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## The Effect of Hedonistic and Utilitarian Consumer Behavior on Brand Equity: Turkey - UK Comparison on Coca Cola

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### Abstract

Consumer behavior, divided into utilitarian and hedonistic factors, forms the basis of many studies looking at the concept of brand equity and its dimensions. Based on a comparison between Turkey and UK respondents, this study focuses on the idea that the brand equity significantly differs according to the consumption types which, in turn, are affected by the brand equity dimensions. The survey for this study is conducted on 218 consumers over both countries between February and March 2014. The data obtained are analyzed through the SPSS statistical program. The results show that the utilitarian consumer behavior has the highest effect on the brand equity for Coca Cola; and the perceived quality, which is found to be the significant for the Turkey respondents, is the most important determinant for both variables.

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### 1. Introduction

Within the world of branding there has been a lot of attention given to the role that brand equity can play in driving performance and long term sustainability (Erdem and Swait, 1998). This is, in turn thought to have direct implications on how a company approaches both its strategic intents and resulting marketing manifestations. There can be assumed to be a strong relation between strong brand equity and an equally rich firm performance in the market. There are a number of studies indicating that a positive mindset towards a brand increases the probability of initial and subsequent purchases, which may come to mean that it is less likely for the consumers to sway towards any would be competitors or alternative products (Jones, Reynolds and Arnold, 2006). If it is assumed that a high level of brand equity should be the archetypal goal of any brand, then it is necessary both in theoretical and managerial terms to study its dimensions, which ultimately generate sought after affections, such as brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, brand trust and brand loyalty. This field of investigation can ultimately help firms better strategize their activity and engagement in the market by conclusively identifying and then controlling the factors that enable a stronger interaction with a shopper's mindset, which will assist in creating a strategic advantage for them as against their competitors.

Various studies have been conducted as to determine the antecedents, or factors that may have an effect in creating brand equity (Grewal, Gopalkrishnan, Krishnan and Sharma, 2003). This will manifest in different consumer

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behaviors driven simply by the direct actions of the brand itself or a consequence of a myriad of external factors the consumers are regularly exposed to. Within the literature there is a very clear distinction that splits behaviors into two categorical types – Hedonistic and Utilitarian. Among the first theoreticians in the field, Plato foresees three distinct constructs associated with the human mind; cognition, emotion and conation (Scott, Osgood and Peterson, 1979). Evolving throughout the years, these concepts have been studied by various disciplines including psychology, sociology as well as marketing, and coined among the variables of consumer behavior, which affect the actual purchase behavior. The studies on the consumer behavior dating the first half of 1900s concentrated more on the tangible products with a Classical Economic Approach. According to this view, the consumers, who are assumed to be equipped with sufficient information about the products, make rational choices trying to maximize their benefits (Frank, 1987). This understanding largely emphasizes the utilitarian perspective on the consumer behavior. “While this approach is quite valid and useful for goods whose tangible qualities and utilitarian performance serve as primary determinants of their value to the consumer, it would seem inappropriate for products whose selection and use are based upon satisfying emotional wants, rather than fulfilling utilitarian functions” (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1978). According to the same authors, there is a distinct difference between the consumption based on rational functionality and the consumption based on hedonistic purposes. While the former is more related to the mind, the latter mainly refers to the multisensory images, fantasies and emotional arousal in using products. This latter perspective onto the consumer behavior necessitates a conceptual link between the hedonistic consumption and symbols, or rather the symbolic meanings hidden behind the products and services.

Mainly investigating how different consumer types affect the formation of positive or negative brand equity, our paper manifests its assertions on the example of Coca Cola, on which most people have pre-organised opinions as a globally renowned brand. Although it may be largely conceived as a utilitarian product in the sense of having such characteristics as a thirst quencher and accompaniment at meals, the product is also believed to reflect some hedonistic characteristics with regard to the pleasures it may arouse, status symbols and symbolic meanings it may represent such as being cool, western, and accessible. Thus, studying how the people actually engage with the brand in terms of both the consumption types and the equity will yield interesting perspectives on how brands should strategize to achieve their overall objectives, especially within the context of the fast moving consumer goods. Comprising two main sections, the study begins with the literature review on the related terms and clarifies the hypotheses in the first section. The second section includes the research methodology, results, research model, and ends with the conclusions including some theoretical and managerial insights.

## **2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development**

### *2.1. Utilitarian and Hedonistic Consumptions*

Within the literature it has been established that there are two primary behavioral attitudes sitting behind a purchase decision which drive overall engagement with the good or service in question - utilitarian and hedonistic structures (Hirshman and Holbrook, 1982; Herabadi, Verplanken and Knippenberg, 2009). The fundamental difference between these two behavioral sets is that the former, in essence is task related and cognitively driven as well as appealing to one's mind and logic (Strahilevitz and Myers, 1998; Childers, Carrb, Pecke and Carson, 2001; Roy and Ng, 2012) whilst the latter has a stronger focus towards emotive opinions, and responses, multisensory, fanciful and exciting aspects of a product as well as an appreciation of the experience rather than simply for task completion (Hirshman, 1980; Woods, 1960; Overby and Lee, 2006; Nili, Delavari, Tavassoli and Barati, 2013; Babin, Darden and Griffin, 1994). Utilitarian behaviors in their rational nature can be said to be less arousing than their hedonistic counterparts due to their capacity to satisfy and provide cognitively oriented benefits (Lim and Ang, 2008). Meanwhile in contrast hedonistic qualities in an interaction tend to generate emotional arousal (Mano And Oliver, 1993). In such cases where hedonism is the primary driver, shoppers will evaluate available characteristics from the perspective of aesthetics, taste, symbolic meaning, and sensory experience (Holbrook and Moore, 1981). Also, the existing literature includes different approaches analyzing the outcomes emerging as a result of these patterns (Jones, Reynolds and Arnold, 2006) as well as the situational factors or motivations giving rise to them (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003). From a managerial contribution of the understanding into these differing behaviors, it can better help managers position their goods and services in the most suitable environment to appropriately capitalize and thrive amongst the competition (Nili, et al., 2013), which, in turn, is expected to increase the overall firm performance.

A vital development to this framework though is that an individual product or service can exhibit both utilitarian and hedonistic attributes which will naturally appeal in differing ways to contrasting shopper groups; to put it differently, both hedonic and utilitarian products may possess benefits that are either hedonic or utilitarian in nature (Lim and Ang, 2008; Babin and Attaway, 2000). Thus, it is possible to assess a product from both a hedonistic benefits-wise and utilitarian benefits-wise at the same time. To further develop this point, Roy and Ng (2012) highlight that consumers do not just exhibit behavioural differences within the confines of hedonism. Indeed purchase decisions will be very much decided from a personal perspective and relate to the experiences of the individual in question. This takes the current discussion to the fact that different people will evaluate the same product or service differently based on the personal and experiential differences. This relativity will have a fundamental influence on the creation of effective marketing strategies by proposing the question of which attributes should be raised to the forefront over the rest. For example, is it more effective to strategize Coca Cola as a thirst quenching drink (a utilitarian attribute), or as a symbol of Westernised culture (a hedonistic attribute)? This can even then be further manifested across different contexts. A lot of research has been done into the differing behaviours shoppers exhibit in an online environment compared to an offline equivalent. Despite lacking the physical ability to touch, Overby and Lee (2006) discuss how shoppers still expect an experience from their online engagements. Grewal, Gopalkrishnan, Krishnan, Sharma (2003) also discuss how the process of shopping online facilitates convenience but also the ability to compare between vendors. Both aspects would underpin the logical and rational nature of utilitarian engagements. However, Kim (2002) highlights that people can shop online for entertainment purposes and for out-of-routine experiences that absorb the users and let them “get away from it all”.

The discussion between the utilitarian and hedonistic attributes of consumption can further be extended as to include cultural differences or the components of cultural conditioning within society (Hirshman, 1986; Cardoso and Pinto, 2010). This macro factor can manifest itself within the world of consumption by cultural values having a direct impact and influence on the preferences and attitudes amongst the population towards marketing stimuli (Lim and Ang, 2008). The study goes on to reference how shoppers may base a decision on culturally conditioned stimuli over other options, even if it is not the best available alternative. In other words, the drives of cultural factors could underpin shoppers making hedonistic choices despite compelling utilitarian characteristics that would favour alternatives as more suitable. Also, consumers engage with certain products in an effort to associate with certain lifestyles and personalities (Herabadi, et al., 2009). To further manifest such cultural differences, this study focuses on Coca Cola, a globally known brand, in an attempt to firstly determine whether consumers from different cultural backgrounds, Turkey and UK in our case, would have a uniform perception within this particular brand, be it hedonistic and/or utilitarian, and secondly how these perceptions differ in the context of brand equity.

## 2.2. Brand Equity

Often confused or interchangeably used with brand value, brand equity refers to “a set of perceptions, knowledge and behavior on the part of the customers that creates demand and/or a price premium for a branded product” (Tiwari, 2010), or simply a strong brand (Aaker, 1992), for the creation of which, brand management is of primary importance (M’zungu, 2010). While the brand value is more concerned with what the brand is worth to the management and shareholders financially, brand equity is what the brand is worth to the customers. Researchers have carried out a lot of work to determine the dimensions of brand equity, resulting in various viewpoints on the issue. For instance, while Keller (1993) finds brand awareness and brand image as the antecedents of brand equity, Berry (2000) extends the limits as to include brand knowledge and customer satisfaction. According to Park and Srinivasan (2005), brand equity includes attribute-based and non-attribute based components. On the other hand, such researchers as Kamakura and Russell (1993) agree that brand equity could be achieved to the extent that it reflects on the actual consumer purchase behavior or market behavior (Dollatabady and Amirusefi, 2011). In an attempt to measure brand equity, Yoo and Donthu (2001) associate brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and brand loyalty as the antecedents of brand equity. There are also studies which focus on the extension of brand equity dimensions in different product or service levels, categories, sectors and cultures (Severi and Ling, 2013; Dew, and Kwon, 2010; Zaichkowsky, Parlee and Hill, 2010; Martensen and Grønholdt, 2010; Baldauf, Cravens, Diamantopoulos and Roth, 2008).

Although there exist different opinions supported with empirical findings as to the dimensions of brand equity in the literature, this study adopts Aaker’s standpoint on 4 basic atomic structures of the brand equity construct, namely, brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and brand loyalty. It is also important to evaluate brand equity

in terms of brand trust in addition to Aaker's 4 dimensions, in that whether the customers trust a brand or not is believed to be one of the strongest determining factors of the overall image that this brand leaves in their minds.

### 2.2.1. *Brand Awareness*

Defined as the probability that, consumers are familiar about the availability and accessibility of a company's product and service, brand awareness is widely thought to have an important role in the assurance of purchasing decisions as well as the perceived risk evaluation of the customers (Malik, Ghafoor and Iqbal, 2013). "It is believed to affect consumer decision-making, especially for low-involvement packaged goods" (Sarigöllü and Huang, 2012). The customers are more likely to consider brands during the purchase they have pre-knowledge on, which thus, increases the brand's market performance, according to the same authors. Within this context, it is expected that the consumption types, brand equity and the country differences are affected by the degree of brand awareness.

### 2.2.2. *Brand Association*

Consumers make choices about brands based on the information stored in their memory. In other words, the information already kept in the mind is brought forward in the purchasing or not-purchasing decisions. According to the research by Hastak and Mitra (1996), this information recall necessitates external stimuli, such as advertising, to affect the accessibility of brands which are associated with a complex net of perceptions in memory, and to influence consideration sets (i.e., the subset of brands considered at the time of choice) as well as choice outcomes. Examples of brand associations may include representation of purchase, functional qualities, benefits or consumption situations (Romaniuk and Thiel, 2013). It is still open to investigate the effect of consumption types and country differences on the brand association.

### 2.2.3. *Perceived Quality*

"It is a form of attitude, related but not equivalent to satisfaction, and results from a comparison of expectations with perceptions of performance" (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1988). From another perspective, the term refers to the consumer's overall evaluation of a product or service. "It is the consumer's judgment about a product's overall excellence or superiority over the others". "It is (1) different from objective or actual quality [in that while the former is the customer-based, thus differing according to each customer, the latter is related to the overall mechanistic or technical quality of a commodity], (2) a higher level abstraction rather than a specific attribute of a product, (3) a global assessment that in some cases resembles attitude, and (4) a judgment usually made within a consumer's evoked set" (Zeithaml, 1988). While the level of abstraction or judgment in the mind is thought to be crucial in the formation of the perceived quality of a product which, in turn, has an important effect in actual purchase, which type of consumer behaviour leads a higher level of abstraction/judgment is still open to further investigation.

### 2.2.4. *Brand Trust*

"The construct of trust involves 'a calculative process' based on the ability of an object or party (e.g., a brand) to continue to meet its obligations and on an estimation of the costs versus rewards of staying in the relationship" (Doney and Cannon, 1997). Afzal, Khan, Rehman, Ali and Wajahat (2010) draw attention on the past experiences related to a product or service in determining consumer trust. The authors also mention in their research that brand trust is based on ending results of a perception or action, and has an influence toward changing behavioral and attitudinal loyalty. Examining brand trust according to two general product-level, category-related control variables (hedonic and utilitarian value) as a part of their empirical research, Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) find that when these variables are controlled, brand trust and brand affect jointly have an effect on purchase loyalty and attitudinal loyalty.

### 2.2.5. *Brand Loyalty*

Brand loyalty is constructed through the regular purchase of the same brand or product type or through the preference of a brand or product over the others. In their study exploring the effects from brand trust and brand affect to brand performance, Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) find that brand loyalty is a result of greater trust in the brand reliability and more favorable affects; in other words, high levels of consumer trust and affect in a brand also increases

the level of attitudinal and behavioral brand loyalty. Although most of the literature tend to concentrate on these two main types of loyalty, some other researches further extend the dimensions of brand loyalty as logical, affective and evidencing loyalty (Fraering and Minor, 2013); as well as latent and spurious loyalty (Dick and Basu, 1994). In another study on the relationship among brand personality, brand trust, brand affect and brand loyalty, it is found out that “brand personality can increase the level of brand trust and evoke brand emotions, which, in turn, can build the level of brand loyalty” (Sung and Kim, 2010). Also, regarding the main determinants of brand loyalty, Javalgi and Moberg (1997) foresee the effects of past satisfaction with a brand, perceived risk associated with a purchase, availability of substitutes and cost of changing brands. Evidencing from the existing literature, it is evident that the relationship between the brand loyalty and consumption types is open to further investigation.

In the light of the literature about the variables in our study, these hypotheses are developed;

- H<sub>1</sub>: There is a statistically significant relationship between the utilitarian consumer behavior and the brand equity dimensions.
- H<sub>2</sub>: There is a statistically significant relationship between the hedonistic consumer behavior and the brand equity dimensions.
- H<sub>3</sub>: There is a statistically significant relationship between the brand equity and the brand equity dimensions.
- H<sub>4</sub>: There is a statistically significant relationship between brand equity and the two types of consumer behaviours

As for the differences between the two sample groups based on our variables, these hypotheses are developed;

- H<sub>5</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference in the utilitarian consumer behaviour between the Turkey and UK respondents.
- H<sub>6</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference in the hedonistic consumer behaviour between the Turkey and UK respondents.
- H<sub>7</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference in the brand equity between the Turkey and UK respondents.
- H<sub>8</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference in the brand awareness between the Turkey and UK respondents.
- H<sub>9</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference in the brand association between the Turkey and UK respondents.
- H<sub>10</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference in the perceived quality between the Turkey and UK respondents.
- H<sub>11</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference in the brand trust between the Turkey and UK respondents.
- H<sub>12</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference in the brand loyalty between the Turkey and UK respondents.

### **3. Methodology**

#### *3.1. Research Goal*

The purpose of this study is to identify the effects of two main types of consumer behavior on the brand equity with a comparative analysis between Turkey and the UK. The main drive behind this purpose is the belief that the branding issues are of primary importance for the firms’ strategy formation, and one of the driving forces differentiating them from their competitors in today’s highly competitive business world.

#### *3.2. Sample and Data Collection*

As a form of comparison, Turkey and the UK have been selected in our survey with the belief that the two countries will indicate a possible difference in the perception of the same brand, being Coca Cola in our case, on the consumers’ side due to the fact that Turkey may represent a more Middle Eastern character while the UK represents a typical Western one. The reason why the brand of Coca Cola has been selected, on the other hand is the fact that it is a universally known brand, a typical example from the soft drinks sector, and both the consumer groups will not have difficulty in identifying the brand while answering the questions.

As the data collection method, an Internet survey was conducted through social forums where it was believed a sound respondent engagement would be ensured, during February and March, 2014. A total of 218 consumers, being 140 from Turkey and 78 from the UK, took part in the survey on a voluntary basis. Data obtained from these

questionnaires were analyzed through the SPSS statistical program. Regression analyses and t-test for independent samples were conducted to test the hypotheses.

### 3.3. Analyses and Results

To measure brand awareness, a 4-items scale is adopted from Yoo, Donthu (2001) and Berry (2000). Brand recall is measured through a 4-items scale from Cheng and Chen (2001) and Berry (2000). A 3-items scale of perceived quality is adopted from Sirdeshmukth, Singh and Sabol (2002), Berry (2000), and Yoo and Donthu (2001). To measure brand trust, a 5-items scale is used from Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), Lassar, Mittal and Sharma (1995). Brand loyalty is measured through a 5-items scale from Bristow (2002), Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), Thiele and Mackay (2001). To measure brand equity, a 5-items scale is adopted from Berry (2000), Yoo and Donthu (2001) and Washburn and Plank (2002). To measure the hedonistic consumer type, 3 item-scale of Na, Son and Marshall (2007), while the scale of utilitarian consumer type is developed on a personal opinion based on the existing literature. All the scales are measured using 5-point likert type. Table 1 indicates the factor loadings of the scales, indicating the structural validity of the scales used, together with the Cronbach's Alpha values for each factor, which exceeds 0,60, indicating the reliability of the scales (Durmuş, Yurtkoru and Çinko, 2011).

Table 1: Factor Analysis Results and Cronbach's Alpha Values

	Items	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Total Variance Explained
<b>Hedonistic consumer behavior</b>	H2	0,901	0,847	70,701
	H3	0,875		
	H4	0,853		
	H1	0,723		
<b>Utilitarian Consumer Behavior</b>	U3	0,856	0,624	48,129
	U4	0,844		
	U2	0,552		
	U1	0,419		
<b>Brand Awareness</b>	A4	0,798	0,685	53,803
	A2	0,771		
	A3	0,721		
	A1	0,633		
<b>Brand Recall</b>	R3	0,839	0,791	61,537
	R4	0,804		
	R2	0,803		
	R1	0,683		
<b>Perceived Quality</b>	Q2	0,918	0,884	81,189
	Q1	0,907		
	Q3	0,878		
<b>Brand Trust</b>	T3	0,863	0,854	63,481
	T2	0,827		
	T4	0,811		
	T1	0,778		
	T5	0,693		
<b>Brand Loyalty</b>	L1	0,914	0,887	69,189
	L2	0,878		
	L3	0,851		
	L4	0,763		
	L5	0,739		
<b>Brand Equity</b>	E1	0,878	0,839	74,876
	E2	0,836		
	E3	0,764		
	E4	0,721		
	E5	0,689		

To test the hypotheses developed on the variables in the study ( $H_1$ - $H_4$ ), the regression analysis is conducted. The test results are indicated in the Table 2. According to these results, there is a significant relationship between utilitarian consumer behavior and brand awareness ( $\beta = -.167$ ,  $p = .008$ ), perceived quality ( $\beta = .335$ ,  $p = .000$ ), brand trust ( $\beta = .222$ ,  $p = .005$ ) and brand loyalty ( $\beta = .222$ ,  $p = .002$ ) for the brand of Coca Cola. Among these, *perceived quality* has the highest contribution. These four dimensions of brand equity explain the variance in the utilitarian behavior by 47%. However, brand association ( $\beta = .134$ ,  $p = .081$ ) is found not to affect the utilitarian consumer behavior significantly. While there is a meaningful relationship between the hedonistic consumer behavior and brand awareness ( $\beta = -.197$ ,  $p = .002$ ), brand association ( $\beta = .546$ ,  $p = .000$ ) and brand loyalty ( $\beta = .368$ ,  $p = .000$ ); perceived quality ( $\beta = .091$ ,  $p = .238$ ) and brand trust ( $\beta = -.120$ ,  $p = .138$ ) do not have an effect in explaining hedonistic consumption. Among the significant ones, *brand association* has the highest contribution. The first three dimensions explain 45 % of the variance in hedonistic consumption. It is also found that there is a significant relationship between brand equity and all 5 dimensions; brand awareness ( $\beta = .205$ ,  $p = .000$ ), brand association ( $\beta = .230$ ,  $p = .000$ ), perceived quality ( $\beta = .297$ ,  $p = .000$ ), brand trust ( $\beta = .233$ ,  $p = .000$ ) and brand loyalty ( $\beta = .273$ ,  $p = .000$ ), which cumulatively explain the variance by 58%. The most important contribution to this variance is the *perceived quality*. Similarly, both utilitarian consumer behavior ( $\beta = .485$ ,  $p = .000$ ) and hedonistic consumer behavior ( $\beta = .361$ ,  $p = .000$ ) have an effect on the brand equity, explaining 52% of its variance. *Utilitarian consumer behavior* has a higher contribution to the variance in brand equity. Thus, while  $H_3$  and  $H_4$  are supported,  $H_1$  and  $H_2$  are partially supported.

Table 2: Regression Analysis Results for  $H_1$ - $H_4$ 

Dependent Variables	Independent Variables	Standardized $\beta$	Sig.	Adjusted $R^2$	F Value	Model Sig.
Utilitarian Consumer Behavior ( $H_1$ )	Brand Awareness	-.167	.008	0.473	39.657	.000
	Brand Association	.134	.081			
	Perceived Quality	.335	.000			
	Brand Trust	.222	.005			
	Brand Loyalty	.222	.002			
Hedonistic Consumer Behavior ( $H_2$ )	Brand Awareness	-.197	.002	0.454	36.546	.000
	Brand Association	.546	.000			
	Perceived Quality	.091	.238			
	Brand Trust	-.120	.138			
	Brand Loyalty	.368	.000			
Brand Equity ( $H_3$ )	Brand Awareness	.205	0.000	0.576	47.854	.000
	Brand Association	.230	0.000			
	Perceived Quality	.297	0.000			
	Brand Trust	.233	0.000			
	Brand Loyalty	.273	0.000			
Brand Equity ( $H_4$ )	Utilitarian Consumer	.485	.000	0.519	117.587	.000
	Hedonistic Consumer	.361	.000			

To test the hypothesis developed between the two sample groups based on the variables ( $H_5$ - $H_{12}$ ), t-test for independent pairs is conducted. The test results are indicated in the Table 3. According to these results, Turkey respondents and UK respondents statistically do not differ importantly in utilitarian consumer behavior ( $t = 1.217$ ,  $p = .225$ ), hedonistic consumer behavior ( $t = -0.404$ ,  $p = .686$ ) and brand equity ( $t = -0.463$ ,  $p = .644$ ) for the brand of Coca Cola. However there is a statistically significant difference in brand awareness ( $t = -3.900$ ,  $p = .000$ ) between the two sample groups. UK respondents have a higher brand awareness for Coca Cola (mean=4.26) than the Turkish ones (3.88). The two sample groups differ in brand association ( $t = -4.854$ ,  $p = .000$ ); UK respondents have a higher brand association (mean=3.03) than Turkey respondents (mean=3.58) for Coca Cola. They also differ in perceived quality ( $t = 4.554$ ,  $p = .000$ ); Turkey respondents (mean=3.25) have a higher perception of quality for Coca Cola than UK ones (mean=2.52). Similarly the groups differ in brand trust ( $t = -3.11$ ,  $p = .002$ ); UK respondents (mean=3.27) have a higher brand trust for Coca Cola than Turkey ones (mean=2.91). Lastly, the groups differ in brand loyalty ( $t = 2.33$ ,  $p$

= .021); Turkey respondents (mean=2.55) have higher brand loyalty for Coca Cola than UK respondents (mean=2.22). Thus, H<sub>5</sub>, H<sub>6</sub> and H<sub>7</sub> are not supported while H<sub>8</sub>, H<sub>9</sub>, H<sub>10</sub>, H<sub>11</sub> and H<sub>12</sub> are supported.

Table 3: T-Test Results for H<sub>5</sub>-H<sub>12</sub>

Dependent Variables	Independent Variables (Country)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig.	Hypothesis
Utilitarian Consumer	Turkey	140	2.8708	0.93815	1.217	0.225	H <sub>5</sub> not supported
	UK	78	2.7308	0.7372			
Hedonistic Consumer	Turkey	139	1.9994	0.91273	-0.404	0.686	H <sub>6</sub> not supported
	UK	78	2.0481	0.72754			
Brand Equity	Turkey	140	3.1262	0.88945	-0.463	0.644	H <sub>7</sub> not supported
	UK	78	3.1733	0.60607			
Brand Awareness	Turkey	140	3.8845	0.91645	-3.9	0.000	H <sub>8</sub> supported
	UK	78	4.2628	0.51582			
Brand Association	Turkey	140	3.0333	0.97037	-4.854	0.000	H <sub>9</sub> supported
	UK	78	3.5801	0.68197			
Perceived Quality	Turkey	139	3.2518	1.18352	4.554	0.000	H <sub>10</sub> supported
	UK	78	2.5214	1.03835			
Brand Trust	Turkey	140	2.9114	1.04821	-3.117	0.002	H <sub>11</sub> supported
	UK	77	3.2701	0.64463			
Brand Loyalty	Turkey	140	2.5589	1.16191	2.336	0.021	H <sub>12</sub> supported
	UK	77	2.2234	0.91994			

In the light of the research findings, the research model of the study can be drawn as below;

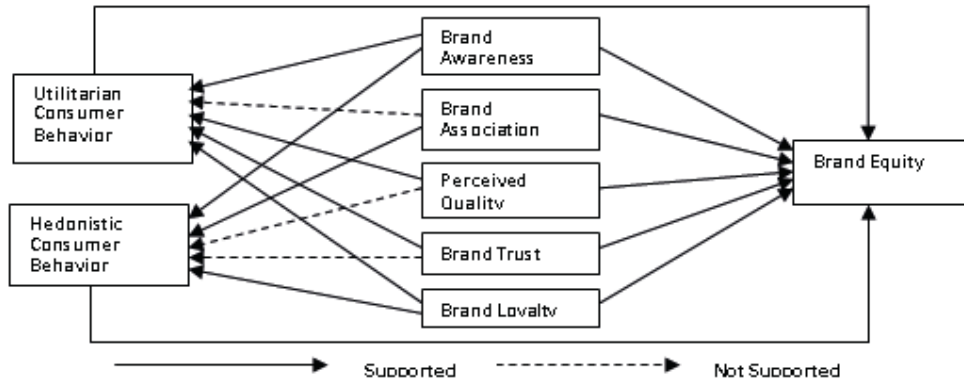


Figure 1: Final Research Model

#### 4. Conclusion

This study mainly explores any possible relationship between the utilitarian & hedonistic consumer behaviors and brand equity. Instead of focusing on the direct correlation between the two variables, it seeks to understand this relationship through the dimensions of brand equity, namely, brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, brand trust and brand loyalty in the context of Coca Cola. The most striking result of the analyses conducted between and among these variables indicates that the utilitarian consumer behavior is the most important determinant on brand equity (H<sub>4</sub>). The brand equity dimension that has the highest effect on the utilitarian consumer behavior is, on the other

hand, the perceived quality ( $H_1$ ). The perceived quality is also found to be the most important determinant of the brand equity among other dimensions. ( $H_3$ ) In the country comparisons as for the perceived quality, Turkey respondents significantly differ from the UK ones with a higher mean ( $H_{10}$ ). What can basically be inferred from these results is that those consumers who perceive higher quality for Coca Cola who are, in turn, the Turkey ones, ascribe higher brand equity to it. From a managerial point of view, this emphasis on the perceived quality for both the equity and the utilitarian consumption is that Coca Cola can give a special consideration in positioning itself in the market as well as in managing its strategic goals. The difference between the countries associated with this point also proves the need for the brand to adopt a “customized” perspective besides a localized one.

The hedonistic consumer behavior which is found to have less effect in determining brand equity is, on the other hand, affected by the brand association the highest ( $H_2$ ). Brand association which is not proven to affect utilitarian consumption has, in turn, the highest effect among the UK respondents ( $H_9$ ). The most important result which can be inferred from this is that if the strategic goal of the brand is formulated as to emphasize the hedonistic character of any product item, it can aim to increase brand association; if the product item is more related to the utilitarian consumption, it can address to the perceived quality. Furthermore, the fact that no difference is found between the two countries for the utilitarian and hedonistic consumption ( $H_5 - H_6$ ) stratifies this implication. In other words, the sample groups do not significantly differ in their consumption types, proving that generic strategies can be developed and applied integrally, at least for Turkey and UK markets. Lastly, from  $H_8 - H_{12}$  which are fully supported, we see that the UK over-indexes for awareness, association and trust, whilst Turkey scores higher for quality and loyalty in the context of Coca Cola. A very clear management implication is although consumers may behave in similar ways (utilitarian and hedonistic), they reach these ends via different paths. Efficient management of these paths could lead to stronger equity. This is consistent with the literature exploring how different shopper groups perceive the same item in contrasting ways, but this study begins to take that understanding across national borders into a global sphere. The application of the survey on only one brand and two countries as well as small sample groups comprise the biggest limitations of this study. Expanding the scope of the study to include more brands of varying scale and across different countries or regions would further develop these understandings, and assist in generalizing the findings.

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