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ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ACTIVITIES ON BRAND EQUITY AND CUSTOMER RESPONSE IN TURKISH APPAREL INDUSTRY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN TURKISH AND MOROCCAN CUSTOMERS

MASTER'S THESIS

Chaimae GRARI

Department of Business

Business Administration Program

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SEPTEMBER 2022

ONAY FORMU

DECLARATION

I hereby declare with respect that the study "The Impact of Social Media Marketing Activities on Band Equity and Customer Response in Turkish Apparel Industry: A Comparative Study between Turkish and Moroccan Customers", which I submitted as a Master thesis, is written without any assistance in violation of scientific ethics and traditions in all the processes from the Project phase to the conclusion of the thesis and that the works I have benefited are from those shown in the Bibliography. (.../.../20...)

Chaimae GRARI

FOREWORD

I want to express my sincere appreciation and thanks to my thesis advisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Burçin Kaplan, for her valuable guidance and continuous support provided during the preparation of this research. She was fully encouraging me, which kept me motivated through every step of this thesis and facilitated its accomplishment.

I would like to dedicate my work to my family who has been supporting me since day one. I am so grateful for their love and encouragement that kept me strong and ambitious during this journey. Thank you for being there for me during the hardest moments and for backing me up when I felt low.

September, 2022   Chaimae GRARI

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ACTIVITIES ON BRAND EQUITY AND CUSTOMER RESPONSE IN TURKISH APPAREL INDUSTRY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN TURKISH AND MOROCCAN CUSTOMERS

ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the effect of social media marketing activities (SMPF) on the creation of brand value (brand awareness and brand image) and customer response (paying higher wages and loyalty) towards the company in the Turkish ready-made clothing industry, and to examine the relationship between social media marketing activities and Moroccan and Turkish customers. aims to compare the effect.

Quantitative research was conducted and a questionnaire was used to collect data from 140 Turkish customer and 163 Moroccan customer of a Turkish textile brand that is considered one of the representatives of the Turkish ready-made clothing industry and will be referred to as X throughout the study. The collected data were analyzed with the SPSS program 28.0 and SmartPLS 4.0.

The findings show that social media marketing activities have a significant impact on brand equity as well as a positive impact on customer response. In addition, the results show the mediating effect of brand equity on social media marketing activities and customer response. In addition, the analyzes made with the data obtained were not supported by the results as they showed that social media marketing activities did not differ between Turkish and Moroccan customers.

As a result of this research, it has been concluded that, under the available data and conditions, Turkish ready-made clothing brands' presence on social media and their use of SMPF help them to build strong brand equity and obtain a positive customer response.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing Activities, Brand Equity, Customer Response, Turkish Apparel Industry, Turkey, Morocco

TÜRK HAZIR GİYİM SEKTÖRÜNDE SOSYAL MEDYA PAZARLAMA FAALİYETLERİNİN MARKA DEĞERİ VE MÜŞTERİ YANITI ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ: TÜRK VE FASLI MÜŞTERİLER ARASINDA KARŞILAŞTIRMALI BIR ÇALIŞMA

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Türk hazır giyim sektöründe sosyal medya pazarlama faaliyetlerinin (SMPF) marka değeri (marka bilinirliği ve marka imajı) yaratma ve firmaya yönelik müşteri yanıtı (daha yükdek ücret ödemek ve sadakat) üzerindeki etkisini araştırmayı ve sosyal medya pazarlama faaliyetlerinin Faslı ve Türk müşteriler arasındaki etkisini karşılaştırmayı hedeflemektedir.

Nicel bir araştırma yapılmış ve Türk hazır giyim sektörünün temsilcilerinden biri olarak kabul edilen ve ismi çalışma boyunca X olarak anılacak olan bir Türk tekstil markasının 140 Türk ve 163 Faslı müşterisinden veri toplamak için bir anket kullanılmıştır. Toplanan veriler SPSS programı 28.0 ve SmartPLS 4.0 ile analiz edilmiştir.

Bulgular sosyal medya pazarlama faaliyetlerinin marka değeri üzerinde önemli bir etkiye ve ayrıca müşteri yanıtı üzerinde olumlu bir etkiye sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Ayrıca sonuçlar, marka değerinin sosyal medya pazarlama faaliyetleri ve müşteri yanıtı üzerindeki arabuluculuk etkisi göstermektedir. Ayrıca elde edilen verilerle yapılan analizler, sosyal medya pazarlama faaliyetlerinin Türk ve Faslı müşteriler arasında farklılık göstermediğini gösterdiği için sonuçlar tarafından desteklenmemiştir.

Bu araştırma sonucunda, mevcut veriler ve koşullar altında, Türk hazır giyim markalarının sosyal medyadaki varlıkları ve SMPF kullanmaları, güçlü bir marka değeri inşa etmelerine yardımcı olmakta ve olumlu bir müşteri yanıtı elde etmelerini sağlamaktadır sonucuna varılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal medya pazarlama faaliyetleri, Marka değeri, Müşteri yanıtı, Türk hazır giyim sektörü, Türkiye, Fas

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ABBREVIATIONS

AVE   **:** Average Variance Extracted

BE   **:** Brand equity

CR   **:** Customer response

HTMT   **:** Heterotrait-Monotrait

PLS   **:** Partial Least Squares

P-value   **:** Probability value

SEM   **:** Struructural Equation Modeling

SMMAs   **:** Social Media Marketing Activities

SPSS   **:** Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

TL   **:** Turkish Lira

USD   **:** United States dollar

VIF   **:** Variance Inflation Factor

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I.   INTRODUCTION

In the digital world we are living today, the use of social media became a part of our daily routine. Every social media user rarely spends a day without checking his accounts in different social media platforms. Social media is used by several billions of people all around the world. It represents all the online platforms and applications making the content sharing, interactions and communication easier (Richter and Koch, 2008) such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Obviously, the emergence of social media brought many changes to the business world. Marketing, which is one of the main activities of any company and plays a big role in the success of the company and the achievement of its goals, have witnessed a significant change due to the arrival of social media. This change is related to the migration from traditional marketing to social media marketing. The latter is based on promoting the enterprise by interacting and attracting the interest of present and potential customers with different social media channels (Saravanakumar and SuganthaLakshmi, 2012).

Many companies employ this strategic tool, as they understood its importance for the success of the company (Pavel, 2015). Social media marketing has surely brought many advantages for businesses such as reaching customers, interacting with them (Kelly et al, 2010) and achieving goals whether the company is big or small and whatever is its sector. Not to forget that social media marketing impacts positively brand equity (Abu-Rumman and Alhadid, 2014) and customers response (Godey et al, 2016).

Brand equity is a crucial element for every company. It is one of the keys that allow the businesses to survive the fierce competition with different competitors. Building a brand is mainly related to founding brand equity (Pappu, et al. 2005). Over the years, brands have used several tools and methods to build strong brand equity such as sales force, advertisements, public relations (Aaker, 1991), but the digital era we are living in have obliged brands to choose new techniques. Social media marketing is one of the effective techniques to build brand equity as it was

proven by many researchers (Seo and park, 2018; Godey et al, 2016).

Today, Customers not only use social media to have fun and entertain themselves but it has become a way to express their opinions, to share ideas with other customers and to build their points of views. The interactions between customers give them the opportunity to collect information about products and services and even influence their thoughts. Moving from traditional media such as television to get information to using social media to look for it (Mangold and Faulds, 2009) reflects the importance of adopting social media marketing by companies in order to be close to customers, interact with them and understand their needs. Social media marketing has the power to influence the customer behavior and response towards a brand.

Social media marketing is a powerful technique known for being effective, cheap, and fast and this is why companies should wisely use this tool. Lately, many researches have been interested in studying social media marketing as it has proven its crucial role in the business world whether for the brand itself or for the customers.

A. Thesis Statement

The significance of social media in the life of every customer obliges companies to use it in order to be close to them, understand them and interact with them. Social media marketing is an activity that should be used by brands as it has effects on different aspects. The current thesis will offer a comprehension of the impact of social media marketing activities on two important things for every brand, which are brand equity and customer response in Turkish apparel industry represented by X brand, a well-known Turkish fashion brand which name was not revealed based on ethical considerations, and compare the impact of SMMAs on Moroccan and Turkish customers.

B. Significance of the study

The importance of this study lies in exposing the importance of using social media marketing activities in Turkish apparel industry by evaluating its role in building brand equity and influencing customer preferences. Moreover, this thesis is exploring an interesting point, which is the role of brand equity in the relationship

between social media marketing and customers, a matter that hasn't been studied by many researchers. Also, this study participates in determining if the culture has an effect on the customer's exposure to social media marketing. The importance of this study lies on its contribution to the literature related to social media marketing and its effect on brand equity and customer response in Turkish apparel industry. The selection of this topic was based on the significance of social media in the existence of every brand and in the daily life of every customer. Social media has the power to impact the work of the company and the preferences of the customer.

C. Purpose and Objective

This research plans to deeply investigate the effect of social media marketing activities in Turkish apparel industry. This study examines the effect of social media marketing activities on brand equity in order to understand how social media help building brand equity. Also, it studies the effect of social media marketing activities on customer response to verify how social media is affecting customer response. This studying is as well comparing the effect of social media activities between Turkish and Moroccan customers. This study has three main objectives, which are:

- Investigating the impact of social media marketing activities on brand equity creation and customer response regarding a brand for Turkish and Moroccan customers.

- Exploring the effect of social media marketing activities on loyalty and price premium, as mediated by brand equity for Turkish and Moroccan customers.

- Establish similarities and differences of the effect of social media marketing activities of Turkish apparel industry on Turkish and Moroccan customers

D. Research Questions

- Is there a significant effect of social media marketing Activities on brand equity?

- Is there a significant effect of social media marketing Activities on customer response?

- Does brand equity have a mediating effect on the relationship between social

media marketing Activities and customer response?

- Are there any differences in the impact of social Media Marketing Activities on Turkish and Moroccan customers?

E. Nature of the Study

This study is explanatory research aiming to determine the impact of social media marketing activities on brand equity and customer response in Turkish apparel industry, precisely X brand that is considered as one of the well-known brands in the industry and to compare this impact between Turkish and Moroccan customers. The target sample is composed of teenagers, middle-aged, youngsters, and old-aged followers and customers in Morocco and Turkey of the X brand and chosen based on the convenience sampling technique. The tool used to collect data is a well-structured questionnaire distributed online. Findings of this study can be used for further researches.

F. Plan of the Study Chapters

The current chapter is delivering a quick presentation of the background and subject of this thesis and presenting the objectives and research questions that will be met. The following chapters will go as below:

- Chapter 2: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

The second chapter is dedicated to introduce the literature review related to the problem studied in this thesis. A detailed explanation of every concept related to our topic is presented. Also, the conceptual framework of this research is being defined in this chapter.

- Chapter 3: Research Methodology.

This chapter is about the research methodology, which means all techniques and tools that used in collecting and analyzing the appropriate data for this research. This section will define the research design, the sampling method, data collection tool and the statistical analysis.

- Chapter 4: Analysis and Findings.

This section is dedicated to the interpretation of the results obtained through

different analysis according of the research questions and hypotheses. All the answers are presented in this chapter.

- Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations for Future Studies.

Chapter 5 is summarizing the whole research by starting by presenting the thesis problem and hypothesis. This section also delivers a small recapitulation of the methods and an exposition of the conclusions achieved through the findings of the study. Also, it shows limitations and recommendations for future studies.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A.   Introduction

This chapter discusses and summarizes the literature related to this dissertation topic. Firstly, the scholarly definitions of web 2.0 and user generated content, social media, its functions and types, social media marketing, and its uses, and social media marketing activities have been presented. Secondly, brand equity has been described through the definition of two dimensions, which are brand image and brand awareness and the SMMAs influence on brand equity have been introduced. Thirdly, customer response has been explained by presenting its two components: price premium and brand loyalty and the effect of SMMAs on customer response have been presented. Then, a general look at the Turkish apparel sector has been presented. Finally, the conceptual framework has been constructed, identifying the independent, dependent, and mediating variables of the study.

B.   Web 2.0

Web 2.0 is a term that need to be defined before explaining social media as it is a social media basis (Paquette, 2013, p. 2). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define web 2.0 as the platform where all contents are continually exchanged, shared, and modified in a collaborative way by the users, not only formed and posted by them. It is a term to describe how the use of internet has changed (Andersen, 2007). Web 2.0 switched the role of users from only consuming information without having the right to create it to both producing and consuming content (Kamel Boulos and Wheeler, 2007). It had given the users more ways of communication and connection than how it was restricted with web 1.0. It has given them the possibility to express their ideas and interact with the shared content.

C. Social media

In the last 20 years, the world has noted an interesting change, which is the apparition of social media that has become an essential component of our everyday life; we cannot spend a day without checking different platforms like Instagram, Facebook, or Twitter. Social media represents all the online platforms and applications that make sharing content, interactions, and collaborations easier (Richter and Koch, 2008). According to Robbins and Singer (2014), social media refers to any technology that makes the circulation and sharing of information over the Internet smoother. Social media is a number of online applications developed on web 2.0 foundations to enable the creation and trade of user-generated content (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Social media has offered its users a space to interact with other users, share content between them and express their opinions (Weber, 2007).

In the past years, the number of social media users has significantly raised. In 2020, Facebook has reached 2.85 billion users; YouTube has attained 2.29 billion users while WhatsApp has arrived to 2 billion users (Statica, statica.com) and this can be explained by the increasing use of smartphones by almost every person all over the world; which made the access and the utilization of online social channels easier and intense (Hudson et al., 2016). The intensive use of different social media channels for sharing content and partaking in different activities, represents a crucial form for brands to interact with interesting audience parts (Murdough, 2009).

Social media is not only a simple platform for sharing content but it becomes a crucial part in the development of marketing plan for every company (Aichner and Jacob, 2015). Also, social media has a big role in influencing the consumer's purchase intention which was demonstrated by Kim and ko (2012) who have encountered that 70% of consumers have used social media to obtain information, and half of them have used the information acquired from the social media to make a purchase decision. Social media is bringing more advantages to businesses than traditional media, such as its important role in developing customer trust (Öztamur & Karakadilar, 2014). Social media has proved its effectiveness in strengthening brand awareness and brand image (Masa'deh et al., 2021). The ability to influence brand awareness and brand image has passed from marketers to customers thanks to social media, which has also fundamentally altered how brand material is created,

distributed, and consumed (Tsai & Men, 2013).

We can figure that social media constitutes an interesting tool that impacts consumers and influence brands. It has become a variable that plays a crucial role in the business world, which force the companies to take it into consideration in developing its marketing strategies and plans.

D. The 7 functions of social media:

Kietzmann et al. (2011) presented "honeycomb model of social media" that contains the 7 main functional building blocks for social media websites, which are identity, presence, relationships, reputation, groups, conversations, and sharing as it is shown in the figure below.

Figure 1 Honeycomb model of social media

Source: Kietzmann et al. (2011)

1. Identity

Identity is about the degree to which individuals or organizations reveal their identity by sharing personal or company information in social media environment (Babac, 2011). This information can be name, sex, age, or profession. Also, Kietzmann et al. (2011) believe that the revelation of some other information can be done consciously or unconsciously, through the expression of thoughts, likes, feelings or dislikes. Social media platforms allow users to choose what information about them, they want to share.

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2. Presence

The presence function is about the extent to which any social media user can know whether other users are available or accessible online and even where they are (Kietzmann et al., 2011). It can be done through status, which is a function provided by many social media applications that links between virtual and real worlds. The user can choose the status that is accurate with their situation such as online, offline, or busy.

3. Relationships

Relationships is related to the degree to which individuals are related to each other in social media environment. It is about the nature of connections developed between different users, which lead to sharing and conversations (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Many social media platforms encourage the relationships and associations building. For example, Facebook allows its users to define their family members.

4. Reputation

The reputation is related to the extent to which every individual is capable of identifying others relative positions and even his own position in the social media society (Babac, 2011). Reputation in social media is not about the real identities of users but it might be gained through published content and voiced thoughts. This is also valid for companies that want to develop and reinforce their reputation by using social media (Kietzmann et al., 2011).

5. Groups

This dimension is about the degree to which every individual can create communities and sub-communities in social media environment. A higher individual's social network leads to a bigger number of communities, groups, and followers (Kietzmann et al., 2011). For example, Facebook allows its users to create groups that can be accessed only with the agreement of the creator of the group, and the content is limited to its members. Those groups can assemble people who share the same interests or only family members and close friends.

6. Conversations

The conversations are the extent to which every social media user

communicate with other users in social media environment (Kietzmann et al., 2011) either to get new friends, share opinions or exchange content. Most social media platforms are mainly dedicated to make conversations easier and smoother between individuals and even among groups by affording them with interfaces that help them starting conversations.

7. Sharing

Sharing is about exchanging, distributing and receiving content between individuals in social media environment (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Social media is based on sharing different types of content such as videos, pictures, texts between users. It is one of the main features that push people to use social media.

E. Types of social media:

In the last decade, social media had noticed a fast development observed in the high number of developed applications. Each social media application provides its users with different services that make it belong to a certain social media category. Kaplan and Hanelein (2010) classified social media into six different categories, which are social networking websites (Facebook and LinkedIn), blogs (WordPress), collaborative projects (Wikipedia), virtual social worlds (second life), content communities (YouTube and Instagram), and virtual game worlds. Almost every social media application is fitting into one of these categories.

Because of the objectives of this research, only two of the categories will be developed in this part, which are social networking sites and media sharing networks as they are the types of social media applications this study is interested in.

1. Social networking sites:

Social networking sites are the type of social media applications that allow interaction and connectivity between different users. Weinberg (2009) defined social networking sites as the websites that enable their users to communicate and interact with people that share the same backgrounds and interests. According to Boyd and Ellison (2007), all social networking sites share the same aspects such as the creation of personal profiles that can be private or public, a type of friends to connect and interact with, and the ability of checking content of friends and other users and

exchanging content with them. Those sites make generating, sharing, commenting and exchanging the content with other people easier and smoother (Trusov et al., 2009).

Social networking sites are also used by businesses as they present many opportunities of connection and interaction with customers. Companies are using these sites to share information, connect with customers and to reach information from other organizations or from public (Chen, 2014). They represent a very strategic tool that can be employed by every company to get close to current customers and attract the potential ones. Social networking sites presents many advantages for companies, which make it a must for every business to help them reach their objectives and conquer their competitors.

2. Media Sharing Networks

Media sharing networks refer to all social media applications that enable users to share, download and save multimedia content such as pictures, videos, art, memes, etc. Some of the most known media sharing applications are YouTube, Flickr and Instagram. These networks give to their users the possibility to create their own channels and their own accounts and interact with their subscribers or followers (Zarrella, 2010) by sharing pictures, videos or music, etc.

YouTube is one of the biggest video sharing websites that contain both user-generated and professional contents (Welbourne and Grant, 2016). It is used by millions of people and businesses either to create content or to watch it and share it. It has an effective impact that is translated by the number of users that increase continually. The total number of YouTube users worldwide in 2021 is estimated to be around 2,240,03 million and by 2025, there are expected to be 2,854.14 million active YouTube users worldwide (Degenhard, 2021).

Instagram is also a famous media sharing network that was introduced in 2010. In June 2018, the site attracted 1 billion users and by the end of December 2021, Instagram had 2 billion active users globally (Dixon, 2022). It is a platform dedicated to sharing images and videos whether privately or publicly. The mobile application for Instagram works the best and is more user-friendly, this is why it is used more than the main website (Humphrey, 2016). The followers receive notification when there is a new post, and they may interact with those posts by

commenting or liking them in a few seconds. Users have the opportunity to search for and discover a variety of topics just by using a hashtag. They can publish, receive updates, and retweet other users' posts in a matter of seconds.

F. Social media marketing

Social media marketing is one of the newest types of marketing that requires building a good strategy to achieve customer loyalty and brand equity. It is simply using different internet-based platforms of social media in order to promote services and goods and to share ideas and information (Dahnil et al., 2014; Jayasuriya et al., 2018). It is also described as the use of different social media platforms, software, or channels to communicate, develop, exchange, and deliver offers that are worthy for the stakeholders of a company (Tuten and Solomon, 2017). Social media marketing is the different actions that help every person to advertise and promote its goods and services through social media channels and to reach a wider community that might be inaccessible through traditional channels (Weinberg, 2009). This type of marketing is related to relationship marketing, as the latest is defined as when companies not only attempt to sell its goods but shift to interacting and connecting with the customers (Gordhamer, 2009).

Social media marketing is a beneficial tool for every company as it is effective and cheap, and presents many advantages that make it indispensable for the companies. If businesses know how to utilize social media effectively, social media marketing may be the fastest and greatest method to engage with their customers (Icha and Agwu, 2016). According to Kannan (2017), social media marketing is a powerful practice to attract new clients, shape their preferences, and improve and boost sales.

Social media marketing has an interesting role in the interaction between brands and customers, which is so important for the company. Social media has put the customer in the spotlight and given him the opportunity to choose what brands to learn about and what goods or services information they want to know (Mata and Quesada, 2014), which make social media marketers obliged to interact with them and to understand the way they think to afford them with the exact information they are looking for.

G. Advantages of Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing has brought many benefits to the business world. It is used by different businesses in order to make consumers aware of their products and services and to influence them to purchase (Sajid, 2016). According to Choudhury and Harrigan (2014), social media makes companies understand and learn more about the habits of their consumers.

Social media marketing helps in knowledge sharing between consumers and the brand, increases profits, increases brand loyalty and brand awareness, decreases operating costs, and increases brand recognition (Karimi and Naghibi, 2014; Sajid, 2016). The knowledge sharing in social media can be explained through information published by brands about products and services, and thoughts and opinions presented by customers about their experiences with the brand. Also, social media marketing has a significant impact on sustaining and boosting brand loyalty and brand awareness by letting brands and customers develop close and strong relationships that lead to more awareness about the brand by customers and automatically becoming more loyal. One of the most powerful advantages of social media marketing is how it reduces the costs. When compared to traditional advertising, social media marketing has shown to be more cost-effective (Todor, 2016). It allows companies to reach the customers with less costs than traditional advertising such as distributors or face to face salesperson that need more resources, which means more costs.

Social media marketing also give companies a very interesting advantage, which is the possibility of reaching customers worldwide without having any spatial or temporal constraints related to distribution methods and getting publicity for their products without them having to put in more work or spend more money for it (Das and Lall, 2016). It has also made it simpler for businesses to assess the effectiveness of their advertising and allowed them to focus their advertising on specific target audiences (Todor, 2016; Das and Lall, 2016) and provide them with customized information.

To conclude, social media marketing has a crucial role in creating and maintaining the connection between businesses and customers. It is considered as a bridge by which information exchange and communication are fully and easily

ensured.

H. Social Media Marketing and Apparel Industry

Social media has become a part of our daily life, which made it an important tool used almost by every business in order to take advantage of its benefits. The apparel industry is for sure one of the industries that got affected by social media as a strategic marketing tool. The fashion industry believes in the crucial role of social media marketing to reach the customers online, to grow brand love and to develop customer loyalty (Wright, 2009).

According to Jin and Cedrola (2017), an apparel brand is composed of a number of immaterial symbols and traits that deliver a fascinating image of the products quality and essential features. Social media platforms are considered the right tool to help these brands communicate this intangible side by developing a suitable marketing strategy. According to Kalbaska and Cantoni (2018), the use of social media in apparel industry have proven its effectiveness in attracting customers. Social media is effectively used by apparel brands as it is a perfect instrument for sales growth and awareness building (Pattnaik and Trivedi, 2020).

Instagram is known to be the most used social media application by fashion brands (Casaló et al., 2020). It is a platform known for being perfect for sharing a pleasing content or sharing different moments through the stories option (Huggard & Cope, 2020). Many apparel brands are highly active in this application trying their best to deliver a positive image and reach more customers through the adoption of different marketing strategies.

İ. Social Media Marketing Activities

Nowadays users are not only focusing on the product features but rather brands should provide them with stunning experiences (Sheu et al., 2009; Komppula and Gartner, 2013). Companies are obliged to organize marketing activities in compliance with the different needs of users; they should understand the needs of users before users themselves and determine what products they need to arrange occurrences that generate everlasting memories (Kim and Perdue, 2013). Each person uses social media for a different reason. Some are looking to be entertained,

some are looking for newest information, while others want to interact with other users or brands. We all agree that activities of marketing have an impact on the consumers by giving them what they need and on the brands by helping them reach their goals, which make them important in the success of every company.

Social media marketing has many activities that differed from one sector to another. Many are researchers that have addressed social media marketing activities in different fields. Kim and ko (2011) and Godey et al. (2016) have classified social media marketing activities of luxury brands to five possible characteristics which are entertainment, word-of-mouth (WoM), customization, interaction, and trendiness. Sano (2014) addressed trendiness, customization, perceived risk, and interaction as the SMMAs aspects in insurance services. While later, Seo and Park (2018) have applied entertainment, trendiness, interaction, perceived risk, and customization as the five SMMAs elements in the airline industry. Khan et al. (2019) have worked on three aspects of SMMAs for apparel brands, which are interaction, trendiness, and sharing. This study will work on four dimensions, which are entertainment, customization, trendiness, and interaction.

1. Entertainment

One of the most crucial elements of social media marketing is entertainment. It is a result of play and fun the person gets by using social media platforms (Agichtein et al., 2008). According to Kang (2005), entertainment gotten from using social media increases participating conduct and produces continuous use, which develops and induces favorable feelings about the brand. Manthiou et al. (2013) believe that social media users are seeking pleasure and amusement, which makes them interested in the entertaining and amusing content. The companies using social media marketing should give a big interest to this activity because entertainment is so important for every user.

Many researchers have presented entertainment as a strong reason that makes people use social media. Park et al. (2009) state that entertainment has an interesting role in leading participation in social networks. Shao (2009) discovers how entertainment is an effective motive for using user-generated content. Muntinga et al. (2011) realized the use of brand-related content by social media users is mainly for amusement and entertainment. Courtois et al. (2009) find escapism and recreation,

which are causes for looking for amusement, lead loading content on different social media platforms.

Entertainment is a crucial element in social media, which obliges us to evaluate if apparel brand we are working on in this study have fun and entertaining social media.

2. Interaction

Interaction in social media is important in order to maintain a solid communication between brands and customers. Social media make interaction, collaboration, and content sharing of brands with customers easier (Wang, 2012). Interaction with customers in social media helps the brand understand the customers' needs and demands and get their thoughts about the brand in actual time (Vukasovic, 2013). Interaction in social media is beneficial for every business as it gives consumers the opportunity to discuss and share their ideas (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Daugherty et al. (2008) state that the social media interactions motivate and incite the creation of content generated by users. Social media interactions simply represent the users that participate in creating content on online social platforms with the purpose of interacting with like-minded users about a particular brand or a product (Muntinga et al. 2011). So, social media interactions make it easier for customers to contribute in brands social media platforms.

Social media differs according to the interaction type. There is content-based social media and profile based social media (Zhu and Chen, 2015). The latter concentrates on every member alone in order to encourage them connect with specific topic or information as it is interested in the user such as Facebook and Twitter. While, content-based one concentrates on comments and conversations related to the content posted in order to make interact users with content provided by an account they like such as Instagram and YouTube.

Brands are in the obligation of posting special content, reflect the profile of members, and be open to discussions and information exchange in order to encourage interaction with the customers. According to Manthiou et al. (2013), creating an interactive relationship might increase affinity and credibility. In this study, interaction is defined as information sharing and opinion exchange.

3. Trendiness

Trendiness is described as giving the most recent and trendiest news about goods and services (Godey et al., 2016). Social media provides the most updated information and provide hot discussion topics, which is why it is considered a good instrument to seek the best functional goods (Naaman et al., 2011). Customers choose information coming from social media platforms and not company-sponsored information coming from promotion activities because they believe that social media information is more reliable (Vollmer and Precourt, 2008; Mangold and Faulds, 2009). Socia media became a reference for many customers to choose their goods or to build their ideas and opinions about brands. Users are not only there to have fun but they are looking for information too as it is easier and faster, which is why brands are asked to present the newest information in their social media accounts.

Muntingua et al. (2011) believe that trendiness in social media platforms is having four motivations. Firstly, pre-purchase data signifies looking on brand communities for information about products to make wise buying decisions. Inspiration as following brands social media is a source of inspiration by helping consumers to get information and ideas. Surveillance is staying updated about the brand's social media. Finally, Knowledge means obtaining brand-related information from other consumers in order to profit from their expertise and learn more about the brand's products. In this research, trendiness is defined as the diffusion of the newest information about apparel brands.

4. Customization

Customization is how personalized a certain service in order to satisfy the individual's choices (Schmenner, 1986). Customization is founded on contacting users individually, which is distinct from traditional promotion activities. Giving an optimized content to the customer is a strategic tool that allows companies to establish customer satisfaction and generate favorable conceivable control (Ding and Keh, 2016; Nam and Yeo, 2011). Social media customization allows businesses to convey the originality of their brands, which helps them build strong brand loyalty and affinity (Martin and Todorov, 2010).

The posts in social media differ based on how customized every communication, as there are two sorts: a broadcast and a customized message (Zhu

and Chen, 2015). Broadcast has a content that target any user who might be interested. While customized message has a specific target whether it is one person or a small audience. In this study, customization is about the level to which platforms of social media give a customized content to their users.

J. Brand Equity

In the extremely competitive market, brand equity is a crucial element that every brand should have in order to survive (Saidarka and Rusfian, 2019). Brand equity has been a serious concern for every business and every manager as it represents a competitiveness advantage that every brand should have. It indicates the value added by the brand name to its products (Zahoor et al., 2016). According to Aaker (1991), brand equity is a collection of brand liabilities and assets connected to the brand's logo and name that may add to or detract from the value of goods and services and adds value for both the customer and the business. Brand equity is mostly related to the value coming from the brand immaterial assets and liabilities.

Keller (1993) has described consumer-based brand equity believing that brand knowledge, which is an associative network, where the associations are knots, is the starting point to build this concept. Brand equity was divided by Keller (1993) to brand image and brand awareness.
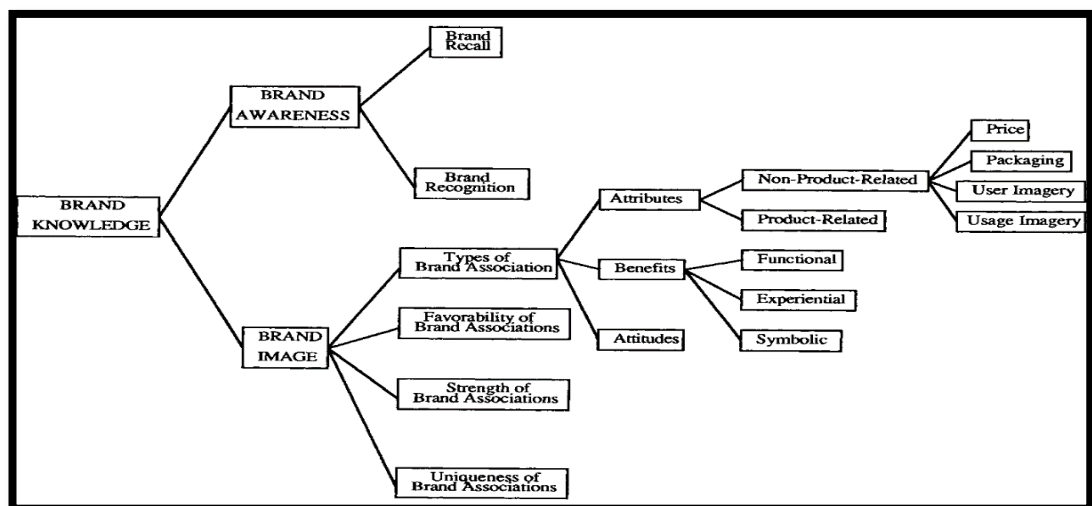
Figure 2 Keller's brand equity model (1993)

Source: Kevin Lane Keller, Conceptualizing, Measuring, and Managing Customer Based Brand Equity, Journal of Marketing, 57(1), 1993, 1–22.

Keller (2003) has defined brand equity as the differences in the response of customers to marketing activity. The idea behind brand equity is to make customers rely on positive experiences when they think or feel a product or service, which will make them have a positive response towards the pricing, the marketing, and distribution of the brands products. Every company is obliged to create situations that make the customers have positive feelings, perceptions, and thoughts about the brand. Brand doesn't rely only on a simple product name but on an iconic definition that the brand pursues. It is a sociocultural event (Keller, 2003). Brand equity is made of two dimensions, which are a behavioral dimension (brand loyalty) and cognitive dimensions (brand awareness/brand associations and perceived quality) and it represents the various reactions of the customer in front of two products with the same characteristics but one is branded and the other is non branded (Yoo and Donthu, 2001).

This concept happens when a customer has special associations of a brand in his memory and is fully conscious of this brand. In brand equity, there is brand awareness, which is the reflection of characteristics such as a sign, logo, and catchphrase of the brand, and brand image, which is the image of the brand in the mind of the customer apart from the signs. These two notions will be explored more deeply below.

1. Brand awareness

Brand awareness is referring to the brand existence in the memory of the customer, which is the capability of the consumer to memorize the brand and recognize it under various circumstances (Rossiter and Percy, 1987). Brand awareness is described as the ability of the customer to remember and notice the brand by linking the brand logo, name, or symbol to a definite association in the memory. To build brand awareness, the company should make sure that the customer knows the service or product category that the brand competes in (Keller, 2003). Aaker (1996) defines brand awareness as the consumer's recall and recognition of the brand but he believes that this recognition can reflect the attitude of the customer towards the brand. Keller (2009) concluded that brand awareness is concerning crowd power or track on memories of consumers that image their capacity to remember or distinguish a certain brand in different situations. According to Hutter et al. (2013), brand awareness is everything that might assist an individual build a

knowledge regarding a specific brand. The degree to which customers can identify the brand in various settings serves as an indicator for brand awareness, which is related to the roles of brand identities in customer's mind (Gopinath, 2019). A high brand awareness can be a sign of the success for a brand as it shows how well-known and distinguished is the brand among customers and how familiar they are with the brands products and services.

We talk about brand awareness when the consumer easily realizes the brand name when thinking about a certain product, which raises its chance of being one of possible nominees and surely its possibility of being picked (Keller, 1993). Brand awareness helps the consumer decide which product to get in less time, as he will always pick the brand that he has enough information about. Aaker (1996) believed that brand awareness has three levels: brand recognition, which translates how familiar is the consumer with a certain brand and recognize it easily, brand recall, which means the brand that first comes to the mind of the consumer whenever its products group is presented and Top of mind, which reflects the brand that dominates the mind of the customer and shows up in every situation he can use it in, the brand that he thinks about the most.

2. Brand image

Brand image refers to the perceptions that customers maintain about a brand based on the reflection of the brand associations in their memory (Keller, 1993). It is the specific physical system developed in the mind of the consumer by combining his feelings for a product and the indirect aspects associated. According to Krishnan (1996), the brand associations are developed either by having a direct experience with the brand product or by indirect means, such as the word of mouth. Brand image is the consumers' private symbolism that includes and incorporates every evaluation and definition about the brand (Iversen and Hem, 2008). It is consisting of ideas and information that consumers have regarding the diverse goods of a brand and their characteristics (Lee et al., 2011). Brand image is about every idea, opinion, thought that the customer has about a brand.

Brand image is considered a crucial marketing component, as it is a result of marketing communication (Riezebos, 2003). A strong brand image helps consumers identify demands, which helps the company stand out from its rivals and increases

the likelihood that customers will have the conviction to buy the product (Hsieh et al., 2004). It is a crucial variable for every brand for the role it plays in the achievement of the brand's goals in a market known for its furious competitivity.

3. Effect of social media marketing activities on brand equity

Buying motivations of consumers are different and various but the brand itself constitutes the most significant mean to bond with the customers (Godey et al., 2013). Every brand has the power to affect the attitudes and visualization of customers through different methods, including the two features of brand equity in Keller's CBBE model (1993), which are brand awareness and brand image.

Through their study, Bruhn et al (2012) demonstrated that the social media communications and traditional communications of the brand have a notable impact on brand equity. Marketing activities that are done through social media are known to be so beneficial to the brand as they reinforce brand equity (Bruhn et al, 2012; Kim and Ko, 2012).

Many are the studies that proved the significant effect of SMMAs on brand equity. Fanion (2011) believed in the importance of social media to create and improve brand awareness. Also, Seo and Park (2018) arrived to the conclusion that activities of social media marketing improve brand awareness and produce a favorable brand image. Social media known for the speed of information spread, permits the brand to be acknowledged by several users (Kumar et al., 2007; Sharma and Verma, 2018). Social media marketing activities represent interesting instruments of awareness by reminding customers of the brand and staying in their minds (Bilgin, 2018).

Some researchers have proved that social media has also an influence on brand image. It is a powerful instrument to interact with different consumers and to develop a favorable image of the brand (Halligan and Shah, 2009; Fortezza and Pencarelli, 2015).

In consideration of this discussion, this study assumes that brand equity is influenced by social media marketing activities.

K. Customer Response

1. Price premium

Readiness to pay a high price refers to the price the customer is glad and ready to give in order to get the products of a certain brand compared to other brands (Netmeyer et al., 2004). The price premium is definitely an immediate precedent of the purchasing conduct of a customer (Godey et al., 2016). A brand gets a premium price when the cost that a customer is ready to spend for its products is higher than the amount they are willing to give for the same products from other brands (Aaker, 1996).

Leung et al. (2013) empirically concluded that the behavioral intention of customers to buy from a brand is dependent on their attitudes related to the brand's Facebook and Twitter advertisements. Willingness to pay premium is definitely coming from a believe that this brand deserves a higher price than any other brand either from a past experience or the perception that the customer has about this brand. According to Godey et al. (2016), the willingness to pay a premium price is a result of different marketing activities done by a brand on social media in order to develop a positive customer response towards the brand.

2. Brand loyalty

Brand loyalty is the propensity of a customer to be loyal to a particular brand reflected by its intention to purchase the brands products as their first option. According to Godey et al. (2016), loyalty indicates the probability that customers will purchase a certain brand's products again. Aaker (1991) advanced that brand loyalty is considered as a measurement of a customer's attachment towards a certain brand. Brand loyalty is a real commitment by customers to frequently or favorably purchase certain products or services (Jackson, 2006). It is the customer's pledge to rebuy a brand's goods and services regardless of competitors' activities and to engage in becoming a potential loyal customer of that brand (Dick and Basu, 1994; Oliver, 1999).

This concept can be conceptualized into two components, one related to the behavior and the other related to the attitude (Jacoby and Kyner, 1973). While behavioral loyalty is related to the purpose of repurchasing a product or a service

from the same brand, attitudinal loyalty is a customer's commitment or preferences when they evaluate the values that can be earned from a specific brand (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001). According to Oliver (1999), Behavioral attitude is connected with the repurchase activity, but attitudinal loyalty is seen as a brand commitment that a customer shows to his favorite products and services.

Customers are more loyal to a brand and are less likely to move to a competing one when they have a favorable perception of that brand in their minds (Zia et al., 2021). Customer loyalty is crucial for every brand as it helps it achieve success and survive in the business world. It is an outstanding asset for every enterprise (Moisescu, 2014; Jiang and Zhang, 2016) for its role in the success of the company and the advantages that it offers. Brand loyalty provides businesses with a number of strategic advantages, including increasing their market share, encouraging brand expansions, lowering marketing costs, bringing in new customers, and fortifying their brand against aggressive threats (Zia et al., 2021).

Brand loyalty in this study refers to the level to which customers are faithful to a specific brand by already purchasing its products or planning to purchase them soon.

3. Impact of social media marketing activities on customer response

Social media platforms are good for getting information and creating preferences about goods and brands (Naylor et al., 2012). Nowadays, many consumers are using social media as business platforms as they pay and purchase products directly from these platforms (Anderson et al., 2011; Tuten and Solomon, 2015). Social media activities not only made direct payments easier but it boosts the relationship between the brand and the customers. According to Laroche et al. (2013), loyalty is enhanced by these strong relationships.

Many researchers have concluded that social media marketing activities are significantly impacting brand loyalty. According to Bagozzi and Dholakia (2006), customers who follow brands social media trusts these brands more and have the aptness to stay loyal to them. Social media marketing activities play a crucial role in increasing brand loyalty (Erdoğmuş and Cicek, 2012; Kim and Ko, 2010).

Gamboa and Gonçalves (2014) have demonstrated how Facebook improves customer loyalty by explaining how followers of the Zara brand on Facebook were

more satisfied, had a remarkable trust, and was willing to pay a high price, therefore, they demonstrated more commitment towards Zara than customers who are not following the brand on Facebook. Godey et al. (2016) proved that social media marketing activities have a big role in developing a positive customer response by impacting the customer loyalty, his brand preference and his willingness to pay premium price. This study predicts social media activities of apparel brands to affect customer responses such as price premium and loyalty.

L.   General look to apparel industry in Turkey

The apparel industry is one of the oldest and most important industries in the world. It is consisting of all companies that design and sell clothes, footwear, and accessories. The development of the Turkish apparel sector started in the 1980s and kept growing remarkably and maintaining Turkey's progress due to entrepreneurial, cheap, and dynamic labor force (Utkun and Atligan, 2010).

The textile and apparel industry in Turkey was founded in the 16th century in the Ottoman empire period. It has played an important role in the economy by employing people, producing different products and generating profits (Akalın, 2001). In the 20th century, the industry has noticed many improvements, starting with the establishment of Sümerbank in 1933, which is an institution that aimed for the economy growth by developing the apparel industry and building more textile factories.

In 1980s, the Turkish apparel industry has grown to the point of meeting the local demand and starting to export, especially as a subcontractor. The exports from Turkey started to reach many countries such as European Union, Libya, and Iraq. In 1990s, the sector's share in the economy has significantly increased compared to other sectors, which made the apparel industry play a crucial role in the Turkish economy. Turkey started focusing more on production and became the main apparel supplier to the European union. The sector has developed to the point of making Turkey the center of production and distribution of big Dutch, American, and German companies. In 2000s, the Turkish apparel sector started focusing more on authentic designs, products development, and brands evolution. Between 1980-2000, textile and apparel industry were the first manufacturing industry in export with 20.5% growth annually (Eraslan et al., 2008).

Until today, the importance and value of the Turkish apparel sector are very significant as Turkey is ranked the 7th largest clothing exporter in the world with a share of 3.7%, and the 3rd largest supplier to the European Union. Turkey ranks 6th in the world when it comes to knitted clothes exporting countries with a share of 4.1%. For the woven clothes, Turkey comes in the 7th rank in the world with a share of 3.3% (trade.gov.tr, 2021).

The Turkish apparel industry has a crucial role in trading worldwide as it has the potential to meet high standards and can easily compete in international markets due to the high quality and diverse products, experienced human resources, production capacity, and accumulated experience during all these years. The apparel sector is also considered the backbone of Turkey's economy with its participation in the economic indicators.

Today, Turkish apparel industry presents many advantages to its customers, which makes it attractive and unique. The list below gives the main characteristics of the sector that give it an added value (erai, 2020):

- The strategic geopolitical position of the country and the strong transport system make the delivery of the products easier and smoother.

- The raw materials are highly present in Turkey as it is a source for many raw materials needed for production, such as cotton, in which Turkey ranks 7th in world production.

- The flexibility of trade policies with the high qualified workforce makes the sector developed and capable of manufacturing high quality products.

- The continuous investment in developed technologies in order to improve the industry.

- The experienced and skilled human resources who have a very good technical knowledge.

Turkey today has many apparel brands that are well known locally and even internationally such as X brand that we will be introducing below and will be focusing on in this research.

M. X brand:

In 1997, X brand opened 21 stores the same year in Turkey and started operating all over the country. In 2009, the brand started operating internationally. Today, it has more than 1000 stores in 47 countries in different continents with almost 50 thousand employees. In 2020, the brand has reached a net sale of 22.6 billion TL and an export with the value of 845 million USD. We refer to our brand with X because the name can't be told due to ethical considerations.

X brand has a philosophy that every person deserves to dress well by allowing people to access to quality products at affordable prices. It also aims to be one of the three most successful apparel retailers in Europe by 2023.

N. Conceptual Framework:

The research model of this study was elaborated based on the existing literature (Godey et al, 2016; Seo and Park, 2018) with making some modifications to adapt it to our research. The independent variable is social media marketing activities: entertainment, interaction, trendiness, and customization, and the dependent variables are brand equity with two dimensions brand awareness and brand image and customer response with price premium and loyalty as dimensions. The variable brand equity is also mediating the relationship between the two other variables. Conceptual framework of this dissertation is shown in figure below:
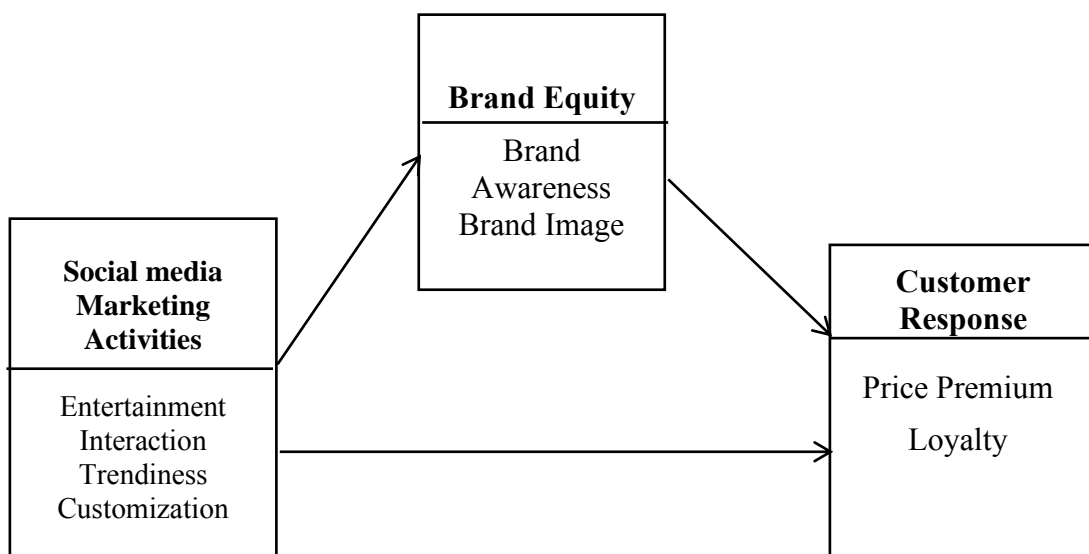
Figure 3 The Study Conceptual Framework

This research will apply this framework to the apparel sector by analyzing the responses to the questionnaire adopted. According to the conceptual framework, the hypotheses of this study were formed as follow:

H1: Social media marketing Activities have a significant impact on brand equity.

H2: Social media marketing Activities have a significant impact on customer response.

H3: Brand equity has a mediating effect on the relationship between social media marketing Activities and customer response.

H4: Social Media Marketing Activities have a different effect on Turkish and Moroccan customers.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Introduction

Research methodology is selected based on the problem we are studying, the purpose of the study and the results we want to achieve. That's why it has to be chosen carefully in order to get accurate results.

This chapter introduces the research methodology by describing the research design, defining the population and sampling, determining the data collection tool and statistical analysis.

B. Research Design

This research is quantitative research that explores the impact of social media marketing activities (entertainment, customization, trendiness, and interaction), which is the independent variable, on brand equity (brand awareness and brand image) and customer response (price premium and brand loyalty), which are the dependent variables. This research is focusing on the Turkish apparel industry precisely X brand that is considered as one of the strongest brands in the sector.

The survey used in this thesis was developed based on past researches to guarantee the validity of the scales. The questions are taken from articles of Kim and Ko (2012), Kim and Hyun (2011), Netemeyer et al. (2004), Godey et al. (2016) and Yoo et al. (2000) then we adapted them to our study. The latest was conducted in Turkey and Morocco, as we want to compare the effect of social media marketing on customers from different cultures. A survey is a tool that will help us collect the information needed to examine our hypotheses and attend the desired results.

Google forms application was used to develop our survey in 4 languages (English, Turkish, French, and Arabic) and which contained 29 questions. The first part included close-ended questions about the demographic characteristics of the respondents while the other parts included the scale questions related to the research variables. The scale used was Likert scale in which the respondent can express his

opinion on a scale of 5 points.

After being approved by Istanbul Aydin University ethical committee, the questionnaire was distributed online in order to collect 300 responses.

C. Population

The aim of this study is to analyze the effect of social media marketing on brand equity and customer response in Turkish apparel industry and to examine the impact of social media activities on customers from two different cultures which are Turkish and Moroccan. So, the population of this research is composed of Turkish and Moroccan customers and followers of the X brand as we consider it as a representative of the Turkish apparel industry. It is a famous Turkish fashion brand, which name cannot be revealed because of ethical considerations.

D. Sampling Method

The sampling method that was applied in this research is a non-probability method, which is convenience sampling technique. The sample is chosen based on accessibility and availability of the participants, which means it is composed of the part of population which is close to hand. As it was hard to share our survey with all Turkish and Moroccan customers, we have chosen convenience technique to collect our data, which allows us to get the appropriate data at the right time with the less cost and effort.

To define the size of our sample, we have used GPower 3.1.9.4 software, which is recommended by Hair et al. (2017). As it is shown below, the size defined was 128. As it is known, the error margin falls to 10% or even less, when a sample of 100 is used (Patel, 2003). But we chose to collect 300 responses because if the sample is from 200 to 300, observations will lead to 7% as error margin.

We collected 312 answers but only 303 were retained, as 9 of the answers were invalid for data analysis. 140 of the respondents were Turkish customers, while 163 were Moroccan customers.
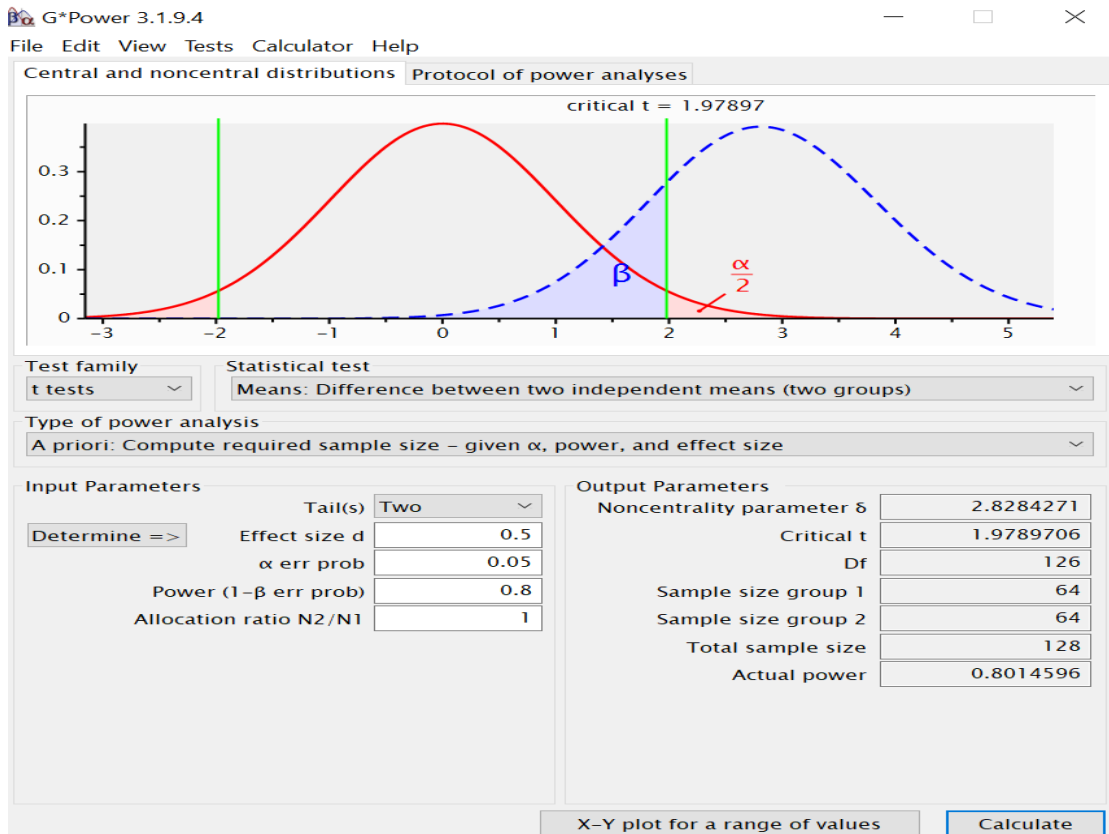
Figure 4 Sample size with GPower Software

Source: GPower 3.1.9.4 software

The margin of error formula is $Z * \sqrt{(P(1-P))/n}$ and the graph below (Reyes, 2013) demonstrate the relationship between the sample size and the margin of error and lead to conclude that the bigger the sample size, the smaller the error.
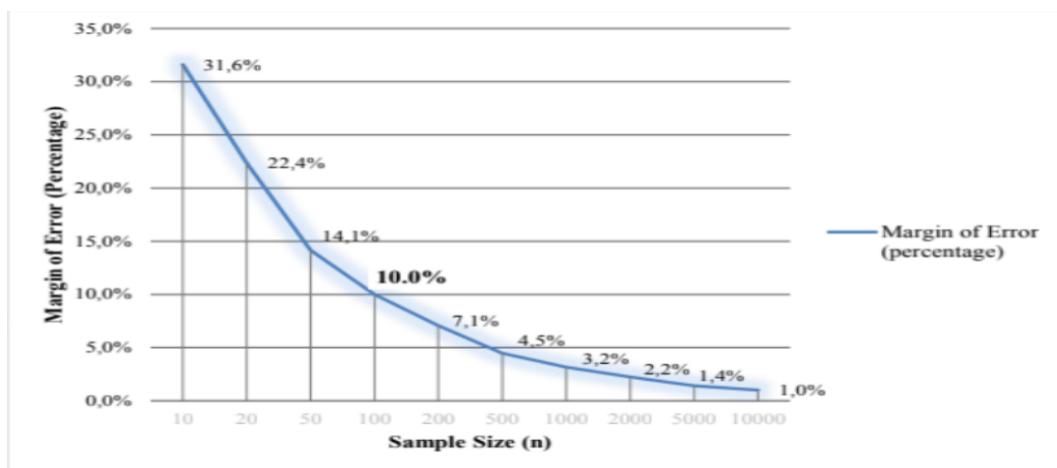
Figure 5 Sample size and Margin error

Source: Reyes, 2013

E. Data Collecting Tool

The data will be collected through a questionnaire developed by using Google forms and distributed online through Facebook, Messenger and WhatsApp. It starts with multiple-choice demographic questions to know our sample more, than 1 to 5 Likert scale questions related to our variables, in which 1 signifies strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree.

F. Normality analysis

Normality test is used to verify if the variables are normally or abnormally distributed. It is important to examine the normality of distribution to know which test to use for data analysis. Many tests are used to run this analysis but the two most known and widely used are Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and Shapiro-Wilk test. For both tests, the data is normally distributed if the sig. is greater than 0.05 and abnormally distributed if the sig. is lower than 0.05.

1. Normaliy test for Turkish sample
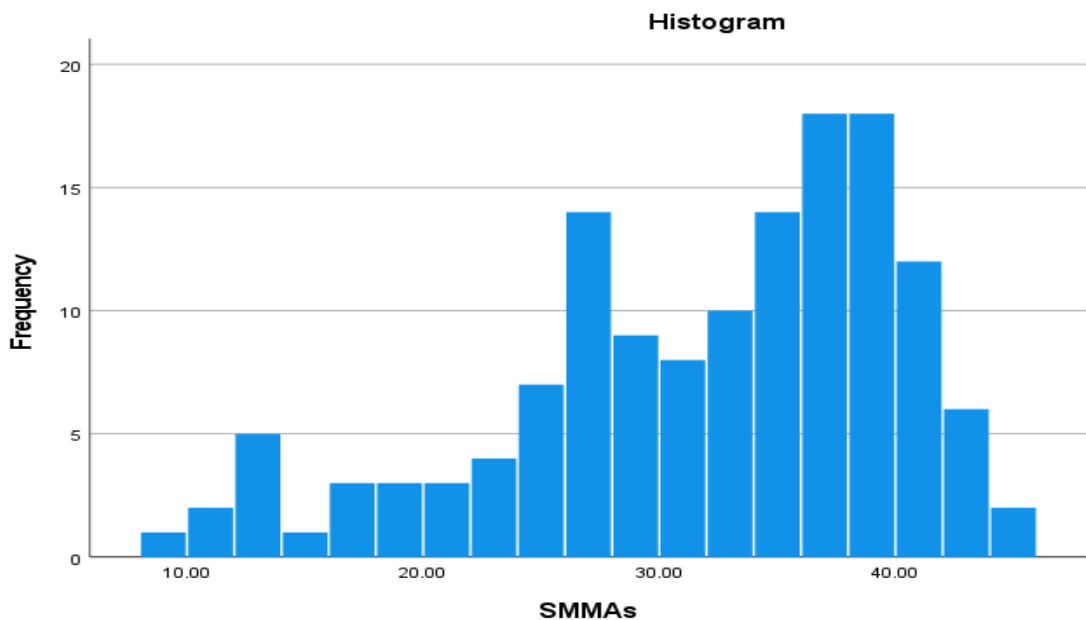
Figure 6 Social Media Marketing Activities Normality Histogram for Turkish Sample
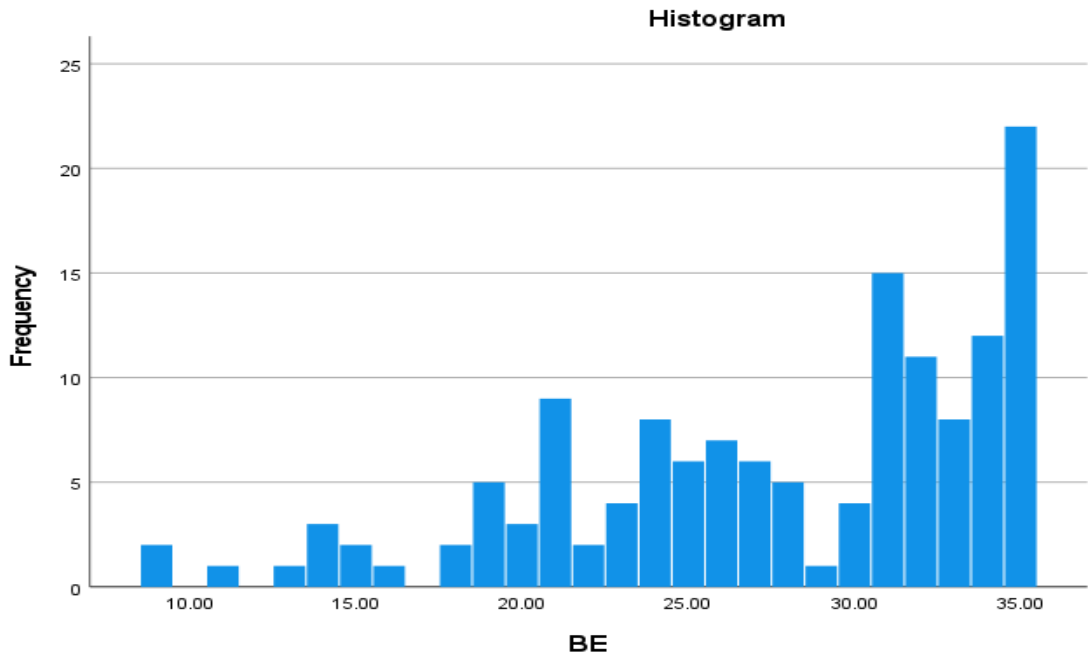
Figure 7 Brand Equity Normality Histogram for Turkish Sample
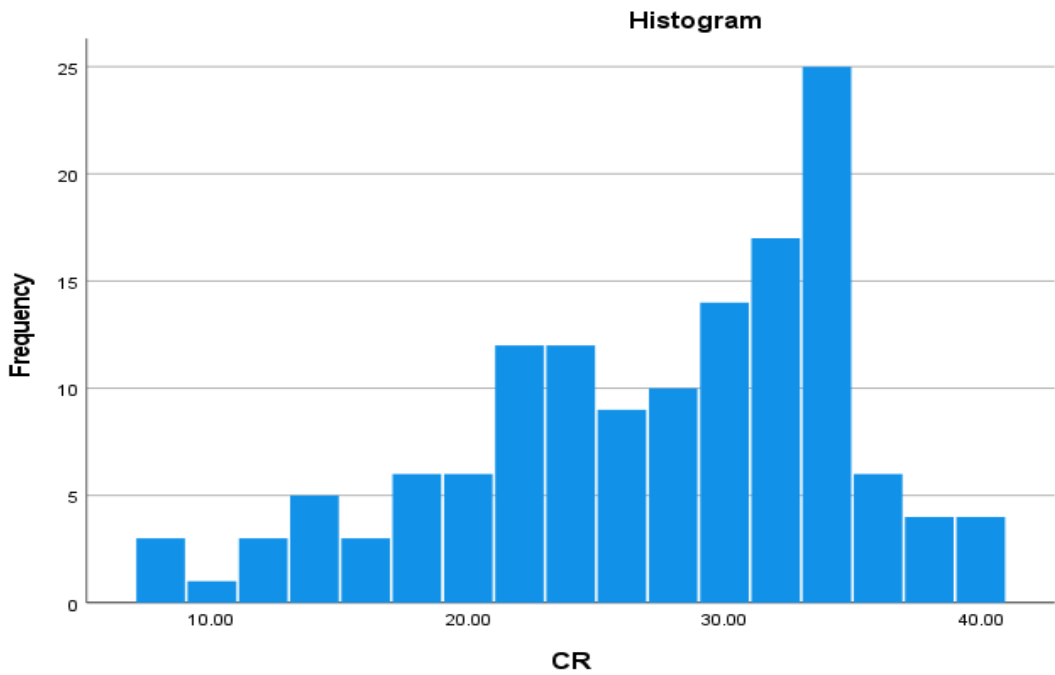
Figure 8 Customer Response Normality Histogram for Turkish Sample

The histograms above show us that the data of the Turkish sample is abnormally distributed, the thing that we will confirm or reject by interpreting the results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests.

Table 1 Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk Results

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		Shapiro-Wilk	
	Static	Sig	Static	Sig
SMMAs	,123	,000	,934	,000
Brand Equity	,178	,000	,906	,000
Customer Response	,113	,000	,952	,000

According to the results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test stated in the table, the sig value of social media marketing activities is .000, brand equity value is .000 and Customer response value is .000; which led us to reject the null hypothesis of the normality of distribution because the sig is less than 0.05 and consequently assume the non-normality of the data distribution for the Turkish sample.

In addition, the results of Shapiro-Wilk test, which are a sig value of .000 for social media marketing activities, for brand equity .000, and for customer response .000, make us reject the null hypothesis of the normality distribution hence confirm the non-normality of the data distribution of the Turkish sample as the sig is lower than 0.05.

2. Normaliy test for Moroccan sample
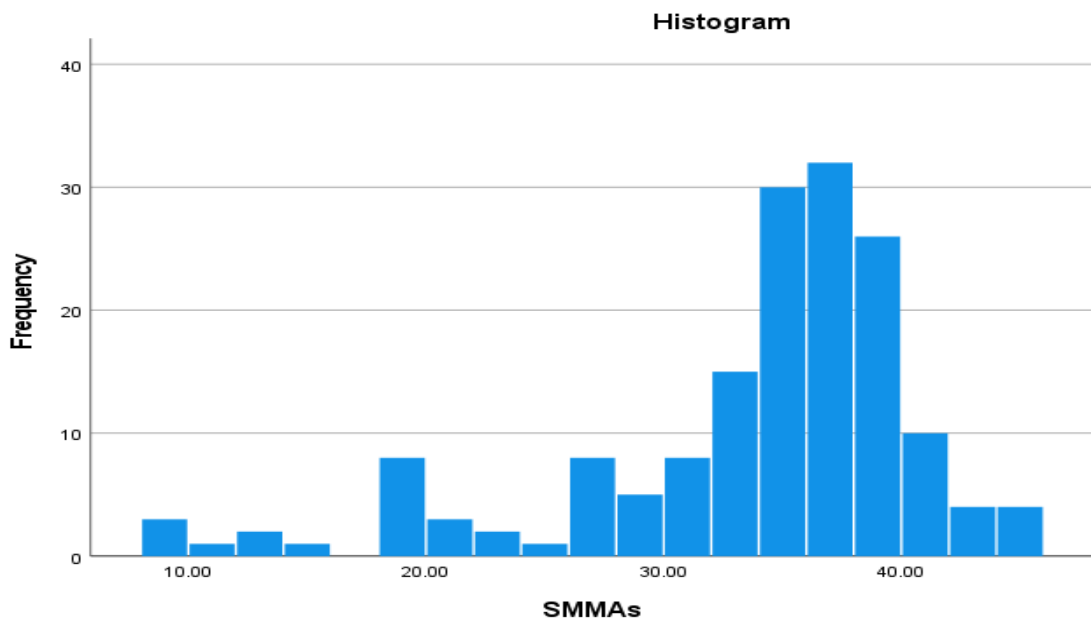
Figure 9 Social Media Marketing Activities Normality Histogram for Moroccan Sample

33
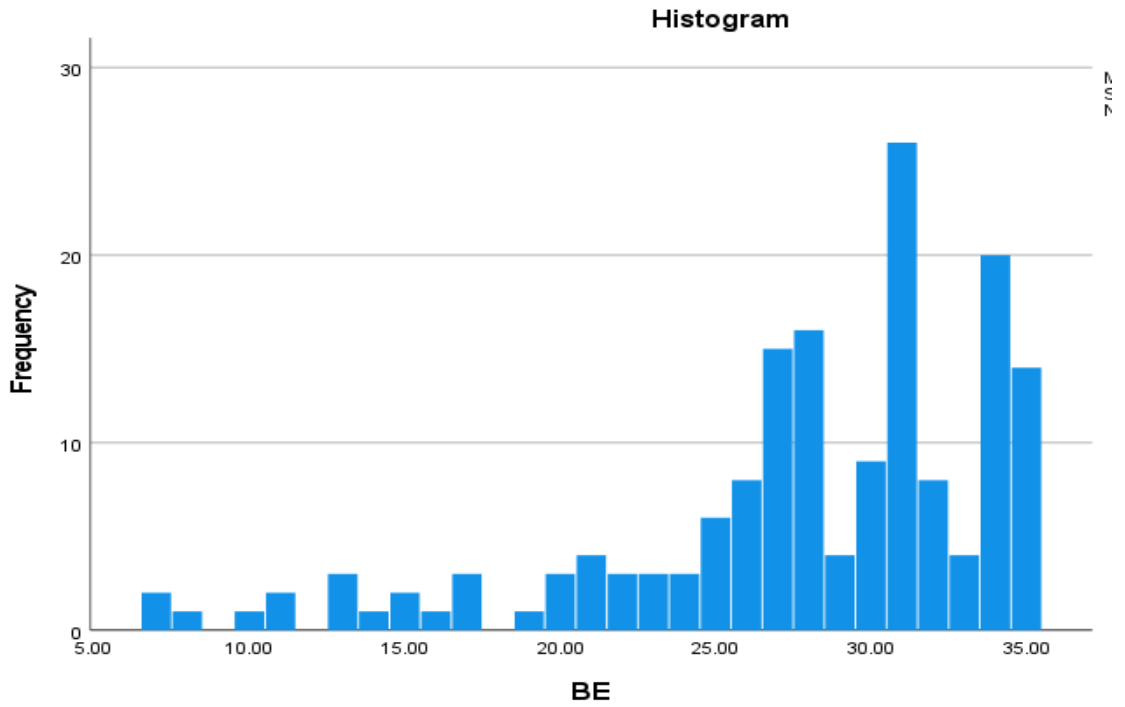
Figure 10 Brand Equity Normality Histogram for Moroccan Sample
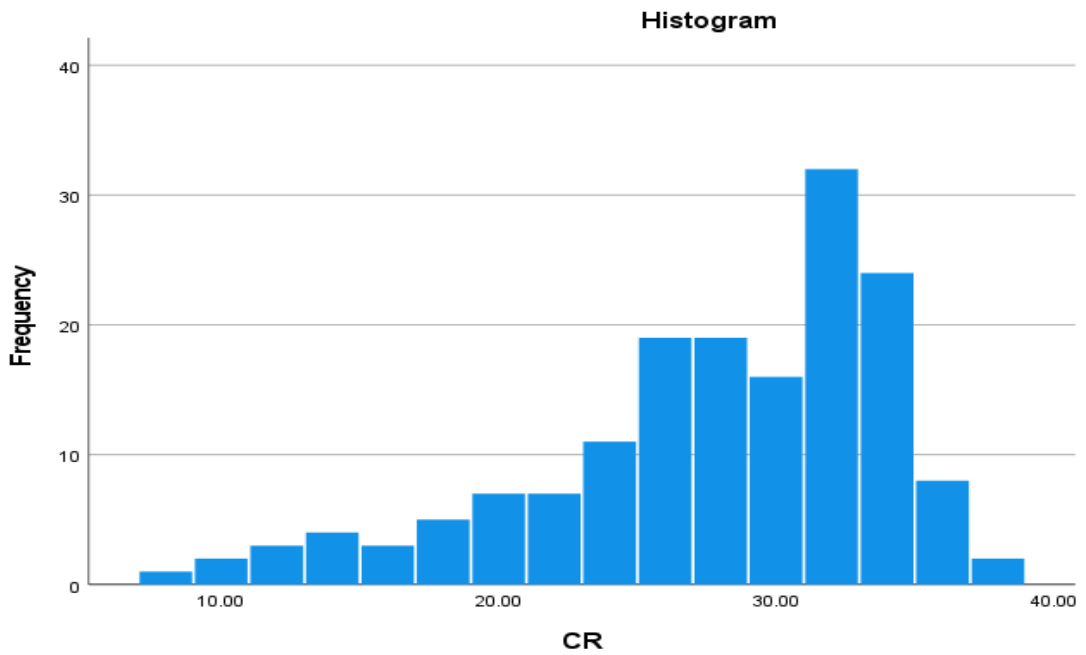
Figure 11 Customer Response Normality Histogram for Moroccan Sample

According to the histograms above, the data of the Moroccan sample is not normally distributed, which leads to perform Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests to confirm or reject the normality of the data.

Table 2 Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk Results

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		Shapiro-Wilk	
	Static	Sig	Static	Sig
SMMAs	,208	,000	,857	,000
Brand Equity	,160	,000	,869	,000
Customer Response	,127	,000	,915	,000

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test shows that the sig value of social media marketing activities is .000, brand equity value is .000 and Customer response value is .000; which means that the data of the Moroccan sample is not normally distributed as the sig is less than 0.05.

And according to Shapiro-Wilk test, the sig value is .000 for social media marketing activities, for brand equity .000, and for customer response .000, which lead us to confirm that the data distribution for the Moroccan sample is not normal as the sig is lower than 0.05.

We can conclude that our data is non parametric for both Turkish and Moroccan samples and for which we will use non parametric test for data analysis.

G. Statistical Analysis

Statistical analyses that will be used in this study are:

- Simple percentage analysis based on the frequency distribution of the collected data and presents results in percentages.

- PLS-SEM for the assessment of the measurement and the structural model.

- Mediation analysis

- Mann Whitney U test which helps compare the means of two groups to see if they are different or not.

Each analysis will be performed for Turkish and Moroccan samples separately. IBM SPSS 28.0 and SmartPLS 4 are the software that was utilized to investigate the data of this research. They are well-known software used to analyze surveys of the social sciences. SPSS will be used for Simple percentage analysis and Mann Whitney U test, while SmartPLS will be used for measurement evaluation, examination of direct relationships and mediation analysis.

IV.   ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Introduction

This chapter is about the analyses. It will include the simple percentage analysis, assessment of the measurement, and finally direct relationships analysis, mediation analysis, and Mann Whitney U test to test our hypotheses and explain the results.

B. Descriptive Analysis

In order to understand our aimed respondents and their answers, a simple percentage analysis was done. This analysis is known for presenting a resume of the answers based on the frequency distribution of the gathered data. The demographic data is the one to be analyzed in this part to develop a clear idea about the sample characteristics.

Table 3 Demographic Q1, Male - Female

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Male	53	17.5%	17.5%
Female	250	82.5%	100%
Total	303	100%	

The survey was conducted on 312 respondents but only 303 answers were accepted. We can clearly notice that females are having a stronger presence than males. 82.5% of the answers are from females while only 17.5% of the answers are from males.

Table 4 Demographic Q2, Age

Age	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Under 20	15	5%	5%
20-30	158	52.1%	57.1%
31-40	94	31%	88.1%
41-50	10	3.3%	91.4%
More than 50 years	26	8.6%	100%
Total	303	100%	

The table 2 shows that most of respondents belong to 20-30 age group with a percentage of 52.1% (N=158). The age group 31-40 represents 31% (N=94) while each of the remaining age groups represents less than 10% as following: more than 50 with 8.6%, under 20 with 5% and 41-50 age group with the smallest percentage 3.3%.

Table 5 Demographic Q3, The employment status

Employment status	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Student	100	33%	33%
Employed	160	52.8%	85.8%
Unemployed	29	9.6%	95.4%%
Others	14	4.6%	100%
Total	303	100%	

More than half of our respondents are employed with a percentage of 52.8%, followed by students who represent 33% of the sample. 29 of the respondents are unemployed (9.6%), while 14 respondents have chosen others with 4.6%.

Table 6 Demographic Q4, Residency country

Residency country	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Turkey	140	46.2%	46.2%
Morocco	163	53.8%	100%
Total	303	100%	

46.2% of the respondents are from Turkey while 53.8% are from Morocco. As we can see, there isn't a big difference between the two. We should note that the Turkish respondents are all located in Turkey and the Moroccan respondents are all located in Morocco.

Table 7 Demographic Q5, Interaction with X brand in social media

Interaction with X brand in social media	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Instagram	194	64%	64%
Facebook	37	12.2%	76.2%
YouTube	3	1%	77.2%%
Not follow or interact	69	22.8%	100%
Total	303	100%	

Most of the respondents are followers of X brand on Instagram; they represent 64% (N=194) of the total sample. 69 of respondents do not follow the X brand social media or interact with it (22.8%). 12.2% is the percentage of the respondents that follow the brand in Facebook (N=37). For YouTube, it is the least used by the respondents as there are only 3 respondents who use the X brand YouTube Channel to interact with it.

C. Descriptive Analysis Based on the Country

In this part, the demographic characteristics will be analysed based on the country in order to have a detailed image of the sample demographic data.

Table 8 Demographic Q1 based on the country, Male - Female

	Turkey		Morocco	
Gender	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Male	21	15 %	32	19.6%
Female	119	825%	131	80.4%
Total	140	100%	163	100%

As we can see in the table above, females represent more than males for both Turkish and Moroccan respondents. They represent 85% of the total of Turkish respondents while males represent only 15%. For Moroccan respondents, Females represent 80.4% and males represent 19.6%.

Table 9 Demographic Q2 based on the country, Age

	Turkey		Morocco	
Age	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Under 20	6	4.3%	9	5.5%
20-30	83	59.3%	75	46%
31-40	41	29.3%	53	32.5%
41-50	5	3.6%	5	3.1%
More than 50 years	5	3.6%	21	12.9%
Total	140	100%	163	100%

For both Turkish and Moroccan respondents, the 20-30 age group is in clear majority with 59.3% for Turkey and 46% for Morocco, followed by 31-40 age group. The least percentage differs between Turkey and Morocco. For Turkey, 41-50 age group and more than 50 have both the smallest percentage, which is 3.9%. For Morocco, 41-50 age group represents only 3.1%, which is the lowest percentage.

Table 10 Demographic Q3 based on the country, The employment status

	Turkey		Morocco	
Employment status	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Student	61	43.6%	39	23.9%
Employed	56	40%	104	63.8%
Unemployed	19	13.6%	10	6.1%
Others	4	2.9%	10	6.1%
Total	140	100%	163	100%

Students represent the highest percentage for the Turkish respondents with 43.6%, followed by employed respondents with 40%, unemployed ones with 13.6% and finally 2.9% of the respondents have chosen others. While for Moroccan

respondents, employed ones constitute the majority with a percentage of 63.8%, followed by students who represent 23.9% of the respondents and lastly Unemployed respondents and others have the same percentage, which is 6.1%.

Table 11 Demographic Q5, Interaction with X brand in social media

	Turkey		Morocco	
Interaction with X brand in social media	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Instagram	79	56.4%	115	70.6%
Facebook	20	14.3%	17	10.4%
YouTube	0	0%	3	1.8%
Not follow or interact	41	29.3%	28	17.2%
Total	140	100%	163	100%

Instagram is the most followed social media application by Turkish and Moroccan customers of X brand, as 56.4% of Turkish customers and 70.6 % of Moroccan customers follow X brand on Instagram. Facebook comes in the second place, 14.3% of Turkish customers and 10.4% of Moroccan customers follow X brand on Facebook. 29.3% of Turkish respondents and 17.2% of Moroccan respondents do not follow or interact with X brand. For YouTube, only 3 of the Moroccan respondents who are using it to follow the brand.

D. Factor Loadings

Factor loading means the degree to which every item in the correlation matrix relates with a particular principal component. It ranges between -1.0 and +1.0, where high absolute values mean a high correlation with the principal factor. According to Hair et al. (2016), the recommended value for factor loading is 0.5 and higher.

Table 12 Factor Loadings for Turkish sample

Items	Brand Equity	Customer Response	SMMAs
BE1	,863		
BE2	,836		
BE3	,837		
BE4	,888		
BE5	,864		
BE6	,879		
BE7	,859		
CR1		,804	

Items		
CR2	,758	
CR3	,377	
CR4	,911	
CR5	,861	
CR6	,885	
CR7	,895	
CR8	,924	
SMMAs1		,826
SMMAs2		,850
SMMAs3		,826
SMMAs4		,803
SMMAs5		,850
SMMAs6		,877
SMMAs7		,875
SMMAs8		,779
SMMAs9		,841

- Brand equity component comprises seven items and the factor loadings ranging from 0.836 to 0.888. All the factor loadings are above 0.4, therefore none of these items will be removed.

- Customer response component consists of eight items and the factor loadings ranging from 0.377 to 0.911. As we can notice, CR3 has a factor loading less than 0.4, which will lead us to delete this item.

- Social media marketing activities component contains nine items with factor loadings ranging from 0.779 to 0.875. None of the items has a factor loading less than 0.4, so al the items will be retained.

Table 13 Factor Loadings for Moroccan sample

Items	Brand Equity	Customer Response	SMMAs
BE1	,870		
BE2	,849		
BE3	,840		
BE4	,811		
BE5	,889		
BE6	,921		

BE7	,863		
CR1		,826	
CR2		,769	
CR3		,157	
CR4		,901	
CR5		,839	
CR6		,810	
CR7		,898	
CR8		,931	
SMMAs1			,844
SMMAs2			,897
SMMAs3			,816
SMMAs4			,820
SMMAs5			,840
SMMAs6			,865
SMMAs7			,853
SMMAs8			,775
SMMAs9			,820

- Brand equity component comprises seven items and the factor loadings ranging from 0.811 to 0.921. As we can notice, all the factor loadings are above 0.4. Hence, none of the items will be removed.

- Customer response component consists of eight items and the factor loadings ranging from 0.175 to 0.931. The item CR3 has a factor loading of 0.175, which is less than 0.4. So, CR3 will be removed.

- Social media marketing activities component contains nine items with factor loadings ranging from 0.775 to 0.897. All the items have a factor loading superior to 0.4, this is why no item will be removed.

E. Reliability Statistics

The reliability test is one of the most important tests that should be done while conducting research. It measures the quality of the measurement tool which is the questionnaire by indicating the extent to which it gives the same results across time and across the different items in the tool. The two most used and known

measures to test reliability are Cronbach alpha and composite reliability, which must have a value greater than 0.7 to say that the measurement instrument is reliable (Hair et al., 2011).

Table 14 Reliability Test

Variables	Turkey			Morocco		
	Cronbach Alpha	Rho_A	Composite reliability	Cronbach Alpha	Rho_A	Composite Reliability
Social media marketing activities	,946	,948	,955	,947	,950	,955
Brand equity	,942	,944	,953	,943	,943	,954
Customer response	,943	,954	,954	,940	,958	,951

The results presented in the table above shows that Cronbach alpha value is ranging from 0.942 to 0.946 for Turkey and from 0.940 to 0.947 for Morocco, while composite reliability is ranging from 0.953 to 0.955 for Turkey and from 0.951 to 0.955 for Morocco. Both indicators have values superior to 0.7 for all the variables for both Turkish and Moroccan samples, which means that the measurement tool is reliable and the construct reliability is established.

F. Construct Validity

Construct validity means that the test measuring a certain construct is actually measuring that construct. It is evaluated by verifying convergent validity and discriminant validity.

1. Convergent validity

Convergent validity is the degree to which two or more items of the same construct are positively correlated. They converge to represent the main construct. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), when AVE value is higher or equal to 0.5, convergent validity is established.

The results of the convergent validity presented in the table below for both Turkish and Moroccan samples shows that the AVE value for all the constructs is greater than 0.5 for both of them; which means the convergent validity is established.

Table 15 Construct Convergent Validity (AVE)

	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	
	Turkey	Morocco
BE	,742	,746
CR	,747	,737
SMMAs	,700	,701

2. Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity reveals that the study constructs are highly distinct from each other. It shows that every construct has its own identity and is not too correlated with other constructs. Hair et al. (2022) are particularly recommending HTMT ratio to examine discriminant validity, this is why in this study, only HTMT ratio will be reported.

HTMT ratio is about the evaluation of the correlation between constructs. According to Hensler et al. (2015), HTMT value should be less than 0.9 and every value that is above 0.9 is translated by discriminant validity lack. The table below shows that HTMT ratio is less than the limit 0.9 for both Turkish and Moroccan samples, which confirms the establishment of discriminant validity.

Table 16 HTMT Ratio for Turkish Sample

	BE	CR	SMMAs
BE			
CR	,841		
SMMAs	,843	,850	

Table 17 HTMT Ratio for Moroccan Sample

	BE	CR	SMMAs
BE			
CR	,880		
SMMAs	,867	,833	

G. Multicollinearity

Variance inflation factor (VIF) is an indicator used to evaluate multicollinearity between the variables. According to Hair et al. (1995), the maximum value of VIF is 10. If VIF exceeds 10, it means that there is a problem of multicollinearity.

As it is shown in the table below, VIF values for the indicators of this study for both Turkish and Moroccan samples are under 10.

Table 18 Multicollinearity statistics (VIF)

	VIF	
	Turkey	Morocco
BE1	4,068	3,452
BE2	3,585	3,453
BE3	3,120	3,201
BE4	3,965	2,732
BE5	3,682	4,252
BE6	3,695	7,052
BE7	3,712	4,510
CR1	4,791	4,243
CR2	4,052	3,922
CR3	7,378	5,138
CR4	4,002	2,914
CR5	3,441	2,385
CR6	4,156	3,793
CR7	7,404	6,524
SMMAs1	4,635	3,048
SMMAs2	4,899	4,296
SMMAs3	3,044	2,540
SMMAs4	3,078	3,461
SMMAs5	3,797	3,709
SMMAs6	3,832	3,614
SMMAs7	4,458	3,507
SMMAs8	3,924	3,932
SMMAs9	5,224	4,572

H. Q square

Q square is a measurement for the predictive relevance of the model. Q square should be higher than 0 to have a predictive relevance.

Table 19 Q Square Results

	Q^2	
	Turkey	Morocco
BE	,631	,671
CR	,651	,631

The Q^2 values for endogenous constructs for both Turkish and Moroccan samples are more than 0, therefore predictive relevance is established.

İ. F square

According to Hair et al. (2013), f^2 effect size is to verify if removing an independent variable can have an effect on the depedent variable. If f^2 value ≥ 0.02,

the effect size is small, while it is considered medium if f² ≥ 0.15, and large if the f² ≥ 0.35 (Cohen, 1988).

Table 20 F Square Results for Turkish Sample

	BE	CR
BE		,375
SMMAs	2,116	,139

For Turkish sample as we can see in the table, the removal of SMMAs has a large effect on BE but a small effect on CR. With f² superior to 0.35, removing BE will have a significant impact on CR.

Table 21 F Square Results for MoroccanSsample

	BE	CR
BE		,269
SMMAs	1,781	,27

For Moroccan Sample, the removal of SMMAs will have a large influence on BE yet a medium effect on CR. Removing BE will have a medium effect on CR as f² is equal to 0.269

J. R square

The table below represents R Square value for brand equity and customer response for each country apart. For Turkey, brand equity R square is 0.640 and this means the variance of social media marketing activities explains 64% of the brand equity variance. While, 73% of customer response variance is explained by the variance of social media marketing activities as R Square value is 0.730.

For Morocco, the variance of social mdia marketing activities explains 67.9% of brand equity variance. And for customer response, R square values is 0.735, which means 73.5% of its variance is explained by social media marketing activities variance.

Table 22 R Square Results

	R Square	
	Turkey	Morocco
BE	,640	,679
CR	,730	,735

K. Hypotheses H1 and H2 testing

hypotheses can be rejected or accepted based on the value of the significance. If significance is less than 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted but if the significance is more than 0.05, the hypothesis is rejected. The hypotheses analysis will be performed for every country separately.

H1: Social media marketing Activities have a significant impact on brand equity.

As we can see in the table of results for H1, the p value is less than 0.05 for both Turkey and Morocco (sig< 0.001). We can conclude that social media marketing activities have a significant effect on Brand equity for Turkey and Morocco. Hence, H1 is supported.

Table 23 Results for H1

H1	Relationship	Beta Coefficients	Standard deviation	T value	P value
Turkey	SMMAs → BE	0,800	0,028	28,801	,000
Morocco	SMMAs → BE	0,824	0,039	21,115	,000

H2: Social media marketing Activities have a significant impact on customer response.

Customer Response is significantly affected by social media marketing activities for Turkey and Morocco as the p value for both of them is less than 0.05 as it is shown in the table below (sig< 0.001). Therefore, H2 is supported.

Table 24 Results for H2

H2	Relationship	Beta Coefficients	Standard deviation	T value	P value
Turkey	SMMAs → CR	0,451	0,079	5,706	,000
Morocco	SMMAs → CR	0,339	0,082	4,124	,000

L. Hypothesis H3 Mediation Analysis

The mediation effect of brand equity on the relationship between social media marketing activities and customer response for every country will be performed by using PLS.

H3: Brand equity has a mediating effect on the relationship between social media

marketing activities and customer response.

For Turkey, the total effect of social media marketing activities on customer response was significant (β=0.811, p < 0.001), and with the inclusion of the mediator the direct effect was still significant (β=0.451, p < 0.001). The indirect effect of social media marketing activities on customer response was found significant (β= 0.360, p < 0.001). So, Brand equity has a complementary partial mediating role in the relationship between social media marketing activities and customer equity.

Table 25 The Mediation Analysis for Turkey

Total effect (SMMAs→CR)		Direct effect (SMMAs→CR)			Indirect effect of SMMAs on CR			
Coefficient	p-value	Coefficient	p-value		Coefficient	SD	T-value (bootstrap)	P-value
,811	,000	,451	,000	SMMAs -> BE -> CR	,360	,062	5,777	,000

For Morocco, the total effect of social media marketing activities on customer response was significant (β=0.797, p < 0.001), and with the inclusion of the mediator the direct effect was still significant (β=0.339, p < 0.001). The indirect effect of social media marketing activities on customer response was found significant (β=0.458, p< 0.001). Therefore, there is a complementary partial mediating role of brand equity in the relationship between social media marketing activities and customer equity.

Table 26 The Mediation Analysis for Morocco

Total effect (SMMAs→CR)		Direct effect (SMMAs→CR)			Indirect effect of SMMAs on CR			
Coefficient	p-value	Coefficient	p-value		Coefficient	SD	T-value (bootstrap)	P-value
,797	,000	,339	,000	SMMAs -> BE -> CR	,458	,079	5,832	,000

We can conclude through the mediation analysis that Hypothesis 4 is supported. Hence, brand equity is mediating the relationship between social media marketing activities and customer response.

M. Hypothesis H4 Mann Whitney U Test Results:

Mann Whitney U Test is a nonparametric test that is used to compare two groups to see if there is a difference between them or not. It is used when the data

follow a non normal distribution. If the sig is less than 0.05, there is difference while if it is more than 0.05, there is no difference. We will be using SPSS to perform this test.

In our study, we are comparing between Turkish and Moroccan customers to know if they have they have the same opinions about Social media marketing activities of X brand.

H4: Social Media Marketing Activities have a different effect on Turkish and Moroccan customers

Table 27 Mann Whitney U Test for Every Aspect of SMMAs According to the Country

	Entertainment	Interaction	Trendiness	Customization
Sig	,032	,017	,138	,546

The results of the Mann Whitney U Test for every aspect of Social Media Merketing presented in the table above demonstrated that there is a difference between Turkish and Moroccans customers in entertainment and Interaction because the sig is lower than 0,05. And there is no difference for Trendiness and Customization between Turkish and Moroccan customers because the sig is superior to 0,05.

But overall there is no difference between Turkish and Moroccan customers regarding social media marketing activities according to the results stated in the table below (sig =0.077). So, Hypothesis H4 is going to be rejected.

Table 28 Mean, Std Deviation, and Man Whitney U Test for SMMAs According to the Country

	Country	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig
SMMAs	Turkey	140	31,4000	8,30255	,077
	Morocco	163	33,1779	7,50220	

Table 29 Summary of Hypotheses Results

Hypotheses	Results
H1: Social media marketing Activities have a significant impact on brand equity.	Supported
H2: Social media marketing Activities have a significant impact on customer response.	Supported
H3: Brand equity has a mediating effect on the relationship between social media marketing Activities and customer response.	Supported
H4: Social Media Marketing Activities have a different effect on Turkish and Moroccan customers.	Not supported

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

No one can deny how social media has become a part of our daily life. Most of people can't spend a day without checking their social media accounts whether to get information, to interact with other people or to share their opinion. Social media is a strategic tool that brought many advantages not only to individuals but also to businesses. The emergence of social media made a big change in the business world by using it in one of the main activities of every business, which is marketing. Many researchers has been interested in studying social media marketing and its importance for the companies.

This research aimed to examine the crucial role that social media marketing play in building brand equity and developing a positive customer response in the Turkish apparel industry. It explores the effect of social media marketing activities on founding brand equity, presented by two dimensions, which are brand awareness and brand image. Also, it investigatess the impact of social media activities on customer response, specifically the effect on price premium and brand loyalty. This study investigates as well the mediating effect of brand equity in the relationship betwenn social media marketing activities and customer response. Not to forget that this research also compares the effect of social media marketing activities between Moroccan and Turkish customers.

The conceptual framework, reserach questions and the survey of this study were developed based on previous literature. The obtained results are based on the 303 responses collected from Turkish and Moroccan customers of X Turkish apparel brand that we considered as a representative of Turkish apparel industry and which name was not revealed due to ethical considerations. To collect the data, Convenience sampling was used. Many analysis were performed on the data collected in order to achieve the desired results. We performed descreptive analysis and the assesment of the measurement analysis. PLS-SEM was performed for direct relationships analysis and mediation analysis. And to test the last hypothesis, Mann Whitney U test was performed . Three of the four Hypotheses were supported.

The first finding proved the significant impact of social media marketing activities on brand equity for both Turkish and Moroccan customers. This result is supported by Seo and Park (2018) who confirmed the positive effect of SMMAs on both brand awareness and brand image. Godey et al. (2016) and Kim and Ko (2012) also confirmed the significant and positive relationship between SMMAs and brand equity for luxury brands. Abu-Rumman and Alhadid (2014) reached the results that demonstrated the significant positive effect of social media marketing dimensions on brand equity. The meaningful impact of SMMAs on brand equity was as well approved by Akgün (2020) in fast fashion sector.

The second result confirmed the positive effect of social media marketing activities on customer response for Turkish and Moroccan customers. This finding is approved by Godey et al. (2016) and Sehar et al. (2019) who demonstrated the significant and positive effect of SMMAs on consumer response. Akgün (2020) confirmed the statistically significant impact of SMMAs on customer response in fast fashion sector.

The third outcome proved the significant mediating effect of brand equity on the relationship between social media marketing activities and customer response. This finding was confirmed by Godey et al. (2016) and Sehar et al. (2019) who studied the relationship between the three variables and come to the conclusion that brand equity positively mediates the relationship between SMMAs and customer response. Vasudevan et al. (2020) reached to the conclusion that support our results and proved that brand equity has a significant mediating effect in the relationship between SMMAs and customer response.

The fourth finding didn't support the hypothesis that social media marketing activities have a different effect based on the culture of customers through a comparison between Turkish and Moroccan customers. The impact of social media marketing activies is the same on customers from Turkey and Morocco; there is no difference between them. Godey et al. (2016) have proved that SMMAs are practically the same in the four studied countries China, France, Italy and India; which confirm our findings.

A. Implications and Recommendations

The results of this study have brought to the light the significance of social media marketing activities for companies. Turkish apparel brands should not miss the opportunity of being present on social media and use social media marketing to take advantage of its numerous benefits. Marketers need to include social media in the elaboration and development of their strategies and plans as it has proved its efficacy in building brand equity and produce a favorable customer response, two essential elements for the success of every brand.

The social media marketing strategies should make sure that the content is entertaining and fun as many people are mostly using social media for amusement and leisure. Also, Brands social media should ensure providing a trendy content by presenting the newest information about different products. Moreover, the content of brand social media must be customized and personnalized according to the customer preferences. And finally, interaction is a requirement in the brands social media as it allows the brand to connect and engage more and more with the customers. A social media marketing strategy that takes into consideration delivering entertaining, trendy, customized and interactive content allows the brand to benefit from many advantages.

Social media marketing is bringing value to businesses by providing them with the chance of creating their brand equity, which is considered the core of building a strong brand capable of facing the fierce competitiveness in the business world. Social media marketing activities are a strategic tool that helps in building brand equity by increasing brand awareness, which helps the brand reaching new customers, and by developing a good and strong brand image in the customer's memory. Every Turkish apparel brand should not overlook the weight of social media marketing to reach their goals and impact their success.

SMMAs influence customer response towards the brand, which reflects the power of these activities in increasing the loyalty of the customer and its willingness to pay a high price. They make the customer develop a positive opinion about the brand by making him prefer that brand over other ones; loyal customers constitute a crucial asset for every brand. Marketers should develop advanced social media marketing projects that focus more and more on creating and maintaining

relationships with customers with different profiles and enhancing the interaction and exchange with them.

Social media marketing activities also affect customer response through brand equity, which means that social media is one of the main ways for Turkish apparel brands to strengthen their relationship with customers. Strong and effective brand equity is surely having a significant impact on the customer response. So, the brands should ensure being on social media and exercising SMMAs properly, which will help them build a strong brand equity and then boost the customer loyalty and his readiness to pay a high price.

The presence on social media constitues a powerful key that every brand should benefit from. It is never too late for brands who don't have social media accounts to start it as this step will bring many opportunities and advantages that make it stronger and successful. It is also a cheap and effective tool for companies to adopt; but they should ensure using it in the right way to profit from its advantages and avoid its flaws.

B. Limitations and suggestions for future researches

First limitation we can talk about is how this study focused only on the Turkish apparel industry, which makes the generalization of the results for other Turkish sectors may not be relevant. Future studies can work on other sectors to confirm the results.

Second limitation of this study is the sample size used in the research, which are 303. It is considered a small sample for the generalization of the results to the whole population. Further studies might use a larger sample size to increase the results generalizability.

Thirdly, the comparison in this study has been made only between Moroccan and Turkish customers so the results are limited to those two countries. Future studies can include more countries especially that Turkish apparel industry has become present in several countries. Including more countries might reveal other results and conclusions.

Fourthly, the research has presented the variable brand equity by working only with two dimensions, which are brand awareness and brand image. Further

studies can include more dimensions of brand equity such as brand associations or perceived quality.

Lastly, including demographic variables such as age or gender to the model of the study should be considered in future studies. These variables might have a mediating effect or moderating effect in the studied relationships between dependent and independent variables.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: Survey Questionnaire (English Version)

APPENDIX B: Survey Questionnaire (Turkish Version)

APPENDIX C: Survey Questionnaire (Arabic Version)

APPENDIX C: Ethical Approval Form

APPENDIX A: Survey Questionnaire (English Version)

Part I: Individual demographics

What is your gender?

- Female
- Male

How old are you?

- Under 20
- 20-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- More than 50

What is your current employment status?

- Student
- Employed
- Unemployed
- Others

Where do you live?

- Turkey
- Morocco

On which social media do you follow or interact with X brand?

- Instagram
- Facebook
- YouTube
- Not follow or interact

Part II: Social media marketing activities

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

	1	2	3	4	5
Entertainment					
Using X brand's social media is fun.					
Content of X brand's social media seems interesting.					
Interaction					
X brand's social media enable information sharing with others.					
Conversation or opinion exchange with others is possible through X brand's social media.					
It is easy to provide my opinion through X brand's social media.					
Trendiness					
Content of X brand's social media is the newest information.					
Using X brand's social media is very trendy.					
Customization					
X brand's social media offer a customized information search.					
X brand's social media provide customized service.					

Part III: Brand equity

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

	1	2	3	4	5
Brand Awareness					
I am always aware of X brand.					
Characteristics of X brand come to my mind quickly.					
I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of X brand.					
Brand Image					
X brand is leading apparel brands.					
X brand has extensive experience.					
X brand is customer-oriented company					
X brand is a representative of the Turkish apparel industry					

Part IV: Customer response

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

	1	2	3	4	5
Willingness to pay a premium price					
I am willing to pay a higher price for X brand than for other brands.					
I am willing to pay a lot more for X brand than for other brands.					

	0%	5%	10%	15%	20%	25%	30% and more
I am willing to pay a __ % more for X brand than for other brands							

	1	2	3	4	5
Brand Loyalty					
I will suggest X brand to other consumers.					
I regularly visit X brand.					
I am satisfied with X brand with every visit.					
X brand would be my first choice.					
I would love to recommend X brand to my friends.					

APPENDIX B: Survey Questionnaire (Turkish Version)

Bölüm I: Demograik Sorular

Cinsiyetiniz?

- Bayan
- Bay

Yaşınız ?

- < 20
- 20-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- > 50

Şu anki çalışma durumunuz nedir?

- Öğrenci
- Çalışıyorum
- Çalışmıyorum
- Diğer

Nerede yaşıyorsunuz?

- Türkiye
- Fas

X marka'yi hangi sosyal medya kanalında takip ediyor musun?

- Instagram
- Facebook
- YouTube
- Takip etmiyorum

Bölüm II: Sosyal medya pazarlama faaliyetleri

1= Kesinlikle katılmıyorum; 2 =katılmıyorum, 3= nötr , 4= katılıyorum, 5= Kesinlikle katılıyorum

	1	2	3	4	5
Eğlence					
X marka'nın sosyal medya araçlarını kullanmak eğlencelidir.					
X marka'nın sosyal medya araçlarını kullanmak eğlencelidir.					
Etkileşim					
X marka sosyal medyası, başkalarıyla bilgi paylaşımını sağlar.					
X marka sosyal medyası aracılığıyla başkalarıyla sohbet etmek veya fikir alışverişi yapmak mümkündür.					
X marka'nın sosyal medyası aracılığıyla fikrimi belirtmek çok kolaydır.					
Trend					
X marka sosyal medya içeriği en yeni bilgilerdir.					
X marka sosyal medyayı kullanmak çok trend.					
Kişiselleştirme					
X marka'nın sosyal medyası, kişiselleştirilmiş bir bilgi araması sunar.					
X marka'nın sosyal medyası kişiye özel hizmet sunar.					

Bölüm III: Marka değeri

1= Kesinlikle katılmıyorum; 2 =katılmıyorum, 3= nötr , 4= katılıyorum, 5=
Kesinlikle katılıyorum

	1	2	3	4	5
Marka bilinirliği					
X marka'nın her zaman farkındayımdır.					
X marka'nın özellikleri hemen aklıma geliyor.					
X marka'nın sembolünü veya logosunu hızlıca hatırlayabiliyorum					
Marka imajı					
X marka Giyim markalarında liderdir..					
X marka geniş bir deneyime sahiptir.					
X marka müşteri odaklı bir şirkettir.					
X markası Türk hazır giyim sektörünün temsilcisidir.					

Bölüm IV: Müşteri yanıtı

1= Kesinlikle katılmıyorum; 2 =katılmıyorum, 3= nötr , 4= katılıyorum, 5= Kesinlikle katılıyorum

	1	2	3	4	5
Dahayüksek bir fiyat ödeme isteği					
X marka için diğer markalardan daha yüksek bir fiyat ödemeye hazırım					
X marka için diğer markalardan çok daha fazlasını ödemeye hazırım.					

	0%	5%	10%	15%	20%	25%	30% ve üzeri
X marka'ya diğer markalardan __% daha fazla ödemeye hazırım,							

	1	2	3	4	5
Marka sadakati					
X marka'yi diğer tüketicilere önereceğim.					
X marka'yi düzenli olarak ziyaret ediyorum.					
Her ziyaretimde X marka'den memnunum.					
X marka ilk tercihim olabilir.					
Arkadaşlarıma X marka'yi önermeyi çok isterim.					

الجزء الأول: الخصائص الديموغرافية

ما هو جنسك؟

• أنثى

• ذكر

كم عمرك؟

• تحت 20

• 20-30

• 31-40

• 41-50

• أكثر من 50

ماهو وضعك الوظيفي حاليا؟

• طالب

• عامل

• عاطل عن العمل

• آخر

أين تعيش؟

• تركيا

• المغرب

على أي وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي تتابع أو تتفاعل مع العلامة التجاري x ؟

• إنستغرام

• فيسبوك

• يوتيوب

• عدم المتابعة أو التفاعل

الجزء الثاني: أنشطة التسويق عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي

1=لا أوافق بشدة، 2 = غير موافق، 3 = محايد، 4 = موافق، 5 = موافق بشدة

5	4	3	2	1	
					ترفيه
					يعد استخدام وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي الخاصة بالعلامة التجاريةX أمرا ممتعا.
					يبدو محتوى وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي الخاصة بالعلامة التجاريةX مثيرا للاهتمام.
					تفاعل
					تتيح وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي الخاصة بالعلامة التجاريةX مشاركة المعلومات مع الآخرين.
					المحادثة أو تبادل الرأي مع الآخرين هوممكن من خلال وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي الخاصة بالعلامة التجارية X.
					من السهل تقديم رأيي من خلال وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي الخاصة بالعلامة التجارية X.
					حداثة
					وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي الخاصة بالعلامة التجاريةX تقدم أحدث المعلومات.
					يعد استخدام وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي الخاصة بالعلامة التجاريةX أمرا عصريا للغاية.
					تخصيص
					تقدم وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي الخاصة بالعلامة التجاريةX بحثا مخصصا عن المعلومات.
					توفر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي الخاصة بالعلامة التجاريةX خدمة مخصصة.

الجزء الثالث: قيمة العلامة التجارية

1=لا أوافق بشدة، 2 = غير موافق، 3 = محايد، 4 = موافق، 5 = موافق بشدة

5	4	3	2	1	
					الوعي بالعلامة التجارية
					أنا دائما مدرك للعلامة التجارية X.
					تتبادر إلى ذهني بسرعة خصائص العلامة التجارية X.
					يمكنني أن أتذكر بسرعة رمز أو شعار العلامة التجارية X.
					صورة العلامة التجارية
					العلامة التجاريةX هي العلامة التجارية الرائدة في مجال الملابس.
					تتمتع العلامة التجارية X بخبرة واسعة.
					العلامة التجارية X هي شركة موجهة نحو العملاء.
					العلامة التجارية X هي ممثل صناعة الملابس التركية.

الجزء الرابع: استجابة العميل

1=لا أوافق بشدة، 2 = غير موافق، 3 = محايد، 4 = موافق، 5 = موافق بشدة

5	4	3	2	1	
					استعداد لدفع سعر عالي
					أنا على استعداد لدفع سعر أعلى للعلامة التجاريةX من العلامات التجارية الأخرى.
					أنا على استعداد لدفع أكثر بكثير للعلامة التجاريةX من العلامات التجارية الأخرى.

30% و اكثر	25%	20%	15%	10%	5%	0%	
							أنا على استعداد لدفع _ % أكثر للعلامة التجاريةX من غيرها من العلامات التجارية.

5	4	3	2	1	
					الولاء للعلامة التجارية
					سأقترح العلامة التجارية X للمستهلكين الآخرين.
					أزور بانتظام العلامة التجارية X.
					أنا راض عن العلامة التجارية X مع كل زيارة.
					خياري الأول سيكون العلامة التجارية X.
					أحب أن أوصي بالعلامة التجارية X لأصدقائي.

APPENDIX D: Ethical Approval Form

T.C.
İSTANBUL AYDIN ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜ
Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü Müdürlüğü

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