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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

## FACULTY OF SPORT SCIENCES STUDENTS' SPORTS PRODUCTS BRAND PREFERENCES: ANADOLU UNIVERSITY CASE

### *Abstract*

The aim of the study is to examine the factors affecting sports products brand preferences of the students attending the Faculty of Sport Science in Turkey and whether these factors display differences according to certain variables. The population of the current study is the students attending Anadolu University Faculty of Sport Sciences. The sampling includes a total of 369 students. In order to determine brand preferences of the students for sports products, "Brand Preference Scale" developed by Ciftci (2006) which was administered. Significant differences were found in these sub-scales among the groups for various variables ( $p<0.05$ ). The results of the current study show that students take the following factors into consideration while preferring the sports products they will use; the prestige due to the use of the product, brand familiarity and an easy-to-remember name, etc. The following factors are also important while students buy a sports product: not frequent changes in prices, having the same price in every shop, option of payment by credit card and the availability of other easy payment methods. Students state that the following factors are also influential in their sports brand preferences: high quality that meets the expectations; model and product variety, interesting and attractive design, high quality fabric, and the satisfaction with the other products of the brand.

**Keywords:** Product, sport Product, brand, brand preference

## INTRODUCTION

The recent increase in consumption figures and the new motive for the companies to improve their product variety in the 21<sup>st</sup> century lead to the emergence of the concept “branding”, which basically provides rational and emotional satisfaction for business enterprises (Borca, 2003; Ersoy et al., 2004). Today’s consumers tend to give importance to the quality and durability of the products as well as after-sales services and the brand name itself. Brand name facilitates the recognition of the product in a shop. It is clear that popular brand names are preferred than others since they are believed to be more quality and offer better after-sales services (Uzun, 2002; Ersoy et al., 2004). The term “brand name” refers to a special name or logo that distinguishes a particular commercial product or object from the similar ones (Ciftci and Cop, 2007). According to another definition, “brand name” is the identity of the producer or distributor and a symbol of the products that distinguish them from those of the rival companies (Agaoglu, 2013). “Brand name” attributes an abstract meaning to the product beyond its existing concrete meaning. In other words, while products bring certain practical advantages to the consumer, brand name is often associated with certain abstract meanings such as image, prestige, status and freedom. Thus, consumers are interested in the meaning and value that a particular product brings to their lives (Uzun, 2002; Borca, 2003). Brand names are considered the most valuable assets of companies; and therefore, brand name value should be maintained and sustained well. At the same time, it is about self-recognition and emotions of the consumers as well. (Lin et al., 2011; Agaoglu, 2013). It is acknowledged that great achievements of powerful companies are due to powerful brand names (Chimboza and Mutandwa, 2007; Agaoglu 2013). “Branding” is believed to be a process with high spiritual value for an entrepreneur (Wen-Hung Wang and Tang 2011; Agaoglu 2013). Thus, obtaining information regarding the factors considered while purchasing the product of a particular brand is a significant issue (Agaoglu 2013).

### Brand Preference

It is suggested that a campaign using suitable and effective tools and techniques results in higher brand recognition and demand in the target market, which leads to a sort of loyalty to the product. When introduced into a market after a successful strategy, brand name can more easily compete with other companies in the market (Oh and Fiorito, 2002). It is stated that consumers’ purchase behaviors are established according to the meanings they attribute to the product and services. It is also believed that consumers’ purchase behaviors

and brand preferences vary according to the prevailing demographic, psychological and sociological factors of the society they live in. Each factor creates an effect on consumers and contributes to the formation of this brand preference (Aktuglu and Temel, 2006; Cakır et al., 2010). Another factor influencing brand preference is said to be “social class”. Since life style inevitably affects perceptions and attitudes, the people from different classes tend to have the different brand preference pattern (Arslan et al., 2009).

The related studies showed various relationships between brand preference, loyalty and consumer characteristics. Some of the results presented in these studies are as follows: brand loyalty is affected by reference groups; the groups with high income tend to have high levels of brand loyalty; and brand loyalty is high for the groups who perceive high acquisition risk (Islamoglu ve Altunısık, 2008; Cakır et al., 2010).

A detailed review of the related literature revealed that a number of studies have been conducted recently to measure and determine the factors that are likely to influence consumers’ brand preferences (Chen and Chang, 2008; Hogg et al., 1998; Jamal and Goode, 2001; Lin, 2002). There are also many studies conducted to determine above mentioned factors specifically in sports market, which is considered a giant industry (Salman et.al., 2008; Nicholls et al., 1999; Rio et al., 2001). When the related literature is examined in Turkish context, it is seen that majority of the studies on brand preferences were carried out with the consumers in clothing sector, and the sampling groups were mostly university students and younger people. In a study conducted with Marmara University students by Tozoglu et al. (2010), in which the communication tools affecting brand preference were compared; the tools were found to have the following rank in terms of their effectiveness from the highest to the lowest: “newspapers and magazines”, “internet”, “advertisements”, “the brands used in movies”, “commercials on TV between movies and programs”, and “radio”. This order was found as follows in another study conducted with Indiana University students: “advertisement”, “television”, “internet”, “the brands used in movies” “newspapers and magazines”, “commercials on TV between movies and programs”, and “commercials on radio and movies”. In the study conducted by Akkoc et.al (2012) to determine the factors affecting the brand loyalty patterns of Usak University students while purchasing trainers, the researchers found that a majority of students purchased trainers once or twice a year and used their trainers not only in sports activities but also in daily activities as well. It was also found that previous experiences with the products and friends are influential in their brand preference. Another study by Agaoglu (2013) was carried out with the students of Ondokuz

Mayıs University School of Physical Education and Sports to determine the factors effective in brand names and brand management. This study aimed at exploring the role of demographic characteristics in brand preference, and the factors considered by the students in this preference. In another similar study conducted by Ersoy et al., (2004) with Gazi University students to examine their preferences in purchasing shoes and clothes, the researchers found that the following factors affect this purchase preference: purchasing the promoted products; hunting for cheaper brands when the options have similar quality; high availability of the product; and taking the advice and opinions of other people. Finally, Cakır et.al (2010) carried out a study with the students attending Adnan Menderes University Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences to determine the factors affecting their preferences in consumption in general. The researchers found that the following factors are considered more important than the others: the country where the product is produced, the design and ambiance of the selling points, advertisement, price, guarantee, availability, reputation, popularity and brand name itself.

When we consider the recent trendy marketing strategies observed in a growing sector like sports industry, university students might be said to have a considerable effect in the process in various ways. Especially, since the graduates of schools of physical education and sports always take part in sports activities (as teachers, coaches, managers, etc.), they are likely to be in front of the public and might be considered models in terms of sportswear styles. In other words; it can be said that the brands used by these graduates might be preferred by the people around them more easily (Tozoslu et al., 2010). In conclusion, the determination of the factors affecting sports products brand references of students attending a faculty related with sports might provide valuable information for business enterprises while determining their marketing strategies.

## **METHOD**

This section presents detailed information about the population, sampling methods, data collection tools and data analysis in the current study.

### **Subject**

The scope of the study is to examine the factors affecting sports products brand preferences of the faculty of sport sciences' students and whether these factors display differences according to some certain variables.

## Research Group

The population of the current study is university students in Turkey. However, due to the financial restrictions and the impracticality of reaching all university students in Turkey, a sampling group was chosen to conduct the study by using convenience sampling method. One criterion to apply this method is that sampling group must have similar characteristics to those of the whole population. Of the students of Anadolu University Faculty of Sports Sciences (700 Students), 450 were sent the scales since they attend the lessons and exams regularly. 372 of these students agreed to participate in the study. Finally, 369 students replied the scale in a valid way and became the sampling of the study.

## Data Collection Instrument

“Brand Preference Scale” developed by Ciftci (2006) was used as the main data collection tool. This scale consists of two parts; the first part includes items addressing the personal characteristics of the participants and their sports products preferences. The second part includes 21 statements regarding the brand preferences of the participants.

In the first part, the participants were asked to mark only one brand name in the list to indicate their favorite brand. The second part is based on a 5-point Likert system for the statements regarding the factors affecting their brand references (1= Not important at all, 2= not important, 3=neutral, 4=important, 5=very important).

## Data Collection and Data Analysis

The research data was collected by the researcher himself. Unclear parts and instructions were explained by the researcher during the administration. In order to increase the validity and reliability, the ones that were not replied and involving suspicious answers were not included in the data analyses.

Before the administration of the questionnaire, it was given to some students and academic staff at Anadolu University Faculty of Sports Sciences and they were asked to state the potential problems and unclear points in the scale. In the final version, the statements in the scale, which were originally prepared for “jeans brand names”, were changed into “sports products”. The data was transferred into computer and analyzed by using SPSS (Statistical Packed of Social Sciences) 20 program. The data analysis involved frequency charts for demographic characteristics, Cronbach Alpha for reliability, t-test, one way ANOVA and factor analyses.

## RESULTS

This section deals with the findings related to participants' brand preferences for sport products, descriptive statistics, Explanatory Factor Analysis as well as the tests applied to determine possible differences.

**Table 1:** Findings Related to Descriptive Statistics

		Frequency	%
<b>Gender</b>	Female	118	32,0
	Male	251	68,0
<b>Age</b>	16 -19	34	9,2
	20-23	240	65,0
	24 and above	95	25,7
<b>Department</b>	Coaching Education in Sport	100	27,1
	Physical Education and Sports Teaching	119	32,2
	Recreation and Sports	59	16,0
	Sports Management	91	24,7
<b>Average Monthly Income</b>	Less than 500 TL – 1000 TL	112	30,4
	Between 1001- 1500 TL	136	36,9
	1501 TL and above	121	32,8
<b>The Money Spent on Sports Products</b>	Less than 100TL and below	60	16,3
	Between 101 and 250 TL	90	24,4
	Between 251 and 500 TL	111	30,1
	501 TL and above	108	29,3
<b>Total</b>		369	100

\*TL: Turkish Liras

According to the findings related to descriptive statistics in this research (Table 1) 111 (32%) of the students who participated in the study is female and 251 (68%) male. As for the age groups, 34 students (9.2%) are in the age range, 240 (65%) 20-23 and 95 (25.7%) 24 and over. 119 of the students (32.2%) are attending the department of Physical Education and Sports Teaching, 100 (27.1%) Coach Training in Sports, 91 (24.7%) Sports Management, and 59 (16%) Recreation and Sports. As for the variable “monthly income”, the following results were obtained: 112 students (30.4 %) has an income less than 500 TL and 1000 TL; 136 (36.9%) 1001-1500 TL; 121 (32.8%) 1501 TL and above. Finally, 111 students (30.1 %) stated that they spend between 250 and 500 TL for sports equipment and 108 (29.3%) 501 TL and above.

**Table 2:** Sport Brands Preferences of Students

	Sneaker		Tracksuits		T-shirts		Favorite brand	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Adidas	126	34,1	170	46,1	154	41,7	164	44,4
Nike	117	31,7	123	33,3	98	26,6	122	33,1
Puma	31	8,4	29	7,9	44	11,9	31	8,4
Asics	20	5,4	2	,5	2	,5	7	1,9
Reebok	11	3,0	5	1,4	8	2,2	6	1,6
Lotto	9	2,4	8	2,2	9	2,4	4	1,1
Kappa	3	,8	6	1,6	9	2,4	4	1,1
Slazenger	6	1,6	4	1,1	2	,5	1	,3
Umbro	1	,3	4	1,1	4	1,1	2	,5
Hummel	5	1,4	8	2,2	12	3,3	12	3,3
Speedo	4	1,1	2	,5	2	,5	6	1,6
Converse	25	6,8	2	,5	1	,3	6	1,6
Wilson	2	,5	-	-	-	-	3	,8
Mizuno	2	,5	-	-	1	,3	-	-
New Balance	2	,5			1	,3	-	-
Diadora	-	-	-	-	2	,5	-	-
Other	5	1,4	6	1,6	19	5,1	1	,3
Total	369	100,0	369	100,0	369	100,0	369	100,0

The Table 2 shows that the most popular brand name stated for “the currently used sneakers” is Adidas (126 students – 34.1%), which is followed by Nike (117 students – 31.7 %). The least popular brand name is Umbro (1 – 0.3%). As for the preferences for tracksuits (Table 2), Adidas was marked as the most preferred brand name by 170 students (46.1%), which was followed by Nike (123-33.3%). Asics, Speedo and Converse were the least preferred brands (2 students for each 0.5 %). 154 students (41.7 %) told that they preferred Adidas brand for t-shirt. Mizuno and Converse brands were the least popular ones (1 student for each – 0.3 %). Identifying students’ favorite sports products brand is considered very important. According to the following table, 164 students (44.4%) marked Adidas as their favorite brand and 122 students (33.1%) Nike.

**Table 3:** Results of Brand Preference Scale Explanatory Factor Analysis (EFA)

<b>FACTORS</b>	<b>Factor Loading Values</b>	<b>Cronbach Alpha</b>	<b>Explained Variance %</b>
<b>Brand Identity</b>		<b>,828</b>	<b>13,453</b>
1. The prestige due to the use of the brand product	,542		
3. The visibility of the label of the sports product	,602		
6. An easy-to-remember brand name	,749		
7. A catchy logo	,802		
8. The popularity of the brand	,658		
<b>Price and Distribution</b>		<b>,767</b>	<b>10,886</b>
16. Not very frequent changes in prices	,508		
17. The same price in any shops.	,617		
18. Option of payment by credit cards and other easy payment methods.	,639		
19. High availability of the sports brand	,654		
20. Widespread sales points	,538		
21. The presence of special sales points	,451		
<b>Product Features</b>		<b>,685</b>	<b>9,363</b>
11. High quality fabric used in the product	,486		
2. The satisfaction from the quality of the sports product	,524		
4. The product variety of the sports product	,655		
5. Attractive design of the sports product	,463		
9. The credibility of the brand	,410		
10. Other consumers' satisfaction with the same brand of sports product	,429		
<b>Promotion</b>		<b>,787</b>	<b>9,336</b>
12. Advertisement in printed media such as newspapers and magazines	,774		
13- Advertisement in broadcast media such as television or radio	,843		
14. Product promotions organized in sales points	,458		
15. Effective display of the product in sales points	,440		
<b>N=369 KMO= 0,836; Bartlett's Sph. <math>\chi^2= 2648,157</math>; <math>p&lt;0.001</math>; Cronbach Alpha= ,854</b>			

Explanatory Factor Analysis was applied to determine the dimensions of “Brand Preferences Scale” developed by Cifci (2006). Explanatory Factor Analysis is a multi-variable analysis technique used to help researchers to understand the relationships among numerous variables by categorizing them into more manageable units. In other words, factor analysis assists researchers in understanding certain relationships among a set of variables by identifying the basic factors (Altunışık et al., 2005: 212-214). According to Hair et al. (1998), factor analysis is multi-variable analysis technique used to understand the basics of a matrix of data. In explanatory factor analysis, the researcher tries to find out the possible relationship among variables since he / she may not have any predictions or ideas about such relationships available in the study.

Prior to explanatory factor analysis, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test was applied to determine whether sampling size is suitable for analysis or not, and Barlett's Sphericity test is used to test the relationship among the variables. The value between 0.5 and 1 is considered acceptable for a KMO test. If the value is below 0.5, the set is said to be unacceptable for the analysis. The value 0.7 is often considered satisfactory for researchers (Altunışık et al., 2005; Sencan 2005). KMO value for "Brand Preference Scale" was calculated as 0.836, which shows that sampling size was satisfactory for the analysis. As for Barlett's Sphericity test applied for "Brand Preference Scale", which determines the suitability of data for the factor analysis,  $\chi^2 = 2648,157$  and  $p < 0.001$  was calculated. This high value shows a meaningful relationship among variables at a level of significance  $p = 0.000$ .

The factor structure of the data in the factor analysis, which is applied to determine the dimensions of both scales, was analyzed through basic components method using Varimax rotation. There are five statements grouped under the factor "brand identity". The factor loading values for these statements ranges between 0.542 and 0.802. The Chronbach Alpha value was calculated as 0.828, and the factor "brand identity" accounts for 13.453 % of overall variance. A total of six statements were grouped under the factor "price and distribution". The factor loading values for these statements ranges between 0.451 and 0.654. The Chronbach Alpha value was calculated as 0.767, and the factor "price and distribution" accounts for 10.886 % of overall variance. The factor "brand features" includes six statements. The factor loading values for these statements ranges between 0.410 and 0.655. The Chronbach Alpha value was calculated as 0.685, and the factor "brand features" accounts for 9.363 % of overall variance. There are four statements grouped under the factor "promotion". The factor loading values for these statements ranges between 0.440 and 0.843. The Chronbach Alpha value was calculated as 0.787, and the factor "promotion" accounts for 9.336 % of overall variance. It is seen that the factor loading values of all the statements grouped under four factors are over 40 and these four factors accounts for 43.038 % of total variance. In order to determine the internal consistency of the factors affecting brand preferences, Chronbach Alpha Test was applied. A higher value than 0,70 is often preferred for the coefficient in this test (Hair et al). Chronbach Alpha value for "product features" was calculated as 0,685 and overall value for the scale 0,854. This result reveals that the internal consistency of *Brand Preference Scale* is high, and the scales are, therefore, reliable (Table 3).

**Table 4:** The Comparison of Average Points for Sub Scales of Brand Preference Scale according to the Variable “Gender”

FACTORS	Gender	N	Mean	t	P
Brand identity	Female	118	3,733	2,409	,017*
	Male	251	3,521		
Price and distribution	Female	118	4,241	2,492	,013*
	Male	251	4,086		
Product features	Female	118	4,394	2,286	,023*
	Male	251	4,267		
Promotion	Female	118	3,567	,621	,535
	Male	251	3,512		

p<,05\* p<,01\*\*

Table 4 displays the average points for the sub scales of Brand Preference Scale according to the variable “gender”. The comparison made between the average points for the sub scales “brand identity”, “price and distribution” and “product features” showed a meaningful difference between males and females (p<0.05). The average points of females were higher for those of males for all three sub scales. However; there was not a statistically significant difference for the factor “promotion”.

**Table 5:** ANOVA Results Regarding the Significant Differences among Brand Preferences Scale Points according to the Variable “Age”

		sd	F	Sig.
Brand identity	Between groups	2	3,822	,023*
	Within the group	366		
	Total	368		
Price and distribution	Between groups	2	,007	,993
	Within the group	366		
	Total	368		
Product features	Between groups	2	1,537	,216
	Within the group	366		
	Total	368		
Promotion	Between groups	2	2,199	,112
	Within the group	366		
	Total	368		

p<,05\* p<,01\*\*

Data analysis showed a significant difference for the points related to “brand identity” (p=,023) among the groups formed according to the variable “age” (Table 5). No significant differences were found for the points related to other sub scales. Multiple Comparison (Post-Hoc) Test applied to determine the differences among the data obtained related to the variable “age” as a sub scale of “brand identity” showed a meaningful difference between the age groups “16-19” and “24 and over”. The difference favors the age group “16-19”.

**Table 6:** ANOVA Results Regarding the Significant Differences among Brand Preferences Scale Points according to the Variable “Department”

		sd	F	Sig.
Brand identity	Between groups	2	3,776	,011*
	Within the group	366		
	Total	368		
Price and distribution	Between groups	2	1,945	,122
	Within the group	366		
	Total	368		
Product features	Between groups	2	4,689	,003
	Within the group	366		
	Total	368		
Promotion	Between groups	2	1,848	,138
	Within the group	366		
	Total	368		

p<,05\* p<,01\*\*

Data analysis revealed a significant difference for the points among the groups formed according to the variable “department” with regards to “brand identity” (p=,023) and “product features” (p=,003), which are the sub scales of “Brand Preference Scale”. No significant differences were found for the points related to other sub scales (Table 6). Multiple Comparison (POST-HOC) test applied to determine the differences among the figures obtained related to the variable “department” as a sub scale of “brand identity” showed a meaningful difference between two departments; namely “Coach Training” and “Sports Management”. The difference favors the students attending “Sports Management” department.

**Table 7:** ANOVA Results Regarding the Significant Differences among Brand Preferences Scale Points according to the Variable “Monthly Income”

		sd	F	Sig.
Brand identity	Between groups	2	,941	,391
	Within the group	366		
	Total	368		
Price and distribution	Between groups	2	,597	,551
	Within the group	366		
	Total	368		
Product features	Between groups	2	,465	,628
	Within the group	366		
	Total	368		
Promotion	Between groups	2	2,847	,059
	Within the group	366		
	Total	368		

p<,05\* p<,01\*\*

The results of the analysis revealed no significant differences among the groups formed according to the variable “average monthly income” for the sub scales of “*Brand Preferences Scale*” (Table 7).

**Table 8:** ANOVA Results Regarding the Significant Differences among Brand Preferences Scale Points according to the Variable “The Amount of Money Spent on Sport Equipment”

		sd	F	Sig.
Brand identity	Between groups	2	,432	,786
	Within the group	366		
	Total	368		
Price and distribution	Between groups	2	,513	,726
	Within the group	366		
	Total	368		
Product Features	Between groups	2	,618	,650
	Within the group	366		
	Total	368		
Promotion	Between groups	2	1,139	,338
	Within the group	366		
	Total	368		

p<,05\* p<,01\*\*

According to the results of the analysis, no significant differences were found among the groups formed according to the variable “the amount of money spent on sports products annually” for the sub scales of “*Brand Preferences Scale*” (Table 8).

## DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

The data obtained from the current study revealed that the participant marked “Adidas” for all the following items: “The brand you are currently using for trainers” ; “The brand you are currently using for tracksuits” ; “The brand you are currently using for t-shirts” ; and “Your favorite sports products brand” . The second most popular brand is “Nike”. Akkoc et.al, in their study on brand loyalty conducted with the students attending Usak University, found that the mostly preferred brands for trainers were Nike, Converse and Adidas respectively. According to AMBRO Responsive Wordpress Magazine (2012), Ozmutlu who the general manager of Adidas Zone Middle, stated during an interview that the market share of Adidas in Turkey is 42% and Turkey is the fourth biggest market for Adidas in Europe. He further added that Adidas achieved two digit growth rates in Turkey for the last three years, and it projects to increase sports products consumption to the levels of western

countries. The information provided by AMBRO Responsive Wordpress Magazine (2012) is in parallel with the results of the current study, which was conducted during the same period of time as the interview. Of the students who participated in the study, 302 (81.9%) replied “no” to the question: “Do you use brand name products only in sports activities?”. Ozmutlu (2012) told that the Adidas brand products purchased for the purposes of “just for doing sports” consists of one fifth of the whole sales. This clearly shows that sports products are purchased not only for sports activities but also for daily use purposes. The results of the current study are consistent with this information (AMBRO Responsive Wordpress Magazine 2012).

Cavusoglu (2011), in his study on sports products brand preferences and the reasons of such preferences, found that a high percentage of young people (96.4 %) watched TV commercials; especially the ones about sports products’ brands (99%). Among these commercials, Nike had a percentage of 50 and Adidas 44.1 %. Similar to the data about TV commercial watching, the participants also stated that they prefer to Nike (38.9 %) and Adidas (42.2%) as sports products’ brands. This data is consistent with the importance the brands give to promotion campaigns. According to the results of the current study, the students are not influenced by the advertisements in printed media such as magazines and newspapers and the commercials on broadcast media such as radio and television while deciding on the brand they will. The factors that have the most important effect are product promotions at sale points and an effective display of the products.

Ciftci (2006), in his study on “jeans” brand name preferences among university students, found statistical differences according to the variable “sex” for the factors “brand identity”, “brand features” and “promotion”. This study shows that male students give more importance to the factor “brand identity” than female ones. In the current study, a comparison made among the mean values according to the variable “sex” for the sub scales of the factors “brand identity”, “price and distribution” and “brand features” also revealed statistically meaningful differences ( $p < 0.05$ ). In other words, female students were found to place more importance on these three sub scales than male ones while deciding on the brand they are going to purchase. These results conflict with those found by Ciftci (2006). In addition, Ciftci (2006) found statistically meaningful differences according to the variable “age” for the factor “brand features”. Accordingly, this factor was more influential on the preferences for the age group “20-23” than the age groups “16-19” and “24 and above”. In the current study, which is about the sports brand name preferences, a meaningful difference was found for the factor

“brand features” between the age groups “16-19” and “24 and above”. In other word, brand features are more important for the students in the age group “16-19” than those who are older than them. These results conflict with those found by Cifci (2006). Moreover, Cifci (2006) found statistically meaningful differences according to the variable “income” for the factor “brand features”. Accordingly, those who have an amount of income “1001-1500 TL” and above was found to give more importance to brand features than those with lower income level. In the current study, no statistical differences were found for the sub scales of “Brand Preferences Scale” according to the variable “monthly average income”

In conclusion, the research results revealed that students took the following factors into consideration while choosing which sports products’ brand to purchase; the prestige due to the use of the sports product, an easy-to-remember brand name and the popularity of the brand. The frequency analysis applied to this factor, which is also called “brand identity”, showed that “the visibility of the brand name label” is not considered a factor influencing their preference. One of the significant decisions taken by the managers while determining their sale strategies is related to pricing and distribution procedures. In addition, the participant students stated that “not very often price changes”, “same price in any selling points” and “payment by credit card and other easy payment methods” are the factors affecting their brand preferences. The fact that students give importance to brand identity and price – distribution factors clearly showed that they often prefer to have the best benefit from the products that meet their expectations. Therefore; the following factors are quite influential in their sports products’ preferences: satisfaction from the quality of the product; product variety; attractive design; quality of the fabric used; and satisfaction from the other products of the brand.

Under the light of the results obtained from the current study, the following suggestions can be made to the companies in the sports products’ sector. Brand managers should conduct surveys to obtain information about the personal characteristics of the customers in the target market and develop their own marketing strategies based on the demands and needs of their customers. In addition, brand identity, product, price-distribution and promotion factors should be analyzed effectively to assist the brand in attracting potential customers. Finally, brand managers should launch brand loyalty programs to increase the number of loyal customers. The current study examines sports products brand preferences of the students attending Anadolu University Faculty of Sports Sciences. The follow-up studies might be conducted with students attending the similar departments at different universities in

Turkey to determine the factors affecting their sports products' preferences and the results might be compared. The results to be obtained from such studies might be compared with those conducted abroad and the factors affecting sports products' preferences in different cultures and geographical regions in the world might be determined.

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