

## SPORT BRANDS PERCEPTIONS AMONG HEAVY USER UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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**Abstract:** The aim of the study is to explain popular sport brands' perception dimensions by students heavily use sport apparels. The sample of research consisted 223 university students from School of Physical Education and Sport. The research results revealed that perceptions on some of the brands with the statement expensive were significantly high and vary by gender and age groups. The results of this study indicate that with an appreciation with four brands, in point of popularity Adidas and Nike comes forward. Reebok was the most masculine one. Nike was the most expensive and Adidas was the most prestigious perceived brand. As far as Puma is concerned, the brand was perceived as expensive, progressive and gracious. Findings from this study provide managerial implications that can be used to better manage and market a sport brand. In this way, sport managers and marketers can enhance their brands by engaging in strategic activities designed to enhance the spectator experience with the offering.

**Key words:** Brand, Perception, Image, Brand Image, Brand Equity, Sport Brand

### INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE

Managers need to concentrate their efforts on managing their brands because of realizing brand is the most important asset of an organization. They use different branding strategies to increase the strength of the product image and carry out the market and product development strategies. These strategies are plans for systematic development of a brand to enable it to meet its objectives and distinguish or services from one another (Kaynak et al., 2007).

An extensive body of literature shows that brand means a name, term, symbol, design or a combination of them intended to identify services or goods of a seller or a group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition (http1). In consumers perspective brand means memories, experiences, influences and they choose brands because of expecting a promise of quality. But in manufacturers perspective it is the name, the logo, colors and the symbols (Ewald and Moskovitz, 2006). Brand could be a symbolic embodiment of the information connected to the product or service that

creates recognition or association with customers in perceptive or psychological way. It differentiates products or services from others (Gladden and Funk, 2002) and allows the consumer to express his or her own self (Belk, 1988).

While brand reflects the idea of consumers about the product or the service, it is the fact that comes forward into the competition between firms. Companies, products or services must constantly want to be requested because of having higher revenues, cash flow and regular sales. Thus, the brand comes to the value and power indicator (Bosnjak et al., 2007). And it needs to be valued. The brand value lies in what consumers have experienced and learned about. The resulting brand associations held in a consumer's memory constitute the brand image and affect their behavior. Thereby, brand associations are important building blocks of customer-based brand equity and marketers should aim to optimize the attributes and benefits that the brand is associated with consumers, satisfying their wants and needs (Torres and Bijmunt, 2008).

Whereas branding has long been an essential marketing tool of for-profit firms to remain successful in an increasingly competitive environment, non-profit firms began to discuss the strategic use of brands in their sector in the mid-1990s (Voeth and Herbs, 2008). There are three important branding concepts and they are called, brand name, brand marks and

trademarks. Brand name refers the element of the brand that can be vocalized. When selecting a brand name for sporting goods or organizations, considerably marketing effort is required. Because choosing a name is such a critical decision for sport marketers to be ensure that the name symbolizes strength and confidence. The name of the brand must be positive, generate positive feelings, distinctive, easy to remember and pronounce. And also, it should be legally and ethically permissible. Brand mark is an aspect or element (such as color, design, picture, symbol, typeface) of a brand that cannot be expressed in words (Argan, 2008; Shank, 1999). A trademark identifies that an organization has legally registered its brand name or brand mark and thus prevents others from using it (Shank, 1999).

In sports market, from sport shoes to competitions, from a soccer ball to the fitness centers, there are various goods and services offered. Because of multitudes of the products in the sport market, goods and services must be classified. An important factor about the sport product is the brand image and there is a relationship between the image and the perceptions and attitudes of the consumers (Argan and Katırcı, 2008). Perception is the task for determining what is out there in our environment and in the world. It is affected by the experiences, environment, individual feelings, behaviors, aims and motivations (Shank, 1999). But at first glance the most important thing of the

brand is its image. It is a key component of customer-based brand equity and refers to the associations a consumer holds in memory (Torres and Bijmont, 2008) and brings extra benefits such as trust, reliability and sophistication (Chiang et al., 2008).

Brand image is a complete concept with the whole of the product. It's all about the brand image which means as the reasoned or emotional perceptions that consumers attach to specific brands (Chiang and Jang, 2006). It is a concept that forms because of customers sensual feelings and can be reinforced by brand communications like advertising, promotion, customer service, word of mouth and other aspects of brand experience (Sung and Tinkham, 2005). Brand images are usually questioned by asking consumers the first words or images that come their mind when certain brand is mentioned. When the customers' responses are highly variable, non-forthcoming or refer to non-image attributes such as cost, it is an indicator of weak brand image. Gardner and Levy first posited brand image as an important part of consumer behavior research in 1955 (Vieregge et al., 2007). In sum, managing brands is so important consumers' base purchase decision on their awareness, perception and attachment to brands. Specifically, brand equity represents positive and negative associations with a particular brand name that adds to the value provided by the product (Rosner et al., 2004).

In marketing, brand image concept has been proposed to include associations related to attributes, benefits and attitudes (Keller, 1993). These benefits and attributes also are associated with sport brands, as well as overall/holistic evaluations of the brands. User or consumer of the sport brands tend to make attributions of the sports brand experience in terms of social, environmental, emotional, psychological. Additionally, consumers draw conclusions about a brand's overall image from impressions they have of the strengths and weakness of the brand's benefits and attributes. Images of sport brands are formed from past experiences, word-of-mouth, and marketing communications. Understanding the benefits and attributes that consumers associate with a sport brand lead to successful image management (Javalgi et al., 1992). To betray the brand image, perception maps about brand is applied. Multidimensional scaling and Correspondence analysis have been widely applied to create conceptual maps (Myers, 1996).

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES

The main aim of this study is to examine the perceptions about sport brands and to reveal the relationships among dimensions and brands. Previous studies (eg. Runeson and Frykholm, 1983; Robinson et al., 1998) underline perception is affected by some factors. One of the main factors is that perception varies by

gender. Generally speaking women's experiencing emotions are more intensely than men (Fujita et al., 1991). So they feel and show emotions deeper to anything. This effects their behaviors, feelings like love, sadness etc. By contrast, men are socially desirable and have self-oriented emotions (Robinson et al. 1998). So it can be said that perceptions on sport brands vary by gender and as a result the following hypothesized relationship is:

*H1. Perceptions on sports brands vary by gender.*

Cross-sectional and longitudinal studies show that age effects perception. For example from childhood or at the beginning of adolescence to early adult years perception differs. During adolescence although there is not much evidence, perceptions become much more negative (Maiano et al., 2004). Thus the second hypothesis is:

*H2. Perceptions on sports brands vary by age groups.*

## **METHOD OF RESEARCH**

Two-hundred and twenty-three university students (141 male, 82 female) participated in this study. Students were selected from physical education and sports classes due to their interest. A questionnaire was developed consisting of two sections. The first section consisted 52 statements on perception dimensions of four popular sport brands. Seven point Likert Scale was used by respondents

in responding to attitude statements. In addition to the interview, statements used in this section were adapted from previous studies (e.g. Akar, 2008) The second section was designed to collect demographic data on respondents including students' individual usage of sport brands and their demographic information consisted of respondents' age, gender, average monthly household income and departments.

Questionnaires were distributed to individuals who were agreed to participate to the study following a short briefing in explaining the research aim. The questionnaires were answered by respondents in the researchers' presence. The time to explain the study and complete the questionnaire was approximately 15 minutes. A total of 260 survey forms were distributed,

223 of which were completely answered, resulting in a return rate of 85 percent. Since the questionnaire was used as the data collection method, SPSS 16 was used in the analysis of the data. A descriptive statistics, Frequency, percentage, averaging and standard deviation were used. In order to state the relationships and differentiations between variables, correspondence analysis, t-test and One-Way ANOVA were implemented.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### *The Characteristics of Participants*

Out of 223 respondents, 63.2% were males and 36.8 % were females. 20 to 22 years age braked (54.3 %) constituted merely half of all respondents. The reported percentages of respondents' average monthly income were less than 1000 TL constituted 37.2 % of all respondents. The percentage of respondents who were reported of having an average monthly income between 1001 and 1500 TL were

constituted 33.2% of all respondents. In terms of departments in School of Physical Education and Sports, 34.1% of the respondents were from recreation department and sports management department students of the respondents were 22.9%. The second class students came first of the respondents (31,4%), first, third and fourth class students were listed accordingly (See Table 1).

**Table 1. Demographics of Participants**

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
<b><i>Gender</i></b>			<b><i>Department</i></b>		
Male	141	63.2	Coach Training	44	19.7
Female	82	36.8	Phy. Ed. and Sport	52	23.3
			Recreation and Sport	76	34.1
<b><i>Avarage Income</i></b>			Sport Management	51	22.9
500 TL	20	9			
501-1.000 TL	63	28.3	<b><i>Class</i></b>		
1.001-1500 TL	63	28.3	1 <sup>st</sup>	53	23.8
1.501-2000 TL	51	22.9	2 <sup>nd</sup>	69	31.4
2001 TL and <	22	9.9	3 <sup>rd</sup>	64	28.3
			4 <sup>th</sup>	29	12.5
<b><i>Age</i></b>			5 <sup>th</sup> <	8	3.6
17-19	38	17			
20-22	121	54.3			
23-25	47	21.1			
26 and >	13	5.8			

N= 223

#### *Perception Dimensions of Brands*

Table 2 shows respondents' perceptions about Nike and Adidas. In terms of res-

pondets' perceptions about Nike; Popularity (mean=5.94) and expensiveness (mean=5.78) came forward. Then the individuals heavily use sports apparels

agree with attitude statements included in survey form in following order. The brand was prestigious (mean=5.72), progressive (mean=5.48), elite (mean 5.42), attractive (mean=5.34), esthetic (mean=5.26) and it was gracious (mean= 5.23). And respondents' perceptions about Adidas; Popularity was the one drawing attention (mean=6.01). Also, Adidas was

perceived prestigious (mean=5.89), progressive (mean=5.83) and elite (5.59). Then the perceptions of Adidas in the survey form respectively were, expensive (mean=5.58), attractive (mean=5.55), masculine (mean=5.26), esthetic (mean=5.24) and also sympathetic (mean=5.06). (See Table 2)

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Nike and Adidas**

		<i>Nike</i>		<i>Adidas</i>	
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
FEMMAS	(1) Feminine - Masculine (7)	4.54	1.31	5.26	1.23
NONELIT	(1) Unelite - Elite (7)	5.42	1.11	5.59	1.09
CHEEXP	(1) Cheap – Expensive (7)	5.78	0.90	5.58	1.15
UNPROG	(1) Unprogressive - Progressive (7)	5.48	1.12	5.83	1.01
UNPOPU	(1) Unpopular – Popular (7)	5.94	1.12	6.01	1.19
UNPRES	(1) Unprestigious – Prestigious (7)	5.72	1.0	5.89	1.03
BORGRA	(1) Boring – Gracious (7)	5.23	1.26	5.45	1.51
UNATTR	(1) Unattractive – Attractive (7)	5.34	1.22	5.55	1.44
ACCESS	(1) Accessible – Inaccessible (7)	4.00	1.66	4.14	1.82
UNEST	(1) Unesthetic – Esthetic (7)	5.26	1.18	5.24	1.48
UNSYM	(1) Unsympathetic – Sympathetic (7)	4.78	1.35	5.06	1.39
SOFTHR	(1) Soft – Hard (7)	4.30	1.30	4.57	1.40
BOREXC	(1) Unexciting – Exciting (7)	4.47	1.38	4.95	1.39

Table 3 shows Puma and Reebok brands perceptions. Puma was perceived expensive (mean=5.50) by the respondents of the study. Then the individuals perceived Puma respectively popular (mean=4.91), progressive (mean=4.85), gracious (mean=4.83), prestigious (mean=4.79), eli-

te (mean=4.77), masculine (mean=4.74), sympathetic (4.70). When the perception dimensions of Reebok are evaluated, Reebok was perceived expensive (mean=4.66), progressive (mean=4.62), elite (mean=4.58) and prestigious (mean=4.51) by the students. (See Table 3)

**Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Puma and Reebok**

		<i>Puma</i>		<i>Reebok</i>	
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
FEMMAS	(1) Feminine - Masculine (7)	4.43	1.59	4.74	1.25
NONELIT	(1) Unelite - Elite (7)	4.77	1.35	4.58	1.19
CHEEXP	(1) Cheap – Expensive (7)	5.50	1.34	4.66	1.33
UNPROG	(1) Unprogressive - Progressive (7)	4.85	1.39	4.62	1.29
UNPOPU	(1) Unpopular – Popular (7)	4.91	1.42	4.50	1.24
UNPRES	(1) Unprestigious – Prestigious (7)	4.79	1.28	4.51	1.18
BORGRA	(1) Boring – Gracious (7)	4.83	1.39	4.46	1.22
UNATTR	(1) Unattractive – Attractive (7)	4.84	1.44	4.35	1.28
ACCESS	(1) Accessible – Inaccessible (7)	4.39	1.57	4.01	1.45
UNEST	(1) Unesthetic – Esthetic (7)	4.64	1.51	4.36	1.32
UNSYM	(1) Unsympathetic – Sympathetic (7)	4.70	1.40	4.47	1.28
SOFTHR	(1) Soft – Hard (7)	4.24	1.42	4.39	1.03
BOREXC	(1) Unexciting – Exciting (7)	4.38	1.51	4.15	1.34

#### *Corresponde Analysis of Dimensions*

To illustrate relationships between perception dimensions and brands, technique of correspondence analysis was applied. The objective of correspondence analysis is to portray data geometrically in low-dimensional space (Yavaş, 2001). Additionally, according to Hoffman and Franke (1986), correspondence analysis is a method of exploratory data analysis, which quantifies multivariate categorical data, affords a graphical representation of the structure in the data, and does not pose stringent measurement requirements. As a graphical method of data analysis, correspondence analysis is best

applied as a multivariate descriptive statistical technique which supplements other forms of analysis (Ngai and Cheng, 1997). Four graphical outputs generated by correspondence analysis are presented in Figure 1-2. The maps on the figure reveal the underlying dimensions related with popular sport brands.

The left part of Figure 1 shows the profile of each brand for the corresponding medium through which respondents' perception dimension of feminine-masculine. A significant chi-square value emerged for brands-feminine/masculine relationship. The value of  $X^2_{(18)} = 115,100$   $p < 0.01$ , indicating a statistically signi-

ficant relationship between brand and related dimension. The inertia ratio indicates the proportion importance of each dimension. The value of inertia explained 13.5% of the total variance. The proportion of 66.1%, 25.4% and 8% of the total variance explained the first, the second and third dimension, respectively. As it can be seen in left biplot on figure 1, Puma was perceived between feminine and less feminine. In contrast, Adidas was evaluated as masculine and very masculine by respondents. Lastly, Nike and Reebok were perceived mostly as neutral and less masculine.

Right part of Figure 2 indicates the relationship between four brands and popularity dimension. A significant chi-square value ( $\chi^2_{(18)} = 277,917$   $p < 0.01$ ) was returned for the relationships. There was thus a statistically significant relationship between brand and popularity variables. The value of inertia explained 31.4% of the total variance. The proportion of 85.4%, 11% and 3.6% of the total variance explained the first, the second and third dimension, respectively. The right biplot (Figure 2) for the cross-tabulation of popularity by brands indicates that the four brands were differentiated in terms of popularity dimension. It would also seem that Adidas and Nike are popular and very popular. As it can be seen on the biplot, Puma was evaluated between of less popular and unpopular by respondent. Whereas, Reebok's image was eva-

luate at a point between of less unpopular and unpopular.

**Figure 1. Perceptual Map Showing Feminine-Masculine and Popularity Dimensions of Brands**

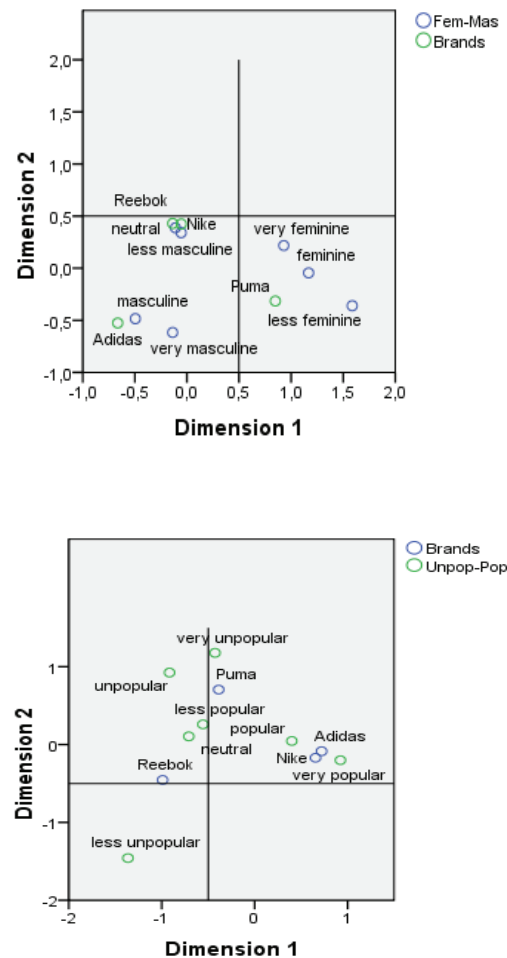
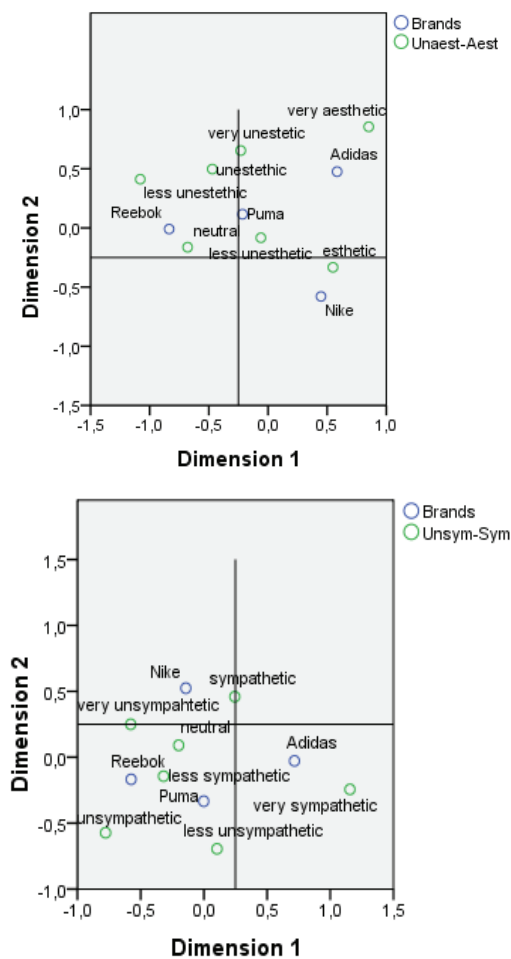


Figure 2 illustrates the graphical biplot generated by correspondence analysis. The left map on the related figure shows the relationship between brands and aesthetics. A significant chi-square value for brand- aesthetics relationship of  $\chi^2_{(18)} = 115,688$   $p < 0.01$ , indicates a statistically significant relationship between brand



and related dimension. The value of inertia explained 13.2% of the total variance. The proportion of 78%, 15.9% and 6.1% of the total variance explained the first, the second and third dimension, respectively. As the right part of the Figure 2 is shown, Adidas is very aesthetic. Additionally, Puma and Reebok were assessed as less unaesthetic brand. It can be stated from biplot that Nike has an aesthetic brand image.

**Figure 2. Perceptual Map Showing Aesthetics and Sympathetic Dimensions of Brands**



The right map on Figure 2 is the biplot for the cross-tabulation of sympathetic category by brands, which reveals the relationship between the row and column based on the proximities of points. A significant chi-square value was reported for the brand- sympathetic relationship, and is stipulated as  $X^2_{(18)} = 51,120$   $p < 0.01$ . Therefore, there is a statistically significant relationship between brand and sympathetic. The value of inertia explained 5.8% of the total variance. The proportion of 79%, 18.7% and 2.3% of the total variance explained the first, the second and third dimension, respectively. The right biplot indicates that Adidas was accepted as very sympathetic. Also, Nike was considered a sympathetic brand. Conversely, Puma and Reebok were seen by respondents as less sympathetic.

#### *Differentiation of Brand Perceptions*

In order to determine the variance on perception dimensions of sports brands between gender and age groups one-way ANOVA and t test methods were applied to data gathered via survey. In between variables with significant differences, averages of males were found higher than females.

Table 4 shows differentiation of Nike and Adidas perceptions based on respondents' demographics. On Nike brand as far as the gender variable is concerned, the only significant difference was on the statement of

cheap or expensive (CHEEXP). Mean of male respondents were higher than females. For the age groups variable, only two statements (CHEEXP and SOFTHR) were found significantly different. In order to assess differentiation of Adidas perceptions according to gender, two significant differences were found among

thirteen statements (ADIFEMMAS and ADICHEEXP). To observe the variance by age groups of perception dimensions of Adidas, results indicated a significant difference on ADIACCESS statement. (See Table 4)

**Table 4. Differentiations of Brands (Nike, Adidas) According to Demographics**

	<i>Nike</i>				<i>Adidas</i>			
	Gender		Age Group		Gender		Age Group	
	t	p	F	p	t	p	F	p
FEMMAS	0,138	0,890	2,934	0,055	2,453	0,015*	0,384	0,682
NONELIT	1,848	0,066	0,914	0,402	1,797	0,074	0,861	0,424
CHEEXP	2,716	0,007**	3,677	0,027*	2,563	0,011*	2,713	0,066
UNPROG	1,135	0,258	0,060	0,942	-0,373	0,709	1,153	0,318
UNPOPU	-0,101	0,919	0,320	0,727	0,476	0,634	1,350	0,261
UNPRES	-0,155	0,877	0,223	0,800	-0,053	0,958	0,307	0,736
BORGRA	-1,581	0,115	0,689	0,503	-0,649	0,517	0,232	0,793
UNATTR	1,323	0,187	0,118	0,888	0,405	0,686	0,547	0,580
ACCESS	-0,499	0,618	0,596	0,552	1,104	0,271	4,546	,012*
UNEST	1,370	0,172	0,866	0,422	-0,121	0,904	0,234	0,792
UNSYM	1,222	0,223	1,870	0,157	-1,046	0,297	0,047	0,954
SOFTHR	1,535	0,126	5,226	0,006**	0,634	0,527	0,188	0,828
BOREXC	1,027	0,306	0,213	0,808	-0,527	0,598	1,599	0,204
FEMMAS	0,138	0,890	2,934	0,055	2,453	0,015*	0,384	0,682

\*  $p < .05$  ; \*\* $p < .01$

able 5 shows differentiation of Puma and Reebok perceptions compare to respondents gender and age groups. There was only a significant difference between gender and perception of Puma brand pres-

tigious or unprestigious statement (UNPRES). As for the age groups ten statements of the thirteen statements were found significantly different (NONELIT, CHEEXP, UNPROG, UNPOPU, UNPRES,

BORGRA, UNATTR, UNEST, UNSYM, BOREXC). In terms of differentiation of perceptions about Reebok brand according to gender, a statement (NONELIT) was found significantly different. As far

as age variable is concerned there was no significant difference between age groups and perception statements.

**Table 5. Differentiations of Brands (Puma, Reebok) According to Demographics**

	<i>Puma</i>				<i>Reebok</i>			
	Gender		Age Group		Gender		Age Group	
	t	p	F	p	t	p	F	p
FEMMAS	-0,253	0,801	1,532	0,219	1,480	0,140	1,406	0,247
NONELIT	-0,819	0,414	4,239	0,016*	2,047	0,042*	1,417	0,245
CHEEXP	0,841	0,401	15,947	0,000**	1,428	0,155	2,383	0,095
UNPROG	-0,278	0,781	7,290	0,001**	-0,275	0,784	0,295	0,745
UNPOPU	0,001	0,999	7,757	0,001**	-0,385	0,700	0,232	0,793
UNPRES	1,742	0,083	5,492	0,005**	-0,931	0,353	0,552	0,576
BORGRA	-0,225	0,822	5,561	0,004**	-0,602	0,548	0,494	0,610
UNATTR	0,295	0,768	6,731	0,001**	-0,318	0,750	1,058	0,349
ACCESS	2,351	0,020*	2,767	0,065	1,647	0,101	0,148	0,863
UNEST	0,543	0,588	4,867	0,009**	-0,252	0,801	0,515	0,598
UNSYM	-0,152	0,879	8,467	0,000**	-0,677	0,499	0,891	0,412
SOFTHR	1,288	0,199	1,798	0,168	-0,305	0,760	0,941	0,392
BOREXC	-0,126	0,900	4,369	0,014*	0,756	0,450	0,585	0,558
FEMMAS	-0,253	0,801	1,532	0,219	1,480	0,140	1,406	0,247

\*  $p < .05$  ; \*\* $p < .01$

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Branding a sport product increases purchase behavior and attention to the product in terms of consumer behavior. But, first of all brand awareness must be created. Brand awareness attracts the consumer into the target market and makes people remember the brand name. After having

reached the desired level of awareness, purposes are to be directed to the brand image. Brand images are usually questioned by asking consumers the first words or images that come their mind when certain brand is mentioned. In this study researchers aimed to explain four popular sport brands perception dimensions and

conducted on heavily user students. This study also launched and exhibited application of correspondence analysis in assessing popular sport brands image. Correspondence analysis, as illustrated here, empowers sport brand managers by allowing them to visualize their brands' competitive standing relative to their competitors' strengths and weaknesses. Research results revealed that respondents' agreement on statements prestigious, popular, elite, progressive and attractive were found significantly high. However, respondents' perceptions on some of the brands statement expensive were significantly high, too. The results of this study indicated that with an appreciation with four brands, in point of popularity Adidas and Nike comes forward. Nike was the most expensive and Adidas was the most prestigious perceived brand. As far as Puma is concerned, the brand was perceived as expensive, progressive and gracious.

Nike and Adidas were also perceived prestigious, progressive, elite and attractive. In terms of accessibility Puma comes forward and the statement about hardness Adidas' has the highest score. In terms of differentiation of perceptions according to demographics (gender and age) there were significant differences. For example Nike's expensiveness was perceived significantly different both gender and age groups. When observing the variance by age groups of perception dimensions of Adidas, results indicated a

significant difference on accessibility statement. In terms of Puma brand as for the age groups ten statements of the thirteen statements were found significantly different. There was no significant difference between age groups and perception statements of Reebok brand but in terms of gender the only significant difference was on the statement Elite.

People's perceptions are effected from environmental and individual experiences so to influence their perceptions sports producers should be care about people's wants and needs. Just as in product positioning, perception of brand images really important for the producers. Findings from this study provide managerial implications that can be used to better manage and market a sport brand. In this way, sport managers and marketers can enhance their brands by engaging in strategic activities designed to enhance the spectator experience with the offering.

## LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

As with all research, this study is not free of some limitations and suggests avenues for future research consideration. The current study focused specifically on limited number of people. Future research on perception dimensions on sports brands could be extended to include wider demographic base, both geographically and international-wise, to further explore the extent to which the findings are generalizable. Another limitation is the time the

research was done because perception is related with time. Four sport brands included into the research the most popular ones in Turkey. The respondents in the study were limited to those who are the students of Anadolu University, School of Physical Education and Sports and heavily use sports apparels in Eskisehir, Turkey. In future studies, many students or people should be included in a research to explain the perception dimensions of sports brands.

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## ÜNİVERSİTE ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN SPOR MARKALARINI ALGILAMA BOYUTLARI

**Özet:** Spor pazarında, spor ayakkabısından spor yarışmalarına, futbol topundan fitness merkezlerine kadar tüketiciye sunulan pek çok spor ürünü ve hizmetleri vardır. Spor pazarında bu kadar çok ürün ve hizmetin yer alması ürün ve hizmetlerin sınıflandırılması gerekliliğini ortaya çıkarır. Bu durumda spor ürün ve hizmetlerinde önemli bir faktör olan marka imajından bahsetmek faydalı olacaktır. Spor markasının imajının algısıyla tüketicilerin tutumları arasında önemli bir ilişki vardır ve araştırmanın amacı da ağırlıklı olarak spor ekipmanlarını kullanan ve giyen öğrencilerin spor markalarını algılama boyutlarını ortaya koymaktır. Araştırmaya 223 Beden Eğitimi ve Spor öğrencisi dahil edilmiştir. İki bölümden oluşan bir anket geliştirilmiştir. İlk bölümde dört spor markasının algılanma boyutlarını ortaya koymasını amaçlayan 52 ifade yer almıştır. Anketin ikinci bölümünde ise öğrencilerin demografik özelliklerini ortaya koymayı amaçlayan sorular yer almıştır. Değişkenler arasındaki ilişki ve farklılıkları ortaya koymak amacıyla correspondence analizi, t-test ve ANOVA analizleri kullanılmıştır. Çalışmaya katılan öğrencilerin yüzde 63.2'sini erkek, yüzde 36.8'ini kız öğrenciler oluşturmuştur. Öğrencilerin yüzde 33.2'sinin aylık gelirinin 1001-1500 TL arasında olduğu belirlenmiştir ve yüzde 34.1'ini rekreasyon öğrencileri oluşturmaktadır. Markalar ile algılama boyutlarını gösterebilmek için correspondence analiz tekniği kullanılmıştır. Analiz sonuçlarına göre tablolardan da görülebileceği üzere, Puma markası erkeksi ve kadınsı boyutunun arasında kalmıştır. Adidas markası ise erkeksi ve çok erkeksi arasında yer almaktadır. Nike ve Reebok ise nötr ve daha az erkeksi olarak algılanmıştır. Başka bir haritada ise Puma ve Reebok markalarının diğerlerine göre daha az popüler olarak algılandığı görülmektedir. Yapılan t-test ve ANOVA analizleri sonucunda, bazı spor markalarının pahalı olarak algılandığı ve bu algının yaş ve cinsiyete göre farklılık gösterdiğini belirtmektedir. Nike en pahalı, Adidas'ta en prestijli algılanan spor markasıdır. Puma ise pahalı, gelişen ve eğlenceli bir marka olarak algılanmıştır. Bu çalışmada, bir spor markasının daha iyi pazarlanması ve yönetimine ışık tutacak bulgular elde edilmiştir. Bu sayede, spor yönetimi ve pazarlamacıları tüketicilerinin deneyim ve beklentilerini daha iyi anlayarak bu doğrultu da tasarlanmış



stratejik faaliyetler yöneterek marka değerlerini artırma şansına sahip olabileceklerdir. Araştırmaya Türkiye’de en bilinen dört spor markası dahil edilmiştir ve araştırma sadece belirli bir coğrafik bölgedeki öğrenciler dahil edilmiştir. Gelecekte farklı markalar ve daha fazla katılımcı dâhil edilerek daha kapsamlı ve geniş sonuçlara ulaşmak mümkün olabilecektir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Marka, Algı, İmaj, Marka imajı, Marka Değeri, Spor Markası