the corner stone of testing the hypothesis using different statistical methods.

Figure 1. Turkish brands in the North Macedonia



Quality trust

The concept of quality trust in one of the main topic in the focus of marketers, managers and researcher. These topic has attracted many of these parties to interact each other in order to offer in the market and consumers in the tangible form. Based in the article of Becker (2000) quality is defined in terms of the moment at which the consumer receives information or cues about the characteristics of the product while shopping for or consuming it.

Consumer mostly tries to buy brand that will find quality in order to fulfill their needs to solve problems that they face. If the brand is different from what customers expected, it will make the brand have the lower quality at the targeted customers' perspective (Soerdato et al., 2019). According to Fandos and Flavian, (2006) quality can be divided into three categories based on product attributes:

1. Search Quality (quality in the shop)-this category is associated with intrinsic and extrinsic product attributes that are cued at the moment the purchase is made and are important for quality selection.
2. Experience Quality (eating quality)-this category is associated with intrinsic attributes that become available only when the product is used or consumed and are important for the consumers' perception of organoleptic quality.
3. Credence Quality-this category represents both intrinsic and extrinsic attributes that are of concern to the consumer but are not cued in the buying or consuming process. The consumer must, therefore, rely on information transmitted by the media, word of mouth, etc.

Price trust

Price is one of the main elements of mixed marketing and at the same time a very important element in the field of global and local brands. Price is also one of the major challenges for marketing managers in defining global products, services and brands. According to Keller (2008), pricing strategy dictates how brand prices categorize consumers (e.g., low, medium, or high priced).

Consumers do not perceive global brands equally against local ones, whether in terms of price or geography. Preliminary research has shown that consumers perceive global brands as more expensive than local ones, but see in them some other special attributes. Global brands usually have a high price and symbolize a high quality, features that promote advertising more clearly. Thus, for example, Ariel detergents and Panten shampoos show a high brand quality, while being tested by experts in different countries of the world (Kumar et .al 2009). The price of global brands is varied and has been studied by a large number of researchers around the world. Many studies, such as McConnell (1968), have linked the perception of price perception to the quality of product brands, while Blatberg and Wisniewski (1989) found that consumers often rank brands based on brand category prices. However, consumers can combine the perception of the price of product brands and their perception of brand quality to achieve the perceived value and value of brands (Keller, 2008). Meanwhile, Keller (2013), states that achieving a balance of perceived value is constantly associated with tensions between low prices and increased consumer perceptions of quality on the other hand.

Origin trust

Origin of trust, respectively country of origin of brands presents one of the important variables in the formation of consumer perceptions about global brands. Seen from an academic perspective, this concept occupies an important place for researchers of the country of origin of products or brands. As a term, it was first encountered in a paper made by Nagashima in 1970. Later, it began to be used referring to a very important field in the direction of marketing. Consumer appreciation for the origin of domestic / foreign products / brands has opened a very big dilemma for how they perceive brands. Research on this topic in different countries shows that consumers value more domestic products than foreign ones (Papadopoulos et al., 1990). To make it even easier to understand, the country of origin is identified with the countries where the brands come from, not with the country where they are produced. The country of origin of American brands is identified as the USA, Germany, Japan, Italy, Switzerland, etc. This has led to a large number of global brands being highly differentiated in consumer perceptions regarding the country of origin. According to Batra et al., (2000) in developing countries, when people associate the brand name with global (non-global) companies, they value the brand name more. In a study conducted by Harash et., al (2012) it is stated that the country of origin of brands by consumers.

Image trust

Aaker states that a well-established brand adds value to products through the brand's favourite image. On the other hand there is also a different definition from Bullmore (2006, pp. 64), who says that brand image is a subjective matter and that is why two people cannot have the same perception of the same brand. Keller (2003) asserts that consumer knowledge of brands as a multidimensional construct who consist of two main dimensions: brand awareness and brand image. Brand image represent the perceptions of brands reflected as the main node of information that is memorized in the mind of consumers and contains the mining of brand. It's important to note that brand image should be treated in the context of local and global brands.

A study made by Kepferer and Schuiling(2003) found that local brands benefit from image of global brands, and in this case, consumers value local brands more than global ones. In a study conducted by Chuling and Lambin(2003) on the image of global brands in the country of origin and in other countries, as a main attributes of evaluation are obtained attributes such as, high quality, reliability, good value, simplicity, friendly and traditionally.

Advertising trust

We are constantly exposed to many different stimuli coming from different sources such as advertisement, sounds, videos and many other stimuli. As consumers, are constantly exposed

to many different stimuli coming from different sources such as advertisement, sounds, videos and many other stimuli. Advertising is very important means of communication with consumers and in developed countries it account for about 1 percent of GDP and about 2 percent of the values of consumer goods(Ceku, 2011). According to Duka and Pano (1999), successful advertising campaigns are remembered for a long time when they are characterized by entertainment, as they are attractive as they arouse the audience's curiosity about what will follow. The authors also point out that elements such humor, emotion, character, drama and background are components that have actually been successful. Through advertising, the image of brands is presented by conveying aesthetic message, stimulating interest, or suggesting quality, determining prestige, restoring credibility and contributing to recognition (Peli, 2001, p. 164).

According to Soh et al., (2009) stated that there are seven components have most frequently appeared and seem relevant to trust in advertising: integrity, reliability, benevolence, competence, confidence, likeability, and willingness to rely on

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Measuring consumer brand trust is not easy issue. To be clear and understandable for our research we tried to find relevant literature which are dedicated to the brand trust. In the different literature we found many suggestions related to the many scales and models with multi dimensions construct. Based in this context Morgan and Hunt (1994) developed a scale to measure brand trust using a seven point liker scale. On the other hand, this scale is based in a number of statements with different traits describing trusting relationships, like faithful, integrity, honest and truthful. Compare to the Morgan and Hunt model of consumer brand trust, Hess (1995) has proposed a special brand trust scale, defined as a multi-dimensional construct containing honesty, an altruism, and a reliability dimension. The instrument adopted in this research was a self-administered questionnaire, comprising mainly of Liker type five item scales with end-anchors (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree). The questionnaire consists of five main variables, as we have presented in the theoretical model like brand dimensions with the subgroup variables, as we have explain in the figure number two. The five hypotheses have been tested using t-test or independent –sample t-test. In order to validate all variables, we first have analyzed the reliability of all variables in this questionnaire. The overall reliability for all item (N= 24) was .80 (Cronbach's Alpha = .802) which means that all variables that we have selected in this research are reliable and this is good point to continue with further quantitative analysis. The value of this indicator ranges from 0 to 1 and a guideline in research, based on Nunnally (1978). In general, based in the Litwin (1995) evidence, there is good if the r-value is

equal or exceeds 0.70. However, despite the reliability of all variables we have measured, as well reliability for five main components. As a result, the reliability, for quality trust, price trust, origin trust, image and advertising trust is showed below in the tables from one to five. In this research paper we have interview 415 respondent from different cities in North Macedonia.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Based in the empirical evidence we have relevant information's regarding concept of trust in the Turkish brands. As we can see from the date there are number of consumers in the Republic of North Macedonia that Turkish brands perceive as brand that they significantly trust. From five trusts dimension that we have selected as consumer's quality trust, price trust, origin trust, image trust and advertising trust. The whole model that we have created is with high significant reliability, which means that Turkish brands in the North Macedonian market are highly trusted by the consumers.

Table 1. Reliability Test Results for Quality trust

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,804	5

Table 2. Reliability Test Results for Price trust

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,795	5

Table 3. Reliability Test Results for Origin trust

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,759	5

Table 4. Reliability Test Results Image trust

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,813	5

Table 5. Reliability Test Results for Advertising trust

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,799	5

As we have presented in the tables 1 to 5, we have different level of significance of all variables, respectively in our research we have twenty five items that are grouped in the five dimension of trust. Based in the Cronbach's Alpha which the level of acceptance according to Hair et.al

(2003), is bigger than $(\alpha) > 0.6$. In our empirical result the Cronbach's Alpha for the first group of variables is $(\alpha) = .804$, for the second group of variables Cronbach's Alpha is $(\alpha) = .795$ the third group of variable have level of significance or Cronbach's Alpha is $(\alpha) = .759$, the fourth group of variables have level of significance or Cronbach's Alpha is $(\alpha) = .813$ and the last group of variables, respectively the fifth group of variables have level of significance or Cronbach's Alpha is $(\alpha) = .799$. Based in the formula of Hair et.al (2003) in the each group of variables the level of significance is bigger than $(\alpha) > 0.6$.

Hypotheses testing

The five hypotheses for this study are tested using t-test, respectively independent simple test based in the formula below:

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{(N_1 - 1)s_1^2 + (N_2 - 1)s_2^2}{N_1 + N_2 - 2}\right)\left(\frac{1}{N_1} + \frac{1}{N_2}\right)}}$$

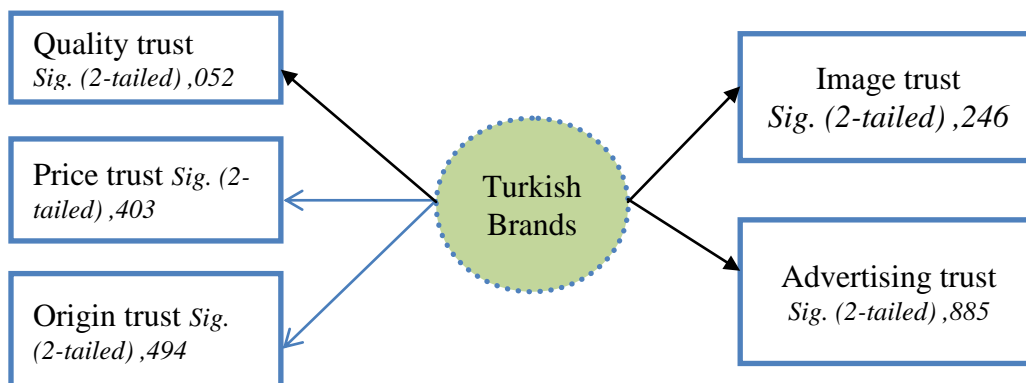
Where:

Degrees of freedom is $2 N_1 + N_2 - X_1$ and X_2 are the respective sample means of the two groups 1

S_1 and S_2 are the standard deviations

N_1 and N_2 are the samples sizes of the two groups

Figure 2. Summary of the hypothesis model



H1: There is no difference between male and female expectations in quality trust (Hypothesis is accepted)

H2: There is no difference between male and female in price trust (Hypothesis is accepted)

H3: There is no difference between male and female in origin trust (Hypothesis is accepted)

H4: There is no difference between male and female in image trust (Hypothesis is accepted)

H5: There is no difference between male and female in advertising trust (Hypothesis is accepted)

Table 6. Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
H:1	Equal variances assumed	,638	,425	-1,953	413	,052	-,82683	,42344	-1,65919	,00553
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,952	412,545	,052	-,82683	,42348	-1,65928	,00562
H:2	Equal variances assumed	1,278	,259	-,836	413	,403	-,35633	,42607	-1,19387	,48121
	Equal variances not assumed			-,836	411,195	,404	-,35633	,42629	-1,19431	,48165
H:3	Equal variances assumed	3,986	,047	-,684	413	,494	-,27991	,40932	-1,08451	,52469
	Equal variances not assumed			-,685	410,417	,494	-,27991	,40880	-1,08352	,52370
H:4	Equal variances assumed	,008	,928	1,163	413	,246	,48235	,41483	-,33310	1,29779
	Equal variances not assumed			1,163	412,848	,245	,48235	,41461	-,33267	1,29737
H:5	Equal variances assumed	1,143	,286	-,145	413	,885	-,06121	,42330	-,89330	,77089
	Equal variances not assumed			-,145	411,029	,885	-,06121	,42282	-,89238	,76996

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

In this research we came to the several conclusions. The findings will contribute to the literature in two ways. First, trust from the consumer perspective is added into model. Second, this study is the first time that is done in the scientific way in the North Macedonia. Third, in the study we have incorporated more than fifty Turkish brands grouped in to the five brand dimensions which are separated each other. An independent t-test was also used for the hypothesis. In this case, the null hypothesis (H: 1 to H: 5) was also not rejected at 5% level of significance. It was, therefore, concluded that “there is no significant difference between male and female on Turkish brand trust. As well as, we can conclude that all five dimensions have the level of significance bigger than 0.05, respectively consumers, male and female in the North Macedonia believe in the quality trust in the Turkish brands, consumers trust in the price of Turkish brands, consumers in the North Macedonia trust in the origin of Turkish brands and consumers trust strongly on the image of Turkish brands and in the end, they trust in the Advertising of Turkish brands. These results also validate the existing findings on the related study. Most of the past findings agreed that there was no significant difference between male and female on Turkish brand trust.

This research paper has some limitation. First, the number of Turkish brands that we have incorporated in this research are not very huge; respectively there are at least twenty nine brands. Second, the numbers of categories that we have grouped brands are six. Third, there are 415 respondents who have participated in this research, even that based in the formula this number is in the line of reliability. Fourth, we have used only independent simple test for testing hypotheses.

For the future research, we propose these suggestion or ide. Number of Turkish brand to be more than we have used in our research, as well as, the dimension of brands should be different and more than six, and using different statistical methods to test hypotheses in order to have different results. Future research should hear the voice of customer which other Turkish brands should be present in North Macedonian market. It's better for future research to include more variables in questionnaire and more brand dimensions such as: perceptions, consumer attitudes, consumer motivations, brand personality, brand loyalty. This research is very good to be carried out in other region in the Balkan countries; this will bring relevant information for researchers and managers in the field of branding.

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