

**THE IMPACT OF BRAND TRUST AND BRAND LOYALTY ON REAL ESTATE
COMPANIES IN TURKEY****MARKA GÜVENİNİN VE MARKA SADAKATININ TÜRKİYE'DEKİ GAYRİMENKUL
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ÖZET

İnternet ve sosyal ağların kullanımı artık giderek artmaktadır ve bu, şirketleri ve mallarını sosyal ağ siteleri tarafından sınırlandırılan birden fazla yöntemle değerlendirebilen çevrimiçi toplulukların oluşturulmasına yardımcı olmuştur. Bu, işletmeleri, markalarına ilham vermek ve tüketicileriyle marka sadakatini artırmak için kritik bir pazarlama kanalı olarak sosyal medyayı uyarlamaya yönlendirdi. Bu araştırmanın amacı, marka topluluklarının ve memnuniyetinin marka güveni üzerindeki etkisini araştırmak ve bunun da marka sadakati üzerinde etkisi var. Buna ek olarak, son araştırmalar marka güveni, elektronik ağızdan ağıza iletişim (eWOM), yeniden satın alma niyeti ve marka sadakati arasındaki ilişkiyi ölçüyor, Bulgular marka güveni ve eWOM'un marka sadakati üzerinde olumlu bir etkisi olduğunu ve marka sadakati üzerinde yeniden satın alma niyetleri üzerinde olumlu bir etki gösterdi. . Analiz ayrıca eWOM'un geri satın alma niyeti üzerinde olumlu bir etkisi olduğunu gösterdi. Araştırma sonuçları, incelenen yapılar arasında önemli bir ilişki olduğunu gösterdi.

Anahtar Kelimeleri: Marka Topluluğu, Marka Güveni, Marka Sadakati, Türkiye.

ABSTRACT

The use of the Internet and social networks is now increasingly growing, and this has helped to create online communities that can assess companies and their goods through multiple methods that are limited by social networking sites. This has driven businesses to adapt social media as a critical marketing channel to inspire their brands and boost brand loyalty with their consumers. The goal of this research is to explore the effect of brand communities and satisfaction on brand trust, which in turn has an impact on brand loyalty. In addition, recent research measures the relationship between brand trust, electronic word of mouth (eWOM), repurchase intention and brand loyalty. Findings showed a favorable effect of brand trust and eWOM on brand loyalty, and a positive effect on repurchase intentions on brand loyalty. The analysis also showed that eWOM had a positive effect on the repurchase intention. The research results showed a significant relationship between the constructs under investigation.

Keywords: Brand Community, Brand Trust, Brand Loyalty, Turkey.

INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, we witnessed an increased rate of using social media platforms in several countries worldwide. Real estate brands are a type of these companies that need to fill the gap of applying social media along with its marketing activities. Republic of Turkey is considered one of the developed countries in the Middle East region in the usage of internet and social media. Social media usage has expanded the scope of online marketing in many aspects, such as the online brand communities' that became more connected and have variety of tools to enable the evaluation of the brands and make promoters or advertisers for the branded products. The study investigates the effect of brand communities and level of satisfaction on brand trust, which in turn affect brand loyalty. It tests the relationships between brand trusts, eWOM, and repurchase intention on brand Loyalty.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study attempts to find out how social media platforms could be beneficial to real estate companies. Communities have tested a revive since mid-nineties and boosted in quantity and relevance. In this research, a case of a real estate company, Arizona group was tested. The study discusses its brand community and its effect on brand trust and impact of brand loyalty. It investigates previous literature on social media, brand trust, brand communities, satisfaction, e-Word-Of-Mouth.

Social Media in Turkey

In Turkey, 64% of Turkish people use social media in January 2020, 56% uses Facebook as the first social platform of choice. 96% of them access it daily, and 98.2% visit it by using their smartphones. 81% searched online for a product or services to buy (We Are Social, 2020).

Social Media in Business

The importance of social media marketing is impacted by the type of industry and type of product. Both types of businesses (B2B and B2C) sales employees use a relationship-focused approach. According to (Felix et al, 2017), some users may look to firms and brands as an “unwanted” guest in online platforms.

Brand Community

Brand communities represent highly valuable marketing, innovation management, and customer relationship management tools (Albert, Merunka, & Valette-Florence, 2008). With the advantage of social networks, implementing brand communities within brand management activities needs fewer financial efforts and less time (Zaglia, 2013). To achieve the expected brand outcomes, it is critical to grow customer interaction and staying up to date with social engagement (Miniz & O’Guinn, 2001), Social networking sites affected the characteristics of consumers; it turned them from silent, investable, and isolated individuals to a noisy, unmanageable and public community. According to A. Moore and Ahonen (2005), community activity is considered as the biggest change in 100 years in business. In virtual environment, users share their experiences and knowledge for specific brand, in which they often group themselves in sub-groups based on the specific brand (Woisetchlager, Hartleb, & Blut, 2008). Social media-based brand communities are the same as brand communities but with a difference; that they are established on social media platforms Habib, Laroche, and Richard (2012).

Brand Community and Trust

Brand trust can be defined as the confident beliefs of consumer that they can rely on delivering promised services from the seller (Agustin & Singh, 2005). A positive relationship is found between brand trust and online brand communities that incomes to develop the relationship quality between the brand and the customer According to Hajli, Shanmugam, Papagianidis, Zahay, and Richard (2017).

Research hypothesizes:

- H0: Brand community in social media platforms has a positive impact on building brand trust for real-estate brands in Turkey.

- H1: Brand community has a significant impact on Building brand trust is key to building trust in real estate industry in Turkey.

Sample Selection

For the purposes of the study, the report studies the case of Arizona Group, one of Turkey's largest real estate companies. The company is involved in strategic apparel design and real estate growth with 30 years of experience in the Turkish sector in general, Building and real estate production in particular was among the founders of the organization who engaged in the creation of other foreign labor unions in Turkey, such as Müsiad and others.

Shown below in Figure 3-2 of the Arizona Group platform (Arizona Group, 2020).

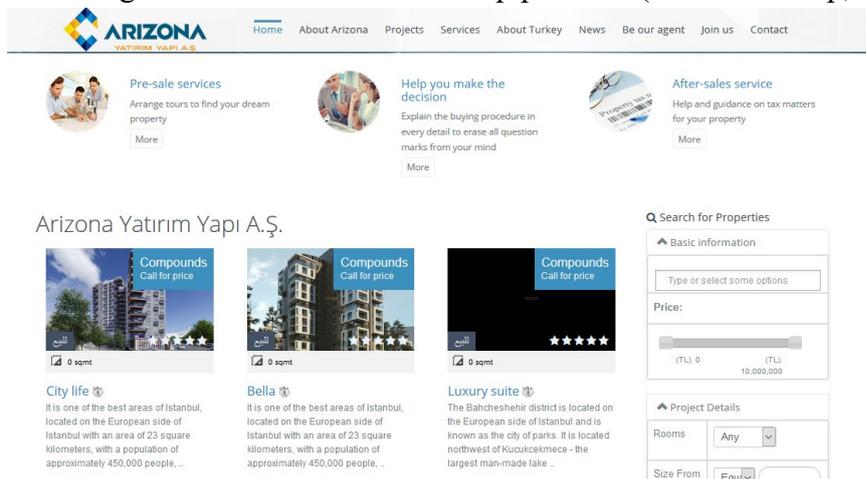


Table 3 Arizona Group Website

The sample of this research study consisted of people who want to buy or invest in real estate in Turkey.

Sample Size

We have targeted population of customers concerned with investment in real estate in the city of Istanbul - Turkey. Easy and random sampling will be conducted to collect data. The data will be taken from 233 customers, who are Arizona's potential customers. Over than 3 thousand 893 houses were purchased by foreigners in August 2020 and 1 thousand 164 of them were from Arab nationalities (Muhasebenews, 2020). The sampling technique that was used (Hill, 2012) in this field is good.

Social Media Accounts Selection

At the beginning of 2015, the Arizona Group used social media, and now it has more than 35,543 fans liking its official page. This online page is considered one of the largest pages of business in Turkey (Arizona Group (FB), 2020).



Table 4 Arizona Facebook Official Page

Research Methodology

This report has applied a quantitative research approach, through using the survey to test its conceptual framework. The potential customers of Arizona Group who are the population of this study were targeted in this survey. For the objective of the present research, surveys are considered as a well-conducted technique (Campbell & Katona, 1953).

- Cost saving methods relative to interviews and focus groups, meaning that polls do not need a large expenditure to be completed.
- Time saving method, which could reach more respondents in less time than other data collection methods.
- Minimizes the likelihood of bias between respondents that may arise in interviews or focus groups.

Questionnaire Design

This questionnaire was built based on an in-depth analysis of prior literature and empirical materials. The value of constructing it in a well-designed fashion that maximizes the advantages should be taken into consideration (Sekaran and Bougie, 2009). The questionnaire for this research followed the above process; selecting an appropriate question that previous researchers tested, trying it on a pilot sample to measure its content validity and face validity, and finally presenting it in an easy-to-understand manner. The researcher should encourage respondents to complete the questionnaire by making it not too long and presenting it to users in a smooth visual manner, testing it via various devices, such as PCs and mobile devices, and placing any necessary helpful content that may enhance understanding of the research objectives and purposes.

The questionnaire was designed into two pages, consisted of 7 sections that includes demographics and a section for each construct, which results in 28 questions. Demographics section was the first section in the questionnaire after the introduction.

Questionnaire Face Validity

The questionnaire went through two evaluation phases to guarantee the legitimacy of the nose. The questionnaire was circulated to a qualified community of marketers employed in marketing teams or marketing companies. Each of the above steps results in a notable adjustment was made for the final-online distributed questionnaire.

Electronic Questionnaire Design

Internet usage grew from 0.4 percent in 1995 to about 59.6 percent in 2020 (internetworldstats.com, 2020). 4.57 billion Individuals will be involved online consumers as of April 2020. This makes 59 percent of the global population online. The growing usage of the Web also tended to expand the use of social networking platforms (statista, 2020).

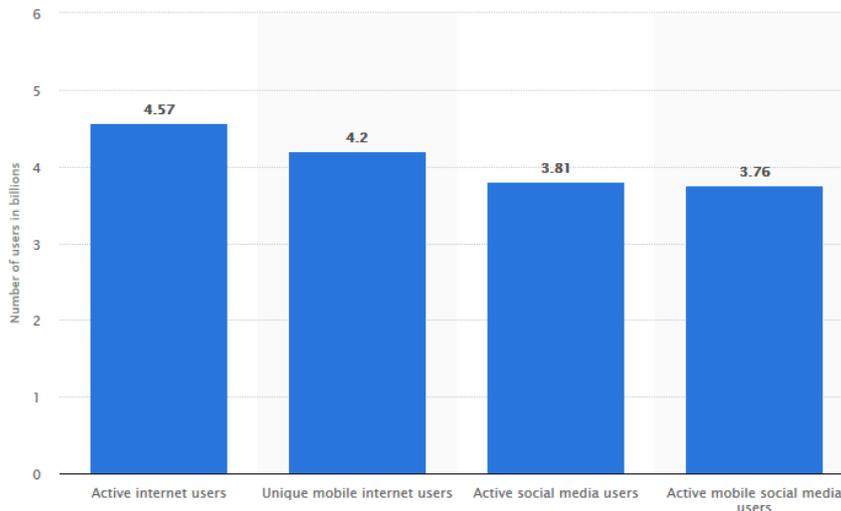


Table 5 Internet Users in 2020 in billions

The low cost of mobile devices has increased its use; around 1.4 billion smartphones have been sold worldwide annually over the past five years (statista,2020), Survey was opened for a week during September 2020 to maximize the benefits of the survey, the google form to enable more in-depth data analysis, the survey was opened.

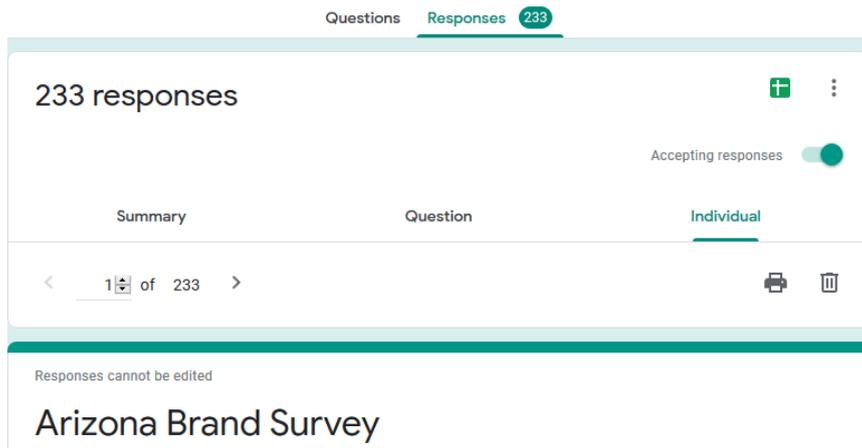


Table 6 Arizona Brand Survey Response Summary

The research population were the potential customers of Arizona Group. The researchers coordinated with the marketing department at Arizona Group to send the survey for some of their customers. Besides that, the researchers used their personal network to reach out the population using personal messaging via WhatsApp and mobile phones.

Operational Definition

Several questions were used to measure the opinion of the respondent for each construct. Each construct has three to four questions, which were tested through a valid measure for the related constructs of the study by previous literature.

5= Strongly Agree, 4= Agree, 3= Neutral, 2= Disagree, 1= Strongly Disagree.

The questionnaire statements were used by Habibi et al. (2016), Jung, Kim, and Kim (2014), Sahin et al. (2011), Laroche et al. (2013), Yoo, Sanders, and Moon (2013), and Munnukka et al. (2015).

Brand Community

Habibi et al. (2016), identifies social media as brand culture built on social media platform. Brand community is specialized, non-geographically bound community based on a structured set of relationships among a brand's admirers.

Brand trust is the average consumer's Willingness to count on the ability of the brands. In this research, brand trust was coded as BT1, BT2, BT3, and BT4.

Brand Trust

Brand trust is the average consumer's Willingness to count on the ability of the brands to deliver the stated function (Chaudhuri & Hlbrook, 2001).

In this research, brand trust was coded as BT1, BT2, BT3, and BT4. Jung et al. (2014) adopted these items.

| Variable | Statement |
|------------------------|--|
| <i>Brand Community</i> | |
| BC1 | I find myself an important part of Arizona brand community. |
| BC2 | The relationship I have with the other members of Arizona brand community means a lot to me. |
| BC3 | I am deeply attached to Arizona brand community |
| BC4 | I and other members of Arizona brand community share the same goals. |
| <i>Brand Trust</i> | |
| BT1 | Arizona is a brand that matches my expectations. |
| BT2 | I feel optimistic about Arizona brand. |
| BT3 | Arizona is a brand I won't be disappointed with. |
| BT4 | Arizona brand ensures satisfaction. |

Hypothesis Testing

The research discusses multiple steps of analysis; as a first step, the research tests the Relationship among two antecedents, brand community and satisfaction, with brand trust. The second phase tests the relationship between brand trust, brand eWOM, and repurchase intention with brand loyalty as a dependent variable.

Brand Community

Concerning brand community respondents lean to be neutral in general or slightly negative. In general, the average standard deviation for BC1, BC2, BC3, and BC4 were about 0.712, which indicates that the respondent's answers were approximately close to the mean.

Table 7 Descriptive Statistics of Brand Community

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------|-----|---------|---------|------|----------------|
| BC1 | 230 | 1 | 5 | 4.56 | .695 |
| BC2 | 229 | 1 | 5 | 4.53 | .698 |
| BC3 | 231 | 1 | 5 | 4.51 | .715 |
| BC4 | 229 | 1 | 5 | 4.50 | .741 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 223 | | | | |

Brand Trust

For brand trust, respondents generally showed a positive trust in Arizona brand. Their answers were about the mean with an average standard deviation equals to 0.694.

Table 8 Descriptive Statistics of Brand Trust

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------|-----|---------|---------|------|----------------|
| BT1 | 231 | 1 | 5 | 4.51 | .715 |
| BT2 | 230 | 1 | 5 | 4.55 | .690 |
| BT3 | 227 | 1 | 5 | 4.53 | .673 |
| BT4 | 230 | 1 | 5 | 4.50 | .698 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 223 | | | | |

Reliability

Reliability is the consistency of the measurement instrument in calculating the proposed concept (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). Cronbach's alpha is the most known test when testing reliability (Cronbach, 1946), The total and inter-correlation values were calculated to figure out how much the item is related in measuring the exact construct in comparison with other items. When correlation value is higher than 0.50 it is considered as an accepted value according to Robinson, et al (1991) Table 4-8 shows a good brand community reliability factor is above 0.9 for brand community variables BC1, BC2, BC3, and BC4, and eWOM1 as shown in Table 28. The correlation for construct items, all of them showed higher than. 0.5 values except BL3, BL4 and e-Wom1, which were all below 0.4.

Table 9 Brand Community Reliability Statistics - Cronbach's Alpha

Reliability Statistics

| Cronbach's Alpha | Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items | Based on N of Items |
|------------------|--|---------------------|
| .928 | .928 | 4 |

Table 4-9 shows the inter-item correlation for brand community variables, where they are around 0.73 and 0.81, which exceed the accepted value.

Table 10 Brand Community Reliability Statistics - Inter-Item Correlation

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

| | BC1 | BC2 | BC3 | BC4 |
|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| BC1 | 1.000 | .778 | .735 | .739 |
| BC2 | .778 | 1.000 | .813 | .754 |
| BC3 | .735 | .813 | 1.000 | .760 |
| BC4 | .739 | .754 | .760 | 1.000 |

Table 4-10 shows the Cronbach's value for each variable of brand community, which are Considered good values by being above 0.7.

Table 11 Brand Community Reliability Statistics - Item-Total Statistics

Item-Total Statistics

| | Scale Mean if Item Deleted | Scale Variance if Item Deleted | Corrected Total Correlation | Item-Squared Correlation | Multiple Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted |
|-----|----------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| BC1 | 13.57 | 3.958 | .814 | .668 | .911 |
| BC2 | 13.59 | 3.883 | .858 | .744 | .897 |
| BC3 | 13.61 | 3.824 | .840 | .719 | .903 |
| BC4 | 13.62 | 3.814 | .814 | .664 | .912 |

Brand Trust Reliability Test

Table 4-11 shows a good Cronbach's alpha factor, which is above 0.9 for brand trust variables BT1, BT2, BT3, and BT4.

Table 12 Brand Trust Reliability Statistics - Cronbach's Alpha

| Reliability Statistics | | |
|------------------------|--|------------|
| Cronbach's Alpha | Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items | N of Items |
| .915 | .916 | 4 |

Table 4-12 shows the inter-item correlation for brand trust variables, where they are around 0.68 And 0.80 which exceed the accepted value.

Table 13 Brand Trust Reliability Statistics - Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

| Inter-Item Correlation Matrix | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | BT1 | BT2 | BT3 | BT4 |
| BT1 | 1.000 | .740 | .712 | .704 |
| BT2 | .740 | 1.000 | .686 | .794 |
| BT3 | .712 | .686 | 1.000 | .746 |
| BT4 | .704 | .794 | .746 | 1.000 |

Table 4-13 shows the Cronbach's value for each variable of brand trust, which are Considered good values by being above 0.7.

Table 14 Brand Trust Reliability Statistics - Item-Total Statistics

| Item-Total Statistics | | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | Scale Mean if Item Deleted | Scale Variance if Item Deleted | Corrected Item-Total Correlation | Squared Multiple Correlation | Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted |
| BT1 | 13.60 | 3.538 | .790 | .632 | .896 |
| BT2 | 13.57 | 3.526 | .821 | .698 | .885 |
| BT3 | 13.59 | 3.640 | .784 | .628 | .898 |
| BT4 | 13.62 | 3.452 | .832 | .711 | .882 |

Results Discussion**Overview of the Findings**

The data that is collected from the online survey was tested and analyzed using Single and multiple linear regressions.

The hypothesis was as following:

- H0: Brand community in Social media platforms has a positive role in building brand trust for Real Estate brands in Turkey
- H1: Brand community has significant impact on building brand trust
- H2: Brand trust has significant impact on brand loyalty

It is found that repurchase intention has the main effect on brand loyalty. eWOM has a significant effect on repurchase intentions within respondents with a beta value of 0.926. The exact positive relationship was found between eWom and repurchases was found to be the same as the relationship between brand trust and satisfaction. The study was published in the online magazine e voted.

Hypothesis Testing

This research aims to help marketers in general, along with those who works in Real Estate context, to get more in-depth insights on building brand trust and brand loyalty for their brands. In this section, the researcher explains the research results form a Turkish point of view. With the increase usage of internet in general in Turkey and social media platforms in specific (wearesocial, 2019), the need arises to investigate how industrial brand can get the benefit out of this increase in usage. The model was built by developing 22 items for 6 constructs that were tested and analyzed according to a linear and multiple regression analyses.

Brand Communities and Brand Trust

The wide usage of internet and social platforms, reflected in a more connected brand communities, increased the customers' control of impressing attitudes for other community members on brands and products. This requires more attention from marketers in order to build a strong relationship with their brand communities to increase their brand trust.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Research Overview

This research aims to investigate the relationship among brand communities and satisfaction on brand trust. The study investigated the relationship between brand trust, eWOM, and repurchase intention with brand loyalty. The research studied the effect of eWom on repurchase intentions. A significant impact was found for brand community, satisfaction, brand trust and e-wOM on brand loyalty, and a positive impact for e-WOM on rep purchase intention. The results were analyzed using simple and multiple linear regression implemented by SPSS 27.0 software. The result supports the proposed hypothesis and found a significant positive relationship among each pair of model variables, as shown in Figure 6-1.

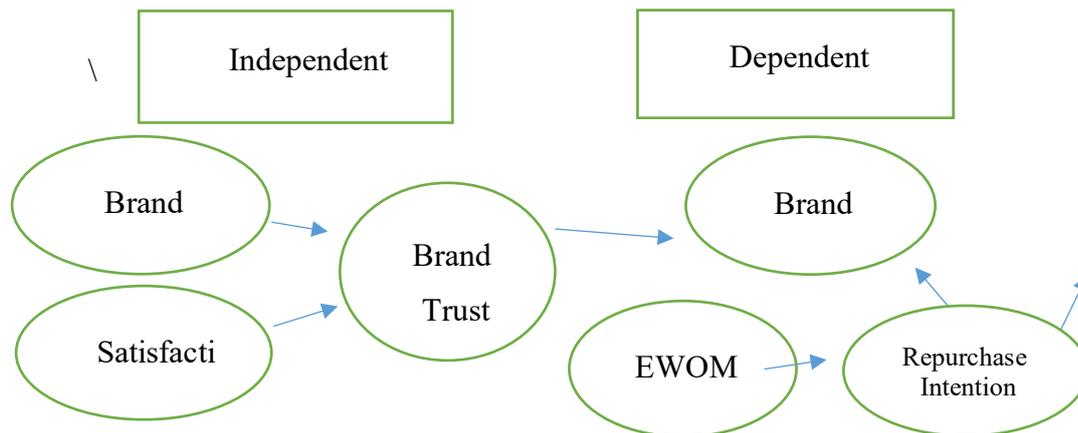


Figure 7 Brand Trust Reliability Statistics - Item-Total Statistics

Conclusion and Recommendations

It was found that there is a positive relationship for brand communities and satisfaction on brand trust. Marketers should ensure that their brand products and services highly satisfy their clients. Brand loyalty is considered as one of the key strategic aims for any marketing or business activity. Research results shows is highly affected by repurchase intention, eWOM and brand trust, respectively.

Theoretical implications

The study was the first of its kind for the Turkish context and within the Real Estate department. The research investigated what effects brand trust among Turkish in the context of Real Estate brands. It investigated the role of eWOM on effecting repurchase intention within clients. The study was implemented in the Turkish in social media context to give an in-depth insight on the relationships among brand community, satisfaction, brand trust, e-WOM, repurchase intention, and brand loyalty. The researchers took a famous Turkish Real Estate brand as its case to conduct their research.

Managerial Implications

Research shows satisfaction in building brand trust is significant in building trust. Real Estate brands can benefit from investing in brand communities. Marketing messages should be communicated continuously through online and offline channels. A special attention to eWOM shall be always in mind, and it is suggested to be in mind while developing social media marketing strategy and plans in order to achieve the most possible positive e-WOM out of clients.

Limitations

Research was conducted within Turkish context and industrial sector only. Framework did not cover every factor that affect both brand trust and brand loyalty. Still there are other variables that could be added to the model, authors say.

Future Research

It is suggested that future research should consist of the model in three levels: countries, businesses, and factors of the study. For the country level, a future study should expand it to include the MENA region, which have many commons among its population. It is suggested to take more variables that can affect brand loyalty, whether from the same model or from outside.

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