Branding Process and a Model Proposal for "Şile Gauze"

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Abstract

Brand and the branding process have been regarded as a component of cultural studies even though they are more generally seen as being a subfield of business economics. Today, it is true to say that countries, cities, destinations, as well as many prominent cultural items can become brands. Thus, the primary aim of this study is to form a model proposal for how "Şile gauze", a local authentic product, can be branded to become competitive. Strategies regarding brand, the process of brand and brand positioning are adapted to Şile gauze and conceptual research about these components are elaborated with the aim of implementing Şile gauze branding. Focus groups were carried out with participants comprising students from marketing and fashion design departments, with a framework for the branding process of Şile gauze subsequently designed in light of the findings from the focus groups. These findings revealed that the target market of Şile gauze is women and men who are in mid-high and high-income groups, who have adopted a health and comfort oriented lifestyle. Additionally, the targeting strategy for Şile gauze preferred by both focus groups was a niche targeting one with a unique positioning in the market.

Keywords: *Şile gauze; brand; branding process; positioning; cultural marketing*

Introduction

The concept of a brand goes back to around 15,000 BC, when the earliest objects marked to indicate possession and quality in ancient Egyptian, Greek, Roman and Chinese civilisations were observed. However, modern branding has possibly emerged with the industrial revolution. In early periods, brands were used for identification purposes; however, soon it was discovered that brands were features to make a difference. Brands today create value for consumers and companies by establishing links with products, organisations and customers.

The American Marketing Association defines it as a "name, term, design, symbol or all other features differentiating a merchant's goods or services from other merchants" (AMA, 2020). According to Keller, a brand is a name, term, sign design or a combination of all these which define the goods and services of a merchant or a group of merchants, differentiating them from those of their competitors (Keller, 2013, 30). Kotler and Gertner claim that brands not only *"differentiate products and represent a promise of value' but also 'incite beliefs, evoke emotions and prompt behaviors"* (Kotler and Gertner, 2002, 249; Tasci and Kozak, 2006, 300). A brand is thus a product or service, the dimensions of which differentiate it in some way from other product or services designed to satisfy the same need (Kotler and Keller, 2009, 276). According to the Protection of Trademarks Law No. 556 "brands include proper names, words, shapes, letters, numbers, visuals like shapes of the goods or the packaging which can be expressed in a similar fashion like printing or publishing, with the condition that they help differentiate goods and services of a given company from that of others" (Decree Law No. 556 on the Protection of

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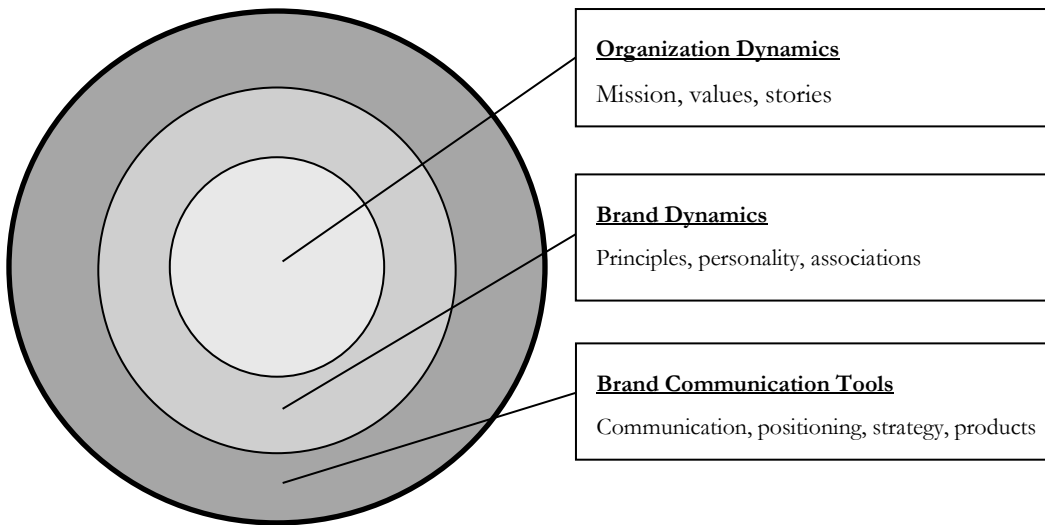[2] Nevin Karabıyık Yerden, Marmara University, Turkey. E-mail: nkarabiyik@marmara.edu.tr.

Trademarks, article: 5, 2020, 812). According to another definition, a brand is a complete knowledge in people's minds acquired from the experience of using a specific good or service. In general, a brand is seen as a superordinate system comprising of various interactive sub-systems that make a difference thanks to unique features such as brand holder, customers, components of the product and parent company (Erdil and Uzun, 2010, 18). Aaker considers the concept of the global brand, defining it as follows: *"Brands with a high degree of similarity across countries with respect to brand identity, position, advertising strategy, personality, product, packaging, and look and feel"* (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2012, 306).

Today, the scope of brands is expanding just like the scope of marketing. Products, places, people, cultural products, etc. can be a brand. Research has revealed the importance of integrated brand communication which can pertain to many areas, from cities to cultural products (Ntounis and Kavaratzis, 2017, 401).

"Integrated brand" is topical these days. The concept of the integrated brand refers to a business strategy where all activities or messages of businesses or products are communicated directly, with the aim of the firm gaining value. The activities and messages focus on the strength of the products or businesses. The integrated brand model is composed of the following components (LePla and Parker, 1999, 2):

Figure 1. Integrated Brand Model

Organization Dynamics
Mission, values, stories

Brand Dynamics
Principles, personality, associations

Brand Communication Tools
Communication, positioning, strategy, products

Source: Lepla and Parker (1999), p.2.

According to the integrated brand model, the dynamics of corporation, mission, values and stories make up the foundation of the brand. The second stage are the dynamics of the brand, which are composed of the principles, personality and associations of it. The last stage is what are called the brand communication tools. These are seen as the most important elements in the brand's initiation and maintenance of the communication with the target group.

Integrated brand communication is very important in terms of creating and sustaining the brand. Even though the process of branding cannot be defined in exact terms, a model for branding of *Şile Gauze* is proposed by offering a framework of the branding process.

Branding process

Branding or creating a brand is a growing field with an increasing number of studies. However, it is difficult to put out an exact formula for branding or creating a brand due to multiple factors affecting the process in a dynamic way. Yet, the literature offers the rules of becoming a brand, concepts about branding and brand management. However, corporations, organisations or institutions can create brands and sustain them. It can be seen that strong brands increase purchase intention, sales, perceived quality, consumer loyalty as well as decreasing costs and perceived risk (Guiry and Vequist, 2014, 564). One of the most important issues for brands that have opened up to international markets or are in the process of doing so is to provide regional adaptation without losing global standardisation appeal (Matanda and Ewing, 2012, 8). Such optimisation is called transnational marketing strategy (Sirkeci, 2013). Keegan and Green (2008, 331) claim that local products/brands also represent the lifeblood of domestic companies. In this study, a model for the stages of brand building processes will be proposed by elaborating the branding process within the framework of the marketing and branding literature. Naturally, this proposal involves a contingency approach, thus being able to be altered, adapted or improved depending on the conditions.

Branding involves a long process that needs to be elaborately investigated. Kotler and Keller (2009, 308) claim that all marketing strategies should be built on STP-segmentation, targeting and positioning. A company discovers different needs and groups in the marketplace, targets those it can satisfy in a superior way, and then positions its offering, so the target market recognises the companies distinctive offering and image (ibid.). Market segmentation and targeting strategies need to be determined for identifying the target market first. Whilst research on market segmentation criteria in the past has included macro criteria, recent studies can be observed having included the aspects like lifestyle, psychographic, and attitude (Hassan, 2012, 344-345). Targeting strategies that can be used when identifying the target market stage, one of the most important stages, and their definitions are presented below (Kotler and Armstrong, 2013; Mucuk, 2010; Sezer, 1998).

Table 1. Targeting Strategies

Market Targeting Strategies	Definition
Mass targeting strategy	Reaching the whole market with a marketing mix
Segmented targeting strategy	Reaching different market segments with a different marketing mix
Concentrated targeting strategy	Reaching only one market segment
Niche targeting strategy	Reaching a small unsaturated group with a suitable marketing mix
Local targeting strategy	Developing a marketing mix for a specific region
Individual targeting strategy	Developing a marketing mix for each consumer
Self-marketing targeting strategy	Creating the marketing mix with the customer

Source: Kotler and Armstrong, 2013.

The targeting strategies seen in Table 1 constitute one of the most important stages of the branding process, as the activities related to brand position, branding strategies, and brand identity are all planned according to the target market.

Figure 2. Branding Process
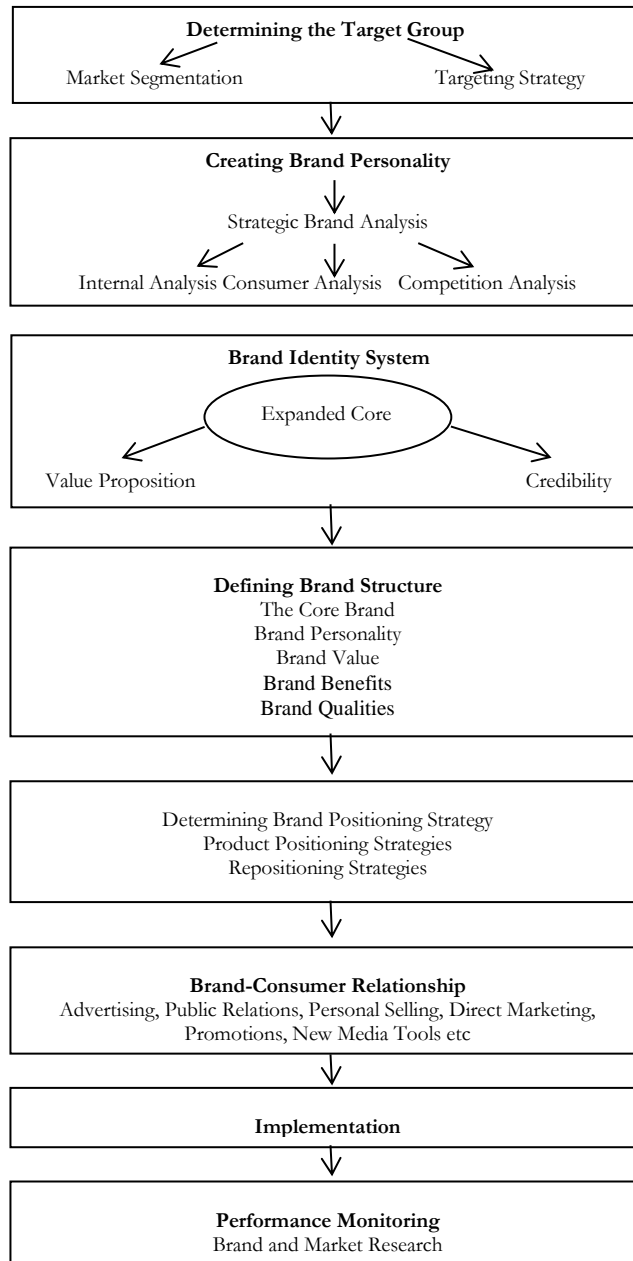
Source: Aaker, 1996; Kotler and Armstrong, 2013.

The second stage of the branding process, brand identity planning, requires strategic brand analysis. In this stage, opportunities and threats in the market for the brand need to be identified by carrying out strengths and weaknesses analysis for the brand, consumers and the competition. One of the important tools used in brand identity planning is brand personality. While the concept of personality was first used in 1958 by Martineau referring to the

personality of retail shops, the concept of brand personality was put forward by J. Aaker in 1997 (Azoulay and Kapferer, 2003, 144). In his study, Martineau found that consumers buy from stores that have a personality similar to theirs (Martineau, 1958, 55). Similarly, the work of J. Aaker indicates that brands have separate personalities. Brand personality is defined as a set of human characteristics associated with a brand (Aaker, 1997, 347). In this sense, brand personality is very important for the branding process.

The next stage of the branding process is the creation of a brand identity system. In this stage, the aim is to form a brand concept according to the target market's needs, desires and expectations. According to the brand identity planning developed by D. Aaker, firstly the core of the brand and in accordance with the brand's core, expanded core needs to be determined. D. Aaker (1996, 21) suggests the creation of the expanded core in four ways; as a product, a person, an organisation and a symbol. However, recent studies show that the history of brands is also prominent in determining brands' identity and forming a strategy. Having a history of the corporate brand plays a vital role in creating the brand's identity (Iglesias, 2020, 59). Another essential component of the brand identity system is the value proposition developed in accordance with the core of the brand. Each brand offers a value proposition, which determines the reputation and prestige of the brand. Recent research has shown that cognitive and emotional trust towards the brand has an intermediary effect on the relationship between the corporate brand and consumer loyalty (Ozdemir et al., 2020).

In the next stage of the branding process, i.e. determining the brand structure, many tasks need to be carried out ranging from the core of the brand, brand personality types, logo, emblem to mascot. All the abstract and concrete work about the brand needs to be formed and clarified in this stage. Following the formation of the brand's core, a brand personality type should be chosen. According to J. Aaker (1997, 352), there are five brand personality types: *"sincere, excited, competence, sophisticated and ruggedness"*. In line with these brand personality types, the brand's logo, emblem and mascot can be created, and branding and brand positioning strategies can be developed. The body of research shows that brands are affected by cultural differences, with their perception in different cultures varying (Foscht, 2008, 136). Hence, it is thought that the selection of the positioning strategies below in consideration of cultural differences and their adaptation to different cultures might be beneficial.

Brand positioning constitutes an important stage of the branding process. This is defined as a brand's position in consumers' minds in comparison with its competition (Ries and Trout, 2001, 2). According to Doyle (1975), brand positioning is defined as how brands on a certain level are perceived based on an analysis of their multidimensional features. Another recent study has revealed that the brand positioning model should be focused on internal and external indicators. While internal indicators pertain to product, human, process and brand image, external indicators are competitors' strategies, their image and segment presence (Sultana, 2020, 279). There are six different brand positioning approaches: (1) by attribute, (2) by use, (3) by user, (4) by product category, (5) by price/quality, and (6) competitive positioning (Aaker and Shansby, 1982). According to another classification, brand positioning strategies are divided into two as goods and service positioning strategies and repositioning strategies (Karpat Aktuglu, 2014). Brand position is formed by picking one or more of the positioning strategies presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Brand Positioning Strategies

Brand Positioning Strategies	Repositioning Strategies
Positioning the brand as the first	Changing the brand's product content (taste, smell etc.)
Positioning the brand as unique	Making physical changes to the product (design, packaging)
Positioning the brand as a market leader	Changing the use of the product
Repositioning the competition	Changing the brand image
Extending the product range of the brand	
Expanding the use of the brand	
Positioning the brand with its name	

Source: Aktuglu (2014).

The brand created within the determined framework of the brand positioning strategy should be able to communicate with consumers and the suitable components of the integrated marketing communication as well as its target group. The brand should be able to initiate and maintain communication with its consumers by using various media such as advertising, public relations, and social media. It should be noted that marketing communication is a cycle. Just as attitude affects consumer behaviour, the latter, in turn, impcts on the former through experience and knowledge (Schultz et al., 1993, 113).

In the last stages of branding, the performance of the brand should be monitored through market and marketing research by the implementation of all branding plans. If the results differ from the targets, the reason for these differences should be investigated, and alternative strategies should be developed. Keegan and Green (2008) claim that brands perform two key functions: First, a brand represents a promise about a particular product made by a particular company; it is a sort of certification of quality. Seconds, brands allow consumers to organise their shopping experience easier by helping them search for and locate a specific product. Thus, differentiating a particular company's offering from all the others is an important brand function (Ibid.). This is why companies have to work on brands and are concerned about the performance of brands.

Data and Methods

This research aimed to develop a model for the branding process of Şile Gauze with reference to marketing strategy. First, we introduce the background. Şile, a town in modern day Turkey, takes its name from a flowering plant commonly known as marjoram from the Lamiaceae family. Şile's history dates back to 700 BC and is believed to be first inhabited by the Bithynis, and later it became part of the Kingdom of Bithynia. This period was followed by Byzantine rule and continued with the settlement of Turks in this region during the Ottoman period. Şile is a touristic coastal town with natural and historic attractions and is very close to Istanbul (Şile Municipality, 2020). One of Şile's most important cultural heritages and cultural products, Şile Gauze is believed to have a history of 150 years (Temir, 2010, 238). The main material of Şile Gauze is cotton thread. Although flax yarn and silk beetle were used in the past when the flax was grown in the region, Şile Gauze has been produced from 100% cotton yarn for the last century. Today Şile Gauze is still produced using the same methods and techniques using

handlooms and semi-automatic looms. There is no difference between the two methods in the pretreatment stages (yarn sizing, warp preparation) before weaving and the creaming, washing and drying of the fabrics after weaving and the structure of the fabric produced (Turkish Patent and Trademark Office, 2017, 23). The most important and original feature of Şile Gauze is that it is washed in the sea after weaving and is left to dry on the beach (in summer), and sand particles are ingrained on the woven surface (Gurkan, 2018, 11).

Şile Gauze production consists of three stages (Turkish Patent and Trademark Office,2017, 23) as follows;

- 1st stage: Preparation of the yarn for weaving (preliminary preparation - sizing, warping, drawing-in)

- 2nd stage: Weaving stage (in handloom or semi-automatic loom)

- 3rd stage: Finishing (creaming, washing, drying)

In 1971, approximately 30 million pounds of Şile Cloth were exported to then West Germany, France, Holland, Switzerland and the United States (Simsek, 1974). Recently, a "Geographical Authentication Certificate" for this product has been obtained by the Municipality of Şile in order to increase the usage of Şile Gauze and to start the branding process (Gurkan, 2018, 62). Culture is one of the most important factors in branding and sustainable competition (Jung, 2020, 2). Culture includes both abstract ideas, such as values and ethics, and material objects and services, such as automobiles, clothing, food, art and sports, that are produced or valued by society (Solomon, 2007, 542). Cultural marketing activities are "*the consideration, preservation and presentation of tangible and intangible heritage, artistic production, as well as the knowledge and skills of various social groups, communities, and nations*" (Stylianou-Lambert, 2014). Şile gauze is a cultural product with a long history and established status in Turkey. Therefore, branding for international markets is a worthy concern.

In this exploratory research, we used focus groups. As the body of knowledge on this particular process is scarce, we chose an exploratory design to contribute to the creation of hypotheses about the research topic rather than verifying them (see Gegez, 2015, 27). As a data collection method, the focus group involved us discussing and elaborating the research question with groups of participants and moderated by probing questions (see Bowling, 2002, 410).

For the four focus groups, each with eight participants, we have selected students from the Marketing and Advertising Department of our university (two groups) and students from the Fashion and Design Department (the remaining two groups). Students were selected randomly. The focus group interviews were moderated by one moderator and one reporter, and the interviews lasted 60 to 80 minutes and were tape-recorded and then transcribed. The interviews were revolved around eight basic questions formulated based on the marketing strategy of Şile Gauze and brand positioning:

1. In your opinion, who is / should be the target group of Şile Gauze?

2. In your opinion, which brand personality should Şile Gauze have?

3. In your opinion, what should be the strategic brand analysis for Şile Gauze? (SWOT analysis, competition analysis and consumer analysis)

4. In your opinion, what concept should Şile Gauze be built on?

5. In your opinion, what should be the positioning strategy of Şile Gauze?

6. In your opinion, what promotion tools should Şile Gauze use when communicating with their target group?

7. In your opinion, what should be the distribution channel of Şile Gauze?

8. In your opinion, what should be the pricing strategy of Şile Gauze?

Findings and discussion

Involving participants from marketing and fashion departments were to uncover differences between these two specialisms. Since Şile Gauze may become a fashion brand elevated from being a local cultural product. However, as presented in Table 3, the responses from the two groups were similar in their evaluation of the Şile Gauze branding process.

Both participant groups have indicated that the target group of Şile Gauze was women and men from high-medium and high-income groups. However, there were also nuances. According to participants from the marketing and advertising department, the consumer profile should be people who like comfortable, stylish and healthy clothing styles while fashion design participants indicated Şile Gauze consumer profile as individuals who adopt comfortable, natural, sincere, durable and simple clothing style. Hence we can summarise that the target group and consumer profile of Şile Gauze can be defined as women and men from high-mid and high income groups; who adopt comfortable, natural, stylish, healthy, durable and simple clothing styles and who can afford holidays. Also, in terms of the marketing strategy of Şile Gauze, marketing and advertising department students indicated the targeting strategy should be niche and concentrated targeting while the fashion design students chose a niche and local targeting strategies. Hence, a common marketing strategy indicated by both groups of students was niche one.

Both groups highlighted the need for a sincere and sophisticated brand personality for Şile Gauze. When the adjectives defining Şile Gauze are considered, it can be seen that marketing and advertising students used the words comfortable, natural, simple while fashion design students said comfortable, natural, simple, durable, summerlike and healthy.

Regarding the first type of strategic brand analysis of Şile Gauze, i.e. SWOT analysis, the marketing and advertising students put forward high price, practicality and lightness as being among the strengths of Şile Gauze. Fashion design students mentioned "natural", "healthy", and "durable" as strengths. Regarding the weaknesses of Şile Gauze, marketing and advertising students referred to its uniqueness and limited availability while fashion design students indicated its unsuitability for all seasons and lack of variety. As far as the opportunities in the market are considered, marketing and advertising students thought that highlighting its unknown features, increasing the demand for it and creating designs for all seasons were the opportunities for Şile gauze. According to fashion design students, opportunities lie in creating new markets in tourist destinations. About the threats Şile Gauze might face in the market, marketing and advertising department students indicated that other fabric producers, specifically linen producers, might seriously threaten Şile Gauze while fashion design students specified threats as the risk of design theft, availability of cheaper

products from other producers and decrease of hand-made products due to advances in technology.

Table 3. Summary of Focus Group Discussions

QUESTIONS	MARKETING AND ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT	FASHION DESIGN DEPARTMENT
1. In your opinion, who is / should be the target group of Şile Gauze?	**Targeting Strategy:** Niche targeting or a concentrated targeting strategy could be used. **Consumer Profile:** Women and men who like comfortable, stylish and healthy clothes, who consider a holiday a necessity, and who are from mid-high and high income groups.	**Targeting Strategy:** Niche or local targeting strategy could be used. **Consumer Profile:** Women and men who prefer a comfortable, natural, sincere, long-lasting and simple clothing style.
2. In your opinion, which brand personality should Şile Gauze have?	**Brand Personality:** Sincere and sophisticated. **Adjectives defining Sile gauze:** Comfortable, natural, simple and vivid.	**Brand Personality:** Sincere and sophisticated. **Adjectives defining Sile gauze:** Comfortable, natural, simple, long lasting, summerlike and healthy.
3. In your opinion, what should be the strategic brand analysis of Şile Gauze? (SWOT analysis, competition analysis and consumer analysis)	**SWOT Analysis:** *Strengths:* High price, practical, light and special. *Weaknesses:* Rarity and accessibility *Opportunities:* Highlighting unknown features, increasing the demand and it's possible to create designs for four seasons. *Threats:* Competition and linen might create the impression of being for older age groups **Consumer Analysis:** Women and men who like comfort and are from high-mid and high income groups. **Competition Analysis:** Linen and chiffon producers.	**SWOT Analysis:** *Strengths:* Natural, healthy and durable. *Weaknesses:* Not suitable for all seasons and lack of variety *Opportunities:* Creating new markets in tourist locations. *Threats:* Competition, imitation of the designs, cheaper products of the competition and technology. **Consumer Analysis:** Women and men who are from high-mid and high income groups and who have adopted a natural, comfortable and simple clothing style. **Competition Analysis:** Linen, cotton, hosiery and chiffon fabric producers.
4. In your opinion, what concept should Şile Gauze be built on?	Summerlike, comfortable, healthy, easy-dry and hygenic	Comfortable, comfort, seaside, pure and healthy.
5. In your opinion, what should be the positioning strategy of Şile Gauze?	**Positioning Strategy:** Unique positioning in the market. **Brand colours:** crème and blue **Brand's value proposition:** originality, comfort, healthy and practicality	**Positioning Strategy:** Unique positioning in the market. **Brand colours:** sand-coloured, brown, beige, cream and blue **Brand's value proposition:** healthy, comfortable and practicality.
6. In your opinion, what promotion tools should Şile Gauze use when communicating with its target group?	Event marketing, website, social media influencers, give-aways in tourist destinations and billboards.	Social media influencers, fashion shows, display windows and fairs.
7. In your opinion, what should be the distribution channel of Şile Gauze?	Direct distribution structure, selective distribution strategy and stores with brands based on colourful and holiday-like image.	Direct distribution structure, selective distribution strategy and stores suitable for the brand concept.
8. In your opinion, what should be the pricing strategy of Şile Gauze?	High pricing strategy.	High pricing strategy.

According to marketing and fashion design students, the consumers of Şile gauze are women and men who adopt natural, comfortable, and simple clothing styles and who are from high-mid and high income groups. At the same time, linen, cotton and chiffon producers are seen as competition. This finding indicates that both groups show similarities between each other.

The brand concept of Şile gauze is defined with the concepts summerlike, comfortable, healthy, easy-dry and hygiene by marketing department students while fashion design program students used comfortable, seaside, pure and health as concepts. It is still possible to say that both groups show similarities in brand concept.

When the brand positioning strategy is considered, both groups indicated that a strategy of being unique in the market was appropriate. Thus, it would seem that there was no difference between marketing and fashion design students in terms of brand positioning strategy. However, brand colours were indicated as cream and blue by marketing and advertising students, while fashion design ones chose sand, brown, beige, cream and blue for this. The value promise of the brand was indicated as originality, comfort, hygene, healthy and practical by marketing and advertising students while the fashion ones stressed healthy, comfort and practicality in this regard. In other words, the results show that the value proposition of Şile gauze differed between marketing and advertising students and fashion design students.

When promotion tools were considered, marketing students thought that event marketing, website(s), social media influencers, promotion give-aways in tourist destinations and billboards should be among the promotion tools, while fashion design students recommended that social media influencers, fashion shows, show windows and fairs should be used for this purpose. Hence, the findings show that both groups agreed on the use of social media influencers for the promotion of Şile gauze.

As far as the distribution channel of Şile gauze is concerned, participants from both groups asserted that the consumers should be reached through a direct distribution structure, selective distribution strategy along with stores with colourful and holiday themes. In terms of pricing strategy, it is seen that both groups indicated a high pricing strategy as being most appropriate. This finding is in line with the fact that all the participants agreed on a niche targeting strategy for Şile gauze.

In terms of pricing strategy, it is seen that both groups indicated high pricing strategy as the pricing strategy. This finding is in line with the fact that participants agreed on a niche targeting strategy for Şile gauze. When the branding and marketing strategy focuses on a niche market, it appears that high pricing strategy should be chosen due to the nature of the niche targeting strategy.

Conclusion

Many consumer groups have an increased interest in original and authentic cultural products as a result of globalisation. There is a growing appetite for different and original products rather than standardised products. As a result, local cultural products have increasingly focused on publicity and branding targeting international audiences. Hence, this study aimed at exploring the branding process for Şile gauze. Şile gauze is an important cultural product originating from a town near Istanbul, Turkey. Thanks to its practicality and uniqueness, this fabric attracts a large segment in Turkey. However, there is no systematic implementation of

a marketing and branding strategy for this product. Findings of this study may offer some input for the branding and marketing efforts of Şile gauze.

In this study, we have applied a model for the branding process of Şile gauze by adapting the Branding Process developed based on the work of D. Aaker (1996) and Kotler and Armstrong (2013). Şile gauze's position in the market, especially in the international market, is discussed accordingly. What we have done is a first and yet limited attempt involving two groups with knowledge of marketing and fashion. Hence we are aware that more of this kind of studies with multidisciplinary groups are needed to develop a more comprehensive strategy.

The findings of our research indicate that Şile gauze should follow a niche targeting strategy particularly aiming at women and men who adopt comfortable, stylish, healthy and simple clothing style, look for durable clothing, usually see holidays a necessity, and who are from high-mid and high income group. The brand personality is seen sincere and sophisticated. Both groups in our study agree on the defining adjectives for the product as comfortable, natural, and simple. Marketing and Advertising department students added "vivid", Fashion Design department students added "durable", "summerlike" and "healthy" to their descriptions. SWOT analyses by both groups indicated the strengths of Şile Gauze as high price, practicality, lightweight, featured, natural, healthy and durable while its weaknesses were limited availability, unsuitability for all seasons and lack of variety. The opportunities in the market were highlighting unknown features of the product, increasing the demand, creating designs for all seasons, creating new markets in tourist destinations. The threats in the market were identified as competition, linen fabric, perception of old age, design theft, cheaper products from competition and technology.

According to the consumer analysis from both groups, the second stage of strategic brand analysis, consumers of Şile gauze were the ones who adopt natural, comfortable and simple clothing styles and who are from the upper-middle and high-income groups. In the competition analysis, the third stage of strategic brand analysis, the competition from other products such as linen, chiffon, cotton and hosiery producers were seen as strong. It also appears that Şile gauze should be designed to possess comfortable, summerlike, healthy, quick-dry, hygienic, seaside feel and pureness features. Uniqueness in the market was suggested as a brand positioning strategy by both groups. Suggested brand colours were creme, blue, sand-colour, beige and brown. The brand promise should be health, comfort, practicality, uniqueness and hygiene. When publicity tools are considered; event marketing, a website, use of social media influencers, promotion give-aways in tourist destinations, outdoor advertising, fashion shows, display windows and fairs were suggested. The distribution strategy should be direct distribution and selective. The pricing strategy for Şile gauze brand should be chosen as high-price which is appropriate for niche targeting strategy.
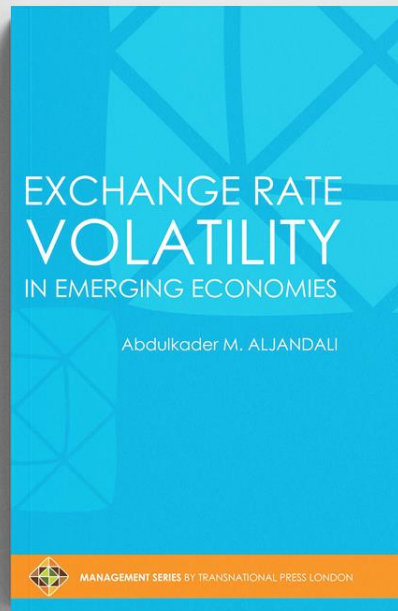
We would like to acknowledge the limited nature of this study and hope that our findings and research strategy may be useful for future studies involving different groups. This would lead to larger, perhaps quantitative studies to be conducted in order to have a better understanding of this unique product and developing its branding.

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