The Effects of Social Marketing Practices and Brand Communication on Brand Trust and Willingness to Pay More: A Research on the Head & Shoulders Brand

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Extensive Summary

1.Introduction

In this study, a survey based on the shampoo sector was carried out to research the effects of brand's social marketing practices and brand communication skills on the trust to the brand and the consumers' willingness to pay more.

2.Methodology

Models and Hypotheses of Research

The research model created as a result of the literature review is shown in Figure 1.
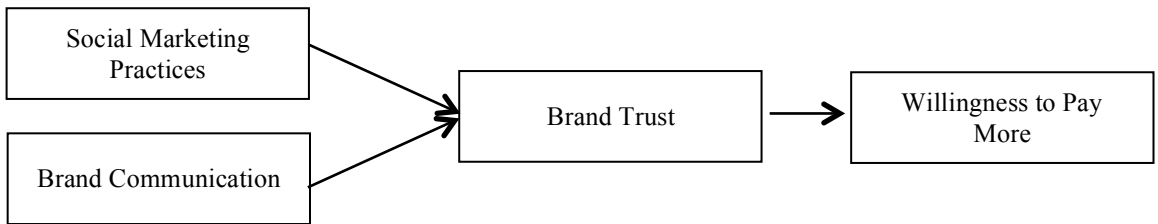

Figure 1 Research Model

Research hypotheses are shown below;

H_1: There is a meaningful and similar relationship between social marketing practices and brand trust.

H_2: There is a meaningful and similar relationship between brand communication and brand trust.

H_3: There is a meaningful and similar relationship between brand trust and willingness to pay more.

H₄: Social marketing practices have indirect effects on willingness to pay more over the brand trust.

H₅: Brand communication has indirect effects on willingness to pay more over the brand trust.

Research Variables

The social marketing practices scale was taken from the study of Mert's (2012) and measured with 9 expressions; brand communication scale was taken from the study of Zehir et al. (2011) and measured with 6 expressions; brand trust scale was taken from the study of Azizi (2014) and measured with 4 expressions; willingness to pay more scale was taken from the study Li, Robson and Coates (2013) and Aydın (2016) and measured with 4 expressions.

Sampling Process

During the process of determining the population and sample, a focus group study was carried out with a group of 10 academicians. At the first stage, they were asked about the shampoo brands they used and the manufacturers of the brands. In the direction of the answers obtained, in the second stage of the tests, they were asked about the social responsibility projects of the producer companies contributing to the society. According to the answers of 80% of the attenders, The Head & Sholders brand which uses the slogan "to win starts in the head" came to the fore with sponsorships in World, Europe and Turkey Basketball League and the support they give to youth and sport. Therefore, the population of this research was the consumers who live in Ankara and use the Head & Sholders brand shampoo.

In this study; due to time, cost and difficulties of access, convenience sampling technique was used and data were collected instantaneously. The survey was carried out between June 1 to July 30, 2017 and available 384 data were obtained.

Validity and Reliability Analyzes

The construct validity of the scales was tested by factor analysis. Single factor confirmatory factor analysis was performed for all scales with AMOS 22 program.

Since the adaptation values produced by the measurement models are not within the acceptable limits, the necessary modifications have been made in the scales based on the modification indexes proposed by the AMOS program. In the modification; 2 expressions were taken from social marketing practices scale and 1 expression was taken from brand communication scale. Also; the covariance relation was made between the error terms of expressions 1 and 2 of the social marketing practices scale. Since the compliance values of the modified measurement model were observed at the acceptable limits, single-factor structures of all variables were verified.

The Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the scales were between 0.85 and 0.91. Based on this finding, it can be said that the scales are reliable at a high level.

3.Findings

Structural Equation Model

The hypotheses of the research were tested by structural equation modeling. According to the results of the structural model; it was found that social marketing applications affect the brand trust(β=0.59, p<0.01), brand communication affects the

brand trust ($\beta=0.49$, $p<0.01$) and brand trust affects the willingness to pay more directly ($\beta=0.79$, $p<0.01$).

In addition, social marketing practices affect the willingness to pay more over the brand trust ($\beta=0.47$, $p<0.01$) and brand communication affects the willingness to pay more over the brand trust indirectly ($\beta=0.39$, $p<0.01$).

The research results show that all hypotheses are supported. When the R^2 values are examined; brand trust was found to be 59%, and willingness to pay more was reported at 62%.

4.Conclusion and Discussion

The shampoo sector in which the study is applied has a serious market share within the cosmetics sector and there is also a fierce competition among the world famous brands as well as local brands. There are a large number of shampoo products on the market and in many different varieties. It can be said that it is extremely difficult for companies to convince consumers for repetitive purchases in this competitive market. Given the fact that product characteristics and price ranges in the sector are not very different, the intensity of the competition can be predicted.

Under the stated conditions, it can be said that companies should pay more attention to the socially beneficial applications percieved more meaningful in recent years and to communication with the consumers to increase the likelihood of being preferred. An assessment can be made that brands can position themselves in different places with the promotional activities supported by the social benefits they provide.

Based on these findings, it can be said that brand trust can be developed by means of the contributions they make to education, health, sports etc., by means of advertising and similar promotional activities and effective communication with consumers. A prediction can be made that the consumers who are met the expectations about the brand can pay more for the product if necessary.