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### **INVESTIGATION OF THE SHOE BRAND PREFERENCES OF STUDENTS OF FACULTY OF SPORTS SCIENCES**

#### **Abstract**

When athletes consider the difficulties they will face against their opponents in their sports lives, they resort to various methods to overcome these difficulties and attain the desired level of success. In this study, it was aimed to investigate students' levels of income, gender and importance of different departments on brand preferences as well as the reasons influencing their brand preferences. As a result of this study, the importance of marketing by considering the elements influencing brand preferences for manufacturers in their sales was acknowledged and a production line was determined in accordance with these expectancies.

This study was prepared for measuring the brand attitudes of students of the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports Sciences, and the Attitude Scale, which was developed by Yavuz Selim Ağaoğlu, was utilized. The scale consisted of 17 items and it was conducted with a total of 100 individuals, including 60 individuals from the Department of Sports Management and 40 individuals from the Department of Coaching Education, chosen with the simple random sampling method in order to determine the factors affecting the brand preferences of students.

As a result of the study, no significant difference was observed in attitude items such as satisfaction, properties of materials, obtaining auditory information from

radio and friends' suggestion on brand preferences according to gender. In attitude items such as the chance to pay with a credit card and friends' preference, it was determined that female individuals agreed less than male individuals while the importance of friends constituted a significant difference in brand preference for students studying in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Additionally, it was determined that there was no significant difference in attitudes such as satisfaction from the product, properties of materials, obtaining information from media according to the limit of spending.

**Keywords:** Student, Brand, Attitude, Shoe

## **SPOR BİLİMLERİ FAKÜLTESİ ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN AYAKKABI MARKA TERCİHLERİNİN İNCELENMESİ**

### **Özet**

Sporcular, rakipleriyle spor yaşamlarında karşılaşacakları zorlukları göz önüne aldıklarında bu zorlukları aşabilmek ve istediği başarı seviyesine ulaşabilmek için farklı yöntemlere başvurumaktadırlar. Bu çalışmada öğrencilerin gelir düzeyleri, cinsiyet ve farklı bölümlerin marka tercihindeki önemi ve ayrıca marka tercihini etkileyen nedenlerin bilinmesi amaçlanmıştır. Bu çalışmanın sonucunda üreticiler satışlarında marka tercihlerini belirleyen hususları dikkate alarak pazarlama yapmalarının önemi anlaşılmış ve bu beklentiler doğrultusunda üretim çizgisi belirlenmiştir.

Yapılan bu çalışma Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Bilimleri Fakültesi öğrencilerinin marka tutumlarını ölçmeye yönelik hazırlanıp, Yavuz Selim Ağaoğlu tarafından geliştirilen tutum anketi toplamda 17 sorudan oluşup, öğrencilerin marka tercihlerini etkileyen etmenleri belirlemek amacıyla Basit Rastgele Örneklem Yöntemi ile 60 Spor yöneticiliği ve 40 Antrenörlük eğitimi alan toplamda 100 bireye uygulanmıştır.

Çalışma sonucunda üründen memnun kalma, malzeme özelliği, radyodan işitsel olarak bilgi edinme ve marka tercihinde arkadaş önerisi gibi tutum maddelerinin cinsiyete göre önemli bir fark bulunmamıştır. Kredi kartı ile ödeme imkânı ve arkadaş tercihi tutum maddelerinde bayan bireylerin, erkek bireylere göre daha az oranda katıldığı, marka tercihinde arkadaş öneminin 4. Sınıfta okuyan öğrenciler için önemli bir fark yarattığı, ayrıca üründen memnun kalma, malzeme özelliği, medyadan bilgi edinme gibi tutumlarda harcama limitine göre tercih edilmesinde ise önemli bir fark bulunmadığı tespit edilmiştir.

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The act of creating a brand has come until today as a result of brands' efforts to distinguish their products from others for centuries (1). The concept of brand extending over today refers to a phenomenon dating back to ancient times. In excavations conducted by researchers, many handprints shaped as an indicator of ownership was found in the walls of the Lascaux Caves in Southern France. In ancient civilizations such as Egyptian, Greek, Roman and Chinese, the concept of brand was created by placing seals on pottery and other items in order to indicate ownership and quality (2).

Branding is an asset of a company with a high moral value and it plays a significant role in representing the product in a better way for consumers to view and understand it, in reducing the risk of perception of consumers and in displaying a higher performance for companies. Additionally, the brand image has an important place in brand management.

In studies, the importance of brand in enriching the brand image and in competing with other brands is rather significant. A known brand image improves customer satisfaction, service quality, loyalty and purchasing the same product again. Branding enables providing information about the product to consumers and using by consumers with its positive properties and characteristic structure (3).

Recently, brand name and brand value have been considered important, and the brand name is perceived as an increasing value for consumers. Additionally, brand value gains advantages on the image of consumers, marketing area and changing prices. Therefore, brand value affects sales behaviors during marketing (4). A strong brand makes marketing more successful while creating a strong relationship between the brand and the consumer at the same time (5). Most importantly, consumers question the price of the products less and trust the brand (6).

On the other hand, the properties of the concept of brand should be known as well as its definition in order to understand it clearly. If the brand is created only with the aim of meeting the desires and needs of consumers, appealing to consumers and monetizing by taking hold of products, several matters should be taken into consideration while presenting the created brand to the public. Some of these matters are as the following.

- \* The brand name should be a name that is positive and distinctive, inspiring positive feelings and it should be easy to remember.
- \* The brand name should create suitable associations with the logo.
- \* The brand name should provide information regarding the benefits of the sports product.
- \* The brand name should be suitable with the lines of the product, the organization and the city image.
- \* The brand name should be short and plain.
- \* The brand name should be legally and ethically acceptable.

Researchers discuss the concept of consumer satisfaction in two aspects, mentally and emotionally. The expectations and perceptions of consumers about the product are expressed mentally while the positive mood gained by using the product defines the emotional aspect. On the other hand, consumer satisfaction also signifies the perception of the total usage value of the brand (7).

When consumers find the single and the best value in a brand, they become more loyal to the brand. The best value at this point can be the result of a positive experience as a result of the honesty due to the confidence given by the brand or as a result of using the brand (8). Effective brands have increasing market shares, and they keep the credibility of new products high, becoming leaders.

Sneaker brand is one of the elements affecting students in sportive success or in success of lessons, and this situation can become a reason that affects students in brand preference.

Because the lessons of students studying in the School of Physical Education and Sports are conducted in indoors or outdoors depending on the characteristics of lessons, the correct preference of sneaker brand plays an important role in success, health and avoiding sports accidents. Therefore, it can be stated that the concept of brand is almost indispensable for the student of the School of Physical Education and Sports.

For manufacturers, because the concept of brand is an element that provides both income and popularity, they desire to know the reasons for being preferred for their own brands, and they determine production strategies accordingly. For this purpose, the brand preferences regarding the usage of sneakers form the basis of this study.

## **MATERIAL AND METHOD**

### **1. The Significance of the Study**

Manufacturers desire to know the reasons for being preferred for their own brand, and they determine production strategies accordingly. Acting with this reason, they create a process table as a result of studies conducted with students such as this study. My aim in this study was also to determine the factors affecting the brand preferences of students studying in the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports Sciences for their daily use and success in physical activities. The desire to be the best brand manufacturer and consumer emphasizes the significance of this study.

### **2. Aim and Method**

Brand preferences regarding sneakers usage form the basis of this study. In order to obtain the data for our aim in the study, the attitudes of students were examined according to various demographic properties. For this purpose, the case study method was adopted in the study.

### **3. Population and Sample**

The population of the study consists of students studying in the department of coaching and sports management in the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports in Firat University, Elazig. The sample of the study consists of 100 students, 40 students from the department of coaching and 60 students from the department of sports management.

### **4. The Preparation and the Application of the Data Collection Tool**

Our questionnaire prepared for measuring the brand preference attitudes of students of the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports Sciences includes demographic properties in the first section while including the 5-point Likert type scale for measuring students' brand attitudes in the second section. The questionnaire consisting of 17 items was conducted with 60 sports management students and 40 coaching students, a total of 100 students chosen by simple random sampling method, with the face-to-face way questionnaire method, and the results obtained from the scale were transferred to SPSS 24 package software, concluding the data entry. In our study, because the data exhibited a qualitative distribution, the "Chi-Square" method was used in determining the relationships of the data with each other. The significance level was determined as 0.05 and the results obtained below this value were considered statistically significant.

### **5. Data Analysis**

In the analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaires, SPSS 24 package software was used and the significance level was regarded as  $p < 0.05$ . In the analysis regarding the

demographic properties and brand preferences of students, frequency and percentage analyses were conducted. In order to investigate the relationship between the variable of departments, genders, grades and monthly limits of spending of students and the factors affecting brand preferences of athletes, Chi-Square analysis was conducted.

## **FINDINGS**

In this section, the data obtained from 100 students of the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports Sciences in the study were analyzed. Firstly, the analysis of the demographic information of the students according to the Likert scale was conducted.

**Table 1.** Demographic Information (Department, Gender, Grade, Monthly Limit of Spending)

Department	f	%	Gender	f	%
Department of Sports Management	60	60.0	Female	45	45.0
Department of Coaching Education	40	40.0	Male	55	55.0
Total	100	100	Total	100	100
Grade	f	%	Monthly Limit of Spending (TL)	f	%
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	14	14.0	250 TL or less	5	5.0
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	17	17.0	Between 251 and 500 TL	36	36.0
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	27	27.0	501 TL and more	59	59.0
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	42	42.0			
Total	100	100	Total	100	100

\* TL = Turkish Liras

Out of the 100 participants studying in the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports Sciences in Firat University, 60 students studied in the Department of Sports Management while 40 students studied in the Department of Coaching Education. As seen in Table 1, the 100 students participating in the study included 45 females and 55 males. The participants also included 14 students in 1<sup>st</sup> grade, 17 students in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, 27 students in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and 42 students in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. In the study, the monthly limit of spending was also determined. The participants included 5 students with monthly limits of spending of 250 TL or less, 36 students with monthly limits of spending between 251 and 500 TL, and 59 students with monthly limits of spending of 501 TL and more.

**Table 2.** Chi-Square analysis of students' departments of study and their perceptions of brand attitude

Questionnaire Items	Department	Crosstabs	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Chi-Square Test	
The name of the shoe brand I prefer is important for me	Department of Sports Management	n	21	17	9	8	5	$X^2=12,324$ ; $P=0,001$	
		% within department	%35	%28,3	%15	%13,3	%8,4		
	Department of Coaching Education	n	8	15	7	6	4		
		% within department	%20	%37,5	%17,5	%15	%10		
I believe the shoe brand I prefer brings me prestige.	Department of Sports Management	n	11	10	23	11	5		$X^2=9,124$ ; $P=0,001$
		% within department	%18,3	16,6	38,3	18,3	8,3		
	Department of Coaching Education	n	18	11	7	2	2		
		% within department	%45	%27,5	%17,5	%5	%5		
The fact that the shoe brand does not have frequent price changes is a reason for my preference.	Department of Sports Management	n	23	17	10	6	4	$X^2=16,306$ ; $P=0,001$	
		% within department	%38,3	%28,3	%16,6	%10	%6,8		
	Department of Coaching Education	n	14	9	8	5	4		
		% within department	%35	%22,5	%20	%12,5	%10		
The fact that the price of the shoe brand is the same everywhere is a reason for my preference.	Department of Sports Management	n	32	12	9	5	2		$X^2=11,116$ ; $P=0,001$
		% within department	%53,3	%20	%15	%8,3	%3,4		
	Department of Coaching Education	n	20	10	6	4	0		
		% within department	%50	%25	%15	%10	-		
The possibility to pay with a credit card is a reason for my preference.	Department of Sports Management	n	27	14	9	8	2	$X^2=13,149$ ; $P=0,001$	
		% within department	%45	%23,3	%15	%13,3	%3,4		

	Department of Coaching Education	n	17	13	8	2	0	
		% within department	%42,5	%32,5	%20	%5	-	
The fact that the shoe brand has widespread sales points is a reason for my preference.	Department of Sports Management	n	17	20	15	8	0	X <sup>2</sup> =16,432; P=0,001
		% within department	%28,3	%33,3	%25	%13,4	-	
	Department of Coaching Education	n	10	14	8	5	3	
		% within department	%25	%35	%20	%12,5	%7,5	
I obtain information about the product from printed media (Newspapers, magazines etc.)	Department of Sports Management	n	10	21	16	9	4	X <sup>2</sup> =9,172; P=0,001
		% within department	%16,6	%35	%26,6	%15	%6,8	
	Department of Coaching Education	n	7	10	18	2	3	
		% within department	%17,5	%25	%45	%5	%7,5	
I obtain information about the product from auditory media (Radio etc.)	Department of Sports Management	n	7	12	23	15	3	X <sup>2</sup> =9,172; P=0,001
		% within department	%11,6	%20	%38,3	%25	%5	
	Department of Coaching Education	n	4	7	9	13	7	
		% within department	%10	%17,5	%22,5	%32,5	%17,5	
I obtain information about the product from visual media (TV, internet etc.)	Department of Sports Management	n	23	14	10	8	5	X <sup>2</sup> =14,643; P=0,001
		% within department	%38,5	%23,3	%16,6	%13,3	%8,3	
	Department of Coaching Education	n	17	8	5	10	0	
		% within department	%42,5	%20	%12,5	%25	-	
My friends are important for me in brand preference.	Department of Sports Management	n	27	15	13	5	0	X <sup>2</sup> =10,233; P=0,001
		% within department	%45	%25	%21,6	%8,4	-	
	Department of Coaching Education	n	19	9	7	5	0	
		% within department	%47,5	%22,5	%17,5	%12,5	-	

According to the departments of study of the participants in the study, in the item of “The name of the shoe brand I prefer is important for me”; there was a difference between the behaviors of the students of the department of sports management and the behaviors of students of the department of coaching ( $X^2=12,324$ ;  $P=0,001$ ). For the participants in the study, it was observed that in the item of “I believe the shoe brand I prefer brings me prestige.”, the students of the department of coaching adopted more ( $X^2=9,124$ ;  $P=0,001$ ). In the item of “The fact that the price of the shoe brand is the same everywhere is a reason for my preference.”, the students of the department of coaching were observed to agree ( $X^2=11,116$ ;  $P=0,001$ ) while in the item of “The fact that the shoe brand has widespread sales points is a reason for my preference.”, it was observed that there was a significant difference in favor of the students of the department of sports management ( $X^2=16,432$ ;  $P=0,001$ ).

**Table 3.** Chi-Square analysis of students’ grades and their perceptions of brand attitude

Questionnaire Items		Crosstabs	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Chi-Square Test
I believe the shoe brand I prefer brings me prestige.	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	n	4	5	4	1	0	$X^2=11,233$ ; $P=0,001$
		% within department	%28,6	%35,7	%28,6	%7,1	-	
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	n	7	5	4	1	-	
		% within department	%41,2	%29,4	%23,6	%5,8		
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	n	13	6	6	1	1	
		% within department	%48,2	%22,2	%22,2	%3,7	%3,7	
	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	n	16	12	8	4	2	
		% within department	%38	%28,6	%19	%9,7	%4,7	
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	n	8	4	2	0	0	$X^2=13,288$ ; $P=0,001$	
	% within department	%57,1	%28,5	%14,4	-	-		
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	n	8	5	4	0		0



The fact that the shoe brand does not have frequent price changes is a reason for my preference.	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	% within department	%47	%29,4	%23,6	-	-	X <sup>2</sup> =9,468; P=0,001
		n	12	8	4	3	0	
	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	% within department	%44,4	%29,6	%14,8	%11,2	-	
		n	23	10	5	2	2	
The fact that the price of the shoe brand is the same everywhere is a reason for my preference.	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	% within department	%54,7	%23,8	%11,9	%4,8	%4,8	
		n	6	4	3	1	0	
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	% within department	%42,8	%28,5	%21,4	%7,3	-	
		n	6	5	5	1	0	
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	% within department	%35,2	%29,4	%29,4	%6	-	
		n	12	6	6	2	1	
	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	% within department	%44,4	%22,2	%22,2	%7,4	%3,8	
		n	16	10	11	3	2	
The possibility to pay with a credit card is a reason for my preference	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	% within department	%38	%23,8	%26,1	%7,1	%4,2	X <sup>2</sup> =12,213; P=0,001
		n	6	4	2	1	1	
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	% within department	%42,8	%28,5	%14,3	%7,2	%7,2	
		n	9	5	2	1	0	
		% within department	%52,9	%29,4	%51,1,8	%5,9	-	
		n						

	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	n	12	8	3	2	2	$\chi^2=13,467; P=0,001$
		% within department	%44,4	%29,6	%11,2	%7,4	%7,4	
	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	n	22	12	8	1	1	
		% within department	%52,4	%28,6	%19,2	%2,4	%2,4	
I obtain information about the product from printed media (Newspapers, magazines etc.)	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	n	5	4	2	2	1	
		% within department	%35,8	%28,6	%14,2	%14,2	%7,2	
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	n	4	4	7	1	1	
		% within department	%23,5	%23,5	%41,2	%5,9	%5,9	
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	n	14	8	3	0	2	
		% within department	%51,9	%29,6	%11,1	-	%7,4	
	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	n	10	8	7	9	8	
		% within department	%23,9	%19	%16,7	%21,4	%19	

The participants' beliefs that the name of the shoe brand and the gain of prestige were observed to be adopted more especially by 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students ( $\chi^2=11,233; P=0,001$ ), while the item of "The fact that the shoe brand does not have frequent price changes is a reason for my preference." was agreed more by also 1<sup>st</sup> grade students ( $\chi^2=13,288; P=0,001$ ). Also for the participants, in the items "The fact that the price of the shoe brand is the same everywhere is a reason for my preference." ( $\chi^2=9,468; P=0,001$ ) and "I obtain information about the product from printed media (Newspapers, magazines etc.)" ( $\chi^2=13,467; P=0,001$ ), significant differences were observed between the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students and students from other grades.

**Table 4.** Chi-Square analysis of students' monthly income status and their perceptions of brand attitude

Questionnaire Items	(TL)	Crosstabs	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Chi-Square Test
The possibility to pay with a credit card is a reason for my preference.	0-250	n	2	1	0	2	0	X <sup>2</sup> =8,117; P=0,001
		% within department	%40	%20	-	%40	-	
	251-500	n	9	10	8	5	4	
		% within department	%25	%27,8	%22,2	%13,8	%11,2	
	501 and more	n	27	15	9	5	3	
		% within department	%45,8	%25,5	%15,2	%8,5	%5	
The fact that the shoe brand has attractive model designs is a reason for my preference.	0-250	n	1	0	2	1	1	X <sup>2</sup> =11,767; P=0,001
		% within department	%20	-	%40	%20	%20	
	251-500	n	17	11	5	2	1	
		% within department	%47,2	%30,5	%13,9	%5,6	%2,8	
	501 and more	n	27	13	8	4	7	
		% within department	%45,8	%22	%13,5	%6,7	%11,8	
I obtain information about the product from auditory media (Radio etc.)	0-250	n	0	0	1	2	2	X <sup>2</sup> =10,239; P=0,001
		% within department	-	--	%20	%40	%40	
	251-500	n	13	9	7	5	2	
		% within department	%36,2	%25	%19,5	%13,8	%5,5	
	501 and more	n	13	8	9	12	17	
		% within department	%22	%13,8	%15,4	%20	%28,8	
I obtain information about the product from visual media (TV, internet etc.)	0-250	n	2	2	0	1	0	X <sup>2</sup> =8,127; P=0,001
		% within department	%40	%40	-	%20	-	
	251-500	n	14	7	8	4	3	

	% within department	%38,9	%19,5	%22,2	%11,1	%8,3
501 and more	n	21	13	9	8	8
	% within department	%35,6	%22	%15,2	%13,6	%13,6

According to the study, it was observed that the items of “The possibility to pay with a credit card is a reason for my preference.” ( $X^2=8,117$ ;  $P=0,001$ ) and “The fact that the shoe brand has attractive model designs is a reason for my preference.” ( $X^2=11,767$ ;  $P=0,001$ ) were more important for students with a monthly limit of spending of 501 TL and more. Furthermore, in the study, it was observed that the students with income status between 251 and 500 TL were adopted the items of “I obtain information about the product from auditory media (Radio etc.)” ( $X^2=10,239$ ;  $P=0,001$ ) and “I obtain information about the product from visual media (TV, internet etc.)” ( $X^2=8,127$ ;  $P=0,001$ ) more.

### **Conclusion and Suggestions**

In addition to active athletes, other sections of the study also use sportswear for various purposes and the market for sportswear increase every day (9). Consumption of sportswear is allocated as 75% for active sports and 25% for daily use in Europe and America while it is observed that these rates are conversely 35% for active sports and 65% for daily use in Turkey (10). For example, licensed product market in Turkey has grown three times from 2009 to 2013 (11). Additionally, it was stated that the retail revenue of the sector of branded sports products reached approximately 1 billion Euros in 2012 (12) and in 2016, the sports product market including organized retail in Turkey was 1.5 billion Euros (10). In the sportswear market, the dominance of brands, especially with America, Germany and England origins and their intense competitive environment, attracts attention (13). In this field, leading producers and suppliers benefit from famous athletes with sponsorships and advertisement campaigns in order to introduce their products (14, 15). In marketing communication, using celebrities is recognized as an effective promotion tool by marketing experts around the world (16, 17) and it is observed that celebrities take part in approximately one in every four advertisements (18).

From this point of view, the preferences regarding the use of sneakers form the basis of this study. In order to obtain the data for our purpose in the study, the attitudes of students were investigated in terms of various demographic characteristics.

Of the participants, 60% were students of the department of sports management while 40% of them were students of the department of coaching. The participants included 45% females and 55% males. Also within the study, the participants in the survey included 42% of students studying in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. In the study, it was determined that the students of the department of coaching were more selective in brand attitude compared to the students of the department of sports management while students studying in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade believed that the shoe brand they preferred would bring them prestige. It was also observed that students studying in 4<sup>th</sup> grade considered the possibility to pay with a credit card as a reason for their preferences while the students with income status between 251 and 500 TL considered the fact that model designs of the shoe brand attracted attention was a reason for their preference.

For the participating students in the study, it was observed that the name of the shoe brand and the belief of bringing prestige were especially adopted for 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students more while the item of “The fact that the shoe brand does not have frequent price changes is a reason for my preference.” was agreed more by the students studying in 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Furthermore, for the students participating in the study, the items of “The fact that the price of the shoe brand is the same everywhere is a reason for my preference.” and “I obtain information about the product from printed media (Newspapers, magazines etc.)” were determined to constitute a significant difference between the students studying in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and students studying in other grades.

According to the study, it was observed that the items of “The possibility to pay with a credit card is a reason for my preference.” and “The fact that the shoe brand has attractive model designs is a reason for my preference.” had more importance for the students with a monthly limit of spending of 501 TL and more. Moreover, it was determined that the items of “I obtain information about the product from auditory media (Radio etc.)” and “I obtain information about the product from visual media (TV, internet etc.)” were adopted more by the students with the income status between 251 and 500 TL.

Reviewing other studies, Akça et al. (2011) investigated the elements affecting the clothing preferences of adolescents aged between 15 and 18. In this age group, it was determined that gender did not constitute a significant difference in individuals’ purposes of buying clothes while socio-economic level and age were determined to constitute significant differences (19). Kılınç (2011) reported that the brand was a primary reason for clothing preference in some ages while in other ages, the group of profession, psychological reasons and income status could be more effective (20).

Çivitçi (2011) conducted a study to determine the clothing preferences, perceptions, perspective on fashion and brand of Kyrgyz and Turkish teenagers. As a result of the study, the teenagers were observed to demonstrate similar behaviors in clothing in spite of their different cultural and social levels, and what mattered to them was the quality of the product (21).

Ünal et al. (2015) conducted a study investigating preferences of university students for sneakers and chocolate brands and reported that fame, loyalty and multiple commitment were effective in sneaker brand preferences. Participants remarked that the sneakers they preferred were well-known brands. It was observed that they usually bought their favorite brands (22). Keskin and Yıldız (2015), in their study titled factors effective on consumers’ brand preferences and effect of brand image on brand value, reported that brand associates, perceived quality, brand image and brand loyalty were effective on brand value while brand awareness did not have a significant effect. Therefore, the brand associations, perceived quality, brand loyalty and brand image of consumers who participated in the study were effective on brand value. However, it was determined that brand awareness did not have a significant effect on brand value (23).

Considering the reasons for preferring brand producing sports equipment, it was observed that quality, practicality, recognition and ranking of product price determined consumers preferences. It can be thought that it would be appropriate for firms and brands producing and marketing sports equipment to consider these criteria and to determine their strategies according to the preference priorities of consumers for a brand or a product.

In brand preferences, the most significant criteria causing the difference in terms of gender are recognition, brand and logo design. It can be stated that the design of attractive logos is the most significant factor that increases the recognition of the product.

In conclusion, no significant difference was observed in attitude items such as satisfaction, properties of materials, obtaining auditory information from radio and friends' suggestion on brand preferences according to gender. In attitude items such as chance to pay with a credit card and friends' preference, it was determined that female individuals agreed less than male individuals while the importance of friends constituted a significant difference in brand preference for students studying in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Additionally, it was determined that there was no significant difference in attitudes such as satisfaction from the product, properties of materials, obtaining information from media according to the limit of spending.

Considering the fact that this study is limited to the students of the Faculty of Sports Sciences in Firat University, it can be suggested that similar studies can be conducted in other universities, with larger sample groups and prospective teachers in different branches.

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