Willingness to punish and reward brands associated to a political ideology (BAPI)

Sumeyra Duman⁎⁎, Ozge Ozgen

⁎⁎ Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Business, Dokuz Eylül University Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Yerleşkesi Buca 35160 Izmir Turkey

⁎⁎ Department of International Business and Trade, Faculty of Business, Dokuz Eylül University, İzmir 35390, Turkey

A B S T R A C T

This study explores the customer insights behind punishing/rewarding brands associated to a political ideology (BAPI) and extends theories of brand avoidance and political consumerism. Study 1 analyzes attitude toward BAPI through a qualitative study and in study 2 the relationship between identification, disidentification, moral avoidance, religiosity and willingness to punish/reward BAPI with the mediating role of attitude is tested via structural equation modeling. The findings reveal that consumers punish the brands they oppose politically, when there is no self-congruence and believe these brands distract the well-being of the society by polarizing and conservativizing it. Moreover, while religious commitment did not have any effect on attitude and willingness to punish/reward BAPI, the results confirm that consumers who attend religious services are found to have a tendency to punish BAPI. This is the first study intended to empirically test these relationships and understand the underlying reasons behind punishing and rewarding BAPI.

1. Introduction

Brand association is defined as anything linked in memory to a brand (Aaker, 1991) and all informational nodes connected to the brand (Keller, 1993). In essence, while some brands with positive associations are considered directly in a consumer's purchase choice, called as evoked or consideration set (Howard & Sheth, 1969), consumers may have neither positive nor negative associations for some other brands, called as inert set. On the other hand, inert set consists of brands the consumer has rejected from his/her purchase consideration because of several reasons (Narayana & Markin, 1975). In the literature, these reasons are explained by unmet or inadequate promises of brands, perceived risk, undesired self-congruence, negative social influence, and association between the brand and political ideology that consumers personally oppose (Khan & Lee, 2014; Lee, Conroy, and Motion 2009; Nenycz-Thiel & Romaniuk, 2011; Sandikci & Ekici, 2009). Additionally, Crockett and Wallendorf (2004) state that consumers have tendency to express their political ideologies through consumption behaviors which draws attention to the critical role of political ideology in brand association networks of consumers. Therefore, understanding the positive and negative consumer responses to the brands, which are associated with political ideologies in consumers' mind, is expected to be a prominent issue for academicians and practitioners. Moreover, studies about motivations behind avoiding certain brands are mostly conducted in developed countries, did not concentrate on politically motivated brand rejection and its antecedents in emerging markets and/or Islamic societies with the exception of Sandikci and Ekici's (2009) study.

Although emerging markets remarkably promise long-term growth opportunities that no longer exist in saturated and highly competitive developed markets (Sakarya, Eckman, & Hyllegard, 2007), they have many pitfalls because of their distinctive characteristics through socio-economic, cultural and regulative subsystems (Burgess & Steenkamp, 2006). Most emerging markets are highly local and governed by faith-based sociopolitical institutions (Sheth, 2011) and people in emerging markets are culturally embedded (Burgess & Steenkamp, 2006). Within an emerging market, firms often face various environmental complexities and heterogeneity (Luo, 2001; Shenkar & von Glinow, 1994). In this framework, besides being sensitive to diverse characteristics of customers, for businesses it becomes necessary to attract, develop, and maintain relationships with faith based institutions in emerging markets (Sheth, 2011). But when companies maintain these relationships with especially political institutions, the associations structured in consumers' mind and effect of these brand associations related to political ideologies should also be taken into consideration in these markets. In some emerging markets such as South-East Asian countries

⁎⁎ Corresponding author.
E-mail addresses: sumeyra.kurt@deu.edu.tr (S. Duman), ozge.ozgen@deu.edu.tr (O. Ozgen).

http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.05.026
Received 11 August 2016; Received in revised form 22 March 2017; Accepted 23 May 2017
0148-2963/ © 2017 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Please cite this article as: Kurt, S.D., Journal of Business Research (2017), http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.05.026
or Turkey, the influence of faith is like the air, invisible especially unobservable to the outside eye but pervasive (Seiple, 2015). But, unfortunately, limited number of studies such as Lee, Conroy and Motion (2009), Sandikci and Ger (2002) concentrated on the religiosity, self-congruence, moral motivations as the antecedents of brand avoidance and politically motivated brand rejection which can be considered as unexplored avenues of research related to negative brand association networks in particularly emerging markets. Additionally, Izberk-Bilgin (2010) claims that expanding the geographical boundaries of consumer resistance researches beyond the economically advanced economies to less advanced nations such as emerging markets would be a fruitful new direction for further researches and enhance current theorization of resistance as a predominantly postmaterialist phenomenon. Therefore, the role of faith on consumption behavior and brand avoidance cannot be overlooked and specifically religion based antecedents of brand avoidance should be empirically investigated in emerging markets.

Following the above concerns, this paper is proposed to examine the attitude toward brands associated to a particular political ideology (BAPI) in consumers’ mind and this paper contributes to the politically motivated brand rejection literature with an empirical research employed in Turkey by offering new insights on why consumers may intentionally punish or reward these brands beyond product-related reasons. Political ideology provides a shared belief and value system through which people view and react to the world around them (Feldman, 2013). Religion is one of the shaping forces of political life and also a source for ideological arguments in politics (Williams, 1996). The Republic of Turkey is a democratic, secular and social state governed by the rule of law. On the other hand, unlike the adoption of secularism in Western countries, in Muslim world secularism means state control of religion and state effort to use religion in the service of its nationalist and developmental goals (Shepard, 1987). So, religion is one of the crucial components in formation of the national identity in Muslim world including Turkey. For that reason, political ideology and religion are co-existing concepts in Turkey despite its secular characteristics. In this article, the terminology of BAPI indicates also religious ideological orientations due to Turkey’s abovementioned unique characteristics. Additionally, according to Mabeswaran and Shavitt (2014), one of the neglected areas in consumer behavior is the unique cultural features of emerging markets. Since the subject is also tightly associated with the unique socio-cultural and political structure of Turkey as an emerging country, current research made by the authors as the lens of insiders can enrich the understanding of a variety of motivations behind willingness to punish and reward BAPI as suggested by Jafari and Süerdem (2012). In sum, this study contributes to the existing literature by introducing and empirically analyzing the concept of BAPI as an issue of political consumerism and brand avoidance. The present study also highlights the religious motivations behind attitude toward BAPI and extends moral avoidance by associating these variables with not only punishing but also rewarding BAPI in an emerging market context.

Therefore, the main objective of this research is to examine willingness to punish or reward BAPI as consumer responses. In line with this objective, first, this study aims to explore the insights and antecedents of consumer responses toward BAPI in the context of Turkey. Secondly, this study intends to provide the first empirical investigation of the impact of identification, disidentification, moral avoidance, religiosity on willingness to punish or reward BAPI. In doing so, this research provides a novel perspective on understanding brands associated to a political ideology. The paper is structured as follows. In the following part, unique features of Turkish society and how it is similar to or different from the other emerging markets are analyzed under the section of context. Then, the literature on brand avoidance, the link between brand avoidance and attitude toward BAPI, willingness to punish and reward as a behavioral outcome of political consumerism is discussed. Lastly, the methodology and findings of the studies are provided with a discussion and conclusion at the end.

2. Context: Turkey as an emerging market

It is difficult to define and classify emerging markets since there are variety of indicators used to make a list of these countries. Many scholars use the World Bank's classification of economies which is based on Gross National Income (GNI) per capita (World Bank Atlas method) which categorizes economies with GNI per capita of $1025 or less in 2015 as low-income, $1026 and $4035 as lower middle-income, $4036 and $12,475 as upper middle-income and $12,476 or more as high-income economies (World Bank, 2016a). Even though the economies of emerging markets are small in size compared to developed economies, considering the high growth rates of these markets, it is estimated that by 2035, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of emerging markets will permanently surpass that of all developed countries and present opportunities for future market expansion (Wilson & Purushothaman, 2003). Although emerging markets have distinct characteristics from developed economies, they also have commonalities within each other (Dawar & Chattopadhyay, 2002). Miller (1998) identified several common characteristics of emerging markets such as inadequate commercial infrastructure and legal framework, political instability, unique cultural characteristics and influential role of government in economic life.

Governments, regulatory bodies, nongovernmental organizations, religion, business groups are much more influential in emerging markets compared to developed economies (Arnold & Quelch, 1998; Sheth, 2011). With a vulnerable market that is affected by governing political institutions, Turkey shows no exception among the emerging markets, whereas possesses unique characteristics such as being a major player in Middle Eastern politics and the only Muslim candidate country for European Union (Erdoğmus, Bodur, & Yılmaz, 2010).

Turkey is one of the most attractive emerging markets with a population of 78 million (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2016) and world’s 18th largest economy (World Bank, 2016b) and with its current socio-cultural and political context, fits the purpose of this study. Specifically, Turkey is appropriate to analyze politically motivated brand avoidance because there is a societal perception about certain brands having intimate ties with political parties (especially toward parties which represent conservative political ideologies) which causes debate among consumers. Turkey is a country with a majority of Muslim population and especially after 1980s, the role of Islam transformed from being a belief system to having also a political identity (Sandikci & Ger, 2002). According to “Global Religious Diversity” report of Pew (2014), even though Turkey has low religious diversity, this does not mean cohesion in social life. As the conservative political parties gained strength, religion acquired a political role in self-expression. Reflections of this sociological transformation resulted in capital movements among social classes, which caused shifts within consumption practices and brand preferences of consumers. As a result of this sociological transformation, capital movements have been observed and thereby consumption practices of Turkish people have been differentiated into four categories; spectacularist (upscale urban consumers with little cultural capital and who exhibit a highly fashion-conscious and display-oriented consumption), nationalistic (extreme and moderate nationalists and secularists who purchase products associated with Atatürk, founder of the republic), bourgeois (upmarket urban consumers with minimal cultural capital and who exhibit a highly fashion-conscious and display-oriented consumption), and lastly historical (consuming products that belong to Ottoman era) (Sandikcî & Ger, 2007). Among these aforementioned categories, this study specifically discusses consumption practices in religio-political framework because brands, which carry Islamic associations, are viewed as favorable by people having more conservative lifestyles and in contrast can be regarded as unacceptable by people having a secular lifestyle. Adaş’s (2009) study on Islamic capital in Turkey shows that as political Islam gained more power, visibility of Islamic discourses and symbols in the society and economy has increased.

S. Duman, O. Ozgen

Journal of Business Research xxx (xxxx) xxx-xxx

ARTICLE IN PRESS
دریافت فوری متن کامل مقاله

امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات