THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

BAHÇEŞEHİR UNIVERSITY

A STUDY OF CORPORATE IMAGE FOR AUTOMOTIVE COMPANIES IN TURKEY INCLUDING MERCEDES-BENZ, BMW, AUDI AND VOLVO

DETECTING CORPORATE BRAND ASSOCIATIONS

Master's Thesis

EZGİ YILDIZ

İSTANBUL, 2010

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MASTER OF ARTS IN MARKETING

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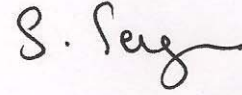## MASTER OF ARTS IN MARKETING

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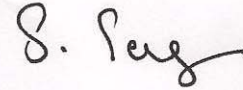Name/Last Name of the Student: Ezgi Yıldız

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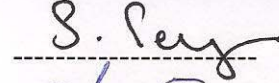
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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF CORPORATE IMAGE FOR AUTOMOTIVE COMPANIES IN
TURKEY INCLUDING MERCEDES-BENZ, BMW, AUDI AND VOLVO

Yıldız, Ezgi

Marketing Graduate Program

Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Elif Karaosmanoğlu

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The aim of this study is to find out the gaps between the perceived image of a company by its existing & potential customers and perceived corporate image by its own sales personnel working at dealer offices. Accordingly, a sample case company is selected and its current corporate image perception is examined with the comparison of its competitors. Mercedes-Benz is taken as a reference company whereas BMW, Audi and Volvo which operate in Turkish market are taken as the main competitors of Mercedes-Benz in automobile segment.

The proven importance of corporate image in prior studies of the literature and the limited number of corporate image studies about automobile sector in Turkey, especially for the mentioned automobile companies, reasoned the selection of this study. The subject of corporate image is gaining more and more importance for the companies as all of them want to increase their sales numbers, market shares, strengthen their positions in the market and guarantee their survival in the long run.

In this study, the importance of corporate brand management is going to be discussed within the light of the relevance of corporate brand. Corporate identity, corporate image and corporate brand relationship is going to be explained. While the strategic advantage of successful identity management is explained, the relevance and the importance as well as the advantages of successful corporate image management are going to be discussed. After mentioning customer based corporate brand equity; corporate brand awareness, corporate brand loyalty, corporate brand's perceived quality, corporate brand identification as well as corporate brand associations are going to be discussed as the parts of corporate brand equity. In order to make clear the environment of the study, some vital and current information is going to be given about the Turkish automobile sector. This information will include the structure and environment of automotive sector in Turkey as well as the history and current market positions of Mercedes-Benz Turk and its main competitors; BMW, Audi and Volvo.

The applied part of the thesis includes two parallel studies. The first one includes the information gathered by questionnaire technique which is applied to the existing&

potential customers of Mercedes-Benz automobile company. This technique is used in order to understand the customers' approach; how they perceive Mercedes-Benz's and its competitor companies BMW, Audi, Volvo's images. This technique is also used to make a comparison between the perceived image understood by the customers and perceived image understood by the sales people working as Mercedes-Benz dealers. Therefore, the second study includes information gathered by questionnaire technique which is an implemented version of the customers' questionnaire and applied to the dealers of Mercedes-Benz in order to understand their approach to the corporate image.

Keywords: Corporate Image, Corporate Identity, Corporate Brand Associations, Corporate Brand Equity, Turkish Automotive Sector

ÖZET

TÜRKİYE'DE FAALİYET GÖSTEREN MERCEDES-BENZ, BMW, AUDI VE VOLVO OTOMOTİV ŞİRKETLERİNİ ICEREN KURUMSAL İMAJ ÇALIŞMASI

Yıldız, Ezgi

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Bu çalışmanın amacı, bir şirketin mevcut ve potansiyel müşterilerinin algıladığı imajı ile bayilerinde çalışan satış elemanlarının gördüğü kurumsal imaj arasındaki farkları ortaya çıkarmaktır. Dolayısıyla, bir örnek olay firması seçilmiş ve mevcut kurumsal imaj algısı diğer rakip firmalar ile de kıyaslanarak incelenmiştir. Referans firma olarak Mercedes-Benz secilmiş ve Türk piyasasında bulunan BMW, Audi ve Volvo üretici firmaları Mercedes-Benz'in ana rakipleri olarak kabul edilmiştir.

Geçmiş literatür çalışmalarında kurumsal imajın kanıtlanmış önemi ve bu tarz kurumsal imaj araştırmalarının Türkiye otomotiv sektörde çok az sayıda yapılmış olması bu konunun seçilmesine neden olmuştur. Kurumsal imaj konusu, tüm şirketler tarafından, gerek satış rakamlarını artırmak, gerek pazar paylarını genişletmek, gerekse pazardaki varlıklarını güçlendirmek ve uzun vadede varolmalarını garantilemek nedenleri ile daha da önem kazanmaya başlamıştır.

Bu çalışmada, kurumsal markalaşmanın ışığında, kurumsal marka yönetiminin önemi tartışılacaktır. Kurumsal kimlik, kurumsal imaj ve kurumsal marka ilişkisi açıklanacaktır. Başarılı kurumsal kimlik yönetiminin stratejik avantajı ile birlikte, başarılı kurumsal imaj yönetiminin avantajları, önemi ve iki kavram arasındaki ilişki incelenecektir. Müşteri bazlı kurumsal marka değeri tanıtıldıktan sonra kurumsal marka bilinci, kurumsal marka bağlılığı, markanın algılanan kalitesi, kurumsal markanın tanımlanması ve kurumsal marka ilişkilendirmeleri de tartışılacaktır. Çalışmanın gerçekliliğini ve kapsamını ortaya koymak üzere, Türk otomobil sektörü hakkında bazı önemli ve güncel bilgiler verilecektir. Bu bilgiler Türkiye'deki otomotiv sektörünün yapısı ve içinde bulunduğu şartları içerdiği kadar, Mercedes-Benz Türk'ün ve başlıca rakipleri olan BMW, Audi ve Volvo şirketlerinin geçmişte ve bugün pazardaki konumlarını da kapsayacaktır.

Tezin uygulama bolumu iki paralel çalışmadan oluşmaktadır. Birinci çalışma, Mercedes-Benz otomobil şirketinin mevcut ve potansiyel müşterilerinden anket tekniği ile toplanan bilgileri içermektedir. Bu teknik müşteri yaklaşımını anlamak, Mercedes-Benz'in ve rakip şirketlerin; BMW, Audi, Volvo'nun; imaj algılanmasını incelemek için kullanılmıştır. Bu teknik ayrıca Mercedes-Benz'in müşterilerinin algıladığı imaj ile

bayide satış pozisyonunda çalışanların algıladıkları imaj arasındaki farkı anlamakta kullanılmıştır. Bu nedenle, ikinci çalışmada müşteri anketinin bayilere uyarlamış versiyonu uygulanmıştır. Bu şekilde çalışanların kurumsal imaj hakkındaki algıları incelenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kurumsa Imaj, Kurumsal Kimlik, Kurumsal Marka İlişkileri, Kurumsal Marka Değeri, Türk Otomotiv Sektörü

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1. INTRODUCTION

We live in a time of immense environmental complexity and change, and consequently corporations have been forced to significantly alter their strategies to better compete and survive. Mergers, acquisitions, and divestitures represent a major dimension of corporate change over the past several decades.

As it is the fact that companies are growing faster and it is getting harder to reach qualified customers, to gain their trust and to increase their loyalty, companies need to improve their researches about understanding their target customers' needs, attitudes and buying behaviors. They must design their offers and their images in a way that they become competitively attractive and preferred by their target customers. And also, a corporation clearly must be concerned about its image and reputation amongst not only its customers but also its other important constituent groups; distributors and retailers, financial institutions and analysts, shareholders, government regulatory agencies, social action organizations, the general publics and employees.

Since 1950s, mainly prior discovery of the effect of harder competition, corporate image studies rapidly became a popular area of interest to companies (Kennedy, 1977). Although many companies commission an occasional image research, only a few of them do it systematically and on a regular basis. Actually, a system of periodically collecting, gathering and analyzing the information which describes how different publicize view key attributes of the company's performance, is a vital and unique tool of understanding customer loyalty level for the companies which want to strengthen their position in the markets they perform in and to survive in the long run in these markets. Many of the studies have revealed that the most successful companies are those that care about understanding what factors really do make a difference in a company's success and cultivate loyalty from the customers as well as the employees. The true mission of the company is to create value for its key constituencies of a business system; its stakeholders, including customers, employees, suppliers,

shareholders, government, investors and etc. The contribution of corporate image management activities to companies' mission achievements is the opportunity of telling themselves to all these constituencies in a proper way.

As a corporate image is the sum of the impressions that stakeholders hold about the company, the ideal corporate image is also created by the company's "brand equity," created by the process of branding. So all the components of customer based corporate brand equity; corporate brand awareness, corporate brand perceived quality, corporate brand loyalty, corporate brand identification as well as corporate brand associations leads the creation of corporate identity. Communication of corporate identity with the stakeholders, including marketing and personal communication leads corporate image.

A strong positive image with the general public would definitely be beneficial to the company. Research suggests that a prominent corporate image and an outstanding reputation are consequential factors in attracting a high quality workforce. Current employees represent the internal constituency that a company must consider when communicating corporate identity. It is widely believed that a positive reputation in the eyes of employees is a prime causal factor of high morale and productivity. Additionally, it should be emphasized that employees play a large role in representing the company to its external stakeholders.

Obviously, each of the various stakeholder groups is likely to have a somewhat different perception of the corporation because each is concerned primarily with a different facet of its operation. Thus, customers are principally interested in the price, quality, and reliability of the company's products and services. Employees are mainly concerned with wages, working conditions, and personnel policies. Logically, then, a company should tailor its communication to each stakeholder group individually to engage the special concerns of that group. In businesses of all sizes, it is vital that managers recognize the importance of creating and maintaining a strong image, and that they also make employees aware of it.

The proven importance of corporate image in prior studies of the literature and the limited number of corporate image studies about automobile sector in Turkey reasoned the selection of this study. As, the automotive industry in Turkey plays an important role in the manufacturing sector of the Turkish economy, good image management for

the leading automotive companies Mercedes-Benz and its competitors BMW, Audi and Volvo is becoming more important as well. And as Mercedes-Benz is taken as the main investigated company, the opinions of its existing & potential customers as well as its dealers about the company's corporate image are going to be analyzed. All the factors mentioned above stresses out the importance of perceived corporate identity by customers as well as by the employees. The gaps between these groups should be minimized as much as possible and even eliminated for a successful corporate image management.

1.1 AIM OF THE STUDY

Considering all the topics discussed above, the main aim of this thesis is to find out the gaps between the perceived image of the automobile company Mercedes-Benz in Turkish automobile market by its existing & potential customers and perceived corporate image by its own sales personnel working at Mercedes-Benz dealer offices. Accordingly, developing valid strategies based on the gap qualities to improve overall company image defines the following objective of the study.

The related objectives are exploring which automobile companies are mostly known by the customers, which of the automobile companies among Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo are examined as the best fit according to the customers' ideal image definition, how identified the potential & existing customers with the mentioned four automobile companies according to their level of agreement, how they would rate the attributes about corporate brand associations comparing the four companies, what their perceived identity and image levels are, what the attributes of ideal image are and how the customers perceive the four automobile companies on the basis of these attributes.

1.2 DESIGN OF THE STUDY

In the first part of the literature review, an evaluation of corporate brand management is going to be discussed including the topics like the importance of corporate brand management, the relevance of corporate brand, the relevance of product brand, the relationship of corporate identity, corporate image and corporate brand, the relevance of

corporate identity, strategic advantage of successful identity management, the relevance and the importance as well as the advantages of successful corporate image management are going to be discussed. After mentioning customer based corporate brand equity; corporate brand awareness, corporate brand loyalty, corporate brand's perceived quality, corporate brand identification as well as corporate brand associations are going to be discussed as the parts of corporate brand equity. Then, formation of the corporate image and corporate image measurement techniques with detailed research methods are going to be discussed in order to make a basement for the research part of the study and to clarify the subject in the minds of people who are concerned with this subject.

In addition, some vital and current information is going to be given about the Turkish automobile sector in order to make clear the environment of the study. This information will include the structure and environment of automotive sector in Turkey as well as the history and current market positions of Mercedes-Benz Turk and its main competitors; BMW, Audi and Volvo.

In the second part of the thesis, the application of the study is going to be given two relevant and parallel studies. Both of the studies are of quantitative nature. The first one is conducted with a sample of existing & potential customers of Mercedes-Benz to highlight their perceptions about Mercedes-Benz and the competitor companies' images and the second one is conducted with the current dealers of Mercedes-Benz operating in different cities in Turkey also to find out their perceived image level about the four automobile companies. The similar questionnaires and questions have been used in order to be able to clarify the gaps easier between the two groups' perceived image concepts.

1.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

In this study, the importance of corporate brand management is going to be discussed within the light of the relevance of corporate image. The relationship of corporate identity, corporate image and corporate brand is going to be explained. While the strategic advantage of successful identity management is explained, the relevance and

the importance as well as the advantages of successful corporate image management are going to be discussed. After mentioning customer based corporate brand equity; corporate brand awareness, corporate brand loyalty, corporate brand's perceived quality, corporate brand identification as well as corporate brand associations are going to be discussed as the parts of corporate brand equity. In order to make clear the environment of the study, some vital and current information is going to be given about the Turkish automobile sector. This information will include the structure and environment of automotive sector in Turkey as well as the history and current market positions of Mercedes-Benz Turk, BMW, Audi and Volvo.

Besides, there is an applied part of the thesis. It includes two parallel studies. The first one includes the information gathered by questionnaire technique which is applied to the existing & potential customers of Mercedes-Benz. The second study includes information gathered by questionnaire technique which is an implemented version of the customers' questionnaire and applied to the dealers of Mercedes-Benz in order to understand their approach to the corporate image.

2. AN EVALUATION OF CORPORATE BRAND MANAGEMENT

According to Balmer (2001); corporate brands represent one of the most fascinating phenomena of the business environment in the twenty-first century. As corporate brands have a utility in several regards; they communicate the brand's values, afford a means of differentiation from their competitors, and they enhance the esteem as well as loyalty.

Corporate brand is often defined as a name, concept, sign, symbol or some other characteristic that sets the product or service apart from competing products and services. In many companies, corporate brands play a key role in guiding and steering the organization's operations. One common denominator for many successful companies is that they have managed to combine a well-positioned corporate brand with an inspiring and uniting vision. The purpose of a vision is to communicate what the corporate brand is about and what it wants to be, but above all what it wants to become (Balmer 2001, pp.39-44).

A corporate brand is a useful tool for explaining to employees what the company is about. A corporate brand often captures the company's values and visions in a simple and easily understandable format. The corporate brand guides the organization and its decision-making among other things by clarifying the company's business idea and its position in the marketplace. Corporate brands do generally have greater longevity than most other types of valuable resources. A successful corporate brand is a sustainable as well as valuable strategic resource because a corporate brand can provide a sustainable competitive advantage to a company if it is characterized by value, rarity, durability, imperfect immutability, and imperfect substitutability as the corporate brand is the face of the organization (Barich & Kotler 1991, pp. 4-12).

2.1 IMPORTANCE OF CORPORATE BRAND MANAGEMENT

The importance and value of corporate brands has been alluded to in the literature for some considerable time. By establishing a corporate brand a company can distinguish and differentiate itself in the minds of all its customers, competitors, dealers, shareholders and even employees. A corporate brand makes the company and its supported values easily identifiable and creates a level of quality and consistency of performance in the minds of its target audiences (Aaker 1991, p. 61).

Because markets are becoming more complex and products and services are quickly imitated and homogenized, maintaining credible product differentiation is increasingly difficult, requiring the positioning of the whole corporation rather than simply its products. Thus, the corporate values and images emerge as key elements of differentiation strategies. Corporate brands offer more chances for strategic or brand alliances, and play an important role in the recruitment and retention of valuable employees (Aaker 1991, p.61).

The role of corporate branding and corporate brand management is primarily to create differentiation and preference in the minds of customers. According to both Kelly (1998) and Sharp (1995), many companies have realized that a strong corporate brand can lead to competitive advantage in the presence of increased competition. In order to improve brand strength, companies need to shape positive customer perceptions. Common values and common ideas represented by the corporate brand can help the coordination process within the company.

Besides, corporate branding strategy can assist companies in management of their supply-chain or distribution channels, directly or indirectly. Balmer and Wilkinson (1991) argue that a strong corporate image is the most effective form of product differentiation.

For corporate brands the focus is on stakeholders. An effective corporate brand often has a latent value in terms of excess capacity that can be applied to other markets. The use of corporate brands in the launch of new products increases the success rate and saves the costs of a new product launch. One of the greatest benefits of an effective

corporate brand management is its effect on non-product market areas, such as its role in the recruitment and retention of valuable employees. Hence, the corporate brand can be of inestimable value to an organization's human resources department. This is because an organization's corporate brand values can serve as a template against which prospective employees can be evaluated. Another reason why corporate brand management so critical is, it is one of the most important factors linking the company with consumers and other stakeholders. Consumers' perceptions of the corporate brand are shaped by various different observations, in all the contacts and encounters that they have with the company, its representatives and messages. Indeed, at best, all operations in the company are guided by the corporate brand management. That is why the building and management of the corporate brand requires such broad-ranging knowledge and expertise (Abratt 1989, pp.63-76).

A corporate brand management involves the conscious decision by senior management to introduce the attributes of the organization's identity in the form of a clearly defined branding proposition. This proposition strengthens organizational efforts to communicate, differentiate, and enhance the brand's key stakeholder groups and networks. A corporate brand proposition requires total corporate commitment to the corporate body from all levels of personnel. The corporate brand management is used as a template for evaluating an organization's activities in line with the corporate brand proposition. Corporate brand management is a part of corporate-level marketing as other different concepts; corporate identity, corporate reputation, corporate communications (Keller 1993, pp.1-29).

Corporate brand management can also be defined as the process of creating and maintaining a favorable reputation of the company and its constituent elements by sending signals to stakeholders using the corporate brand which is based on the identity of the company. The concept of corporate brand management unites the concept of brand management with the concept of corporate identity. Thus, an increasing linkage between corporate identity (corporate-level) and brand management leads to an integrated approach. Corporate brand management originates from a marketing perspective with the aim of attracting customers. The concept of the corporate brand management shapes the communication of values and identity in a strategic and

coherent way, internal and external, through corporate as well as marketing communication (McDonald 1991, pp.31-8).

Corporate brands are means of expressing something symbolically. Consumers have a perception of themselves and they relate their brand choice on the basis of using a particular brand. They interpret brands as symbols and attribute their own meaning to it. The symbolic meaning of a corporate brand is defined by the group of people using the brand and varies according to the exposure to the different social environment. People perceive brands in their very personal ways, attach own meanings to them and build relationships to them. The connection and strength of a customer and corporate brand is based on factors like passion, interdependence, commitment, intimacy, compatibility and self-connection to the corporate brand. Customers build a self-connection to different corporate brands, build a specific brand meaning to them and use this to develop their own self-identity. To leverage the ideal self-concept, customers choose corporate brands which they believe maintain or support the desired self-image. They use corporate brand logos for their self-expression and self-representation. So the corporate brand itself becomes a direct part of the action of an external stakeholder/customer or internal stakeholder/employee (de Chernatony 2001, pp.32-44).

2.2 CORPORATE VERSUS PRODUCT BRAND

Corporate branding enables companies to use the vision and culture of the whole organization explicitly as part of its uniqueness. Corporate brands can increase the company's visibility, recognition and reputation to a greater extent than can product brands (Aaker 1991, p.61).

Product branding yields different advantages for companies. McDonald et al. (2001) argue that, a company using a product-brand strategy rather than corporate branding will experience less damage to its corporate image if one of its individual brands fails.

Corporate branding builds on the tradition of product branding, seeking to create differentiation and preference. However, corporate branding is conducted at the level of the company instead of the product or service, and furthermore extends its reach beyond customers to stakeholders (McDonald et al. 2001, pp.335-52).

A corporate brand can be regarded as the sum of the corporation's marketing efforts to present a controlled representation of the corporation's value system and identity. It differs from a product brand in its strategic focus and its implementation, which combines corporate strategy, corporate communications and corporate culture (Knox 2004, pp.105-15).

Corporate branding differs from product branding in several other ways. First, the focus shifts from the product to the corporation. Corporate branding therefore exposes the corporation and its members to a larger extent. Second, managerial responsibility for product brands usually rest in the middle-management marketing function, while corporate brands usually involve strategic considerations at a higher executive level. Third, product brands typically target specific consumers, while corporate brands usually relate all of the company's stakeholders and products and services to each other. Fourth, product-brand management is normally conducted within the marketing department, while corporate branding requires support across the corporation and cross-functional coordination. Fifth, product brands are relatively short-term, compared to corporate brands, with their heritage and strategic vision. Therefore, corporate branding is more strategic than the normally functional product branding (Knox 2004, pp.105-15).

Corporate branding acquires a certain degree of tangibility through the messages the company delivers and the relationship it establishes with various stakeholders. Second, corporate branding is more complex than product branding because of the variety of messages and relationships, and the potentially subsequent confusion. Third, it tends to demand greater attention to issues of ethical or social responsibility. The focus of a product brand is on customers while that of a corporate brand is on stakeholders. Therefore, corporate brands can provide a sense of trust and quality for the company in extending a product line or diversifying into other product lines (Knox 2004, pp.105-15).

Corporate branding typically uses the total corporate communication mix to engage target audiences who perceive and judge the company and its products or services. Hatch and Schultz (2003) conclude that companies successful in establishing a corporate brand are more competitive than companies relying only on product branding in the fragmented markets created by globalization. On the other hand, corporate branding is also more complex than product branding in that it requires simultaneous

and effective interaction of strategic vision, organizational culture, and images. De Chernatony (1999) holds that corporate brand facilitates customers' desire to look deeper into the brand and evaluate the nature of the company.

Customers normally derive their perception of a product brand from its advertising, distribution, and communicated image. On the other hand, corporate brand images typically result from customers' interaction with the company's employees, physical presence and overall marketing efforts. A degree of intangibility and complexity is considered to be a central characteristic of a corporate brand. Therefore, corporate branding can provide the strategic focus for the brand's positioning and its consistency across the company's marketing and communication activity (Knox 2004, pp.105-15).

Griffin (2002) also argues that corporate branding strategy aims to identify and maximize the actual and perceived "fit" between the company and its environment, in response to an uncertain environment and its perception of its internal capability to manage the uncertainty. There is a need not only to coordinate internal decision-making process effectively, but also to meet the needs of various external stakeholders at the same time.

There is always scope for tension between proponents of corporate and product branding. Companies may gear up for short-term, tactical choices that maximize revenues in a period of economic downturn, and many might build product brands at the expanse of the corporate brand. However, Booker (2002) predicts that globalization, interconnected markets, affiliations and associations will provide an impetus for the building of strong corporate brands in the coming years. The increased exposure of worldwide consumers to global media has increased their desire for quality branded goods and services. Corporate brands are capable of increasing the company's visibility and recognition to a greater extent than product brands can.

According to Aaker, (1996), a key way in which organizational associations work, particularly in the context of the corporate brand, is by providing credibility to brands being endorsed. The corporate brand is often used to endorse a product brand. The natural role of the product brand is to generate brand-as-product associations, whereas the corporate brand's natural role is to provide organizational associations that add credibility to the product claims.

As shown in the Figure 2.1 below, Mercedes-Benz is a brand of the products of Daimler AG, in Germany. But in deed, Mercedes-Benz is a brand itself, even a corporate brand for some of the locations around the world, like Mercedes-Benz Turk A.S. The relative roles of corporate and product brands are differ in accordance to the type of associations and primary function associations.

	CORPORATE BRAND	PRODUCT BRAND
Brand Example:	Daimler	Mercedes-Benz
Type of Association:	Organizational	Functional benefits
Association Example:	Financial Performance	High Quality
Primary Function of Associations:	Provide credibility	Provide value

Figure 2.1: The Relative Roles of Corporate and Product Brands

Source: Illustrated on the basis of Aaker, D.A. (1996), "*Building Strong Brands*", New York, p.133

Figure 2.1 describes the relative role of corporate brand (Daimler) which has an organizational type of association, with its financial performance and indicates that Daimler as a corporate brand provides credibility to its customers which relates its primary function of association. On the other hand, Mercedes-Benz as product brand has functional benefits as association type. Since, the product brand; Mercedes-Benz had high quality, it provides value proportion to its customers as primary function of the association.

In comparison, Balmer (2001) suggests that corporate brands differ from product brands in higher strategic focus, internal as well as external targets, and incorporation of corporate strategy. Moreover, he argues that corporate brands have three general advantages, they are differentiated, they can be communicated and they are powerful sources of brand equity.

2.2.1 The Relevance of Corporate Brand

According to Balmer (1995) and Mitchell (1997), in an era when the emphasis is moving from product branding to corporate branding, there is a need to better appreciate the management approach for corporate branding.

Corporate brand focuses on attributes of the organization rather than those of the products. Such organizational attributes as innovation, a drive for quality, a concern for the environment are created by the people, culture, values, and programs of the company. Corporate brands provide a basis for differentiation, a value proposition, and a customer relationship (Balmer 1995, pp.39-44).

A corporate brand that is applied to many products also provides economies of scale and scope in creating visibility and awareness, since the cost involved is spread over multiple products; in Mercedes as an example, cars, light commercial vehicles, buses, trucks. Further, the name is exposed wherever these products are advertised or sold. Multiple products therefore translate directly into more exposure for the brand name (Aaker 1991, p.61).

Corporate branding is defined by core values shared by different products with a common and overall brand identity, which play a decisive part in coordinating the brand-building process. The role of the corporate brand is to give credibility in cases such as communications with government, the financial sector, the labor market, and society in general (Aaker 1991, p.61).

2.2.2 The Relevance of Product Brand

According to Aaker (1991), a product brand is flexible, allowing companies to position and appeal to different segments in different markets. A challenge with product branding is that targeting different small segments through different brands can result in high marketing costs and lower brand profitability.

The goal of linking a brand with a product is not to gain recall of a product when the brand is mentioned. It is also having people respond that, mentioned product is needed. Attributes directly related to the purchase or use of a product can provide functional benefits and sometimes emotional benefits for customers. A product brand can create a value proposition by offering something extra like features or by offering something better (Aaker 1996, p.133).

The development of product branding has been built around the core role maintaining differentiation in a particular market. Product-brand management is normally conducted within the marketing department. The focus of a product brand is on customers.

Customers normally derive their perception of a product brand from its advertising, distribution, and communicated image (Aaker 1996, p.133).

In product branding, the company supports many different product brands with each having its own name and style of expression while the company itself remains invisible to consumers. Product branding is achieved through a combination of factors, including the product name and logo, use of color, text, graphics, and sound, the style of various other design elements, marketing, and most importantly, the attributes of the product experience itself. Successful product branding requires skillful crafting of a product image, and is not achieved simply by plastering a product logo on every surface and using the product's color scheme at every opportunity. Rather, meaningful and high-quality branding that enhances users' experience would be much more successful (Beverland 2001, pp.383-99).

2.3 CORPORATE IDENTITY CORPORATE IMAGE AND CORPORATE BRAND RELATIONSHIP

There is a strong and direct relationship between corporate image, corporate identity and corporate brand. According to Balmer, J.M.T. (2001), the focus on the identity traits of the corporation means that corporate identity is characterized by their complexity and heterogeneous and an identity based view of corporate brands.
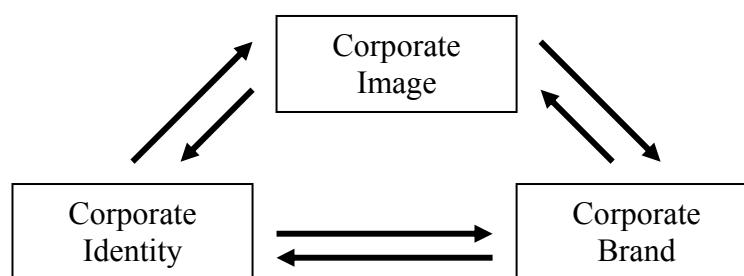
Figure 2.2: The Relationship of Corporate Image, Corporate Brand and Corporate Identity

Source: Balmer, J.M.T. (2001), *"Corporate identity, corporate branding and corporate marketing - seeing through the fog",* **European Journal of Marketing, V.35, pp. 248-291**

As marketing communications are also interpreted these concepts as an attempt by the organization to project its 'ideal self-image' to both internal and external people, corporate image, identity and brand should be seen as closely interrelated. Corporate identity and image are interrelated, not only because impressions and perceptions among various publics often build on communication constructed by organizations (identity), but also because a "corporate image", in a certain sense and a construct of the organization itself based on its own reading of "external" impressions. Corporate brand identity and brand image is the set of benefits with the expectations and experiences of the organization so that sequentially all the sides of the two concepts are matched together (Balmer 2001, pp.248-291).

For many organizations, corporate identity creation leads identification within the corporation and that a corporate image begin to develop. In addition, corporate identity provides the central platform upon which corporate communications policies are developed, corporate reputations are built and corporate images and stakeholder associations with the corporation are formed (Aaker 1991, p.61).

While corporate identity refers broadly to what people perceive, feel and think about their organizations, corporate image is defined as the way organization members believe others see their organization. Similarly, when corporate identity is expressed, the corporate brand occurs symbolically to present an image that will be interpreted by others. The relationships between corporate image, identity and brand form circular processes involving mutual interdependence. Corporate brand is a self-reflexive product of the dynamic processes of organizational identity and provides the symbolic material from which corporate image is constructed and with which it is communicated. On the other hand, a negative thought on corporate image also affect corporate identity in a negative way. Corporate image involves externally produced meaning-making about the organization but has also an influence on internal processes of identity formation. As organizational members are also members of external groups (e.g. consumers of the organization's goods or services), it is likely that image and identity are compared and these comparisons communicated within the internal symbolic context of the organization (Aaker 1996, p.133).
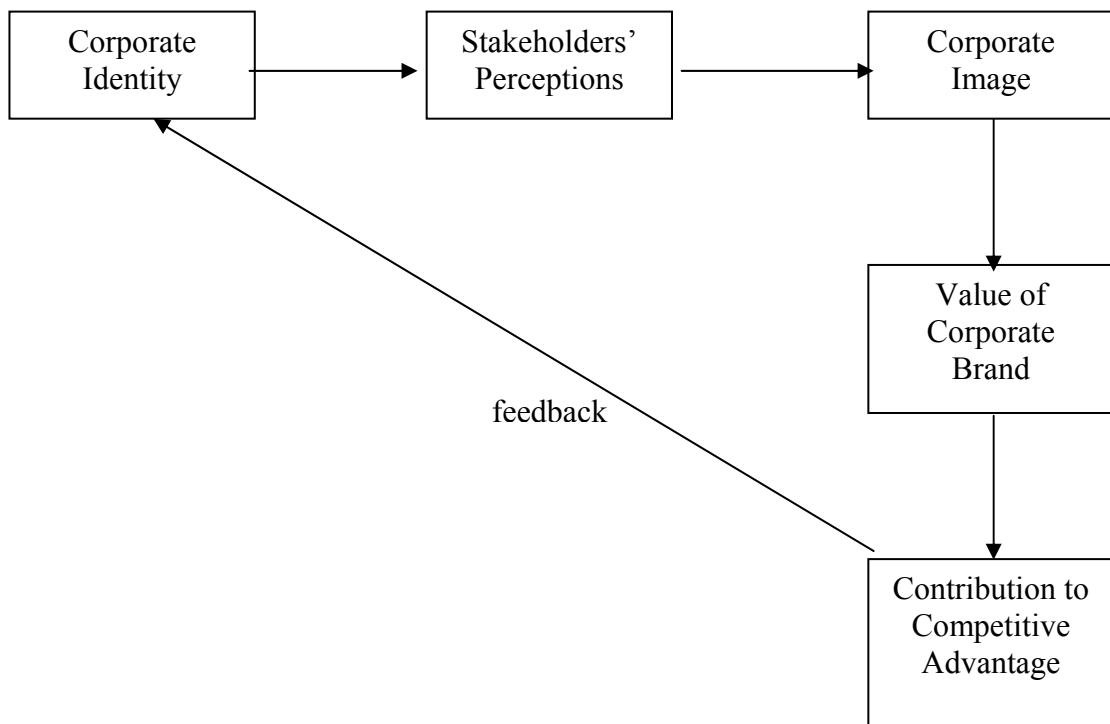
Figure 2.3: The Relationship of Corporate Identity, Corporate Image and Corporate Brand while Creating Competitive Advantage

Source: Aaker, D.A. (1996), *"Building Strong Brands",* New York, p.133

Corporate identity involves corporate values& purposes, corporate strategies, organizational cultures as well as organizational structure. Through the communication of stakeholders (employees, customers, distributors & retailers, suppliers, joint- venture partners, financial institutions and analysts, shareholders, government & regulatory agencies, social action organizations and general public) corporate image is created. (Olin 1978, p.4) Corporate image refers to immediate mental picture that individuals or individual stakeholder groups have of an organization. Corporate image creates the value of the corporate brand which has greater longevity than most other types of valuable resources. Thus, this value leads to the competitive advantage of the company which is the primary motivation set within the organization. Competitive advantage refers the reputation of the company in the eyes of individuals and stakeholder groups which would influence the willingness to provide support for the company (Balmer 1997, pp.169-284).

2.3.1 The relevance of Corporate Identity

According to Abratt (1989), corporate identity is a set of symbolic representations including graphic designs and, sometimes, organizational behavior, therefore it becomes an assembly of cues by which an audience can recognize the company and distinguish it from others and which can be used to represent or symbolize the company. The notion of corporate identity is generally seen as belonging to the sender side of the communication process. Identity means the sum of all the ways a company chooses to identify itself to all its publics; its communities, customers, employees, dealers, the press members, present and potential stockholders, security analysts…etc. Thus, corporate identity is what members believe to be the central, enduring and distinctive character of their organization.

There are a number of different definitions in the literature. Balmer and Stotvig (1997) define corporate identity as the strategically planned and operationally applied internal and external self-presentation and behavior of a company. Albert and Whetten (1985) point out corporate identity is comprised of the visual cues that the public use to recognize a company and differentiate it from its competitors. Bromley (2001) debates that corporate identity is the set of attributes that helps in distinguishing one company from another. Others believe that the corporate identity becomes particularly significant in differentiating similar companies with similar offerings (Albert and Whetten 1985, pp.263-95) defines corporate identity as being the way in which the organization presents itself to its stakeholders. However, Markwick and Fill (1997), see the corporate identity as "representing how the company would like to be perceived, introducing itself to different stakeholders, and distinguishing itself from other organizations."

Aaker D.A. (1991) defined corporate identity as the sum of the corporate identities expressed as a product, organization, person, and symbol. Kapferer (1992) presented corporate identity as a six-sided prism with different faces as physique, personality, culture, relationship, reflection, and self-image. While corporate image focuses on consumers' perceptions of brand differentiation, corporate identity is more concerned with how managers and employees make the organization unique. Corporate identity is a unique set of the associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain.

These associations represent what the brand stands for and simply a promise to customers from the organization members.

According to Van Riel (1992), a strong corporate identity is effective in the following ways:

i. **_Raise motivation among employees:_**
A strong corporate identity enables employees to identify their company. Their increased commitment to the company affects their behavior as well as their motivation which has also an external impact. This leads better use of the company's human resources.

ii. **_Inspire confidence among the company's external target groups:_**
A powerful corporate identity leads the various external target groups to develop a clear picture of the company.

iii. **_Acknowledge the vital role of customers:_**
Most of the companies see their customers as their most important target group, as they continuously justify the existence of the company. Well-defined corporate identity establishes the basis of continuing relationship, thus securing the future of the company.

iv. **_Acknowledge the vital role of financial target groups:_**
Suppliers are usually perceived as a company's second most important target group. Thus, they must have confidence in the company, as they usually take the highest risks in supplying considerable sums of money.

According to Balmer, J.M.T. (1998), corporate identity also helps to establish a relationship between the company and the customer by generating a value proposition involving functional, emotional or self-expressive benefits.

The corporate identity is the central, timeless essence of the organization-is most likely to remain constant to new markets. It also includes elements that make the company both unique and valuable. Thus the identity usually contributes to the value proposition and to the organization's basis for credibility. Sometimes a slogan can capture at least part of the corporate identity: "Mercedes-Benz; unlike any other" or "Mercedes-Benz; the future of the automobile" or "Engineered to move the human spirit". The Mercedes

corporate identity had a quality component (a world-class car company) and a relationship component (treating customers with respect) provided an umbrella under which these two core elements of the corporate identity could be sheltered (Balmer 1998, pp.963-996).

Balmer (1998) asserts that corporate identity, as an important corporate asset, represents the company's ethics, goals and values, to differentiate the company from its competitors. Multinational companies typically use corporate identities to project their quality, prestige and style to stakeholders.

According to Aaker (1996) corporate identity involves corporate trust, product user profile, product performance, product quality, customer relationship, corporate scope, corporate slogan, corporate personality, corporate heritage, committed employees as well as loyal users.

Mercedes-Benz's Corporate Identity

i.	Corporate Trust: Prestige and quality
ii.	Product User Profile: Top businessman, plus all those governors who give importance to the security
iii.	Product Performance: Performance cars based on technological superiority
iv.	Product Quality: A world-class car producer, unlike any other
v.	Customer Relationship: Treat customers with respect
vi.	Corporate Scope: German company
vii.	Corporate Slogan: "Mercedes-Benz - The Future of the Automobile"
viii.	Corporate Personality: Thoughtful, reliable, safe, presents high prestige; exiting, spirited, cool, innovative; the pursuit of excellence
ix.	Corporate Heritage: Developed in Germany
x.	Corporate employees: Committed Employees
xi.	Customers: Loyal users

Figure 2.4: An Example of "Corporate Identity"

Source: Examined on the Basis of Aaker, D.A. (1996), *"Building Strong Brands",* New York, p.133

2.3.2 Strategic Advantage of Successful Corporate Identity Management

Successful corporate identity management establish a favorable reputation with an organization's stakeholders which it is hoped to be translated by such stakeholders into a propensity to buy that organization's products and services, to work for or to invest in the organization. A favorable corporate reputation gives an organization a competitive advantage (Knox 2004, pp.105-115).

The literature on corporate identity sees corporate identity management as taking into account an organization's historical roots its personality, its corporate strategy and the three parts of the corporate identity mix; behavior of organizational members, communication and symbolism in order to acquire a favorable corporate reputation which results in improved organizational performance (Knox 2004, pp.105-115).

In order to measure corporate identity, different quantitative or qualitative methods can be used. Qualitative methods of data collection such as semi-structured interviews, observation and an examination of documentary evidence are usually preferred (Abratt 1989, p.63-76).

Corporate identity has a particular role to play in strategic differentiation. Through identity, managers have a way to understand distinctive competencies that can influence the strategy of the company. Managing identity for strategic advantage is a matter of identifying, expressing, and then developing unique capabilities of a corporation. Company is capable of making to key constituencies, including customers, employees, suppliers, dealers, distributors, and long-term investors (Knox 2004, pp.105-115).

Ackerman (1988) states that after conducting a value analysis including an evaluation of company history, reports, market research and etc., formulating a positioning strategy by determining the company's unique capabilities in a mission plays important role. Then the companies should develop a corporate identification system in order to accomplish strategic objectives which address the corporate name, symbol and logo of the company. Then after devising an audience management program, the companies should implement and monitor the identity management on the basis of ongoing communications programs to build a competitive position for the company.

According to Ackermann (1988), there are five basic steps in managing identity;

1- Conducting a value analysis:
involves in-depth interviews within and outside of the organization. Also includes an evaluation of company history, reports, market research and marketing materials.

↓

2- Formulating a positioning strategy:
describes the company's unique capabilities in a mission and a corporate positioning statement directed at external audiences.

↓

3- Developing a corporate identification system:
aims to accomplish strategic objectives which address the corporate name, symbol and logo of the company.

↓

4- Devising an audience management program:
manages stakeholders both inside and outside the company to strengthen relationship program with key audiences such as customers, dealers, suppliers, and industry opinion leaders.

↓

5- Implementing and monitoring the identity management:
the implementation plan should establish ongoing communications programs in a time frame. Bringing identity into the strategic management step provides companies to build a competitive position for the company.

Figure 2.5: The Five Basic Steps in Managing Identity

Source: Ackerman, L.D. (1988), *"Identity Strategies That Make a Difference"*, **The Journal of Business Strategy, May/ June**

2.3.3 The Importance of Corporate Image

There are different groups describing corporate image in different ways. Three main groups in the literature can be named as cosial critics, writers with analytic orientation, and utilitarian authors.

The first groups as cosial critics include, Boorstin (1961), Alvesson (1990), and Morgan (1986) as an example. These authors try to form the definitions and theories in relation to the concept of image. The second group contains writers with an analytic orientation, such as Poiesz (1988), Verhallen (1988), Pruyn (1990), Beijk and van Raaij (1989), Wierenga and van Raaij (1987), and Reynolds and Gutman (1984). Their main interest is the meaning of the term and the methods of measurement derived from this term. The third group is represented in the academic world by Kennedy (1977), van Raaij (1986), Dowlign (1986), and Barich and Kotler (1991), who are concerned with the image formation process.

Within the light of these studies, the basic definition of corporate image and its utility for the companies can be derived. According to Kotler (1991), the term "image" is used to represent the sum of beliefs, attitudes, and impressions that a person or group has of an object. This object can be a company, product, brand, place as well as a person.

According to the Kotler's definition above, images about various objects will vary from person to person simply because a person's believes, ideas, feelings, and impressions result from their different backgrounds and differ according to their life experiences. So, it is possible to say that a company does not have an image; people hold images of the company. This leads the idea that corporate image is the way how the customers, employees and investors perceive the company. Therefore companies need to identify their image strengths and weaknesses and take an action to improve their images accordingly (Barich & Kotler 1991, pp.4-12).

According to Kennedy (1997), corporate image is more conceptualized as the total impression that an organization makes on its various audiences. In other words, it is the reception of an organization in its surroundings. Corporate image is most commonly related to the receiver side of the communication process. Besides, corporate image is

the perception of the company by its communities, customers, employees, dealers, the press members, stockholders…etc. It refers to the reception of the communication efforts by the external world or the organization's external surroundings. Corporate image is the way the organizational members believe that others see their organization.

What does a corporation's image have to do with the long-run survival of a company? Many of the organizations feel that a good image has an impact on the people's behavior. Companies promote their images in order to provide an objective for advertising, to inform the media, to create an identity for employees, to justify profit and the company's role, to influence financial institutions and investors, to stimulate sales, to promote favorable relations with the community, government, special interest groups, and other opinion leaders as well as to create a competitive positioning strategy...etc. In order to track image of the corporation, companies must coordinate the entire image elements described above (Barich & Kotler 1991, pp.4-12).

Corporate image also refers to an image which is an impression created or stimulated by a sign or a set of signs. Thus, while describing a corporate image, referring to a notion of a collective or partly shared value and generating signs that has come to represent the organization in the minds of its various audiences, are required (Barich & Kotler 1991, pp.4-12).

In recent years, the importance of corporate image has been recognized by increasing numbers of the companies. Companies consider that the transmission of a positive image is an essential precondition for establishing a strong relationship with their target groups (Van Riel 2005, pp.1-19).

The corporate image basically describes the way of thinking by a consumer about the company and the feelings the organization arouses when the consumer thinks about it. These are the fundamental characteristics on the basis of which the company can develop a competitive advantage for itself. Understanding the corporate image is therefore of a major concern for a long run management of the organization's competitive position (Van Riel 2005, pp.1-19).

Poeisz (1988) believes that without the help of images, consumers have difficulty in deciding on which products to buy. They are losing their ability to act rationally day by day as they are not familiar with all the alternatives in the market. Also consumers are not aware of all the features of a particular product so that hey are not able to judge all those features in the correct way. Furthermore, this inability to act rationally leads consumers to seek other grounds to make their decisions. All these, increase the importance of the corporate image.

The importance of a favorable image can be summarized as following statements:

i. A sound corporate image is an incentive for the sale of products and services. It helps the company recruit the right employees, it is important to the financial world and to investors and it generates faith among internal and external target groups (Hatch & Schulz 2003, pp. 41-64).

ii. A good image helps a company attract the people necessary for its success: analysts, investors, customers, partners, and employees. Identity management can secure that good image (Van Riel 2005, pp.1-19).

iii. A positive corporate image is a condition for continuity and strategic success. It is no longer solely the field of attention of marketing, but rather a strategic instrument of top management (Van Riel 2005, pp.1-19).

iv. Images are particularly helpful when information on the basis of which people have to make decisions is complex, conflicting and/or incomplete, when information is either insufficient o too wide-ranging to be able to judge (Poiesz, 1988).

v. Image is a representation in the minds. It affects attitudes, which in turn affect behavior. No company can afford to ignore image. The impression it creates consciously or unconsciously, whether it wishes to or not- affects people who do business with it (Bernstein, 1986).

2.3.4 Managing Corporate Image

With increasing competition, companies need to improve their understanding of customers' needs, attitudes, and buying behaviors. With these understandings it is even getting more critical to be able to have a good management of corporate image (Bernstein, 1986).

According to Abratt (1989), the formal articulation of a corporate philosophy, which is highly specific to the company, is believed to form the cornerstone of the corporate image management process. Such an experience provides management an opportunity to explore the corporate personality and to develop a corporate philosophy, which embodies the core values and assumptions of the company.

The key component of the corporate image management process involves the activities designed to effect the strategic management of the business. Strategic management consists of two tasks; the task of formulating a strategic plan; and the task of implementing and executing the strategic plan (Abratt 1989, pp.63-76).

2.3.5 The Advantages of Strong Corporate Image

Corporate image is not only a PR tool when the strategic and critical work for creating and promoting such an image is considered. Corporate image creation task is complex, it is expensive, and also can not be handled easily. The question is "What can corporate image promotion achieve that no other promotional tool can?" (Kennedy 1977, p.11).

According to Kennedy (1977), following fourteen reasons emerge from the literature as underlying objectives and advantages of corporate image;

1) <u>For General Promotion Value:</u> The authors believe in image promotion just as another public relations tool. The purpose of image promotion could also be achieved by other means (Kennedy 1977, p.11).

   The process of creation of a brand image is intimately associated with promotional activities, as promotion value will often be a significant element of the process whereby a brand image is created in the mind of the customers (Lewis 2001, pp.17-18).

2) <u>Encouraging Favorable Behavior towards the Company:</u> The Corporate image is considered as a mean of creating the positioning of the organization in the individuals' minds. If the individual holds favorable attitudes towards the organization he/she would consider making some contracts with the company rather than its competitors; but if he/ she does not feel positively towards the company, then he/she would rather consider the competitors as a contract partner (Kennedy 1977, p.11).

An individual's attitudes towards the company direct and positively affect the perceptions he possesses of its products preferred and seen with respect to the different quality dimensions. If the company has a good corporate image in its customers' mind, then these customers would have favorable behavior towards the company.

3) <u>Affecting the Sales of Products:</u> It is clear that a greater sales volume and increased profitability can be achieved through sales promotion, but image promotion can have the same direct results, if the campaign has successful results of the actual purchasing behavior (Kennedy 1977, p.11).

A product that is perceived with a good image has a greater probability of being selected. That is why marketers try to create images for their brands so that they are positioned to fit a distinct market segment occupied by no other brand. They strive to create a brand image that would keep a strong position in the target consumers' mind (Aaker 1991, pp. 23-36).

Corporate brand image is the key to answer the question of how the consumer chooses among alternative brands after information-gathering processes of buyer behavior. Alternative evaluation is how the consumer uses this information to evaluate the options and arrive at a brand choice. The perspective focusing on psychological attributes of a product of consumer behavior states that consumers often choose products, services and activities over others because they associate these attributes with a certain life-style, a self-image or an ascribed status. For that reason, marketing academicians and researchers see the symbolic image of products or services as more important in their success than their physical characteristics and

attributes (Aaker 1991, p.61).Therefore, it is possible to mention the direct effect of image attributes on sales figures and brand image is recognized in all elements of the marketing mix, mainly in promotional strategies (Kotler 1991).

4) <u>Giving Products an Additional Advantage:</u> Customers buy the reputation behind the product, not simply because of the physical or functional properties, but also because consumers are considered to be more favorably disposed towards these products or brands. It is actually considered as the best to promote the company behind the product offerings as the product is not durable in the same way like a successful company (Kennedy 1977, p.11).

According to the gestalt theory, consumers tend to perceive the products from an overall perspective, associating with the brand name all the attributes and satisfactions experienced by the purchase and use of the product (Murphy 1990, pp.23-9) (Ambler 1996, pp.24-46). Thus, the consumers' evaluation of the different brand attributes could be conditioned by their overall impression regarding the brand evaluated. However, consumers are usually able to evaluate each of the product and brand name attributes (Keller 1993, pp.1-29).

It has long been recognized in the literature that the consumer's evaluations of the brand image can be characterized by different dimensions. This classification of the utility provided by the brand has been revealed in research areas such as those related to branding, the needs and motivations for consumption behavior, the individual's attitudes and social psychology (de Chernatony and McDonald 1996, pp.40-5).

5) <u>Attracting Shareholders:</u> When considering the general financial environment, a company can achieve two main objectives; maintaining the confidence of those who have already committed their monetary support; and creating confidence in the company among the financial institutions, which will lead to additional support being raised more easily (Kennedy 1977, p.11).

Corporate image is built on the perceptions of the company's stakeholders, that is, consumers, employees and shareholders (Hatch *et al.* 2003, pp.41-64). Each of

these groups will associate different aspects to the company, thus developing its own image that will affect their behavior towards the organization. Some authors conclude that corporate image has an important and direct influence on shareholders- investors.

6) <u>Attracting Employees:</u> Employees need to be convinced that their company offers the type of environment in which they wish to work. In addition, the company needs to ensure that it is able to attract the type of human resources it most needs (Kennedy 1977, p.11).

Attracting customers is not the only way in which brand images can benefit corporations. In a competitive job market, companies need to devise strategies for recruiting the best potential employees. With excellent staff, companies can create excellence easier in its area. The main idea is not only attracting customers, but also appealing the potential employees. A good brand image provides job applicants with a realistic image of what it would be like to work in a particular company. It encompasses all the factors that make the company a good place to work. These include: bright and cheerful office space, an ethos of collaboration and team work, flexible working hours, an excellent canteen…etc. While these factors can't replace salary differentials, they can influence employment choices. Furthermore, in doing these things, an employer demonstrates a strong corporate image, people-centered philosophy that shows employees they are valued individuals, not just fodder to keep the corporate beast satisfied. A good brand image has another important function; retention. Attracting good employees is one thing but holding on to them is even more important. The corporate image reflects the reality in a good way to keep key staff. If people are happy in their work, feel valued, see the possibility of carving out a real career pathway and are adequately remunerated, why they should wish to change jobs (Knox 2004, pp.105-115).

7) <u>Aiding Good Relations with the Community:</u> The running of the company would be considerably easier if the community where the company performs in is supporting it. Promotion of the corporate image can keep the local people informed about what is happening within the company and also can ensure better working relationship (Kennedy 1977, p.11).

According to an established and long-held conclusion, brand image has considerable influence on consumer behavior. Thus, corporate image is a predictor of the decision to pursue contact with organizations (Gatewood *et al.,* 1993) by attracting its internal and external publics, both present and potential. Similarly, the influence of image on increases in sales and on the strengthening of brand loyalty has been shown. Therefore, it is logical that brand image is of great importance both in the context of companies and in the non-profit field (Sirgy and Samli 1985, pp.195-206).

8) <u>Aiding Good Relations with Government:</u> Through image promotion the company can gain better self-confidence and as a result of this, it can expect that it would be consulted before anything is finalized by legislation about a new subject like a new plant building or import/export opportunities and etc. (Kennedy 1977, p.11).

A strong corporate brand with a clearly defined vision and values, also increase its importance in the minds of its stakeholders. These stakeholders include employees, suppliers, shareholders, dealers as well as government. Core values and attitudes as defined by company founders; value based relationships with multiple stakeholder groups, and the ability of corporate brands to influence stakeholder behaviors. The corporate brand provides a source of competitive advantage by bringing together the company vision, culture and values, with organizational systems and networks, to form a unique organizational value proposition for stakeholders (Hatch and Schultz 2003, pp.41-64).

9) <u>Influencing Attitudes:</u> By changing attitudes, actions would also be changed. Hence, if the individual can be persuaded to adopt a favorable attitude towards the company, it is reasonable to assume that this individual would also behave in a favorable manner towards the company (Kennedy 1977, p.11)

In today's market, having a well thought through brand strategy is a key contribution to corporate success. Brands enable consumers to efficiently encode their functional and emotional values in their minds. The resulting images enable consumers to recognize the points of difference between competing brands and affect their attitudes toward those brands. These associations refer to any aspect that

link the brand with the consumer's memory (Aaker 1996, p.133). Even though relating the measurement of brand image directly to the product appears a reasonable way to determine what is in the consumer's mind and what would be consumers attitudes toward brands and to the corporate, it should be realized that often products are marketed under an umbrella brand strategy, which could lead to a more general brand image as well as corporate brand image (Aaker 1996, p.133).

10) <u>Creating Familiarity to Create Favorability:</u> The main target of corporate image promotion is to affect the behavior. A high score of familiarity with a company, the higher the profitability. Accordingly, the main concern is to bring the company to the public's notice (Kennedy 1977, p.11).

According to Lewis (2001) objectives and advantages of corporate image is increasing the customer's awareness of the corporate and the products of that corporate. The better known the company, the better disposed the target audience towards to the company. Familiarity and favorability indicates how much the target customers as well as stakeholders know about the company, how much the level of their knowledge about the corporate. Corporate branding has the objective of creating differentiation and preference that creates the sense of knowing a company.

11) <u>Reflecting the Company:</u> A company can use corporate image promotion to tell the public what it is, what it does, how it does, and so on. By telling these, the company provides the facts to the public so that it can base its views of the company and form a favorable view (Kennedy 1977, p.11).

Corporate image is described as the overall impression made on the minds of customers. It is related to tradition, ideology, business name, reputation, variety of services, and to the impression of quality communicated by each person interacting with customers. While image reflects the activity area, performance and the vision of the company, it affects customer expectations with regard to the quality of the products and service offering. Barich and Kotler (1991) argue that a company needs to identify its image strengths and weaknesses on key attributes for each target group and to take corrective action to better its image.

12) <u>Serving Corporate Objectives:</u> What ever the objectives are, a formal image promotion program would always be helpful to fulfill them (Kennedy 1977, pp.11-24).

The corporate image is associated with the organization's aspirations, interests, beliefs, goals and objectives. It supports and satisfies multiple business objectives such as creating brand awareness, establishing brand credibility, enhancing overall corporate image and stimulating consumer's purchase intention.

Corporate objectives can be anything from increasing sales, forging new business relationships, enhancing corporate stature, improving customer loyalty, thwarting negative publicity, pacifying customers and easing market entry and etc. And many companies attribute corporate image as a major factor in their success (Balabanis *et al.* 1998, pp.25-44).

13) <u>Aiding Management Decisions:</u> If the research is done and also the results are clear, management policies of how the company ought to be seen would also be clearer. Corporate image provides management the areas of needing attention for the company's image promotions (Kennedy 1977, pp.11-24).

A successful corporate image creates consumer trust in the brands of that company and is seen as one aspect of brand associations essential for brand success. This created trust and clear vision of the company that created by the corporate image aids management of the company to take important and strategic decisions as strong corporate image reduce the uncertainty and risk associated with a brand (Chaudhuri and Holbrook 2001, pp.81-93).

14) <u>Competitive Tool for the Smaller Companies:</u> It is easier for a small company to promote the image through personal contact. In this light the corporate image can be a powerful tool for those companies which do not have extensive resources. It is clear that creating a powerful, consistent and durable corporate image is important for all operating organizations today including global companies as well as small and new founded small companies. If a small company has already a good image

that its target consumers have in their mind, this image could be the most important advantage of this company according to its competitors (Kennedy 1977, pp.11-24).

Perhaps no area of information is that critical to organizational success as the tracking of customer tastes and preferences. This information is the foundation on which rests reliable business forecasts and identification of strategic windows of opportunity. Large corporations have dominated the field of customized market research but small corporations do not have this opportunity all the time. The time and resources required for such in-depth analyses of markets have often been far beyond the scope and cost range of smaller companies. But monitoring comments and feedback in these locations can allow a company to gauge customer reactions to their own and competitors' products and services. While the quality of this information may be difficult to judge, the lower cost for access will leverage the benefits of this information. Any organization must reach out to the customers in their targeted market. Gaining awareness from customers who may not previously have known about a business or its products and services poses an especially difficult, but common, problem to many smaller businesses. Many of the customers of small and mid-sized businesses will utilize these companies according to the image of the company and would evaluate & select the goods and services they will purchase.

Much of the existing literature relating to the management of a small organization's brand tends to suggest that commitment and consistency, which can be gained through the "diffusion of a company's mission, values, goals" and finally image (de Chernatony 1999, pp.157-179).

As Kennedy (1977) mentioned that promoting image brings lots of advantages like providing an objective for advertising, informing the media, stimulating the sales, helping to establish company goodwill, creating an identity for employees, justifying profits and supporting to establish internal harmony, corporate image and its right promotion as well as management are very valuable assets for companies.

2.4 BRAND EQUITY

According to Lassar, W. and Mittal, B. (1995) brand equity is very important to marketers of consumer goods and services. Brand equity facilitates in the effectiveness of brand extensions and brand introductions. This is because consumers who trust and display loyalty toward a brand are willing to try to adopt brand extensions.

Brand equity is regarded as a very important concept in business practice as well as in academic research because marketers can gain competitive advantage through successful brands. The competitive advantage of companies that have brands with high equity includes the opportunity for successful extensions, resilience against competitors′ promotional pressures, and creation of barriers to competitive entry. An indication of the importance of well-known brands is the premium asset valuation that they obtain. In view of these characteristics, brand equity is "the enhancement in the perceived utility and desirability a brand name confers on a product". It is the consumers′ perception of the overall superiority of a product carrying that brand name when compared to other brands (Pope 1993, pp.81).

Brand equity is conceptualized from the perspective of the individual consumer and customer-based brand equity occurs when the consumer is familiar with the brand and holds some favorable, strong, and unique brand associations in the memory. Aaker (1991) defines brand equity as a set of assets linked to a brand's name and symbol that adds to the value provided by a product or service to a company and/or that company's customers. The major assets can be grouped into four categories: brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality, brand associations (Aaker 1991, p.61).

Compared to three other assets of Aaker's – brand awareness, brand loyalty, and perceived quality, brand association is the core asset for building strong brand equity (Lassar & Mittal 1995, pp.11-20). Several reasons can be addressed. First, brand awareness is a necessary asset but not sufficient for building strong brand equity. Second, the other brand equity dimensions enhance brand loyalty. The perceived quality, the associations, and the well-known name can provide reasons to buy and affect user satisfaction, which result to brand loyalty.

2.4.1 Customer-Based Brand Equity

Keller (1998) argues that brand equity is unique from customer loyalty, and can be defined as the differential effect that brand knowledge has on consumer response to the marketing of that brand. He argues that a brand possesses positive customer-based brand equity when customers react more favorably to a brand identified product and the way that it is marketed as compared to when it is not. Brands can also possess negative customer-based brand equity, expressed when consumers react less favorably to the marketing activities associated with a brand, as compared to an unnamed or fictitious named version of the product. Keller (1998) further states that one of the characteristics of brands possessing strong brand equity is stronger brand loyalty. This position appears consistent with that of Aaker (1991) who argued that brand loyalty could be considered both a dimension and an outcome of brand equity. Customer-based brand equity is the driving force for incremental financial gains to the company (Martin and Brown 1990, pp.431-438). Customer-based brand equity has been defined as the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand.

2.4.2 Customer-Based Corporate Brand Equity

Keller (2002), defines corporate brand equity as "the differential response by consumers, customers, employees, other companies, or any relevant constituency to the words, actions, communications, products or services provided by an identified corporate brand equity", and he concludes that since it is not difficult for rival companies to copy products, a strong corporate brand allows a company to express itself in terms of "who it is" and "what it is about" and therefore provides a means to transcend the types of associations found for products alone.

According to Aaker (1996), corporate brand equity is a set of assets linked to corporate brand's name and symbol that adds to the value provided by a product to a company or the company's customers. The major corporate brand equity categories are directly related to the product brand equity categories;

  i. Brand Awareness
 ii. Brand Loyalty

iii.   Perceived Quality

iv.   Brand Associations

Several aspects of the definition deserve details as corporate brand equity is a set of assets. Thus, the management of corporate brand equity involves investment to create these assets. Also, each corporate brand equity asset creates value in a variety of very different ways in order to manage corporate brand equity effectively. Besides, corporate brand equity creates value for the customers as well as to the company. For assets to provide a basis for corporate brand equity, they must be linked to the name as well as to the symbol of the corporate brand. If the corporate brand's name shows change, some or all of the assets would also be affected or even lost.

Aaker (1996) stated that, to a greater extent, the equity of a corporate brand depends on the number of people who purchase its products regularly. Hence, the concept of corporate brand loyalty is established as a vital component of corporate brand equity. Strong effects of corporate brand recognition on choice and market share are discussed and documented extensively in marketing literature. That is why Aaker regards the concept of corporate brand awareness as a second component of brand equity. Corporate perceived quality is included as another significant component. Other proprietary brand assets constitute the final component.

Within the corporate brand equity assets, corporate brand association is very important for building strong brand equity as brand awareness is a necessary asset but not sufficient for building strong corporate brand equity. And also, the other brand equity dimensions enhance brand loyalty. The perceived quality, the associations, and the well-known name can provide reasons to prefer and affect user satisfaction, which result to corporate brand loyalty. However, brand loyalty is sometimes excluded from the conceptualization of brand equity, because consumers may be in the habit of buying a particular brand without really thinking why (Keller 1998). Finally, the perceived quality is one kind of corporate brand association. The concept of brand identification also focuses on the association network. So, it is clear that brand equity is supported in great part by the associations as well as brand identification that consumers create in their mind with a brand. Therefore, a deeper understanding of brand identification

together with association becomes more critical when building strong brands (Keller 1998).

As a result, it is possible to extend the major corporate brand equity categories with corporate brand identification. As explained above, corporate brand awareness, corporate brand loyalty, corporate perceived quality, corporate brand identification are directly related to corporate brand associations;

  i.   Corporate Brand Awareness
 ii.   Corporate Brand Loyalty
iii.   Corporate Perceived Quality
 iv.   Corporate Brand Identification
  v.   Corporate Brand Associations

2.4.2.1 Corporate brand awareness

Brand awareness is the consumer's ability to identify a brand under different conditions. This can take the form of brand recognition and brand recall. Brand recognition assumes prior exposure to the brand. When given a cue, consumers are likely to correctly identify the brand as being previously seen or heard. Consumers might recognize many brands but only recall a small number of them; sometimes even only one brand. Brand recognition is therefore considered as the minimum level of brand awareness and is based on aided recall. Brand recognition is particularly important when a consumer chooses a brand at the point of purchase (Keller 2003, pp.595-600).

Brand recall is considered the next level of brand awareness. It relies on unaided recall and relates to the consumer's ability to retrieve the brand from memory when provided with a relevant cue. If the consumer is not aided by having the name provided, brand recall implies that the brand holds a stronger brand position in the customer's mind. The first-named brand in an unaided recall thus represents the highest level of brand awareness.

Brand awareness is created and enhanced by increasing the familiarity of the brand through repeated exposure, which ultimately results in consumers having "experienced"

the brand (Keller 2003, pp.595-600). When consumers have enough experience of the brand by seeing, hearing or thinking about it, the brand will take root in memory.

A well-recognized and accepted brand image is one of the most valuable assets a company possesses. Brand managers and manufacturers are concerned with managing brand equity and capitalizing on the value of a brand image (Aaker 1991, p.61).A product or retail establishment has many associations which combine to form its total impression. Few would argue that consumers form impressions of brands, and that these impressions later exert a major influence on shopping behaviors. To attract new customers and maintain existing ones, organizations need a distinguishing element that will make consumers identify and buy their products, for example, a successful product brand. Creating and building brand awareness, reaching consumers' minds, and encouraging them to develop a preference for the brand, are important steps in ensuring a successful product brand (Keller 2003, pp.595-600).

Brand awareness is essential for the above process to occur, since consumers must first be made aware of a brand in order to buy it. Brand awareness is the crucial first stage in buyer readiness to develop a brand preference and move closer to the point of purchase.

Corporate brand awareness can affect perceptions and attitudes, and it drives brand choice as well as loyalty. Awareness reflects the salience of the brand in the customer's mind. There are different levels of awareness as mentioned above, including:

  i.   *Recognition* - occurs if customer has heard of that brand before
  ii. *Recall* - indicates what brands customer can recall
  iii. *Top-of-mind* - the first brand comes to customer's mind
  iv. *Dominant* - the only brand recalled by the customers

Awareness reflects the presences of the brand in the mind of customers. It can be a driver in some categories, and it usually has a key role to play in brand equity (Aaker 1996, p.133).

2.4.2.2 Corporate brand loyalty

Corporate commitment/loyalty can lead to consumer loyalty for all the products of the company (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003, pp.76-89). Loyalty is defined as a psychological state generated by an individual's perceptions, beliefs and emotions which support the willingness or the intention of developing and maintaining a stable and durable relationship. An increase in customers' satisfaction leads to an increase in their loyalty to the company and this loyalty leads an increase in their purchases from the company. Thus, there is a strong relationship between consumer loyalty/commitment to a company and the share of purchase from the company.

The knowledge of the customer profiles for each level of loyalty/ commitment would enable the company to design differentiated marketing programs that aim to maintain or increase customer loyalty or gain new commitment from new possible customers who are not yet committed to the company (Iniesta and Sanchez 2002, pp.261-279). According to, Kassim and Souiden (2004), both satisfaction and image may have a strong impact on customer loyalty/commitment to the company which in turn may affect the company's revenues and profits directly. Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) argue that corporate loyalty is dependent on the corporate image and the customers' perceptions and beliefs about relevant company characteristics like culture, skills, values, competitive position...etc.

The value of consumer loyalty for organizations is widely discussed in the literature. Loyal consumers contribute to a company's performance through making additional purchases. Another important aspect of consumer loyalty is loyalty at the level of attitudes. Attitudinal loyalty can be defined as capturing the affective and cognitive components of brand loyalty. This type of loyalty represents a more long-term consumer commitment to an organization (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003, pp.76-89).

The importance of understanding the determinants of consumer loyalty is generally well acknowledged and researched in the marketing literature. The consumer value construct as a combination of functional, emotional and social components and found that multiple value dimensions account for consumer choices better than single attributes (Baldinger & Rubinson 1996, pp.22-36).

There is a relation both to loyalty as an intention, as consumption over a long period of time as well as the frequency and share of purchases. Gremler and Brown (1996) describe three different levels of loyalty. The first level is linked to consumer behavior in the marketplace, like repeated purchases and is consequently named behavioral loyalty. Thereafter is attitudinal loyalty, which refers to consumer preferences and attitudes. The highest level is cognitive loyalty which means that a brand comes up first in a consumers' mind, when the need to make a purchase decision arises, like the consumers' first choice. The cognitive loyalty is closely linked to the highest level of awareness (top-of-mind), where the matter of interest also is the brand, in a given category, which the consumers recall first.

Besides, a loyal customer base represents a barrier to entry, a possible price premium, time to respond to competitor innovations, and a protection against price competition (Chaudhuri 1999, pp.136-146). Loyalty is of sufficient relevance to use as a criterion variable which can be the basis of evaluating other possible measures. There are two kinds of loyalty measures;

  i. Price Premium
 ii. Satisfaction

Price premium is a basic indicator of loyalty, as the amount that a customer would pay for the brand in comparison with another brand offering similar or fewer benefits. The price premium can be determined by simply asking customers how much more they would be willing to pay for the brand. If the customers are loyal, they should logically be willing to pay a price premium; if they are not willing to pay more, it means that their loyalty level is relatively low (Motameni 1998, pp.275-290).

Satisfaction is a direct measure of how the customers are willing to stick to a brand. Satisfaction can also be measured by asking direct questions about loyalty. Loyalty is a relatively simple, accessible concept; people understand loyalty to family, friends, companies and brands.

2.4.2.3 Corporate brand's perceived quality

Corporate brand's perceived quality is an association that is usually central to brand equity as it is one of the key dimensions of brand equity (Aaker 1996, p.133) Perceived quality is also highly associated with other key brand identity measures, including specific functional benefit variables. Thus perceived quality provides a variable for other elements of brand identity (Hart 1999, pp.8-9).

According to Aaker, D.A. (1996), corporate brand's perceived quality is brand association that is elevated to the status of a corporate brand asset for several reasons;

i. among all brand associations, mostly only corporate brand's perceived quality drives financial performance
ii. corporate brand's perceived quality is often major strategic trust of a business
iii. Corporate brand's perceived quality is linked to and often drives aspects of how corporate brand is perceived.

Corporate brand's perceived quality is usually the heart of what customers are buying and in that sense; it is a bottom-line measure of the impact of a corporate brand identity. It reflects a measure of goodness that spreads over all elements of the corporate brand. Even the brand identity is defined by functional benefits; most studies will show that perceptions about those benefits are closely related to corporate brand's perceived quality. When perceived quality improves, so generally do other elements of customers' perception of the corporate brand.

The interpretation of the corporate brand's perceived quality for the loyal segment versus the switchers versus those loyal to another brand could be different. Perceived quality may not be a key driver in some contexts. In particular, it may not be responsive to relevant events. This concern leads to the consideration of the leadership variable (Aaker 1996, p.133).

Leadership and popularity also affects the level of corporate brand's perceived quality. Leadership reflects in part the "number one" syndrome. The logic is that if enough customers are buying into the brand concept to make it the sales leader. The company can be category leader or can be growing more popular then its competitors or it also

can be respected for innovation which leads a significant increased in the perceived corporate quality in the minds of customers (Aaker 1996, p.133).

2.4.2.4 Corporate brand identification

Corporate brand identification is the degree of overlap in a consumer's self-concept and his/ her perception of the corporation, and furthermore, it is different to the related notions of brand loyalty and organizational commitment. Corporate identification is necessarily organization specific, and people who identify with what an organization represents are likely to be loyal to the organization's products or services (Bhattacharya *et al.*1995, pp.46-57).

According to Brewer's theory (1991) of optimal distinctiveness, companies attempt to resolve the fundamental tension between their need to be relevant to the market and their need to be unique. Therefore, high-performance companies try to attract exceptional people by appealing to their distinctive characteristics based on the fact that perceived identity distinctiveness of the company is positively related to its identity attractiveness.

Corporate image/ prestige refer to organizational stakeholders' perceptions that other people believe the organization is well regarded. Consumers seek to satisfy their self-enhancement need by identifying with organizations that have high corporate image and prestigious identities. Thus, the attractiveness of a company's identification is likely to be determined in part by its perceived image. So, the higher the identity prestige, the higher the identity attractiveness to consumers which means perceived identity prestige of the company is positively related to its identity attractiveness (Bernstein 1992, p.44).

If the consumers can not distinguish the unique aspects of the company, they would not have profound impressions of the company which is also similar to the relationship between employees and their corporation in which images provide distinctiveness shapes to show the strength of employee identification within the organization. Thus, perceived identity distinctiveness of the company is positively related to the corporate identification. The perceived identity prestige of the company that the consumers perceive can enhance the degree of corporate-customer identification means it is:

perceived identity prestige of the company is positively related to the identification (Bromley 1993, p.18).

Dutton *et al* (1994) also concluded that the greater the attractiveness of the perceived identity of an organization, the stronger is a person's identification with it. Thus, companies are likely to position themselves in an attractive manner to increase consumer identification with the company. Thus perceived identity attractiveness of the company is also positively related to the customers' corporate identification. Corporate brand identification is active, selective, and volitional on consumers' part and causes them to engage in favorable as well as potentially unfavorable company-related behaviors. Corporate identity scholarship emphasizes the centrality of strategy, structure and culture of corporate identity (Balmer 2001, pp.248-291).

All the definitions above strongly support the fact that corporate identification has also a place in corporate brand equity. Because, the perceived quality, the associations, and the well-known name can provide reasons to prefer and affect user satisfaction, which result to corporate brand loyalty, corporate brand loyalty leads the concept of brand identification which also focuses on the association network. So, it is also clear that brand equity is supported in great part by the brand identification that consumers create in their mind. Therefore, a deeper understanding of brand identification becomes more critical when building strong brands. As a result, it is possible to extend the major corporate brand equity categories with corporate brand identification.

Customer and stakeholder identification, relates to the degree to which an individual's, or groups, affinity with an organization mirrors the distinctive characteristics of an organization (Dutton *et al,* 1994). When a customer identifies with an organization, he/ she perceive a sense of connectedness to an organization and define him/ her in terms of the organization. The possible key parts of identification include corporate distinctiveness, and corporate reputation as these both concepts has a clear impact on corporate brand identification (Abratt 1989, pp.63-76).

i. *Corporate Distinctiveness:* Differentiation is a bottom-line characteristic of a corporate brand: if a corporate brand is not perceived as being different, then it will have difficult time supporting brand identification for the company as well as for its

products or services. The indicators of corporate brand differentiation may include asking questions like "is this company different than competing ones?" (Aaker 1996, p.133).

Distinctiveness relates to how the entity is different from competitors. Consumers create a salient identity by belonging to a group like in-group that is unique compared to another group like out-group (Mael and Ashforth 1992, pp.103-123). The social categories of in-group and out-group are both relational and comparative. They demonstrate one's relationships with those found attractive and offer a comparison to those viewed as different (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003, pp.76-89).

When consumers gravitate toward an entity that is prestigious and/or distinctive they are transferring these positive traits back on themselves. This distinctiveness of the corporate according to its customers effects the identification of the company within the minds of its customers.

ii. ***Corporate Reputation:*** Value perception: if a brand does not generate value, it will usually be vulnerable to competitors. The value measure provides a summary indicator of the brand's success at creating a value image. (Aaker 1996, p.133). There is a significant relation between a brand's market share and the corporate reputation. When customers decide to prefer a brand, they are influenced partly by the corporate reputation and corporate image (Aaker 1996, p.133).

Knox (2004) states that corporate reputation creates the corporate brand identification and the means are differentiated from its competitors. Further, it offers a clear framework by which brand consistency can be achieved, and a mechanism for achieving brand continuity, through its identification of links with the organization's core business processes.

Corporate reputation is seen as the outcome of a competitive process in which companies signal their essential characteristics to constituents to maximize social status. The cumulative value judgments by the public over time, provides the company with significant competitive advantages (Fombrun and Shanley 1990, pp.177-187).

Herbig and Milewicz (1995) define reputation as "the estimation of the consistency over time of an attribute of an entity. This estimation is based on the entity's willingness and ability to perform an activity repeatedly in a similar fashion. An attribute is some specific part of the entity-price, quality, and marketing skills". In general corporate reputation is defined as the net perceptions of an organization's ability to meet the expectation of all its stakeholders. So, the reputation of a company is perceived as the strong relationship between the customers and the organization, which is viewed as client relationship-building. That is considered being an important element that contributes to successful organization (Howard 1998, pp.177-187).

Corporate reputation is very important as those companies with a more positive reputation appear to project their core mission and identity in a more systematic and consistent way than companies with lower reputation rankings. Further, these companies try to impart significantly more information, not only about their products, but also about a range of issues relating to their operations, identity, and history. Satisfactory corporate reputation is an important driver of successful organizational relationships with clients, which can have a significant impact on the business performance of an organization. Academicians agreed that corporate reputation is an important asset for the companies; it generates goodwill to the company, creates a corporate identification in the minds of customers and it must be constantly maintained, as it is very fragile and extremely hard to repair (Black and Carnes 2000, pp.31-42).

A good corporate identification which is reached by an exceptional corporate distinctiveness and reputation will distinguish the company from its competitors. In addition, it will lead the customer to assume that the products have a higher quality and may enable the company to command premium price, attract better applicants and investors, enhance the organization's access to capital markets, and to generate word-of-mouth endorsement and act as a barrier against imitation (Fombrun and Gardberg 2000, pp.241-255).

Employee identification towards an organization is also stronger where the organization is associated with high quality attributes. Such association accords an individual or a group prestige as well as image.

2.4.2.5 Corporate brand associations

Corporate brand associations of corporate brand equity usually involve image dimensions as the parts of organizational associations which are unique to the company. For a corporate brand, organizational associations are usually important for two reasons. First, a corporate brand does represent an organization with the manager and people employed in design, production, and consumer contact. Thus it is natural to focus on organizational values, employees, programs, and assets of the organization. Second, the organization is almost always involved with many product classes, each of which will usually have a set of product brands (Balmer 1995, p.39-44).

Aaker (1996) states that organizational associations have different advantages like;

   i.   Creating a value proposition that will be meaningful to customers and differentiate the brand

  ii.   Promoting customer relationships based on the feelings engendered by the organizational associations

 iii.   Helping a variety of products, thereby efficiently providing all of them with an identity umbrella

  iv.   Providing employees of an organization with a sense of purpose and meaning that motivates them

An organization is usually more enduring, complex, and permanent than a particular product line. A perception of an organization is therefore more difficult for competitors to combat than specific brand attributes, which can be easily surpassed. Thus organizational associations can be a major source of a company's sustainable advantage.

According to Aaker (1996), organizational associations consist of community orientation, innovation, concern for customers, presence and success of the corporate and local vs. global corporation criteria's.

   i.   Society/community orientation; directly effects consumer behavior among corporate brand associations as the company act simply like a good citizen by proving it in many ways including environmental sensitivity, sponsorship of

worthwhile charities as corporate social responsibility and etc. Going "green" is another way of being a good citizen. This trait can be associated with environmentally sensitive ingredients or recyclable packaging and etc (Aaker 1996, p.133).

As Keller (1993) mentioned, associations differ according to how favorably they are evaluated. In CSR literature, numerous researches suggest that companies involved in CSR can obtain consumers' positive product and brand evaluations, brand choice, and brand recommendations (Sen and Bhattacharya 2001, pp.225-243), good attitude to company, good impression/image of it, purchase intention and even enjoy a premium price. More importantly, "when a corporation behaves in a manner that is perceived as socially responsible, consumers are likely to infer that it has certain desirable traits that resonate with their sense of self" (Lichtenstein *et al* 2004, pp.16-32).

Besides, CSR is also widely identified as a contribution to the enhancement of a company's overall reputation. Corporate social activities can lessen the damaging effects on corporate reputation of certain criminal activities and bad behaviors. Reputations allow companies to signal their "true" attributes over time. CSR actions are gradually becoming a leading issue in business, with companies taking a variety of initiatives all aimed at making sense of CSR. Companies rely increasingly on a good CSR reputation to enhance, protect or repair their overall corporate image (Cramer *et al*. 2004, pp.269-287).

However, companies are running a business not a charity, which means that their first responsibility is to secure and sustain a return of investment. Therefore, marketers should be concerned with how benefits relate to costs. Beyond ethical behavior, CSR can prove an expensive luxury – it only makes sense where it actually contributes to the value of the business or the brand. If CSR doesn't generate brand associations then it makes no sense as part of a brand strategy (Cramer *et al* 2004, pp.269-287).

ii. Innovation; is perhaps the key corporate brand association for the companies as innovation helps companies to introduces themselves as the opinion leaders, market leaders, market managers and etc (Aaker 1996, p.133).

iii.   Concern for customers; if a company can credibly communicate such a philosophy; customers not only gain confidence in the products and services but also feel that someone cares for them. It is a lot easier to like someone who likes you. Thus, several corporate brands have made this concept of friendship one of the defining elements of their corporate brand identity (Aaker 1996, p.133).

iv.   Presence and success; the visibility and presence of the organization behind a corporate brand also creates an image of competence of the company. Dealing with an organization that has the resources to back up its products and a long history of doing business, makes people to believe that company's corporate brand and makes them loyal in a specific time period (Aaker 1996, p.133).

v.   Local vs. global; day by day, global branding is becoming a bigger challenge because it's no longer possible to isolate a brand and its reputation from global environment. The unavoidable exposure of your local brand-building strategy in the international arena is part of the growing difficulties that attend global brand building. Related to this complication are the internal issues that arise. Corporations handle the local and global mix in their marketing departments and these issues are the result of the speed and spread of communications.

Global communication is more or less forcing brand builders around the world to adjust their approaches. They have to forego the strategy that provides local marketing teams with full autonomy. Even though local brands are still available and strong, some of the activities that are used to promote them are now obsolete. The purpose of global brand management is to conceive of and control a brand's global direction, and this is done by defining and communicating the brand's core values. The execution of this communication lies in devising and consistently applying a specific style, tone, and image of the company.

The role of local brand management is to refine the communication of the brand's core values by adjusting their execution to communicate meaningfully with each local market.

The corporate brand associations also link the corporate brand to partner associations in the surrounding environment and to institutional associations in culture. The links that a corporate brand establishes to internal and external partner associations such as brands, persons, places, product categories and institutions that add to end customer image and equity derived from the corporate brand (Cheng and Chen 2001, pp. 16-21).
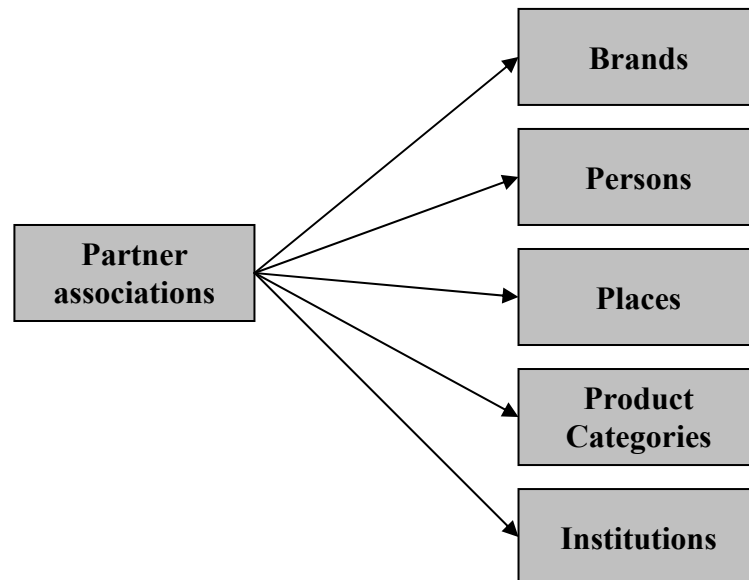
Figure 2.6: Types of Partner Associations

Source: Uggla, H. (2006), "A conceptual model for the creation of inclusive brand architecture", *Industrial Management and Organization, Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden.*

Partner associations are defined as associations secondary to the identity and more immediate territory of the corporate brand. These associations are linked to the corporate brand. Partner associations can be components, product categories, persons or even places with desirable reputation and high levels of brand awareness. Thus, partner associations are subdivided into five categories; brands, products, places, product categories and institutions (Berens and Van Riel 2004, pp.1363-3589).

i. *Brands*

Partner brands are linked to the corporate brands together with a constellation of other brands. Mercedes and Benz are ingredient brands that cannot be bought separately.

These ingredient brands can create strong associations for respected corporate brands through reinforcing core attributes of their products (Uggla 2006, pp.785-802).

In addition, a partner brand can transfer emotional or design oriented associations to a corporate brand through product integration co-branding; in this manner, an example could be for the Mercedes-Benz corporate brand in the development of the smart car.

ii. *Persons*

Persons may not be brands but they can possess brand equity, in terms of strong associations and brand recognition. Strong celebrity endorsers can also be positioned as partners through a link to a corporate brand. In some cases, partner brand associations become very strong and important as drivers for end consumer decision that they become a natural part of the brand structure of the corporate brand (Hale 2003, p.32).

iii. *Places*

Places can provide instant associations for a corporate brand in which countries in particular, are related to different levels of quality in specific categories; like German cars have high perceived quality. So the country of origin so called place can have strong emotional or self-expressive associations and content that can be linked to the corporate brand and contribute to the emotional dimension of corporate reputation.

iv. *Product categories*

Product categories have their own set of associations that can modify the corporate brand in different ways. Product categories can also affect the positioning and brand portfolio of a corporate brand (Aaker 2000, p.56).

v. *Institutional associations*

Institutions carry a deep societal or cultural meaning. Institutional associations are subtle cultural associations without explicit commercial character. These associations are the outcome of culturally embedded meaning that can be meditated and transformed into meaning, as well as value for a specific corporate brand. An institutional association denotes an association that has meaning to and recognition in a given

cultural context. These are powerful associations for which institutional rules and relations determine meaning (Rosa and Porac 2002, pp.503-532).

When corporate brands connect to institutions, institutional brand associations and corporate social responsibility associations are created that can create legitimacy for the brand (Berens *et al.* 2005, pp.1-19).

3. AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

3.1 THE STRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT OF AUTOMOTIVE SECTOR IN TURKEY

Automotive sector is one of the leading sectors in all developed and developing countries, as the sector has very important connections with all the other sectors in the economy. As a result, the technological developments in automotive sector force other sectors to show parallel developments. In addition, some sectors such as tourism, construction, agriculture, transportation and etc. depend on automotive sector for their transportation related needs. Moreover, automotive sector creates employment for even some unrelated sectors; such as marketing, finance, insurance companies, raw material suppliers and etc. As these supporting sectors play an important role in transferring the goods and services to the end consumers. Considering all these relations of the automotive sector and all the other sectors, it is clear that any change in the sector will automatically affect the economy (Yurdakul and Ic 2002).

As it is the case for all the countries of the world, also in Turkey, the automotive sector has very dynamic process in regards to changes in market and competition conditions. Overcoming these and adopting newer technologies, the Turkish automotive sector found itself a place and became a part of the global world. According to the dynamic effects of customs union agreement, the Turkish industrial sector has been generally opened to the world competition. As a result of this liberalization process, Turkish automotive sector increased the productivity and quality in order to become competitive in the global world. As a matter of fact, following the customs union agreement, Turkish producers had more chance to access into the EU countries. This access has created even more competition for Turkish automotive industry as well as other industries in Turkey whereas efficiency and production level in Turkish automotive industry has also increased after the customs union agreement (Bekmez & Komut 2006).

Traditionally, the automobile sector which has reached to the level of high sales and production has always faced with the problems such as low capacity, under integration

of subsectors with the sector, low standards, low quality, high costs due to these and old fashioned technology used previous years (Azcanli 1995).

The sector has a high potential of growth, however it is vulnerable to economical crises more than the other sectors. One of the indicators of those assumptions is the number of automobiles per 1000 person. As it is shown in the Figure 3.1, Turkey is behind the world average and also the countries like Bulgaria, Hungary, and Greece. The situation that the number of automobiles per 1000 persons in Turkey is 235, is an indicator for the potential of development in that sector in Turkey (Burnaz & Burnaz, 2000).
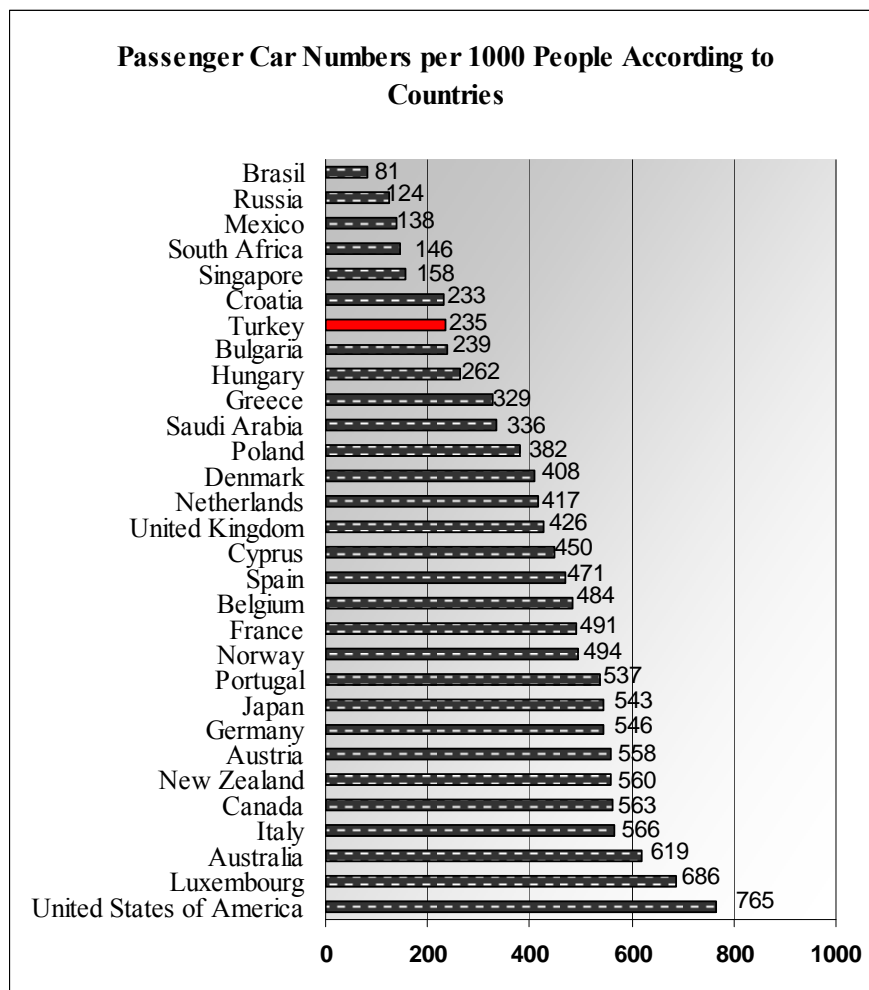
Figure 3.1: Passenger Car Numbers per 1000 People According to the Countries Source: http://tr.wikipedia.org (2008), "Ülkelere göre araç sayısı listesi"; http://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/percentC3percent9Clkelere_gpercentC3percentB6re_a rapercentC3percentA7_saypercentC4percentB1spercentC4percentB1_listesi, last accessed February 2010.

On the other hand, checking the sizes of the passenger car markets in different countries in Europe, stresses out the potential in Turkey. Even though in the figure of "the number of automobiles per 1000 person", Turkey is behind the world average and also the countries like Bulgaria, Hungary, and Greece, according to the market sizes, Turkey rates as a bigger market than these three countries (See Figure 3.2). Turkish market size is 312,614 whereas German market size is 3,591,611 and the market size in Netherland is 379,581, in Greece is 210,819, Hungary is 73,293 and Bulgaria is 21,129.

The number of automobiles per 1000 person is 235 and the market size in Turkey is around 313,000, better indicate the potential of the growth and development of automobile sector in Turkey (European Automotive Manufacturers Association, 2009).
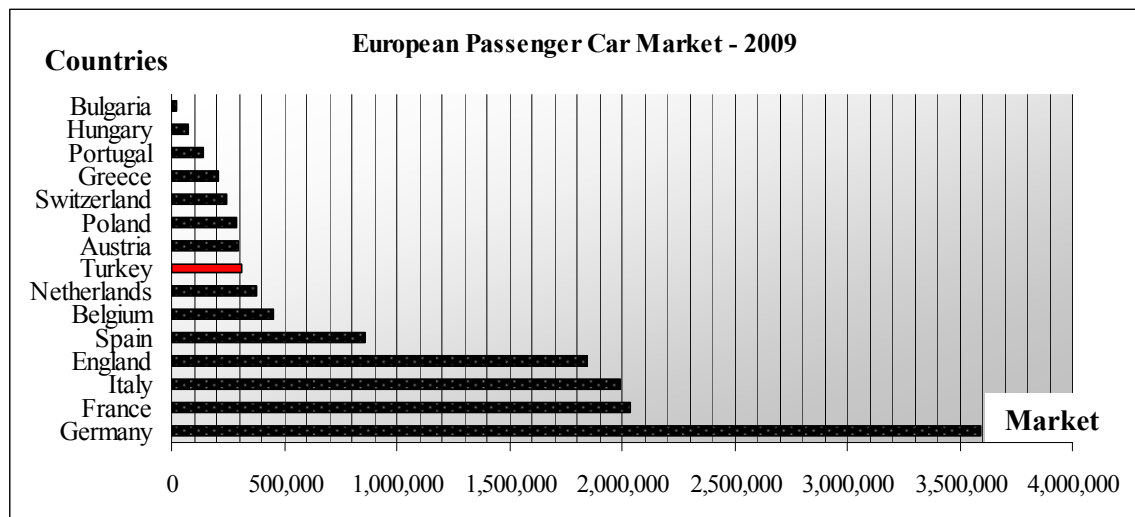
Figure 3.2: European Passenger Car Market - 2009

Source: European Automotive Manufacturers' Association, Annual Report (2009)

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Registration	1,649,879	1,864,344	2,181,388	2,861,640	2,861,640	3,058,511	3,274,156	3,570,105	3,838,631	4,072,326	4,422,180	4,534,803	4,600,140	4,700,343	5,400,440	5,772,745	6,140,992	6,472,156	6,796,629
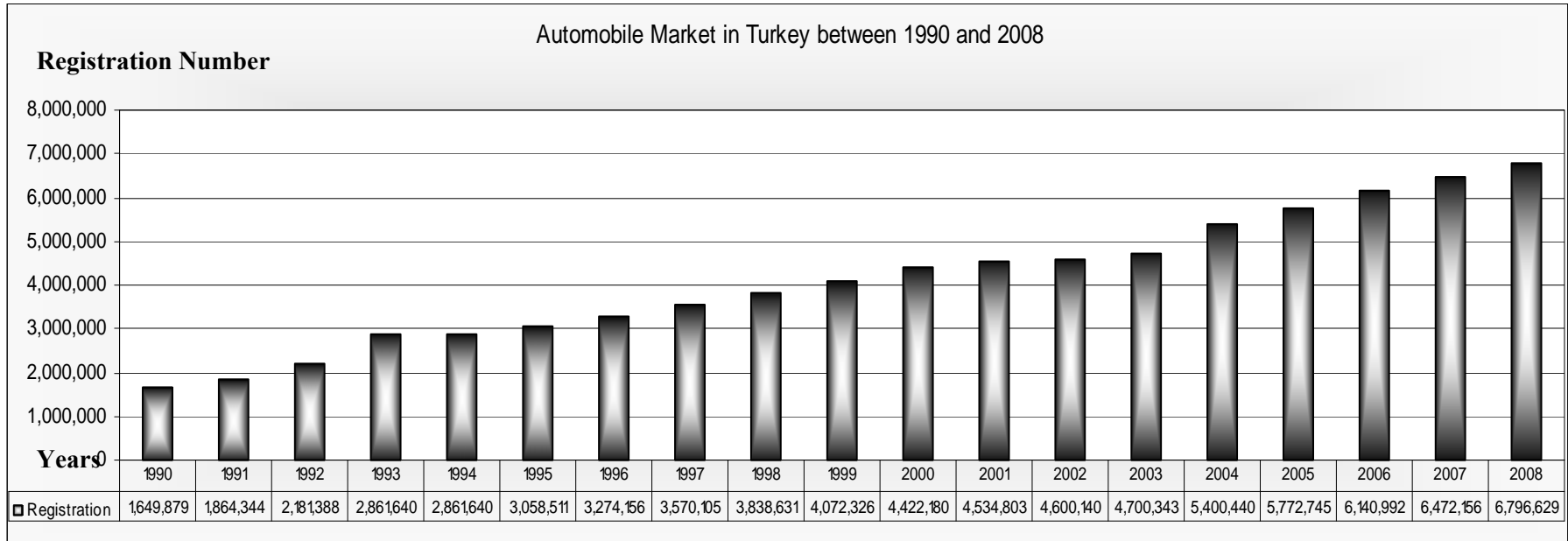
Figure 3.3: Automobile Market in Turkey between 1990 and 2008.

Source: Automotive Manufacturers Association, "General and Statistical Information Report (2008)"

The Figure 3.3 proves the growing market in Turkish economy. The automobile registration number which was around 1,650,000 units during 1990 increased almost 6 times in 18 years and reached around 6,800,000 units in 2008. The potential of the market increased year by year and continues to increase. The level of increase is not the same all the time and affected by domestic financial crisis in some period of times but the reality shows that the registration number and the market size never stopped growing in spite of the crisis, financial difficulties, decreasing demand, unstable domestic market, inadequate investments & production as well as import and export rates in the sector, high private consumption taxes within the industry, high fuel prices and etc (Komut 2006, p.41).

3.2 THE STRENGTHS AND THE WEAKNESSES OF THE TURKISH AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Turkey has one of the fastest growing motor vehicle industries in the world. The main strengths of the sector include (Komut 2006, p.41):

   i.   One of the major sectors in Turkish manufacturing industry

  ii.   Leads private sector investor

 iii.   Drives force in manufacturing industry with its high value added

 iv.   A reliable source of tax revenue with its totally registered production

  v.   High-skilled human resources both in production and management

 vi.   Sustainable and improvable competitive workforce with low labor cost and culture of productivity

 vii.   Technological know-how and rapidly growing investments in R&D

viii.   Widespread distribution and marketing networks

 ix.   Integration with world automotive industry since 1990s

  x.   Geostrategic advantage

xi.   Export experience in strong export markets

xii.   Easy access to potential emerging markets

xiii.   Capacity existence which is suitable for the economies of scale

xiv.   Strong auto parts industry with a diversified product portfolio

xv.   Strong cooperation with foreign partners and development in R&D investments as well as the capacity

xvi.   Growth potential in the domestic market

xvii.   Proximity to developing and developed markets

xviii.   Alignment with international technical legislation and quality system and perspective for EU accession

xix.   Qualified and relatively cheap labor compared to the developed countries.

Besides, geographical position and logistic opportunities make Turkey an attractive location for automotive investments. Turkish companies are aware of the importance of these factors for global competition and foreign manufacturers are also trying to enter this market whether with export or direct investments for manufacturing. Turkey is also showing good progress in harmonizing its legislation and regulations on the automotive sector with those of the EU in matters. Its legislation is generally in line with international rules of free trade within the context of the Customs Union and World Trade Organization (*Automotive Manufacturers' Association, Annual Report 2009)*.

Foreign carmakers have been more successful in marketing their vehicles in Turkey than domestic producers because they offer a wider variety of automobiles than produced in the country. The continued strength of the New Turkish Lira (YTL) combined with low cost bank loans often makes imported passenger cars affordable. Many middle and upper class Turks also prefer imported cars to locally manufactured vehicles as a status symbol (*Automotive Manufacturers' Association, Annual Report 2009*).

Beside the strong and potential sides of Turkish automotive industry, it also has some weaknesses including (Komut 2006, p.41):

i.   Unstable domestic market

ii.   Loss of quality & quantity in manpower as a result of the financial crises caused by the weak economy

iii. In adequate investments & production in the sector

iv.   High costs of raw materials due to capacity utilization and production below economies of scale

v.   High private consumption taxes

vi.   High fuel prices

vii. Insufficient export incentives

3.3 BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF THE HISTORY OF TURKISH AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

The first automobile assembly plant in Turkey was established in 1960, and a number of joint ventures entered into the market in the late 1960s. Domestic production increased until 1976, but declined until 1980 because of supply shortages.

Production increased steadily after the early 1980s, and as a result of increasing demand and the prospects of the Customs Union with the European Union in 1996, the industry expanded its production capacity in the early 1990s. The economic crisis in 1994 had a disastrous impact on production, which declined by almost 50 percent. In spite of the 1994 crisis, the industry attracted foreign direct investment, and new companies.

Total production gradually increased after the 1994 crisis and exceeded its level in 2000 partly as a result of increasing exports to the EU countries. The 2001 crisis was a step backward in production but the industry bounced back very strongly after the crisis. The

industry has hard times with the global financial crisis which has started at the end of 2008.

The emergence of Turkey as an export centre is attracting major players from across the world to invest in the auto sector. In fact, FDI inflow in the sector has been continuously increasing from past few years on account of Turkey's strategic location and closeness with both European and the Middle East countries. Various automobile giants have made Turkey a gateway to enter the European auto markets and taking the benefits of government incentives.

The direction of foreign trade in the case of automobiles is completely different. Turkey imports a large part of its automobiles from developed, mainly EU countries. A large proportion of Turkey's exports of automobile components go to developed countries. Turkey both imports and exports these products at an increasing level to/from the EU, as the Turkish automobile industry has fully integrated with the European production chains (Taymaz & Yılmaz, 2008).

Passenger Car Demand, Production, Import and Export Levels between 1995-2008

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
■ Demand	221,84	231,83	345,19	326,80	275,50	466,43	102,14	94,537	232,80	453,74	435,70	370,64	353,28	302,05
□ Production	233,41	207,75	242,78	239,93	222,04	297,47	175,34	204,19	294,11	447,15	453,66	545,68	634,88	621,56
▨ Imports	21,651	57,479	125,02	111,53	131,21	258,98	72,259	60,283	154,00	311,66	301,88	255,49	236,72	206,79
▤ Exports	33,224	33,404	22,612	24,669	77,753	90,026	145,45	169,94	215,31	305,07	319,82	430,42	504,35	526,30

Figure 3.4: Passenger Car Demand, Production, Import and Export Levels between 1995 and 2008

Source: Automotive Manufacturers Association "General and Statistical Information Report (2008)", Automotive Industry Publication

Figure 3.4 above shows the changes of passenger car demand, production, import and export levels in Turkish market between then years of 1995 and 2008. The numbers basically shows that the demand is directly related with the crisis that Turkey has experienced in 1994, 2001, 2008 and etc. In parallel production numbers have changed according to the internal and external market demands. Traditionally all these had significant positive or negative impacts on the import and export numbers of Turkish automobile industry.

The Figure 3.5 indicates the negative impact of domestic and global financial crisis on the domestic sales numbers, export rates as well as capacity utilization in Turkish automobile industry within ten years period (1989-2009).

The shapes of the figures basically show that capacity utilization is directly influenced by the crisis that Turkey has experienced in 1994, 1996, 1998, 2001 and 2008. In parallel, all these had significant negative impact on the domestic sales numbers of the country as well as the export numbers of Turkish automobile industry.
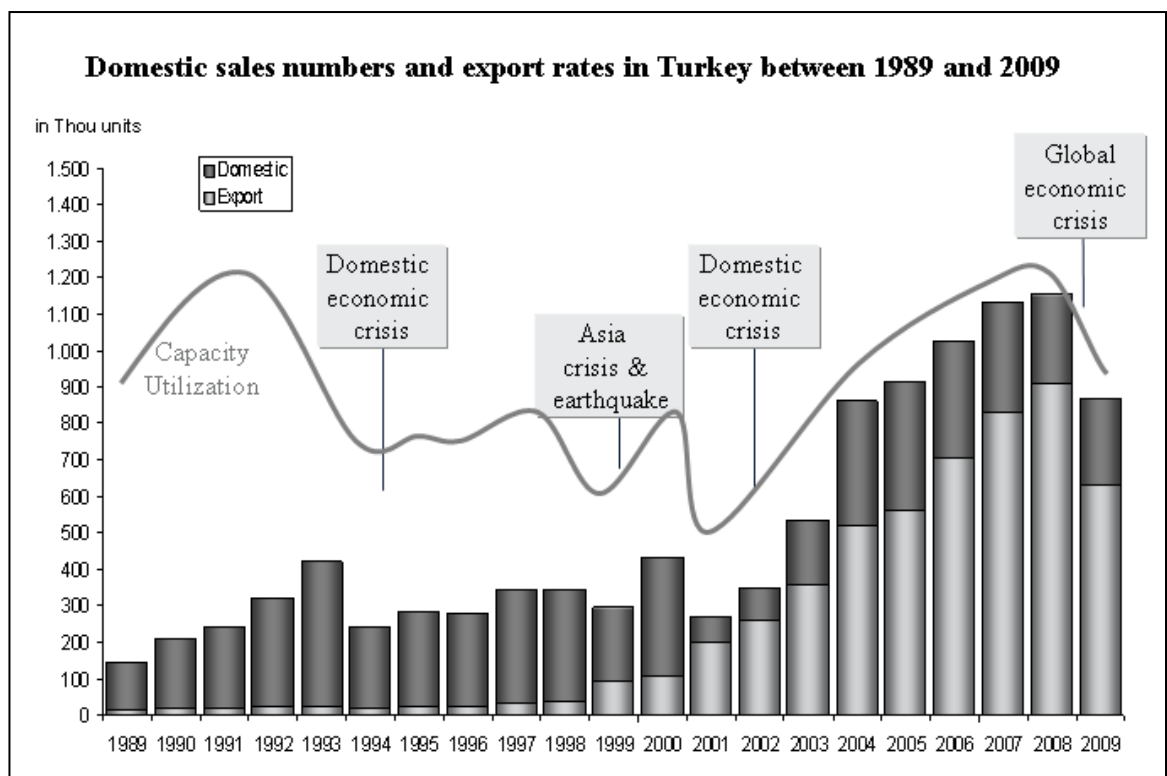
Figure 3.5: Domestic sales numbers and export rates in Turkey between 1989-2009

Source: "Mercedes-Benz Facts and the Figures" Report, 2009

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3.4 IMPORTANCE OF AUTOMOTIVE SECTOR IN THE TURKISH ECONOMY

The automotive industry in Turkey plays an important role in the manufacturing sector of the Turkish economy.

According to the data coming from "Automotive Manufacturers Association", Turkey had a production capacity of 1.5 Million vehicles which indicates a cramped annual growth of 4percent and capacity utilization of 75 percent in 2008. There are 15 national & international manufacturers in Turkey. Turkey is also rated on the 11th place regarding to providing direct employment of 300,000 people whereas the total size of the industry is 1.2 Million people. Turkey was ranking as the 6th largest producer in Europe and the 15th largest producer in the world. With a cluster of car-makers and parts suppliers, the Turkish automotive sector has become an integral part of the global network of production bases, exporting over $22,944,000,000 worth of motor vehicles and components in 2008.

   i.   In the long term, Turkey will be in a strong position as a production location for foreign countries as well as foreign origin companies. The main reasons will be:

  ii.   Low total landed cost: Turkey is cost competitive against major automotive producing countries mainly due to its low labor cost

 iii.   Labor pool availability and quality: Turkey's solid university system and technical schools provide a high-quality talent pool. And young population will continue to grow

  iv.   Proximity to growing markets: Turkey offers the proximity of not only European countries but also other emerging markets such as Middle East and South Africa.

   v.   Strong supplier base: Supplier base is growing and providing major components

  vi.   Incentive for localizations: There are attractive incentives for foreign investors and the incentives are competitive against those of other developing European countries (McKinsey analysis, EIU, Investor's Guide, Steel Business Briefing, October 2008).

There are really supportive associations in Turkey which supports the development of the industry within and outside of the company. Automotive Manufacturers Association (OSD) for instance represents automotive industry in EU. It aims to improve various motor vehicles made in Turkey, contributes to the automotive industry to make available within Turkey all parts and spare parts, studies common issues of the industry and make recommendations to both public and private institutions, represents members in matters dealing with the automotive industry and protect interests of the industry and its members. There is also Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Investment Support and Promotion (ISPAT) which is the official organization for promoting investment in Turkey by presenting investment opportunities to members of the global business community, assisting them before, during and after their entry to Turkey, serving as a reference point for international investors and as a point of contact for all institutions engaged in promoting investments.

3.5 IMPORTANCE OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY MANAGEMENT IN AUTOMOTIVE SECTOR AND TURKEY

The automotive manufacturers have to satisfy different needs and higher expectations of the customers in the World of different& numerous products and brand alternatives which effect loyalty in a bad way. Today, creating comparative superiorities which supports the survival of the companies and also managing the in proper way are getting importance. Especially after CU, this era had determined new characteristics and companies started to follow main strategies according to these sectoral features which are described below (Burnaz & Burnaz, 2000):

i. The expectations and desires of the customers have increased due to the increased number of products, brands and models

ii. The customers have become more conscious about their rights after Consumer Protection Law.

iii. The increased competition, variety and supply in the sector have changed the structure of the sector from oligopolistic to perfect competition.

iv.   Increased imports and high capacities made manufacturers work under capacity.

v.   The profitability of dealers, producer/importer companies have reduced.

vi.   After CU, the standards and quality in subsectors and also in automobile sector had to be adjusted to EU norms.

vii.   Due to increased competition between dealers, importers and manufacturers, they all started to make more promotional activities.

viii.   Sales by credits became regular activity of sales and even some companies have started to establish their own credit or finance companies to answer the needs.

ix.   In order to increase the sales and providing a second income to the dealers, companies have started to give importance the second hand business and for this purpose they have started selling and buying second-hand automobiles by guarantee even by establishing new companies for this purpose.

x.   The guarantee periods became longer due to the increase in quality and standards in imported as well as produced automobiles.

xi.   In order to provide high brand loyalty and customer satisfaction, the companies have started to give 24 hours road service and professional call centers.

xii.   Due to the efficient internet facilities, the companies started to make sales from internet.

xiii.   The sellers are replaced by more qualified ones and the numbers of the sellers have decreased.

xiv.   The domestic producer have understand the importance of exportation and started to export

In spite of the instable economical and political conditions which affect the automotive sector more than the others in Turkey, the sector has really developed rapidly compared to its beginning in order to make this development sustainable. Both the producers and the governments should be more careful and act as the plans. While adjusting and

adopting the sector to EU norms and world conditions, the governments should take actions encouraging exports and should revise the tax system which affects the internal and external market deeply.

3.6 MERCEDES-BENZ TURK A.S.

Mercedes-Benz is a German manufacturer of luxury automobiles, buses, coaches, light commercial vehicles and trucks. It is currently a division of the parent company, Daimler AG (formerly DaimlerChrysler AG), after previously being owned by Daimler-Benz.

The history behind the Mercedes-Benz brand and the three-pointed star starts with Gottlieb Daimler and Carl Benz. The invention in the 1880s of the high-speed engine and the automobile enabled Gottlieb Daimler and Carl Benz - independently of one another - to lay the foundations for the motorization of road transport. With the help of financial backers and partners, they both invested their private developments in their own enterprises - in Mannheim, Benz founded the company Benz & Cie. in October 1883, and Daimler-Motoren-Gesellschaft (DMG) was formed in November 1890. (www.daimler.com)

In order to gain publicity and a certain distinction for their products, both companies sought a suitable trademark. To begin with, the inventors used their own names - "Benz" and "Daimler" - which vouched for the origin and quality of the engines and vehicles.

On the other hand, Mercédès - a Spanish girl's name meaning 'grace' - was the name of the daughter born in 1889 to the Austrian businessman, who visit the Daimler factory and ordered his first Daimler car - a belt-driven vehicle with a six-hp two-cylinder engine in 1889. But the car was soon too slow for Jellinek and he demanded 40 km/h and ordered two more vehicles. Jellinek had good contacts with the worlds of international finance and the aristocracy and became increasingly active as a businessman. In 1898, he began to promote and sell Daimler automobiles, in particular, within the higher echelons of society. In 1899, DMG supplied Jellinek with ten vehicles; in 1900, Jellinek demanded ever faster and more powerful vehicles from

DMG. From 1899, he entered these in race meetings - first and foremost of which was the Nice Week - where he would race under his pseudonym Mercédès - the name of his daughter, ten years old at the time, and a name that was well known in motoring circles. In the early days, the name referred to the team and driver - not to an automotive brand (www.daimler.com).

At the beginning of April 1900, Jellinek made an agreement with DMG concerning sales of cars and engines and the decision was taken to use the Jellinek's pseudonym as a product name. In addition, it was agreed that a new engine "*bearing the name Daimler-Mercedes*" was to be developed. Two weeks later, Jellinek ordered 36 of the vehicles at a total price of 550,000 marks - a sizeable order even by today's standards: in 2005, this total would have been equivalent to 2.3 million Euros. Just a few weeks later, he placed a new order for another 36 vehicles, all with eight-hp engines.

The first vehicle to be fitted with the new engine, a 35-hp racing car, was delivered to Jellinek by DMG on December 22, 1900. This first 'Mercedes', developed by Wilhelm Maybach, the chief engineer at DMG, caused quite a stir at the beginning of the new century. With its low center of gravity, pressed-steel frame, lightweight high-performance engine and honeycomb radiator, it featured numerous innovations and is regarded today as the first modern automobile.

On June 23, 1902, 'Mercédès' was lodged as the trade name and this was legally registered on September 26. From June 1903, Emil Jellinek obtained permission to call himself Jellinek-Mercedes, commenting that "*this is probably the first time a father has taken his daughter's name.*"

From 1910 onward, a three-dimensional star adorned the radiator at the front of the car. The three-pointed star was supposed to symbolize Daimler's ambition of universal motorization - "on land, on water and in the air" and it became a registered trademark in August 1923.

Today, throughout the world the name 'Mercedes-Benz' is synonymous with tradition, innovation and the future of the automobile.

Eventually, Mercedes-Benz Türk A.S. was established in Istanbul in 1967 under the name "Otomarsan" with Daimler-Benz AG as the major shareholder with 36 percent. The company started the production of 0 302 type buses in 1968. In 1970, only 2 years after its foundation, the company started to export. In 1984, the company was appointed the general representative of Mercedes-Benz in Turkey. In 1986, parallel to the growth potential of Turkey, the truck plant started production in Aksaray in Central Anatolia. In November 1990 the name of the company was changed to Mercedes-Benz Türk A.Ş. (www.mercedes-benz.com.tr).

Mercedes-Benz Türk is one of the biggest foreign direct investments in Turkey with a total investment volume of € 620 million and employs 4,000 people. Furthermore 2,500 people are employed in its nationwide dealer and customer service network. Daimler AG currently holds 67 percent shares in Mercedes-Benz Türk A.Ş.

Mercedes-Benz Türk produces city-buses and coaches at the Hoşdere Bus Plant in Istanbul and light, medium and heavy duty trucks at the Aksaray Truck Plant. These facilities are an important part of Daimler AG's development and production network. Mercedes-Benz Türk also sells the vehicles which are exclusively produced in Turkey in the domestic and export markets. Furthermore the company imports and sells Mercedes-Benz vans and all passenger car brands of the Daimler group. In 2008 Mercedes-Benz sold 29,860 vehicles in total (www.mercedes-benz.com.tr).

Today 75 percent of the buses produced by Mercedes-Benz Türk are exported to 73 countries. €210 million have been invested into the Hoşdere Plant, which has a production capacity of 4,000 vehicles a year. Also the trucks of the Aksaray Plant are of the same quality level as those manufactured at plants in Germany. Mercedes-Benz Türk Aksaray Plant has been exporting vehicles to Central and East European countries since 2001. The export business gained momentum after truck sales to Western Europe began in 2004 and the number of truck exports has reached 22,000 units to 58 countries. With its high product quality, Aksaray Truck Plant has proved itself to be the equal of its German counterpart in Wörth which in turn has enabled Mercedes-Benz Türk's spare-part industries to export components to Mercedes-Benz truck plants in Germany (www.mercedes-benz.com.tr).

3.7 KEY COMPETITORS OF MERCEDES-BENZ TURK A.S.

In the luxury automobile segment, Mercedes-Benz has three main competitors; BMW, Audi and Volvo. Even though the competition is quite strong for some automobile models with these companies, Mercedes-Benz achieved to create big difference in terms of the sales numbers in Turkey among its customers. As shown in Figure 3.6., Mercedes-Benz was rated in the third place among its competitors in 2005. The next two years indicate increasing sales numbers for all automobile companies. However, 2008 sales numbers create a significant difference for Mercedes-Benz among its customers as it was the only company which continued to increase its sales numbers while all he other were loosing their sales volume and market shares. (Mercedes-Benz Facts and the Figures Report, 2009)

Total Sales Units of Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
■ Mercedes-Benz	3,401	4,125	4,640	4,673	9,700
□ BMW	5,266	5,158	7,256	4,849	6,729
▦ Audi	4,689	4,928	6,118	5,484	6,251
▨ Volvo	2,411	1,844	2,747	2,452	2,271
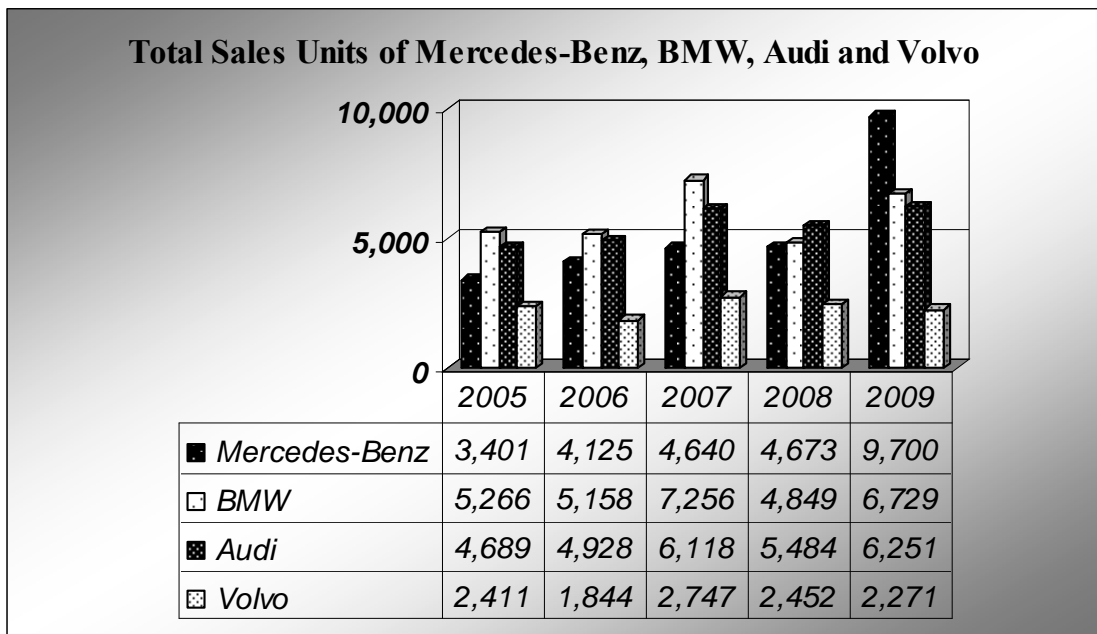
Figure 3.6: Total Sales Units of Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo

Source: "Mercedes-Benz Facts and the Figures" Report, 2009

Figure 3.7 below indicates the market shares and the changes of their market shares between 2005 and 2009, of these four automobile companies as competitors to each other related with their sales numbers.

Total Market Share of Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
⊠ Volvo	0.5	0.5	0.8	0.8	0.6
▦ Audi	1.1	1.3	1.7	1.8	1.7
▢ BMW	1.2	1.4	2	1.6	1.8
■ Mercedes	0.8	1.1	1.3	1.5	2.6
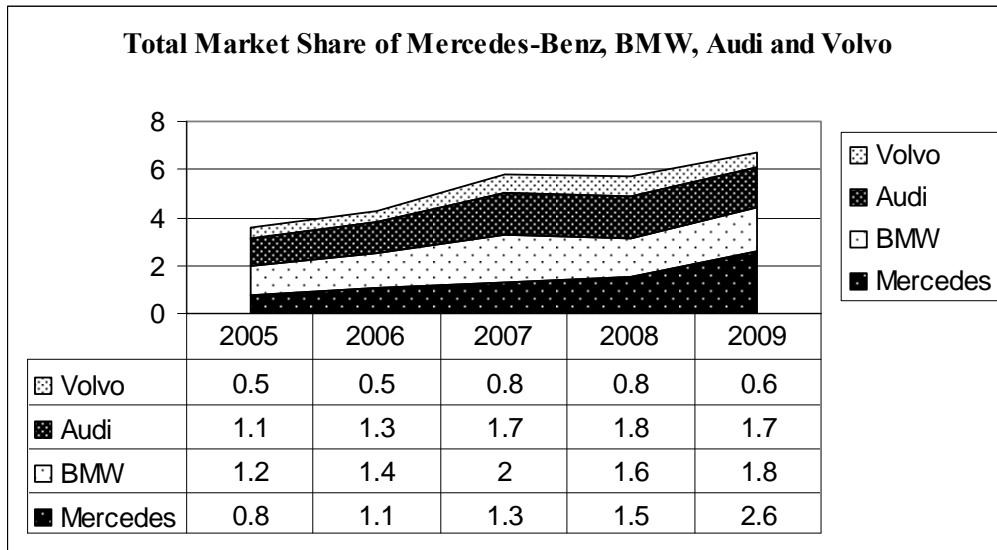
Figure 3.7: Total Market Share of Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo

Source: "Mercedes-Benz Facts and the Figures" Report, 2009

Comparing the registration numbers of Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo by 2008, points out the fact that Mercedes-Benz leads the sector on the basis of trademarks of these four automobile companies.

Motor Vehicles by Trademark - 2008

	Audi	BMW	Mercedes	Volvo
■ Units	48,249	92,005	151,338	24,279
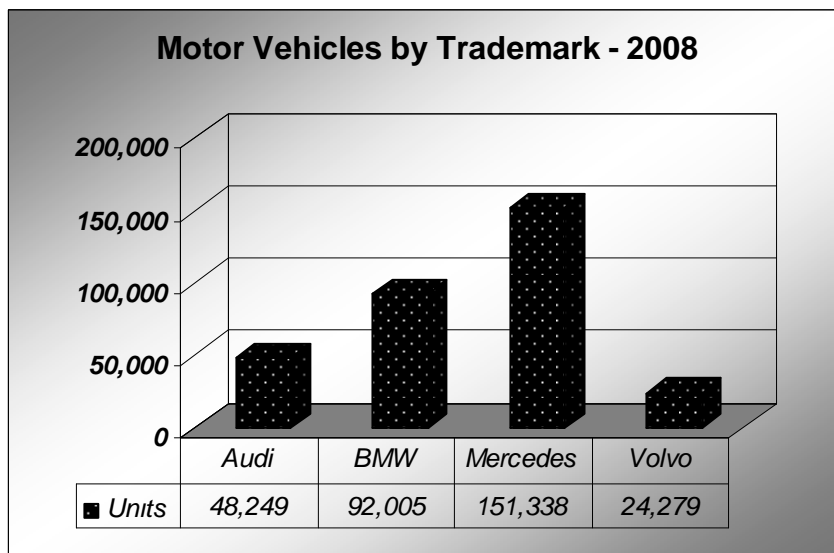
Figure 3.8: Motor Vehicles of Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo by Trademark in 2008.

Source: "Mercedes-Benz Facts and the Figures" Report, 2008

3.7.1 BMW

BMW (Bayerische Motoren Werke AG - *Bavarian Motor Works*) is a German automobile, motorcycle and engine manufacturing company founded in 1916. It is known for its performance and luxury vehicles (www.bmw.com.tr).

The company's situation became increasingly precarious in the 1950s. At the end of 1959, Daimler-Benz made an offer that involved the restructuring of BMW for a limited time. However, this was rejected by the small shareholders and workforce, at the Annual General Meeting on December 9. Their determination and his faith in the BMW 700 prompted Herbert Quandt to increase his shareholding. One year on, after securing state bridging aid, BMW was restructured under Quant's control. BMW urgently needed space at its Munich plant to expand its car production activities. Production of BMW motorcycles was consequently moved to Berlin-Spandau in 1969. BMW motorcycles were now made at the plant that had built aircraft engines until 1945 and then machine tools – and took to the roads with that famed "Berlin air" in their tires.

In order to manage its sports activities professionally, BMW established the separate Munich-based company Motorsport GmbH. Its race engines were exceptionally successful in Formula 2 racing – for a time two-thirds of all engines in that category bore the BMW badge- and created an independent motor sport vehicle in the guise of the BMW M1. BMW Steyr Motoren Gesellschaft was established jointly by BMW AG and Steyr-Daimler-Puch AG. An engine plant was built in Steyr, Upper Austria, according to BMW AG plans. BMW assumed sole responsibility for the plant in 1982 renaming it BMW Motoren GmbH, Steyr. The first diesel engine was built there one year later. The plant is now the group's competence centre for diesel technology. The site of an old barracks in north Munich acquired by BMW in the early 1980s became the home to the Research and Innovation Center (FIZ), which companies design, construction and testing facilities, a prototype construction unit and a complete pilot plant. The first departments started work there in 1985. The FIZ was officially opened in 1990, since when it has been extended a number of times. In order to expand rapidly and gain a presence in market segments in which it had not previously been involved, BMW purchased the British-based Rover Group, with the active brands Rover, Land

Rover, MINI and MG. In addition to modernizing the plant, the task for the next few years was to rejuvenate the product lines (www.bmw.com.tr).

The BMW Group acquired the rights to the name Rolls-Royce for cars – which at that time were being built by the Volkswagen Group. In accordance with the terms of the agreement, the BMW Group was not permitted to exercise the brand rights until 2003, but it already started planning new models and a new Rolls-Royce vehicle factory in Goodwood, West Sussex. Since the acquisition of the Rover Group, the pound sterling had appreciated by almost half – and the costs of restructuring the company had risen even more sharply. The prospects were looking increasingly bleak. The BMW Group sold Rover and MG for a nominal price of ten pounds. Land Rover was likewise sold shortly afterwards. The MINI brand was retained by the BMW Group (www.bmw.com.tr).

With the brands BMW, MINI and Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, the BMW Group has been focusing systematically on selected premium segments in the international car market since 2000. Over the subsequent years, the model range in the premium segment of the lower midsize class has been extended by the BMW 1 Series, and the large coupé and convertible segment has witnessed the appearance of the BMW 6 Series. The MINI brand was launched in 2001, with production commencing at the Oxford plant. The BMW Group assumed brand responsibility for Rolls-Royce Motor Cars in 2003, concurrently with the construction of a new worldwide head office and manufacturing plant in Goodwood, Great Britain.

The name-change to Bayerische Motoren Werke compelled management to devise a new logo for the company, therefore the famous BMW trademark is designed and patented at this time. However, they remained true to the imagery of the previous Rapp Motorenwerke emblem (which was designed by Karl's brother, Ottmar Rapp). Thus, both the old and the new logo were built up in the same way: the company name was placed in a black circle, which was once again given a pictorial form by placing a symbol within it (www.bmw.com.tr).

The BMW Company is a charter member of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Environmental Achievement Track, which recognizes

companies for their environmental stewardship and performance. It is also a member of the South Carolina Environmental Excellence Program and is on the Sustainability Group Index, which rates environmentally friendly companies BMW has taken measures to reduce the impact the company has on the environment. It is trying to design less-polluting cars by making existing models more efficient, as well as developing environmentally friendly fuels for future vehicles. BMW offers 49 models with EU5/6 emissions norm and nearly 20 models with CO_2 output less than 140 g/km, which puts it on the lowest tax group and therefore could provide the future owner with eco-bonus offered from some European states (www.bmw.com.tr).

BMW has started to operate in Turkey in 1984 with the partnership of "Borusan Otomotiv". Since that term, BMW continued its investment and increased the number of its product range and be an important part of Turkish automotive industry. Within the luxury automobiles segment, BMW operates in different cities of Turkey with its dealer network and competes with Mercedes-Benz, Audi, Volvo brands mainly which are also serving imported passenger cars to their target markets (www.bmw.com.tr).

3.7.2 Audi

Audi AG is also a German manufacturer of automobiles marketed under the Audi brand. The company is headquartered in Bavaria and has been a wholly-owned (99.55 percent) subsidiary of the Volkswagen Group (Volkswagen AG) since 1964. Volkswagen Group re-launched the Audi brand with the 1965 introduction of the Audi 60 range. Shortly thereafter the name was acquired as part of Volkswagen's purchase of the Auto Union assets from former owner, Daimler-Benz (www.audi.com.tr).

The Audi emblem with its four rings identifies one of Germany's oldest-established automobile manufacturers. It symbolizes the amalgamation in 1932 of four previously independent motor-vehicle manufacturers: Audi, DKW, Horch and Wanderer. These companies form the roots of what is today AUDI AG. On 14 November 1899, August Horch (1868 - 1951) established the company A. Horch & Cie. in the Ehrenfeld district of Cologne. Here he developed his first car, which was completed at the beginning of 1901. The company moved to Reichenbach in Saxony in March 1902 and converted to a share-issuing company two years later, which involved a further change in location. On

10 May 1904, A. Horch & Cie. Motorwagen-Werke AG was established in Zwicka (www.audi.com.tr).

Today, the largest shareholder of Audi AG is Volkswagen AG, which holds over 99 percent of the share capital. Volkswagen AG includes the consolidated accounts of Audi AG in its own consolidated financial statements. Audi's sales grew strongly in the 2000s, with deliveries to customers increasing from 653,000 in 2000 to 1,003,000 in 2008. The largest sales increases came from Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Through the early 1990s, Audi began to move more towards the position of being a real competitor in its target market against global luxury leaders Mercedes-Benz, BMW and Volvo.

Audi has entered Turkish market with its partnership with "Doğus Otomotiv" in 2002. Since then, Audi continued its investment and increased its product range and become an important part of Turkish automotive industry. Within the luxury automobiles segment, Audi operates in different cities of Turkey with its dealer network and competes with Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Volvo brands mainly which are also serving imported passenger cars to their target customers in Turkey (www.audi.com.tr).

3.7.3 Volvo

The Volvo Group is a Swedish supplier of commercial vehicles such as trucks, buses and construction equipment, drive systems for marine and industrial applications, aerospace components and financial services. Although Volvo was incorporated in 1915 as a subsidiary of AB SKF, a Swedish ball bearing manufacturer, the auto manufacturer was officially founded on 14 April 1927, when the first car rolled out of the factory in Gothenburg. In 1999, Volvo sold its car division Volvo Cars to Ford for $6.45 billion. The Volvo trademark is now shared between Volvo AB, where it is used on heavy vehicles and the unit of Ford, where it is used on cars. Ford decided to put Volvo Cars on the market in 2008 (www.volvo.com.tr).

In 1927 the first series-manufactured Volvo car, the Volvo ÖV4, rolled off the production line on the island of Hisingen, Göteborg. Since then, Volvo has developed from a small local industry to one of the world's largest manufacturers of heavy trucks,

buses and construction equipment, with more than 100,000 employees, production facilities in 19 countries and operations in more than 180 countries (www.volvo.com.tr).

From the very start, the company's two owners, Assar Gabrielsson and Gustaf Larson, decided to construct vehicles that were safe and could withstand the harsh conditions posed by Sweden's cold climate and the poor road conditions of that time. Since vehicles are driven by people, the founders' view was that: "Safety is – and must always be – the basic principle in all design work." The focus on safety, durability and quality has been part of the company's development from the beginning.

In 1999, the Volvo Group sold Volvo Cars to the Ford Motor Company. The Group's position in the area of trucks was further consolidated with the acquisition of Renault Trucks and Mack Trucks in 2001, and our roots branched off to both France and the US. During 2006 and 2007 the Volvo Group acquired the Japanese truck manufacturer Nissan Diesel. Also in early 2007, an agreement was reached regarding the acquisition of Ingersoll Rand's road development division. Furthermore, the acquisition of 70 percent of the shares in Lingong, one of China's largest makers of wheel loaders, was finalized. The last ten years we have also undergone rapid growth in the service area with, for example, financial solutions supporting the sales of the manufacturing business units (www.volvo.com.tr).

Volvo means "I roll" in Latin, conjugated from "volvere" (cp the ball bearing producer SKF). The name *Volvo* was originally registered in May 1911 as a separate company within SKF AB and as a registered trademark with the intention to be used for a special series of ball bearing, but this idea was only used for a short period of time and SKF decided to use "SKF" as the trademark for all its bearing products.

The first Volvo company in Turkey was founded in Istanbul in 1994 in order to deal with the operations of import, sales as well as after sales under the name of "Volvo Otomobil Ticaret Ltd. Sti." In 1999 the name of the company "Volvo Otomotiv Turk Ltd.Şti." has changed to its current name; "Volvo Turk Ltd". The same year, Volvo decided to sell all its shares to Ford Company. Still, Volvo operates as a separate company in Turkey (www.volvo.com.tr).

Today, Volvo continues its investments in Turkey and keeps on increasing its product range. Volvo Turk Ltd. is currently an important part of Turkish automotive industry. Within the luxury automobiles segment, Volvo also operates in different cities of Turkey with its dealer network and mainly competes with Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi brands which are also serving imported passenger cars to their target customers in Turkey (www.volvo.com.tr).

3.8 SUMMARY

Competition in an industry is ill rooted in its underlying economic structure and goes well beyond the behavior of current competitors. The state of competition in an industry depends on five basic competitive forces i.e. entry, threat of substitution, bargaining power of buyers, bargaining power of suppliers, and rivalry among current competitors (Porter, 1980). Daimler's so its brand Mercedes-Benz's strategy rests on four pillars: global presence, strong brands, broad product range, and technology leadership.

The company has a super network that ensures the flow and exchange of information from various departments within and between the company and its strategic partners. The strength of the competitive forces in an industry determines the degree to which this inflow of investment occurs and drives the return to the free market level, and thus the ability of companies to sustain above-average returns. The bargaining power rivalry is what keeps Mercedes-Benz on the run, as such that it can keep ahead of its competitors like BMW, Audi, Volvo and others, who are always there and always threatening their market share.

Besides, differentiation of product has enabled Mercedes-Benz to beat down the power of its customers by offering them basically the same product (engines) at various prices under various models and class. The versatility of the company enables it not only to produce a wide range of vehicle ranging from cars to trucks but it has also employed a Superior Engineering Technology in relation to other automobile manufacturers and made available the existence of a worldwide after sales service. This diversity of product program permits consumers to make wide variety of choices and has been a

determining factor in the choices made by consumers who decided to buy a Mercedes-Benz product and making them a household name.

Rivalry among existing competitors in automobile sector in the world takes the familiar form of jockeying for position-using tactics like price competition, advertising battles, product introductions, and increased customer service or warranties (Edmondson 2003).

4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

As discussed in the previous section, the parts of corporate brand equity have relationship between each other. Corporate brand awareness, corporate brand loyalty, corporate brand's perceived quality by the company's stakeholders, corporate brand identification, basically generates the main corporate brand associations which finally help corporate to have an image in its stakeholders' minds (Aaker 1996, p.133).
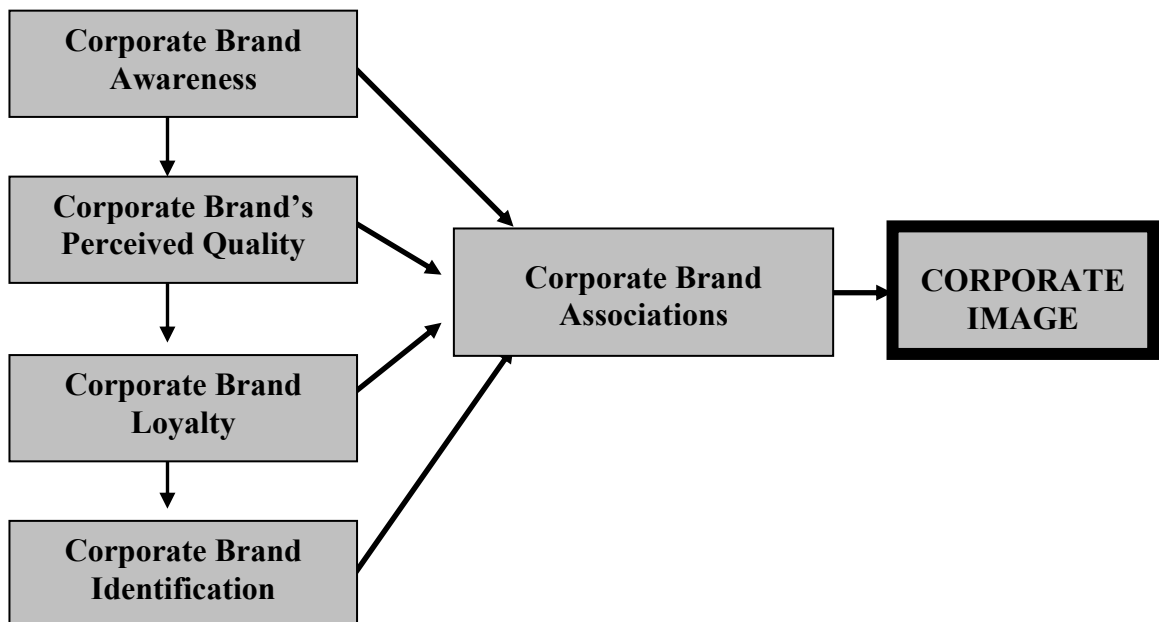
Figure 4.1: The Determinants of Corporate Brand Associations and Its Relationship with Corporate Image

Source: Adapted from Aaker, D.A. (1996), *"Building Strong Brands"*, New York, p.133

Customer-based equity so the brand associations occur when the consumer is aware and familiar with the brand and holds positive associations about the brand in memory. What a person knows about a company and how a person is identified with that company influence perceptions of the company's products as well as the number and

validity of corporate associations. Brand-specific knowledge impacts both behavioral and affective loyalty as it creates switching costs to less well-known alternatives and an incentive to get to know a brand even better. Besides, increasing the number of associations makes it easier to access the particular brand node from the memory since these associations offer multiple pathways to the same brand node. A unique brand association would increase its brand image and build a competitive advantage (Aaker 1996).

In order to be able to see the corporate image creation and management process, the factors which affect all these values are shown detailed in the Figure 4.2 below.

Corporate Brand Awareness

- Recognition
- Recall
- Top-of-Mind
- Dominant

- Corporate Distinctiveness
- Corporate Reputation

Corporate Brand Identification

- Price Premium
- Satisfaction

Corporate Brand Loyalty

Corporate Brand Associations

Partner Associations

- Brands
- Persons
- Places
- Product Categories
- Institutions

Corporate Brand's Perceived Quality

- Financial Performance
- Trust of Business

Organizational Associations

- Society/ Community Orientation
- Innovation
- Concern For Customers
- Presence and Success
- Local vs. Global

Marketing Communications

Corporate Brand Identity

Personal Communications

C O R P O R A T E   I M A G E

Figure 4.2: Conceptual Framework of Corporate Image Formation

4.1 FORMATION OF CORPORATE IMAGE

While corporate brand awareness consists of four different types; corporate brand recognition, corporate brand recall, top-of-mind and dominant level, it also has a direct effect on corporate brand associations. On the other hand corporate brand awareness can affect perceptions and attitudes, and it drives brand choice as well as loyalty. Awareness reflects the salience of the brand in the customer's mind (Bernstein 1989, pp.315-320).

Corporate brand loyalty is directly influenced by price premium of the corporate products as well as satisfaction of the customers so that they prefer to use the product or service again and become loyal. A brand's value to a company is largely created by the customer loyalty it commands. Also, considering loyalty as an asset encourages loyalty-building programs which then help create and enhance brand equity. Brand loyalty is one of the key considerations when placing corporate brand associations as highly loyal customer base can be expected to generate very predictable sales which would directly effect the corporate position within the market, then corporate identity and finally corporate image. The more loyal customers a corporate brand has, the more higher the perceived quality of this corporate brand in the minds' of its stakeholders. Therefore, it is also clear that there is a positive relationship between corporate brand loyalty and corporate brand's perceived quality (Andreassen & Lindestad 1998, pp.7-23).

Corporate brand's perceived quality is created in the minds of customers and the other stakeholders by the financial performance of the company and major strategic trust created by that company among the company's stakeholders. Perceived quality is a piece of brand association that is elevated to the status of a corporate brand asset. It is usually the heart of what customers are buying and in that sense; it is a bottom-line measure of the impact of corporate brand identification. It reflects a measure of goodness that spreads over all elements of the corporate brand. When perceived quality improves, so generally do other elements of customers' perception of the corporate brand and corporate brand identification among its stakeholders (Arnold 2007).

Corporate brand identification is directly influenced by corporate distinctiveness as well as by corporate reputation. Companies try to attract exceptional people by appealing to their distinctive characteristics based on the fact that perceived identity distinctiveness

of the company is positively related to its identity attractiveness. Besides, corporate reputation refers to organizational stakeholders' perceptions that other people believe the organization is well regarded. If the consumers can not distinguish the unique aspects of the company, they would not have profound impressions of the company which is also similar to the relationship between employees and their corporation (Balmer 2001, pp.248-291). The concept of brand identification also focuses on the association network. So, it is clear that brand equity is supported in great part by the associations as well as brand identification that consumers create in their mind with a brand. Therefore, a deeper understanding of brand identification together with association becomes more critical when building strong brands.

As a result, it is possible to extend the major corporate brand equity categories with corporate brand identification.

Corporate brand awareness, corporate brand loyalty, corporate brand's perceived quality and corporate bran identification as four important concepts of corporate brand equity, directly influences and are related to corporate brand associations. Corporate brand associations are effected by partner associations; brands, persons, places, product categories and institutions.

Partner brands are linked to the corporate brands together with a constellation of other brands. Mercedes and Benz are ingredient brands that cannot be bought separately. These ingredient brands can create strong associations for respected corporate brands through reinforcing core attributes of their products. Persons may not be brands but they can possess brand equity, in terms of strong associations and brand recognition. Places can provide instant associations for a corporate brand in which places and countries in particular are related to different levels of quality in specific categories. Product categories have their own set of associations that can modify the corporate brand in different ways. Finally, institutional associations are the outcome of culturally embedded meaning that can be meditated and transformed into meaning, as well as value for a specific corporate brand (Aaker 1991, p.61).

According to Aaker (1991) corporate brand associations are also effected by value perception of stakeholders, corporate brand differentiation from other competitors and

also organizational associations which consist of community orientation, perceived quality, innovation, concern for customers, presence and success of the corporate and local vs. global corporation criteria's.

With all the side factors and effecting concepts, corporate brand associations are the key factors creating corporate brand identity both in core and extended way. Corporate identity creates a basement for the formation of corporate communication objectives. A marketing communication strategy is used there to emerge these issues as what to say, how much to say, whom to say, how to say and etc. The marketing communications strategy should be shared by all the stakeholders who are under the interest of the corporation. The internal and external customers of the organization have a direct effect on the identity as well as image of the corporation. Also, the view of employees (as personal communication) of the organization reshapes the corporate brand identity (Aaker 1991, p.61).

Interpersonal communications, marketing communications, respectively the image of the corporation is formed by the products and services of the organization which carry the symbols of corporate identity. By the feedbacks of the marketing communications channel and the experience of products and services and the marketing communication strategy can be revised whilst the view of employees to the corporate identity is also redefined. Thus, companies should consider the importance of communication internally and externally. This implies that the company has complete control over all aspects of communication used to communicate with their publics. In addition to the benefit the company can gain from the frequency of communication, there are the different issues the company reveals through its communication as stakeholders would appreciate the transparency of a company which gives them a sense of greater reliability.
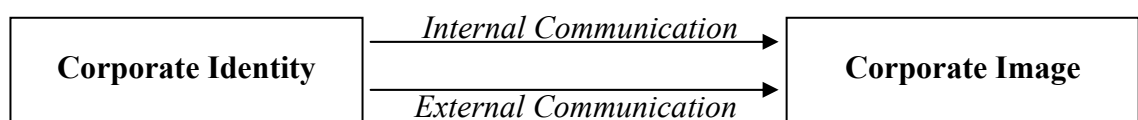
Figure 4.3: The Relationship between Corporate Identity and Corporate Image by Using Internal and External Communication

Source: van Riel, C.B.M and Fombrun, C.J. (2007), *Essential of Corporate Communication***, Routledge, London, pp. 22-68**

It is also very important to be able to develop a dialogue, by knowing what matters to an audience and communicating on that level, rather than a monologue designed to deliver a message. There is nothing better and more powerful than an organization that understands itself, knows its aims and goals, has dedicated, committed and enthusiastic employees, and that relishes two-way communications with its key audiences (Aberg 1990).

Finally, these marketing and personal communications of corporate brand identity creates the corporate image of the organization. Corporate image as "what people actually perceive of a corporate identity" and "commonly held perceptions of an organization by a group or groups". Also, it is "the perception that different audiences have of an organization which results from the audiences' interpretation of the cues presented by an organization". From the similarity of these definitions provided above, it can be determined that the corporate image exists externally to the organization in the perceptions of company's stakeholders (Aberg 1990).

4.2 HYPOTHESES DEVELOPED

In the both studies of the thesis, the components gathered from literature survey were used to prepare questions for the questionnaires. Therefore, the hypotheses were developed regarding four automobile companies' perceived image on the basis of the following variables;

   i.   Corporate distinctiveness

  ii.   Corporate brand identification.

 iii.   Corporate reputation

 iv.   Price premium

  v.   Corporate brand loyalty

 vi.   Satisfaction

vii.   Corporate brand awareness

viii.   Corporate brand associations

ix. Corporate image

The hypotheses were developed based on the various statements about dimensions of corporate image. The variables divided into sub-statements in order to make respondents comfortable about understanding the meanings and the contents of the variables.

Corporate Distinctiveness & Corporate Brand Identification

The identification literature demonstrates that distinctiveness characteristic predicts a person's identification. (Bhattacharya et al.1995, pp.46-57) Distinctiveness relates to how the entity is different from competitors. Consumers create a salient identity by belonging to a group that is unique compared to another group (Mael and Ashforth 1992, pp.103-123).

One of the essential aspects of branding is brand distinctiveness. It is the art of being unique and desirable by target customers. Companies endeavor to create some form of brand distinctiveness to avoid their products being viewed as commodities. So, brand distinctiveness generates competitive advantage for companies. Customers have no basis for choosing a particular brand over others if a brand is not perceived to be different (Aaker 1993, p. 61). According to Goodyear (1996), brand distinctiveness also means identification that guarantees consistency of offerings with a consequence of becoming a shortcut in decision-making in the long run. In other words, brand distinctiveness becomes a tool that can help companies to stand out from the crowd and to create a corporate identification in the target customers' minds (Aaker 1991, p. 61). Perceived identity distinctiveness of the company is positively related to its identity attractiveness and it positively effects the corporate brand identification.

Distinctiveness refers to organizational stakeholders' perceptions that other people believe the organization is different than its competitors. Consumers seek to satisfy their self-enhancement need by identifying with organizations that have distinctive identities (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003, pp.76-89). Thus, the attractiveness of a company's identity is likely to be determined in part by its perceived distinctiveness. This supports the positive relationship between distinctiveness and brand identification and shapes the strength of a customer identification of the organization. The higher the distinctiveness

of the corporate/ the brand, the higher the identification it has among its customers. In sum, distinctiveness is one of the factors that facilitate the corporate identification.

Therefore the first hypothesis (H1) is developed as "There is a positive relationship between corporate distinctiveness and corporate brand identification".

Corporate Reputation & Corporate Brand Identification

Corporate reputation has been gaining notice in the last few years as an important asset of the companies (Black and Carnes 2000, pp.31-42). Academicians in corporate strategies have begun to recognize the fact that corporate reputation provides companies competitive advantages. If a company has a good corporate reputation in the minds of its target customers, it is more possible that these customers start to identify themselves with that company, brand as well as the products of the company. The success of a companies' reputation leads to the development of a unique set of skills and a unique identification (Balmer 1995, pp.39-44).

The better the reputation that an organization has, the more identified the customers as well as the other shareholders with this company. Van den Bosch, De Jong and Elving (2005) also explored possible relationships between corporate reputation and corporate brand identification. Olins (1989) is well-known for his "corporate identity& identification structure", which consists of different concepts. Although these concepts introduced by Olins (1989), they are often presented as the corporate identification structure, they merely provided by an indication of reputation of the organization. On the other hand, internal function of reputation relates to employees' identification with the organization as a whole and/or the specific departments they work for. Identification appears to be crucial for employees and corporate reputation plays a symbolic role in creating such identification. Reputation management involves the planned maintenance, assessment and development of a corporate reputation as well as associated tools and support, anticipating developments both inside and outside the organization, and engaging employees in applying it, with the objective of contributing to employees' identification with and appreciation of the organization as well as recognition and appreciation among external stakeholders.

Therefore the second hypothesis (H2) is developed as "There is a positive relationship between corporate reputation and corporate brand identification".

Price Premium & Corporate Brand Loyalty

Drawing on Aaker's (1991) theory of brand equity, it is suggested that loyalty is one major dimension of brand equity. Brand equity is believed to have a significant role in generating price premium to the brand owner. So, a premium price also reinforces the perceived quality and thus results in higher brand loyalty. Customer price tolerance towards the brand/product/service can also be considered as the company's price premium and can be measured in terms of "the extra amount of money the individual will pay for the brand in comparison to the other brands". In line with this view, Motameni and Shahrokhi (1998) state that price premium can be a very effective measure of loyalty and loyalty's contribution.

The view that price premium has a positive impact on corporate loyalty is also supported by Keller (1993), who states that "consumers with a strong, favorable attitude should be more willing to pay premium prices for the brand" which makes them more loyal to the company. De Chernatony and McDonald (1998) further argue that companies with more loyal customers have the ability to command higher prices. They argue that customers are less price sensitive than competitors' customers. In addition, they proposed that loyal customers might be less sensitive to price increases than transactional customers. A loyal customer base represents a barrier to entry, a basis for a price premium, and protection against intense price competition. Naturally, a positive and strong brand image plays a significant role in creating brand loyalty. According to Aaker (1996), a basic indicator of loyalty is the amount a customer will pay for the brand in comparison with another brand offering similar benefits. Price premium is the best single measure of brand equity as well as corporate brand loyalty. An empirical investigation conducted by Ailawadi et al (2003) concompanies that price premium is an excellent global measure, as it is relatively stable over time but yet captures variations in the brands health, and in addition correlates with other global measures of brand loyalty.

Therefore the third hypothesis (H3) is developed as "There is a positive relationship between price premium and corporate brand loyalty".

Satisfaction & Corporate Brand Loyalty

Satisfaction plays an important role in the estimation of future buyer behavior and in the development of business relationships and long-term brand success so the loyalty. Busacca and Castaldo (2003) propose in their conceptual framework that in the first stages of a consumer-brand relationship loyalty is determined in terms of brand satisfaction. This develops as a result of the consumer's positive experiences with the brand, it positively affects brand commitment and re-purchase intentions, and it improves the brand's reputation. Subsequently, as the relationship is prolonged, satisfaction is replaced by loyalty (Garbarino and Johnson 1999, pp.8-19). A consumer who is satisfied with the brand is more willing to remain loyal to it, to pay a premium price for it, to buy new products introduced under it in the existing and in new categories, and to share some information about his or her tastes, preferences, and behavior (Busacca and Castaldo 2003).

Satisfaction is often used as a predictor of future consumer purchases. Satisfied customers have a higher likelihood of repeating purchases in time, of recommending that others try the source of satisfaction, and of becoming less receptive to the competitor's offerings. More specifically, satisfaction is found to be a necessary precursor of customer loyalty. Whereas satisfaction and loyalty are recognized as strongly related by most studies; satisfied customers tend to be loyal customers with or without the mediation of other variables (Rowley 2005). A customer usually starts judging a product in order to find the benefits it brings and the satisfaction it promises. The generic or unbranded product would be enough to start such a selection process. Inexperienced consumers with a line of products start with the product benefits and preferences whereas experienced and loyal consumers go directly to the brands. As the customer becomes more experienced with the product, he or she may focus on a brand and become loyal to a brand. A number of studies have investigated the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty, building on the assumption that satisfaction plays a key role in explaining consumer loyalty. During past decades, customer satisfaction has frequently been advanced to account for customer loyalty. Furthermore,

Oliva *et al.* (1992) argue that the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty is non-linear, meaning that in case satisfaction increases above a certain level, customer loyalty will increase rapidly.

Therefore the fourth hypothesis (H4) is developed as "There is a positive relationship between satisfaction and corporate brand loyalty".

Corporate Brand Awareness & Corporate Brand Identification

Brand awareness refers to the strength of the brand node in memory, how easy it is for the consumer to remember the brand (Keller 1993, pp.1-29). According to Keller (1993), brand awareness is a necessary condition for the creation of brand identification. When a brand is well established in memory, it is easier to attach associations to the brand and establish them in memory. Brand knowledge so the brand awareness affects consumer response to the brand; defined as perceptions, preferences and, most important, behavior arising from marketing mix activity. Brand identification requires brand knowledge; unless a consumer has a representation of the brand in memory – including awareness and a positive image. Brand awareness affects brand identification and that both aspect of brand knowledge are direct determinants of current consumer purchase behavior.

Brand awareness refers to "the ability for a buyer to recognize or recall a brand is a member of a certain product category" (Aaker 1991, p.61). High levels of brand awareness and positive brand image should increase the probability of brand choice, as well as produce greater identification with brand and company which increase customer loyalty and decrease vulnerability to competitive marketing actions (Keller 1993, pp.1-29). So, brand awareness has a significant positive impact on brand and corporate brand identification.

Therefore the fifth hypothesis (H5) is developed as "There is a positive relationship between corporate brand awareness and corporate brand identification".

Corporate Brand Identification & Corporate Brand Loyalty

The goal of branding as it has evolved over this period has been to explore ways to add value to the basic product or service and thus create brand preference and loyalty (de Chernatony 2002). On the other hand, the more consumers identify with a brand, the more will be the consumers' word-of mouth reports and brand loyalty. Some research results regarding the outcome variables of identification show that the more the target customers identify with the organization, the more they agree with its norms and cooperate with it. A consumer's identification with a social object (whether it is an organization or a brand) leads the person to behave positively toward it. So, brand identification will positively affect brand loyalty and word-of-mouth reports.

Besides, a consumer who identifies with a company will have positive thoughts and feelings about it. Moreover, identification with an organization has been found to lead to frequent contact with that organization and, in some cases, consumers champion the organization, its products and its advertisements (Bhattacharya & Sen 2003, pp.76-89). Strongly identified consumers will evoke the motivation to protect self-defining beliefs and the meaning derived from a relationship with a company. Therefore, identification with a company causes a commitment to it. Taken together, these findings imply that when strongly identified consumers' positive beliefs about a company are challenged by negative publicity, they are likely to try to protect their beliefs. Such consumers will engage in defensive information processing with a bias in the direction of their preferred conclusions (Brown et al. 2005).

In contrast, given a negative publicity about a company, weakly identified consumers, who do not see a retailer as important to their sense of self and whose beliefs about the retailer are not as strongly defined, should be guided by the motivation to form accurate judgments. Therefore, they will judge the negative information more objectively. Notably, strong identification will immunize consumers against moderately negative publicity; however, this effect will disappear when the degree of negativity increases (Bhattacharya & Sen 2003, pp.76-89).

Therefore the sixth hypothesis (H6) is developed as "There is a positive relationship between corporate brand identification and corporate brand loyalty".

Corporate Brand Awareness & Corporate Brand Associations

Customer-based equity so the brand associations occur when the consumer is aware and familiar with the brand and holds positive associations about the brand in memory. Brand awareness as the dimension of brand knowledge have been generally examined in prior marketing research that it refers to the strength of the brand node in memory, like how easy it is for the consumer to remember the brand (Keller 1993, pp.1-29). According to Keller (1993), brand awareness is a necessary condition for the creation of brand associations which lead brand image. When a brand is well established in memory, it is easier to attach associations to the brand and establish them in memory. Brand awareness has a positive effect on brand associations as it affects consumer response to the brand, defined as perceptions, preferences and, most important, behavior arising from marketing mix activity so the intended future behavior of purchase. The higher the brand awareness the more association customers have with the company or with the brand and these associations would affect the brand's position in consumers' minds and brand choice.

Keller (2003) argued that associations are created on the basis of brand awareness and direct experiences the customers have with the brand. So, brand awareness has a significant role on the development of brand associations, by linking perceived quality evaluations with the development of brand associations (Keller, 1993).

Therefore the seventh hypothesis (H7) is developed as "There is a positive relationship between brand awareness and corporate brand associations".

Corporate Brand Identification & Corporate Brand Associations

Brand association is defined by Aaker (1991) as "anything 'linked' in memory to a brand". The more target customers identify themselves with the corporate or product brand, the more they have associations with the brand.

What a person knows about a company and how a person is identified with that company influence perceptions of the company's products as well as the number and validity of corporate associations. Corporate associations can be both a strategic asset and a source of competitive advantage (Aaker 1996, p.133). Because influencing these

corporate associations is an important strategic task (Barich and Kotler 1991). Therefore marketers spend great sums of money each year on corporate advertising, corporate philanthropy, sponsorships, cause-related marketing and public image studies. But if the customers are mainly identified with the corporate brand or with the brands that a corporate produce or has, then the creation as well as the extension of the associations is much possible and easier. As the associations are the key factors for the corporate image creation and management, it is so important to understand how the information consumer's associate with a company affects their responses to the products and services offered by that company.

Therefore the eighth hypothesis (H8) is developed as "There is a positive relationship between corporate brand identification and corporate brand associations".

Corporate Brand Loyalty & Corporate Brand Associations

Brand-specific knowledge impacts both behavioral and affective loyalty as it creates switching costs to less well-known alternatives and an incentive to get to know a brand even better. So, it is said that a positive relationship between brand-response intensity and the number of associations the brand elicits. Consumers with intense positive brand response and loyal should therefore elicit more favorable associations than consumers with less intense response. The higher the loyal customers are with a corporate or a brand, the more positive associations the corporate or the brand elicits. According to (Morgan and Hunt 1994), loyalty is primary variable for maintaining successful relationships between consumers and brand associations they have. Consumers transfer corporate loyalty to products when consumers trust a brand and perceive it as safe and purchasing that brand's products as being without risk so that they create more association with the brand (Keller and Aaker 1992). Reast (2005) suggested that a positive relationship exists between corporate/ brand loyalty and the number of brand associations.

Keller (2003) argued that associations are created on the basis of direct experiences and marketing information the customers have. Direct experience involves consumers' beliefs and loyalty that have been created by using a specific product. Marketing information relates to the organizations' promotional strategy and informal

communication which is developed through positive word-of-mouth. Keller (2003) also defined brand associations as "informational nodes linked to the brand node in memory and contain the meaning of the brand for the consumers". The influence of the affect dimension on consumer loyalty supports the role of the attitudes on the development of brand associations (Keller 2003, pp.595-600).

Therefore the ninth hypothesis (H9) is developed as "There is a positive relationship between corporate brand loyalty and corporate brand associations".

Corporate Brand Associations & Corporate Image

Aaker (1991) asserted that the underlying value of a brand name often is the set of associations – its meaning to people. Associations represent the basis for corporate and product image in the minds of target customers. Keller (1993) pointed out that the favorability, strength, and uniqueness of brand associations are the dimensions distinguishing brand knowledge that play an important role in determining the differential response that makes up brand image, especially in high involvement decision settings.

A representative few of the most prevalent and useful organizational associations, identified by Aaker (1996), are society/community orientation, perceived quality, innovation, concern for customers, presence and success, and local vs. global. Based on the other three brand association contents, total number of associations can be used to identify the association orientation and corporate image of a company. So, the number of total associations had a significant relationship with brand image, consistent with Krishnan's (1996) findings. Besides, increasing the number of associations makes it easier to access the particular brand node from the memory since these associations offer multiple pathways to the same brand node. A unique brand association would increase its brand image and build a competitive advantage.

Therefore the tenth hypothesis (H10) is developed as "There is a positive relationship between corporate brand associations and corporate image".

As a summary, the main hypotheses are designed as followed:

H1: There is a positive relationship between corporate distinctiveness and corporate brand identification.

H2: There is a positive relationship between corporate reputation and corporate brand identification

H3: There is a positive relationship between price premium and corporate brand loyalty.

H4: There is a positive relationship between satisfaction and corporate brand loyalty.

H5: There is a positive relationship between corporate brand awareness and corporate brand identification.

H6: There is a positive relationship between corporate brand identification and corporate brand loyalty.

H7: There is a positive relationship between brand awareness and corporate brand associations.

H8: There is a positive relationship between corporate brand identification and corporate brand associations.

H9: There is a positive relationship between corporate brand loyalty and corporate brand associations.

H10: There is a positive relationship between corporate brand associations and corporate image.

Figure 4.4 below shows the relationships between mentioned concepts in terms of the hypotheses developed.
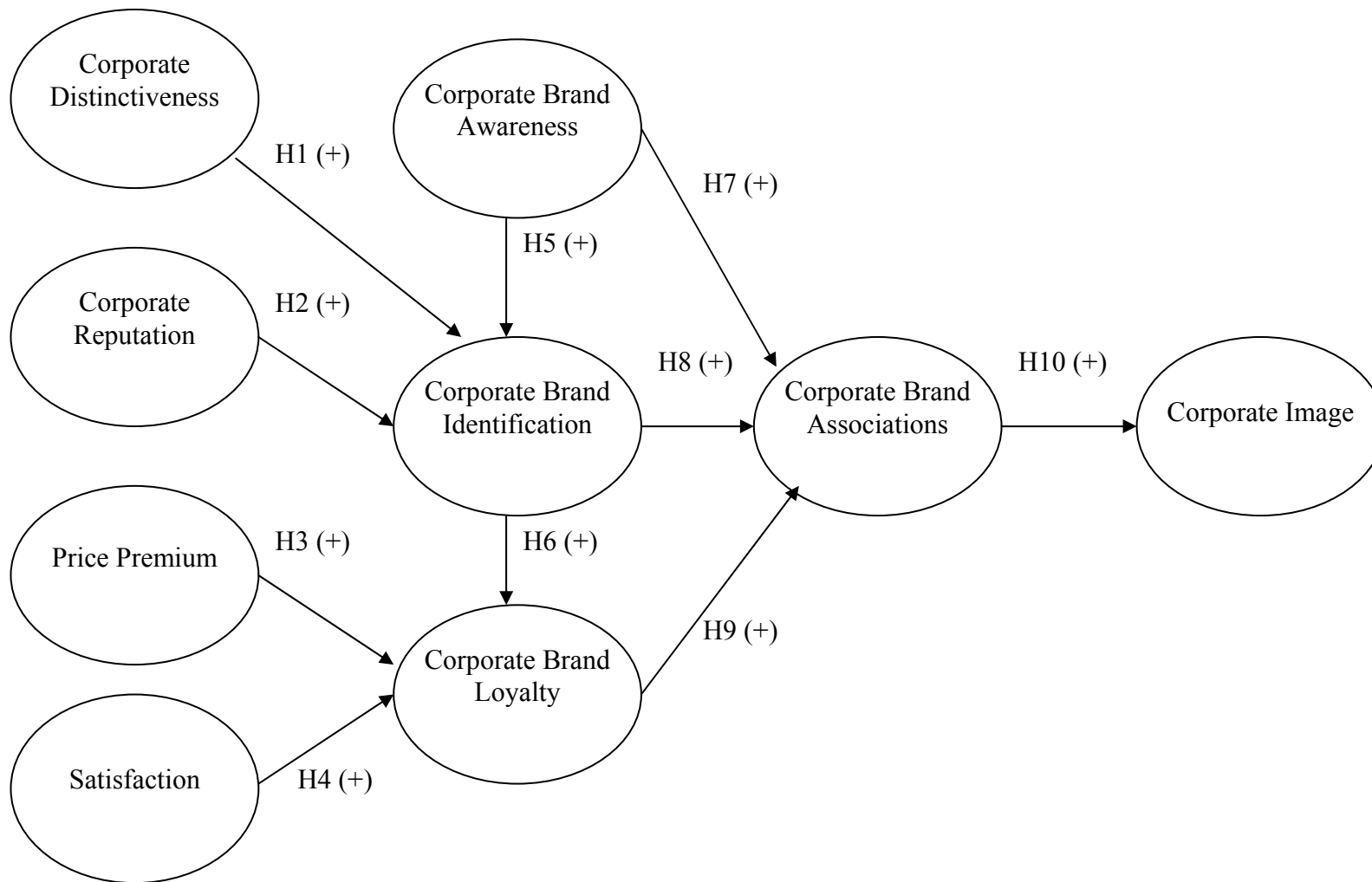
Figure 4.4: The Relationships between Concepts In Terms of Developed Hypotheses

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study of corporate image and identity in automotive sector, specifically for Mercedes-Benz and its main competitors in Turkish market is going to be given in the research as a part of this thesis. In the following, the research design, methodology, data collection procedure, instruments, variables used in the researches, the hypothesis and the findings of the studies are going to be explained in details.

5.1 THE AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of this research is to find out the "perceived image" (how the consumers and dealers see them as) of automobile companies operating in Turkish market and also to detect corporate brand association gaps among dealers and customers.

Accordingly, two studies have been conducted to find out these gaps.

a. **Study One:** The first part of the research (Study One) is based on a survey as a field study which has quantitative nature and which is applied to the existing & potential consumers in order to learn about their perceptions about the automobile companies; Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo and to give a visualized perspective of their approach to the corporate image concept. The aim of study one is to find out the perceptions of consumers about the corporate images of these four companies. In order to understand and learn the approaches of consumers towards these companies and to compare these approaches, the first study is done by the use of a questionnaire technique.

b. **Study Two:** Only learning about or reflecting the perceptions of customers about their corporate images in their eyes, so in eyes of end users would be a bias for the thesis. This fact hence enforced the idea of learning about dealer perceptions and making comparison between the perceptions of the customers as well as the perceptions of the dealers who are actually actively involved in the sector.

Therefore, the second part of the research (Study Two) is also based on the field study, which is of quantitative nature. It is applied to the dealers of Mercedes-Benz in order to learn about their perceptions about their own company and the other competitive companies.

5.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

a. **Study One:** The first part of the research aims to highlight the corporate image derived by these companies and the corporate associations approach in order to position that image. Based on the literature review about corporate image and identity, aims to highlight image perception of customers (potential and existing), a quantitative research method was formed. For this study, a questionnaire was constructed with closed and open-ended questions. The questionnaire is conducted with the potential and existing customers of automobile companies; Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo.

The questions were formed on the basis of the following dimensions: corporate brand awareness, corporate distinctiveness, corporate reputation, price premium, loyalty and satisfaction, corporate identification, corporate brand associations and corporate image.

b. **Study Two:** For the second part of the research same technique has been used. The same questionnaire, which is basically implemented according to the Mercedes-Benz company's dealers, have been used in order to be able to find out the gaps between the perception of these dealers and potential & existing customers of Mercedes-Benz. So, again a quantitative research method was formed with closed and open-ended questions. And the questionnaire is conducted to the current dealers of Mercedes-Benz which are operating in different locations of Turkey.

5.3 DATA COLLECTION

5.3.1 The Method of Data Collection

a. Study One: In the first part of the research, a self administered questionnaire is conducted to the potential & existing customers of Mercedes-Benz in Turkey. Questionnaire was prepared online and e-mailed to the potential & existing customers in order to shorten the time, increase the efficiency and reach more respondents. Questions of the questionnaire were prepared according to the literature. Based on the findings, the market positions of the companies (Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo), their perceived images among the customers were compared with each other.

b. Study Two: In the second part of the research, an adopted version of the same questionnaire (a self administered one) is conducted to the dealers of Mercedes-Benz Turk. This questionnaire was also prepared online and e-mailed to the operating dealers of Mercedes-Benz Turk in order to shorten the time, increase the efficiency and reach more respondents. Questions of the questionnaire were prepared according to the literature. Based on the findings, the market positions of the companies (Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo), their perceived images among the customers and Mercedes-Benz dealers were compared with each other and the gaps between the customers and dealers have been analyzed.

5.3.2 Data Collection Instrument

a. Study One: A structured question form is prepared and used in Study One in order to draw the borders of survey and to get the relevant answers for corporate image perception and comparison of four automobile companies.

In order to understand and learn the existing & potential customers approach to these companies, the questionnaire technique is used to gather data and information. All the questions were undisguised. According to the information in the literature, the questions are designed under three different sections. Section I focuses on the following titles:

i. **Corporate brand awareness:** The open ended **Q1** measures this item. The result shows if these mentioned four companies have a place in the first three automobile companies or not.

ii. **Familiarity: Q2** measures how familiar the existing & potential customers with these four brands. Seven point scales was used in order to have detailed differences between these four brands.

iii. **Corporate distinctiveness & corporate reputation & price premium:** The scaling question **Q3** measures these items. The seven point likert scale was used in order to measure these variables according to existing & potential customers' level of agreement. The first question measures (Corporate distinctiveness), the second and third one measures corporate reputation and the last two statements measures price premium levels of the existing & potential customers

iv. **Product Usage and Preference: Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7** measures the participants (potential &existing customer's driving experience, if they have/ had car, and if so the model of their cars. **Q8** is the filter question in order to see if the participant is an existing customer of Mercedes-Benz or not.

v. **Satisfaction:** Related with the answer of **Q8, Q9** measures the satisfaction level of existing Mercedes-Benz customers with seven-point likert scale.

vi. **Loyalty**: Related with the answer of **Q8, Q10** measures the loyalty level of existing Mercedes-Benz customers on the basis of their experiences with the brand.

vii. **Preference among competitors: Q11** in this section clearly measures the preference of potential & existing customer among these four automobile companies after rating all the statements above according to their level of agreement.

Section II focuses on the following titles:

i. **Corporate Identification, Q1** measures this item. In order to see how identified the potential & existing customers with the mentioned four automobile companies according to their level of agreement.

ii. **Corporate Brand Associations including Perceived Quality**: **Q2** measures the ratings of corporate brand association items, perceived quality and perceived quality measurements; financial performance as well as trust of business, in relation to the perceived ideal company according to the potential & existing customers. The statements involve; partner **associations** (brands, persons, places, product categories, and institutions), **corporate brand's perceived quality** (financial performance, trust of business) and **organizational associations** (including society/community orientation, innovation, and concern for customers, presence and success, local vs. global statements.)

iii. **Corporate Image: Q3** measures the perceived identity, so the image of the mentioned four companies according to existing & potential customers.

The questions **between Q1, Q2 and Q3** are asked to measure the attributes of ideal image and the distance of the images of four companies to ideal image. Respondents were expected to state their level of agreement among seven-point likert scale; from strongly agree to strongly disagree. This scale is used to determine the degree of agreement of the existing & potential customers to the items mentioned in the methodology of first study for an ideal automobile company, and the perceptions of consumers about these four companies on the basis of the statements. These are also interval scales hence it can be observed an equal difference between the ratings of each automobile company.

Section III focuses on the demographic variables;

i. **Demographic Variables; Q1 to Q7** relate to demographic information about respondents to highlight possible differences in perception of image also accordingly in the analysis.

In the questionnaire open ended and close-ended questions were used. The Likert scale, itemized rating scale and also score techniques were used in order to make comparisons between the image attributes and the demographic and usage attribute variables.

b. **Study Two:** An adopted and structured question form is prepared and used in Study Two as well in order to draw the borders of survey and to get the relevant answers for corporate image perception and comparison of four automobile companies.

In order to understand and learn the Mercedes-Benz dealers' approach to these companies, the questionnaire technique is used to gather data and information. All the questions were undisguised. According to the information in the literature, the questions are designed under three different sections. Section I focuses on the following titles;

i. **Corporate brand awareness:** The open ended **Q1** measures this item. The result shows if these mentioned four companies have a place in the first three automobile companies or not according to the dealers of Mercedes-Benz.

ii. **Familiarity: Q2** measures how familiar the Mercedes-Benz dealers with these four brands. Seven point scales was used in order to have detailed differences between these four brands.

iii. **Corporate distinctiveness & corporate reputation & price premium:** The scaling question **Q3** measures these items. The seven point likert scale was used in order to measure these variables according to existing & potential customers' level of agreement. The first question measures (Corporate distinctiveness), the second and third one measures corporate reputation and the last two statements measures price premium levels of the existing & potential customers.

iv. **Satisfaction: Q4** measures this item. It measures the satisfaction level of Mercedes-Benz dealers about being an employee of Mercedes-Benz on the basis of their experiences.

v. **Loyalty**: **Q5** measures the loyalty level of current Mercedes-Benz dealers on the basis of their experiences with the brand and the company.

Section II focuses on the following titles:

i. **Corporate Identification, Q1** measures this item. In order to see how identified the dealers of Mercedes-Benz with the company they work for according to their level of agreement.

ii. **Corporate Brand Associations including Perceived Quality**: **Q2** measures the ratings of corporate brand association items, perceived quality and perceived quality measurements; financial performance as well as trust of business, in relation to the perceived ideal company according to the dealers of Mercedes-Benz. The statements involve; partner **associations** (brands, persons, places, product categories, and institutions), **corporate brand's perceived quality** (financial performance, trust of business) and **organizational associations** (including society/community orientation, innovation, and concern for customers, presence and success, local vs. global statements.)

iii. **Corporate Image: Q3** measures the perceived identity, so the image of the mentioned four companies according to the dealers of Mercedes-Benz. **Q4** in this section clearly measures the preference of the dealers among these four automobile companies after rating all the statements above according to their level of agreement.

The questions **between Q1, Q2 and Q3** are asked to measure the attributes of ideal image and the distance of the images of four companies to ideal image. The dealers of Mercedes-Benz were expected to state their level of agreement among seven-point likert scale; from strongly agree to strongly disagree. This scale is used to determine the degree of agreement of the mentioned dealers to the items mentioned in the methodology of second study for an ideal automobile company, and the perceptions of the dealers about these four companies on the basis of the statements. These are also interval scales hence it can be observed an equal difference between the ratings of Mercedes-Benz and the other three automobile companies.

Section III focuses on the demographic variables:

    i.   **Demographic Variables; Q1 to Q7** relate to demographic information about respondents (Mercedes-Benz dealers) to highlight possible differences in perception of image also accordingly in the analysis.

5.3.3 The Variables Used in the Research

The variables or components used in the research are discussed under the "data collection instrument" heading.

As it can be seen they're corporate brand awareness, corporate brand identification, corporate brand loyalty, corporate brand associations and indirectly, corporate brand identity. Additionally, corporate image definition, ideal image, image dimensions, perceived image, competitor image, image researches and components were measured in both studies in the questionnaire forms.

a.   **Study One:** Study One involves three sections. According to the literature and prepared conceptual framework as well as hypothesis, the dependent and the independent variables of study were prepared as follows:

1.   **Dependent Variable:** Corporate Image

2.   **Independent Variables:**

Section I:

    i.   Corporate Brand Awareness (Q1)

    ii.   First recalled company

    iii.   Corporate Brand Familiarity Mercedes-Benz and its competitors (Q2)

    iv.   Company Evaluation according to; (Q3)

    v.   Corporate Distinctiveness

    vi.   Corporate Reputation

    vii.   Price Premium

viii.   Driving Experience and Automobile Preferences (Q4 - Q8)

ix.   Being a driver

x.   Years of driving

xi.   Automobile possession (own/family)

xii.   The brand of automobiles possessed

xiii.   Mercedes-Benz possession

xiv.   Satisfaction level of Mercedes-Benz from completely satisfied to completely dissatisfied (Q9)

xv.   Corporate Brand Loyalty measurement – according to the level of agreement to the statements (Q10)

xvi.   Being satisfied and acquainted with the brand

xvii.   Preference of the brand in spite of competitors' deals

xviii.   Preference of additional products and services from the brand

xix.   Product usage preference among competitors (Q11)

xx.   Mercedes-Benz

xxi.   BMW

xxii.   Audi

xxiii.   Volvo

Section II:

i.   Corporate Brand Identification (Q1)

ii.   Corporate Brand Associations for an Ideal Automobile Company (Q2)

Corporate brand's perceived quality

i.   Strong financial performance

ii.   Safe & reliable products

iii.   High technology & quality products

Partner Associations (Brands, persons, places, product categories, institutions)

i. constellation of other brands

ii. qualified, well educated employees and service personnel

iii. powerful country of origin

iv. offers a lot of products in different product categories

v. partnership with other institution

Organizational Associations (society/ community orientation, innovation, concern for customers, presence and success, local vs. global)

i. high society/ community orientation and sensitivity to environmental issues

ii. innovativeness

iii. concerns for customers

iv. strong presence

v. global company

vi. Perception of brand image (Q3)

vii. Strong, distinctive character

viii. Successful communication with stakeholders

ix. Good perception among stakeholders

x. High prestige products

xi. Well-know, respectful and desirable products

Section III:

i. Demographics (Q1-Q7)

ii. Gender

iii. Age group

iv. Education Level

v. Marital status

    vi.   Occupation

   vii.   Income

  viii.   Number of people in the household

b. **Study Two:** Study Two also involves three sections. According to the literature and prepared conceptual framework as well as hypothesis, the dependent and the independent variables of study were prepared similarly to the Study One. Keeping the same format has the main target of finding out the gaps easily.

1. **Dependent Variable:** Corporate Image

2. **Independent Variables** differ according to the sessions.

Section I:

    i.   Corporate Brand Awareness (Q1)

    ii.   First recalled company

   iii.   Corporate Brand Familiarity Mercedes-Benz and its competitors (Q2)

   iv.   Company Evaluation according to; (Q3)

    v.   Corporate Distinctiveness

   vi.   Corporate Reputation

   vii.   Price Premium

  viii.   Satisfaction level of being a Mercedes-Benz employee from completely satisfied to completely dissatisfied (Q4)

   ix.   Employment Loyalty measurement – according to the level of agreement to the statements (Q5)

    x.   Being satisfied and acquainted with the brand

   xi.   Preference of working for the company in spite of competitors'

   xii.   Suggesting others to work for that company

  xiii.   Product usage preference among competitors (Q6)

  xiv.   Mercedes-Benz

xv.   BMW

xvi.   Audi

xvii.   Volvo

Section II:

i.   Corporate Brand Identification (Q1)

ii.   Corporate Brand Associations for an Ideal Automobile Company (Q2)

Corporate brand's perceived quality

i.   Strong financial performance

ii.   Safe & reliable products

iii.   High technology & quality products

Partner Associations (Brands, persons, places, product categories, institutions)

i.   constellation of other brands

ii.   qualified, well educated employees and service personnel

iii.   powerful country of origin

iv.   offers a lot of products in different product categories

v.   partnership with other institution

Organizational Associations (society/ community orientation, innovation, concern for customers, presence and success, local vs. global)

i.   high society/ community orientation and sensitivity to environmental issues

ii.   innovativeness

iii.   concerns for customers

iv.   strong presence

v.   global company

vi.   perception of brand image (Q3)

vii.   strong, distinctive character

viii. successful communication with stakeholders

ix. good perception among stakeholders

x. high prestige products

xi. well-known, respectful and desirable products

Section III:

i. Demographics (Q1-Q7)

ii. Work experience in other companies

iii. Name of the previous employing company

iv. Year of employment for previous company

v. Year of employment for Mercedes-Benz

vi. Number of employees working at the dealer

vii. Location of the dealer

viii. Occupation level at the dealer

5.3.4 Statistical Methods Used in the Research

The computer program SPSS 16.0 for PC was used for the derivation of frequency tabulations, means, summary tables, multiple response, one-way ANOVA, independent-T test, paired T test analyses.

5.4 SAMPLING PROCESS

The population of **Study One** is defined as the potential & existing customers of Mercedes-Benz company which sells cars in the Turkish automobile market. The unit of interested customers are all located in Istanbul and selected on the basis of their education, social status, and age.

The population of **Study Two** is composed of Mercedes-Benz dealers which operate in different cities of Turkey. They are the sales representatives of Mercedes-Benz company and their perceived image level is used to find out the gaps between their perceptions and existing & potential customers' perceived image components.

5.4.1 Sampling Method

For Study One according to the conceptual framework which has been developed through the information gathered by the literature, the convenience sampling has been done and the people who live in Istanbul, are in the 25-65 age group and whose education level is above primary school, have been chosen as the sample. These have been selected according to main target characteristics of the mentioned for automobile companies including; Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo.

For Study Two, Mercedes-Benz Turk A.S. dealers which are located in different cities and representing Mercedes-Benz as authorized automobile dealers have been selected. The questionnaires have been applied to the people who have direct contact with the customers and have a deep knowledge of automobile market in Turkey as well as the competitors of Mercedes-Benz operating in Turkish market. Consequently, people who work in Mercedes-Benz dealer offices and have a direct relationship with the sales or responsible for the sales have been targeted like dealer owners, sales managers, sales specialists and sales staff.

5.4.2 Sample Size

The sample size of **Study One** was 200, which involves the existing& potential customers of Mercedes-Benz. The sample size is determined on the basis of the elements stated before. According to the sample size formulation the number of questionnaires was determined and the tests are done on the basis of the information gathered from these 200 questionnaires.

The sample size of **Study Two** is determined on the basis of the number of Mercedes-Benz dealers in Turkey. As the company has 40 dealers in Turkey, 40 questionnaires were distributed to the dealers and all the tests are done on the basis of the information gathered from these 40 questionnaires.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

a. **Study One:** The budget of that research limited the sampling method of the second art of the research that the questionnaires could only be applied to the limited number of customers who live in Istanbul and also a perfect sampling couldn't be done according to the number of main population, so this situation limited the number of questionnaires tested. However, a meaningful comparison could be done and also meaningful results could be got.

b. **Study Two:** The target group (dealers of Mercedes-Benz) was a small population so it was not a perfect sampling but as all the dealers of Mercedes-Benz were reached and their answers could be collected, the results were meaningful and therefore a meaningful comparison could be done.

5.6 ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The computer program SPSS 16.0 for PC was used for the derivation of frequency tabulations, means, summary tables, ANOVA analysis, independent-T test as well as correlation and regression analyses.

6. FINDINGS & ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH

6.1 INITIAL DATA ANALYSIS

6.1.1 Consumer Sample Characteristics

According to the Table 6.1 below, the majority of respondents are males. (69.5 percent) Male respondents were quite interested about the questionnaire as they usually have detailed idea about the automobile companies; the automobile brands used in the survey symbolize the upper-class segment and also luxury products according to their perception.

The 36 percent of the respondents are between the age of 26-35, 29 percent of them are 46 and above, 21.5 percent of them 25 and below, 13.5 percent of them between 36 and 45 age. As it is seen, the majority of respondents were middle-aged. These people are the target group of the automotive companies who are going to repurchase the company's products as their loyalty level will be much higher than the younger customers. On the other hand, young people are the potential customers since they are going to start earning more money in the future and they are the ones who follow the technology closely. Therefore, if a good image of a company is created in their minds, this will provide extra benefits to this company's potential future sales.

The distribution of respondents' social status involves their education level, marital status, occupation, income per month and the people living in their household. According to the education level, most of the respondents have undergraduate degree with the percentage of 50.5 percent and masters degree with the percentage of 44 percent. 5.5 percent of the respondents represent secondary school, high school and PhD graduates.

Table 6.1: Demographic indicators' details for Consumer Data

Demographic Variables		
Gender	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Male	139	69.5
Female	61	30.5
Age	**Frequency**	**Percent**
25 and below	43	21.5
26-35	72	36
36-45	27	13.5
46 and above	58	29
Education Level	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Secondary School	1	0.5
High School	4	2
Undergraduate	101	50.5
Masters	88	44
PhD	6	3
Maritual Status	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Married	117	58.5
Single	73	36.5
Widow	1	0.5
Divorced	9	4.5
Occupation	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Student	31	15.5
Self-Employed	18	9
Administrative/ Secretarial Position	19	9.5
Management Positions	44	22
Professionals (Engineers,Doctors…)		
	88	44
Income per Month	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Lower than 2.500 TL	19	9.5
2.500-5.000 TL	60	30
5.001-7.500 TL	51	25.5
More than 7.501 TL	70	35
Household	**Frequency**	**Percent**
1 person	19	9.5
2 people	57	28.5
3 people	55	27.5
4 people	50	25
5 people	18	9
6 people	1	0.5

On the basis of the marital status; distribution of the sample is mostly occurs by married people. The 58.5 percent of the respondents are married, 36.5 percent of the respondents are single and the 5 percent of the respondents are widow or divorced and 2.5 percent of

the respondents are divorced. According to the occupation, most of the respondents represent professionals (engineers, doctors, lawyers...etc) with the percentage of 44 percent, management positions take the second place with the percentage of 22 percent. The rest of the respondents represent students, self-employed and administrative/ secretarial positions which is respectively 15.5 percent, 9 percent and 9.5 percent.

Mostly the income levels of the respondents are placed in more than 7.501 TL. The percentage of respondents with the income level between 2.501 TL-5.000 TL is 30 percent, the percentage of respondents with the income level between 5.001 TL-7.500 TL is 25.5percent and less than 2.500 TL is 9.5 percent. This shows that the respondents have the possibility of saving money in order to buy a car in their life at least once a time. Thus it is possible to state that the respondents have a general idea about automotive sector. When it comes to the people living in the respondents' household, it is approximately divided equally between 2 or 3 people. Most of the respondents have 2 people in their houses with the percentage of 28.5 and 27.5 percent of the respondents have 3 people in their household.

Table 6.2: Distribution of Driver's License Ownership & Driver's License Ownership Duration & Automobile Ownership

Driver's License Ownership		
Have/ Do not have	**Frequency**	**Valid Percent**
Have Driver's License	193	96.5
Do not have Driver's License	7	3.5
Driver's License Ownership Duration		
Less/ More	**Frequency**	**Valid Percent**
Less than 5 years	50	26.04
More than 5 years	142	73.96
Automobile Ownership		
Yes / No	**Frequency**	**Valid Percent**
Yes	181	90.5
No	19	9.5

As it is shown on the Table 6.2, 96.5 percent of the respondents have driver's license which represents almost the whole sample whereas 3.5 percent of the respondents do not have driver's license. The non-drivers so the people who do not have driver's license were also included into the sample due to the fact that there is a possibility that they can get driver's license or start to drive car in the future, which means they are also potential customers for the companies.

The 73.96 percent of the respondents have deeper experience of driving car as they have a driver's license since more than 5 years. The 26.04 percent of the respondents have less experience than 5 years in driving car. It is possible to say that the distribution of driving experience shows that the respondents are familiar with the automobiles as they basically are the first-users.

According to the Table 6.2, among 200 respondents, 181 of them which make 90.5 percent of the population have a car.

Table 6.3: Distribution of the Brand of the Automobiles Owned

Brand of the Automobiles Owned		
Brands	**Frequency**	**Valid Percent**
Audi	5	2.76
BMW	7	3.87
Citroen	2	1.10
Fiat	5	2.76
Ford	13	7.18
Honda	11	6.07
Hyundai	3	1.66
Mercedes-Benz	59	32.60
Nissan	2	1.10
Opel	10	5.52
Peugeot	1	0.55
Renault	24	13.26
Toyota	12	6.63
Volkswagen	23	12.70
Volvo	4	2.21

The Table 6.3 shows that 32.6 percent of the 181 respondents who have car, own Mercedes-Benz brand as their car. This represents the biggest portion of the population. As the main aim of the research was being able to reach potential & existing customers

of Mercedes-Benz, the table shows that the aim was reached. The second biggest portion of the automobiles owned is Renault with the percentage of 13.26.

Table 6.4: Distribution of the Consumers Who Have/ Had Mercedes-Benz Car

Current / Previous Mercedes-Benz Ownership		
Yes / No	**Frequency**	**Valid Percent**
Yes	102	51
No	98	49

As it is shown on the Table 6.4, 51 percent of the respondents have/had Mercedes-Benz car before. This shows their knowledge about the brand is higher than in general as they were the first users and it is more feasible and possible to make right analysis about their loyalty and satisfaction level to the company.

Table 6.5: Distribution of the Consumers' Automobile Preferences

Current Brand Preference		
Brands	**Frequency**	**Valid Percent**
Other	7	3.5
Mercedes-Benz	160	80
BMW	12	6
Audi	14	7
Volvo	7	3.5

After the questions of respondents' driving experiences, current car, respondents' Mercedes-Benz experiences and so on, the next question asked was their current brand preference. The Table 6.5, so the results of the analysis show that 80 percent of the respondents among 200 people would prefer to have a Mercedes-Benz car. This result shows that even though all the respondents were not representing the current customers of Mercedes-Benz, they definitely represent the potential customers of the company.

6.1.2 Dealer Sample Characteristics

The Study II was conducted as a questionnaire to the dealers of the Mercedes-Benz. Among 40 dealers, sales managers, sales specialists and sales representatives participated to the survey. According to the Table 6.6 below, almost 50 percent of the

respondents worked in other automobile companies before. Among the ones who worked in other automobile companies before, 42.11 percent of them had between 1 and 3 years of experience and 26.32 percent of them had between 3-5 years and more than 5 years of experience in other automobile companies. Besides, 72.5 percent of them had more than 5 years experience at Mercedes-Benz. These indicate that the respondents are experts in automotive sector and know quite well the brand that they work for as well as the competitors of their company in the market.

Table 6.6: Corporate Image Perception of the Dealers for Mercedes-Benz on the Basis of their Gender and Age

Demographic Variables		
Experience in Other Companies	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Worked in another company before	19	47.5
Not worked in another company before	21	52.5
Years of Experience in Other Companies	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Less than 1 year	1	5.26
Between 1 and 3 years	8	42.11
Between 3 and 5 years	5	26.32
More than 5 years	5	26.32
Missing	21	52.5
Total	40	100
Years of Experience in Mercedes-Benz	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Less than 1 year	1	2.5
Between 1 and 3 years	5	12.5
Between 3 and 5 years	5	12.5
More than 5 years	29	72.5

The Table 6.7 below shows the number of employees at the dealers, the locations of the dealers and also the position of the respondents at the dealer offices. According to the table below, percent75 of the respondents have more than 15 employees at their dealers. The dealer location table shows that the questionnaire was conducted all around the Turkey but the most of the responds (37.5 percent) were collected from Istanbul. On the other hand, the table below indicates that the 57.5 percent of the respondents were sales managers. This means, the results were collected from the people who are directly in contact with the sales activities and who have deeper knowledge about the market, the competitors as well as the customer expectations and behaviors.

Table 6.7: The Distribution of the Number of Employees at the Dealers, the Locations of the Dealers, the Positions of the Respondents

Demographic Variables		
Number of Employees at Dealer	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Between 5 and 10	1	2.5
Between 11 and 15	9	22.5
More than 15	30	75
Dealer Location	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Istanbul	15	37.5
Izmir	4	10
Adana	1	2.5
Ankara	3	7.5
Antakya	1	2.5
Antalya	1	2.5
Bursa	2	5
Denizli	1	2.5
Diyarbakir	1	2.5
Duzce	1	2.5
Erzurum	1	2.5
Eskisehir	1	2.5
Gaziantep	1	2.5
Girne	1	2.5
Kayseri	1	2.5
Konya	1	2.5
Lefkosa	1	2.5
Mersin	1	2.5
Samsun	1	2.5
Trabzon	1	2.5
Position at Dealer	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Other	1	2.5
Sales Manager	23	57.5
Sales Specialist	11	27.5
Sales Staff	5	12.5

6.2 ANALYSIS OF PERCEIVED CORPORATE IMAGE ON THE BASIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

6.2.1 Analysis of Perceived Corporate Image for Consumer Data

To be able to analyze perceived corporate image of four mentioned brands and to compare image perceptions of Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo among different demographic variables "t-test' and "ANOVA Analysis" have been used.

The following demographic variables have been chosen in order to analyze corporate image perceptions of customers; age, income level, education level and gender. Since age, education level and income have more than two categories, ANOVA analysis is conducted to investigate whether the perception is different among different categories. On the other hand, t-test has been conducted to compare the image perceptions of different genders.

The tests for the consumer data are implemented separately for Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo in order to analyze different carmakers' perceived corporate image among different categories.

Mercedes-Benz

In order to analyze, difference of the image perception of customers according to different age groups, test of homogeneity of variances has been conducted by using Levene's test. According to this test, these groups have equal variances ($p=0.23 >0.05$). Then, in order to get a detailed understanding of image perception of customers in different age groups about Mercedes-Benz brand, ANOVA analysis has been conducted. According to this analysis, the means of different age groups are different from each other.

In order to analyze, the image perception of customers according to their income levels, test of homogeneity of variances has been conducted by using Levene's test. According to this test, these groups have equal variances ($p=0.61 >0.05$). For detailed analysis, ANOVA test have been used. The results of ANOVA analysis (Table 6.8) show that corporate image perceptions are not differ according to the customers' income levels The results are not different for each groups ($p=0.19 >0.05$)

In order to analyze, the image perception of customers according to their education levels, test of homogeneity of variances has been conducted by using Levene's test. According to this test, the different education-level groups have equal variances ($p=0.296 >0.05$).Then, in order to get a detailed understanding of Mercedes-Benz brand image perception of customers which have different levels of education, ANOVA analysis has been conducted. According to this analysis, the means of different education-level groups are different from each other.

Table 6.8: ANOVA Analysis of Customers' Perceived Corporate Image for Mercedes-Benz with Different Age Groups, Income Levels and Education Levels

ANOVA Analysis of Different Age Groups						
Measurable	Values	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-value
Corporate Image Mercedes-Benz	Between Groups	4,442	3	1,481	5,341	0,001
	Within Groups	54,33	196	0,277		
	Total	58,771	199			
ANOVA Analysis of Different Income Levels						
Measurable	Values	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-value
Corporate Image Mercedes-Benz	Between Groups	1,409	3	0,47	1,605	0,19
	Within Groups	57,362	196	0,293		
	Total	58,771	199			
ANOVA Analysis of Different Education Levels						
Measurable	Values	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-value
Corporate Image Mercedes-Benz	Between Groups	2,933	3	0,978	3,419	0,018
	Within Groups	55,755	195	0,286		
	Total	58,688	198			

Beside the ANOVA Analyses, in order to see which groups image perceptions are different than each other Scheffe Tests have been conducted. Dependent variable is taken as Mercedes-Benz's perceived corporate image.

Table 6.9: Scheffe Test & Multiple Comparisons for the Perceived Corporate Image of Mercedes-Benz within Different Age Groups, Income, Education Levels

Scheffe Test for Mercedes-Benz within Different Age Groups				
(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	P-value
1	2	0.0594	0.1015	0.952
	3	-0.2212	0.1293	0.405
	4	-0.2767	0.1060	0.081
2	1	-0.0594	0.1015	0.952
	3	-0.2806	0.1188	0.138
	4	-.33611*	0.0929	0.005*
3	1	0.2212	0.1293	0.405
	2	0.2806	0.1188	0.138
	4	-0.0556	0.1227	0.977
4	1	0.2767	0.1060	0.081
	2	.33611*	0.0929	0.005*
	3	0.0556	0.1227	0.977
Scheffe Test for Mercedes-Benz within Different Income Levels				
(I) Income	(J) Income	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	P-value
1	2	0.0560	0.1424	0.985
	3	-0.1160	0.1454	0.888
	4	-0.1331	0.1399	0.824
2	1	-0.0560	0.1424	0.985
	3	-0.1720	0.1030	0.428
	4	-0.1891	0.0952	0.271
3	1	0.1160	0.1454	0.888
	2	0.1720	0.1030	0.428
	4	-0.0171	0.0996	0.999
4	1	0.1331	0.1399	0.824
	2	0.1891	0.0952	0.271
	3	0.0171	0.0996	0.999
Scheffe Test for Mercedes-Benz within Different Education Levels				
(I) Education	(J) Education	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	P-value
2	3	-0.4119	0.2726	0.517
	4	-0.1932	0.2734	0.919
	5	-0.5333	0.3452	0.498
3	2	0.4119	0.2726	0.517
	4	0.2187	0.0780	0.052
	5	-0.1215	0.2247	0.961
4	2	0.1932	0.2734	0.919
	3	-0.2187	0.0780	0.052
	5	-0.3402	0.2256	0.519
5	2	0.5333	0.3452	0.498
	3	0.1215	0.2247	0.961
	4	0.3402	0.2256	0.519

According to the Scheffe test above, age groups are shown as followed; 1 indicates; 25 and below, 2 indicates; between 26 and 35, 3 indicates; between 36 and 45 and 4 indicates; 46 and above. The Table 6.9 shows that there is a difference between the image perceptions of the customers who are "between 26 and 35" and who are "46 and above". Besides, age groups were gathered in two sub-groups. The first sub-group includes the age groups; between 26 and 35, 25 and below and between 36 and 45 whereas the second group involves 25 and below, between 36 and 45, 46 and above. When the corporate image perception of these groups are compared, it is seen that the customers who are 46 and above have the highest image perception of Mercedes-Benz (6.5) whereas the customers who are between 26 and 35 have the lowest image perception (6.164).

Different income level groups were shown in the table respectively; 1- lower than 2.500 TL, 2- between 2.501 and 5.000 TL, 3- between 5.001 and 7.500 TL and 4- more than 7.501 TL. The results of Scheffe test according to different income levels show that there is no difference between the image perceptions of customers for Mercedes-Benz according to their income levels.

Table 6.9 shows different education groups as followed; 1- high school, 2- undergraduate, 3- masters and 4- PhD. Also, the results of Scheffe test according to different education levels show that there is no difference between the image perceptions of customers for Mercedes-Benz according to their education levels.

In order to evaluate corporate image perceptions of different genders for Mercedes-Benz brand, homogeneity test (Levene's test) for checking equal variance assumption, has been conducted. As it can be seen in Table 6.10, these both female and male customers have equal variances (p=0.891, p>0.05). Therefore, equal variances assumed are used for comparing these two groups.

Table 6.10: Independent Samples Test for Mercedes-Benz Perceived Image Among different Genders of Customers

Gender: Independent Samples Test								
Measurable	Values	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	P-value	t	df	P-value (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Corporate Image Mercedes-Benz	Equal variances assumed	0.019	0.891	2.294	198	0.023*	0.189	0.083
	Equal variances not assumed			2.298	115.018	0.023*	0.189	0.082

Since the p-value (2-tailed) is less than 0.05 (p=0.023), corporate image perceptions of Mercedes-Benz, are different for males and females. According to Table 6.20, male customers' corporate image perception of Mercedes-Benz is greater than female customers' corporate image perception.

Table 6.11: Descriptive Statistics of Mercedes-Benz's Perceived Image Among Customers with Different Genders

Descriptive Statistics				
Corporate Image Mercedes-Benz	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Male	139	6.370	0.538
	Female	61	6.180	0.536

BMW

In order to analyze, difference of the image perception of customers for BMW, according to different age groups, test of homogeneity of variances has been conducted by using Levene's test. According to this test, these groups have equal variances (p=0.383 >0.05). Then, in order to get a detailed understanding of image perception of customers in different age groups about BMW brand, ANOVA analysis has been conducted. According to this analysis, the means of different age groups are different from each other.

In order to analyze, the image perception of customers according to their income levels, test of homogeneity of variances has been conducted by using Levene's test. According to this test, these groups have equal variances (p=0.392 >0.05). For detailed analysis, ANOVA test have been used. The results of ANOVA analysis (Table 6.12) show that corporate image perceptions are not differ according to the customers' income levels. The results are not different for each groups (p=0.064>0.05)

In order to analyze, the image perception of customers according to their education levels, test of homogeneity of variances has been conducted by using Levene's test. According to this test, the different education-level groups have equal variances (p=0.062 >0.05).Then, in order to get a detailed understanding of BMW brand image perception of customers which have different levels of education, ANOVA analysis has been conducted. According to this analysis, the means of different education-level groups are different from each other.

Table 6.12: ANOVA Analysis of Customers' Perceived Corporate Image for BMW with Different Age Groups, Income Levels and Education Levels

ANOVA Analysis of Different Age Groups						
Measurable	Values	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-value
Corporate Image BMW	Between Groups	7.249	3	2.416	4.904	0.003
	Within Groups	96.573	196	0.493		
	Total	103.822	199			
ANOVA Analysis of Different Income Levels						
Measurable	Values	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-value
Corporate Image BMW	Between Groups	3.775	3	1.258	2.465	0.064
	Within Groups	100.048	196	0.51		
	Total	103.822	199			
ANOVA Analysis of Different Education Levels						
Measurable	Values	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-value
Corporate Image BMW	Between Groups	8.441	3	2.814	5.773	0.001
	Within Groups	95.039	195	0.487		
	Total	103.481	198			

In order to see which groups' image perceptions are different than each other, Scheffe test has been conducted.

Table 6.13: Scheffe Test & Multiple Comparisons for the Perceived Corporate Image of BMW within Different Age Groups, Income and Education Levels

Scheffe Test for BMW within Different Age Groups				
(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	P-value
1	2	-0.20724	0.13528	0.505
	3	0.23721	0.17236	0.596
	4	0.21652	0.14126	0.505
2	1	0.20724	0.13528	0.505
	3	0.44444	0.15841	0.052
	4	.42375*	0.12385	0.01*
3	1	-0.23721	0.17236	0.596
	2	-0.44444	0.15841	0.052
	4	-0.02069	0.16354	0.999
4	1	-0.21652	0.14126	0.505
	2	-.42375*	0.12385	0.01*
	3	0.02069	0.16354	0.999
Scheffe Test for BMW within Different Income Levels				
(I) Income	(J) Income	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	P-value
1	2	0.0109	0.1881	1
	3	-0.0883	0.1920	0.976
	4	0.2471	0.1848	0.619
2	1	-0.0109	0.1881	1
	3	-0.0992	0.1361	0.912
	4	0.2362	0.1257	0.32
3	1	0.0883	0.1920	0.976
	2	0.0992	0.1361	0.912
	4	0.3354	0.1315	0.093
4	1	-0.2471	0.1848	0.619
	2	-0.2362	0.1257	0.32
	3	-0.3354	0.1315	0.093
Scheffe Test for BMW within Different Education Levels				
(I) Education	Education	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	P-value
2	3	-0.3455	0.3559	0.8150
	4	-0.7386	0.3569	0.2360
	5	-0.4000	0.4506	0.8520
3	2	0.3455	0.3559	0.8150
	4	-.39309*	0.1018	0.002*
	5	-0.0545	0.2934	0.9980
4	2	0.7386	0.3569	0.2360
	3	.39309*	0.1018	0.002*
	5	0.3386	0.2946	0.7240
5	2	0.4000	0.4506	0.8520
	3	0.0545	0.2934	0.9980
	4	-0.3386	0.2946	0.7240

According to the Scheffe test above, age groups are shown as followed; 1 indicates; 25 and below, 2 indicates; between 26 and 35, 3 indicates; between 36 and 45 and 4 indicates; 46 and above. The Table 6.13 shows that there is a difference between the image perceptions of the customers who are "between 26 and 35" and who are "46 and above". Besides, according to the Scheffe test, age groups were gathered in two sub-groups. The first sub-group includes the age groups; between 36 and 45, 46 and above, 25 and below, whereas the second group involves 25 and below, between 26 and 35. When the corporate image perception of these groups are compared, it is seen that the customers who are between 26 and 35 have the highest image perception of BMW (6.044) whereas the customers who are between 36 and 45 have the lowest image perception (5.6).

Different income level groups were shown in the table respectively; 1- lower than 2.500 TL, 2- between 2.501 and 5.000 TL, 3- between 5.001 and 7.500 TL and 4- more than 7.501 TL. The results of Scheffe test according to different income levels show that there is no difference between the image perceptions of customers BMW according to their income levels. Therefore it is not needed to perform any multiple comparisons tests.

Table 6.13 shows different education groups as followed; 1- high school, 2- undergraduate, 3- masters and 4- PhD. Also, the results of Scheffe test according to different education levels show that there is a difference between the image perceptions of customers for BMW, who are master's graduates and who are PhD graduates. Besides, when the corporate image perceptions of these groups are compared, it is seen that the customers who are master graduates have the highest image perception of BMW (6.039).

In order to evaluate corporate image perceptions of different genders for BMW brand, homogeneity test (Levene's test) for checking equal variance assumption, has been conducted. As it can be seen in Table 6.14, these both female and male customers have equal variances (p=0.094, p>0.05). Therefore, equal variances assumed used for comparing these two groups.

Table 6.14: Independent Samples Test for BMW Perceived Image Among different Genders of Customers

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
Measurable	Values	F	P-value	t	df	P-value (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Corporate Image BMW	Equal variances assumed	2.83	0.094	-1.227	198	0.221	-0.136	0.111
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.347	143.997	0.18	-0.136	0.101

(Gender: Independent Samples Test)

Since the p-value (2-tailed) is greater than 0.05 (p=0.221), corporate image perceptions of BMW, are not different for males and females. It has also shown in the Table 6.15 below.

Table 6.15: Descriptive Statistics of BMW's Perceived Image Among Customers with Different Genders

Descriptive Statistics				
Gender		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Corporate Image BMW	1	139	5.776	0.767
	2	61	5.912	0.603

Audi

In order to analyze, difference of the image perception of customers for Audi, according to different age groups, test of homogeneity of variances has been conducted by using Levene's test. According to this test, these groups have equal variances (p=0.197 >0.05). Then, in order to get a detailed understanding of image perception of customers in different age groups about Audi brand, ANOVA analysis has been conducted. According to this analysis, the means of different age groups are different from each other.

In order to analyze, the image perception of customers according to their income levels, test of homogeneity of variances has been conducted by using Levene's test. According

to this test, these groups have equal variances (p=0.401 >0.05). For detailed analysis, ANOVA test have been used. The results of ANOVA analysis show that corporate image perceptions are not differ according to the customers' income levels. The results are not different for each groups (p=0.075>0.05) Therefore it is not needed to perform any multiple comparisons tests.

In order to analyze, the image perception of customers according to their education levels, test of homogeneity of variances has been conducted by using Levene's test. According to this test, the different education-level groups have equal variances (p=0.054 >0.05). Then, in order to get a detailed understanding of Audi brand image perception of customers which have different levels of education, ANOVA analysis has been conducted. According to this analysis, the means of different education-level groups are different from each other.

Table 6.16: ANOVA Analysis of Customers' Perceived Corporate Image for Audi with Different Age Groups, Income Levels and Education Levels

Measurable	Values	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-value
ANOVA Analysis of Different Age Groups						
Corporate Image Audi	Between Groups	11.262	3	3.754	5.991	0.001
	Within Groups	122.811	196	0.627		
	Total	134.073	199			
ANOVA Analysis of Different Income Levels						
Corporate Image Audi	Between Groups	4.62	3	1.54	2.332	0.075
	Within Groups	129.453	196	0.66		
	Total	134.073	199			
ANOVA Analysis of Different Education Levels						
Corporate Image Audi	Between Groups	14.407	3	4.802	7.849	0
	Within Groups	119.311	195	0.612		
	Total	133.718	198			

In order to see which groups' image perceptions are different than each other, Scheffe test has been conducted.

Table 6.17: Scheffe Test & Multiple Comparisons for the Perceived Corporate Image of Audi within Different Age Groups, Income and Education Levels

Scheffe Test for Audi within Different Age Groups				
(I) Age	(J) Age	(I-J)	Std. Error	P-value
1	2	-.45627*	0.1526	0.033*
	3	-0.0720	0.1944	0.987
	4	0.0913	0.1593	0.954
2	1	.45627*	0.1526	0.033*
	3	0.3843	0.1786	0.205
	4	.54761*	0.1397	0.002*
3	1	0.0720	0.1944	0.987
	2	-0.3843	0.1786	0.205
	4	0.1634	0.1844	0.853
4	1	-0.0913	0.1593	0.954
	2	-.54761*	0.1397	0.002*
	3	-0.1634	0.1844	0.853
Scheffe Test for Audi within Different Income Levels				
(I) Income	(J) Income	(I-J)	Std. Error	P-value
1	2	0.1558	0.2139	0.9120
	3	-0.0960	0.2184	0.9790
	4	0.2844	0.2102	0.6090
2	1	-0.1558	0.2139	0.9120
	3	-0.2518	0.1548	0.4510
	4	0.1286	0.1430	0.8470
3	1	0.0960	0.2184	0.9790
	2	0.2518	0.1548	0.4510
	4	0.3803	0.1496	0.0950
4	1	-0.2844	0.2102	0.6090
	2	-0.1286	0.1430	0.8470
	3	-0.3803	0.1496	0.0950
Scheffe Test for Audi within Different Education Levels				
(I) Education	(J) Education	(I-J)	Std. Error	P-value
2	3	-0.7960	0.3988	0.2660
	4	-1.24773*	0.3999	0.023*
	5	-1.3667	0.5049	0.0650
3	2	0.7960	0.3988	0.2660
	4	-.45169*	0.1141	0.002*
	5	-0.5706	0.3287	0.3920
4	2	1.24773*	0.3999	0.023*
	3	.45169*	0.1141	0.002*
	5	-0.1189	0.3300	0.9880
5	2	1.3667	0.5049	0.0650
	3	0.5706	0.3287	0.3920
	4	0.1189	0.3300	0.9880

According to the Scheffe test above, age groups are shown as followed; 1 indicates; 25 and below, 2 indicates; between 26 and 35, 3 indicates; between 36 and 45 and 4 indicates; 46 and above. Table 6.17 indicates that there is a difference between the image perceptions of age groups 25 and below; 26 and 35. Also there is a difference between the age groups of between 26 and 35; 46 and above. Besides, according to the Scheffe test, age groups were gathered in two sub-groups. The first sub-group includes the age groups; 46 and above, 25 and below, between 36 and 45 whereas the second group involves 25 and below, between 36 and 45, between 26 and 35. When the corporate image perception of these groups are compared, it is seen that the customers who are between 26 and 35 have the highest image perception of Audi (5.903) whereas the customers who are between 36 and 45 have the lowest image perception (5.519).

Different income level groups were shown in the table respectively; 1- lower than 2.500 TL, 2- between 2.501 and 5.000 TL, 3- between 5.001 and 7.500 TL and 4- more than 7.501 TL. The results of Scheffe test according to different income levels show that there is no difference between the image perceptions of customers Audi according to their income levels. Therefore it is not needed to perform any multiple comparisons tests.

Table 6.17 also shows different education groups as followed; 1- high school, 2- undergraduate, 3- masters and 4- PhD. According to the table, there is a difference between the image perception of undergraduates and PhD graduates, as well as master graduates and PhD graduates. Education levels of the customers were gathered in two groups. The first group includes the education levels; high school and undergraduate whereas the second group includes; undergraduate, masters and PhD graduates. If the corporate image perceptions of these groups are compared, it is seen that the customers who are PhD graduates have the highest image perception of Audi (5.967) whereas the customers who are high school graduates have the lowest image perception (4.6).

In order to evaluate corporate image perceptions of different genders for Audi brand, homogeneity test (Levene's test) for checking equal variance assumption, has been conducted. As it can be seen in Table 6.18, these both female and male customers do not have equal variances ($p=0.002$, $p<0.01$). Therefore, equal variances not assumed used for comparing these two groups.

Table 6.18: Independent Samples Test for Audi's Perceived Image Among different Genders of Customers

Gender: Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
Measurable	Value	F	P-value	t	df	P-value (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Corporate Image Audi	Equal variances assumed	10.094	0.002*	-1.192	198	0.235	-0.15016	0.12593
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.384	165.218	0.168	-0.15016	0.10853

Since the p-value (2-tailed) is greater than 0.05 (p=0.168), corporate image perceptions of Audi, are not different for males and females. It has also shown in the Table 6.19 below.

Table 6.19: Descriptive Statistics of Audi's Perceived Image among Customers with Different Genders

Gender: Group Statistics				
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Corporate Image Audi	1	139	5.548	0.898
	2	61	5.698	0.604

Volvo

In order to analyze, difference of the image perception of customers for Volvo, according to different age groups, test of homogeneity of variances has been conducted by using Levene's test. According to this test, these groups have equal variances (p=0.891 >0.05). Then, in order to get a detailed understanding of image perception of customers in different age groups about Volvo brand, ANOVA analysis has been conducted. ANOVA analysis results show that corporate image perceptions are not different for each groups (p=0.33>0.05).

In order to analyze, the image perception of customers according to their income levels, test of homogeneity of variances has been conducted by using Levene's test. According to this test, these groups have equal variances (p=0.612 >0.05).For detailed analysis, ANOVA test has been used. The results of ANOVA analysis (Table 6.20) shows that

corporate image perceptions do not differ according to the customers' income levels. The results are not different for each groups (p=0.67>0.05)

In order to analyze, the image perception of customers according to their education levels, test of homogeneity of variances has been conducted by using Levene's test. According to this test, the different education-level groups have equal variances (p=0.56 >0.05). Then, in order to get a detailed understanding of Volvo brand image perception of customers which have different levels of education, ANOVA analysis has been conducted. According to this analysis, the means of different education-level groups are not different from each other. (p=0.153>0.05) Therefore it is not necessary to perform any multiple comparisons tests.

Table 6.20: ANOVA Analysis of Customers' Perceived Corporate Image for Volvo with Different Age Groups, Income Levels and Education Levels

Measurable	Values	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-value
ANOVA Analysis of Different Age Groups						
Measurable	Values	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-value
Corporate Image Volvo	Between Groups	2.595	3	0.865	1.15	0.33
	Within Groups	147.381	196	0.752		
	Total	149.976	199			
ANOVA Analysis of Different Income Levels						
Measurable	Values	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-value
Corporate Image Volvo	Between Groups	1.18	3	0.393	0.518	0.67
	Within Groups	148.796	196	0.759		
	Total	149.976	199			
ANOVA Analysis of Different Education Levels						
Measurable	Values	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-value
Corporate Image Volvo	Between Groups	3.961	3	1.32	1.775	0.153
	Within Groups	145.086	195	0.744		
	Total	149.048	198			

Scheffe Test results which are shown in table 6.21 support the claim that the image perception of customers for Volvo, do not differ neither according to their age, their income level nor their education level.

Table 6.21: Scheffe Test & Multiple Comparisons for the Perceived Corporate Image of Volvo within Different Age Groups, Income and Education Levels

(I) Age	(J) Age	(I-J)	Std. Error	P-value
Scheffe Test for Audi within Different Age Groups
1	2	-0.2077	0.1671	0.673
	3	-0.2308	0.2129	0.759
	4	0.0223	0.1745	0.999
2	1	0.2077	0.1671	0.673
	3	-0.0232	0.1957	1
	4	0.2300	0.1530	0.522
3	1	0.2308	0.2129	0.759
	2	0.0232	0.1957	1
	4	0.2531	0.2020	0.667
4	1	-0.0223	0.1745	0.999
	2	-0.2300	0.1530	0.522
	3	-0.2531	0.2020	0.667

(I) Income	(J) Income	(I-J)	Std. Error	P-value
Scheffe Test for Audi within Different Income Levels
1	2	0.2504	0.2294	0.755
	3	0.2502	0.2342	0.767
	4	0.2737	0.2254	0.689
2	1	-0.2504	0.2294	0.755
	3	-0.0002	0.1660	1
	4	0.0233	0.1533	0.999
3	1	-0.2502	0.2342	0.767
	2	0.0002	0.1660	1
	4	0.0235	0.1604	0.999
4	1	-0.2737	0.2254	0.689
	2	-0.0233	0.1533	0.999
	3	-0.0235	0.1604	0.999

(I) Education	(J) Education	(I-J)	Std. Error	P-value
Scheffe Test for Audi within Different Education Levels
2	3	-0.4822	0.4397	0.753
	4	-0.5750	0.4410	0.638
	5	-1.1667	0.5568	0.226
3	2	0.4822	0.4397	0.753
	4	-0.0928	0.1258	0.909
	5	-0.6845	0.3625	0.315
4	2	0.5750	0.4410	0.638
	3	0.0928	0.1258	0.909
	5	-0.5917	0.3640	0.452
5	2	1.1667	0.5568	0.226
	3	0.6845	0.3625	0.315
	4	0.5917	0.3640	0.452

In order to evaluate corporate image perceptions of different genders for Volvo brand, homogeneity test (Levene's test) for checking equal variance assumption, has been conducted. As it can be seen in Table 6.22, these both female and male customers have equal variances (p=0.306>0.05). Therefore, equal variances assumed used for comparing these two groups.

Table 6.22: Independent Samples Test for Volvo's Perceived Image Among different Genders of Customers

Gender: Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	P-value	t	df	P-value (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Corporate Image Volvo	Equal variances assumed	1.052	0.306	-0.357	198	0.722	-0.048	0.134
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.377	131.344	0.706	-0.048	0.126

Since the p-value (2-tailed) is greater than 0.05 (p=0.772), corporate image perceptions of Volvo, are not different for males and females. It has also shown in the Table 6.23 below.

Table 6.23: Descriptive Statistics of Volvo's Perceived Image among Customers with Different Genders

Gender: Group Statistics				
Gender		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Corporate Image Volvo	1	139	5.225	0.905
	2	61	5.272	0.783

6.2.2 Analysis of Perceived Corporate Image for Dealer Data

Related with the perception of the respondents about the corporate image, their loyalty and satisfaction levels have been analyzed.

The Table 6.24 below shows the satisfaction level of Mercedes-Benz dealers. According to the table, 72.5 percent of the respondents are completely satisfied whereas 27.5 percent of them are mostly satisfied.

Table 6.24: Satisfaction Level of Dealers used for Study II

Satisfaction Level		
Scale	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Mostly Satisfied	11	27.5
Completely Satisfied	29	72.5

Table 6.25 below indicates the loyalty level of Mercedes-Benz dealers. According to the table, the average of the respondents' answers is 6.77 in 7-point likert scale which indicates their level of agreement to the attributes regarding to the loyalty questions are quite high, almost close to 7.

Table 6.25: Loyalty Level of Dealers used for Study II

Loyalty Level	
Mean	6.77
Std. Deviation	0.39

The Table 6.26 below shows the automobile brand preferences of the respondents if they would have a chance to buy a new car. The results show that none of the respondents prefer the cars of the competitor brands whereas 92.5 percent of them prefer Mercedes-Benz cars.

Table 6.26: Distribution of Current Brand Preferences of the Dealers

Current Brand Preference		
Brands	**Frequency**	**Valid Percent**
Other	3	7.5
Mercedes-Benz	37	92.5
BMW	0	0
Audi	0	0
Volvo	0	0

To be able to analyze perceived corporate image of Mercedes-Benz dealers among different demographic variables "t-test' and "ANOVA Analysis" have been used.

The following demographic variables have been chosen in order to analyze corporate image perceptions of dealers; number of employees at dealer, working experience in

any other automobile company, years of experience at Mercedes-Benz, position at the dealer.

Since numbers of employees at dealer, working experience in any other automobile companies have two categories, t-test has been conducted to compare the image perceptions of dealers. On the other hand, for years of experience at Mercedes-Benz and position at the dealer, ANOVA analysis is conducted to investigate whether the perception is different among different categories.

In order to see if working experience in any other automobile company has an impact on corporate image perceptions of dealers, independent t-test was conducted. As it can be seen in Table 6.27, these two groups have equal variances (p=0.324>0.05). Therefore, equal variances assumed were used for comparing these two groups. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, corporate image of perceptions are not different for the dealers who have work experience in other automobile company before and for the ones who haven't. Besides, in order to see if number of employees working at dealer has an impact on corporate image perceptions of dealers, also independent t-test was conducted. As it can be seen in Table 6.27 below, these two groups have equal variances (p>0.05). Therefore, equal variances assumed were used for comparing these two groups. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, corporate image of perceptions are not different for the dealers who have between 11 and 15 employees and who have more than 15 employees at their dealer.

Table 6.27: Independent Sample Test for Mercedes-Benz's Corporate Image Perception of Dealers in Terms of Experience in Other Companies and Employee Number at Dealerships

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
Independent Samples Test for Working Experience in Other Automobile Company									
	F	P-value	t	df	P-value (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	1.001	0.324	-0.96	38	0.343	-0.063	0.065	-0.195	0.070
Equal variances not assumed			-0.955	36.509	0.346	-0.063	0.066	-0.196	0.070
Independent Samples Test for Employee Number Working at Dealership									
	F	P-value	t	df	P-value (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	1.001	0.201	-0.263	38	0.794	-0.02	0.076	-0.174	0.134
Equal variances not assumed			-0.26	15.19	0.798	-0.02	0.077	-0.184	0.144

According to the descriptive statistics table below (Table 6.28), dealers who have not work experience in other automobile companies corporate image perception is greater than the ones who worked in other companies. On the other hand, dealers who work at a dealer with more than 15 employees have a better corporate image perception of Mercedes-Benz than the ones who work at a smaller dealer.

Table 6.28: Group Statistics of Dealers' Image Perception of Mercedes-Benz According to their Work Experience in Other Companies and the Number of Employees at Their Dealer

Group Statistics			
any other automobile company	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Yes	19	6.842	0.217
No	21	6.905	0.196

Group Statistics			
Employee Number Working at Dealer	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Between 11 and 15	10	6.86	0.212
More than 15	30	6.88	0.207

In order to see if working experience of dealers at Mercedes-Benz and also if dealers' positions at Mercedes-Benz have an impact on corporate image perceptions of them, ANOVA analysis results are shown in the Table 6.29 below.

As there are more than 2 groups (work experience between 1 and 3 years, 3 and 5 years and more than 5 years), ANOVA analysis have been conducted. The results show that corporate image perceptions are not different for the ones who have work experience between 1 and 3 years, 3 and 5 years and more than 5 years at Mercedes-Benz. (p=0.369 >0.05) Therefore it is not necessary to perform any multiple comparisons tests. Besides, homogeneity test (Levine's test) results also say that these two groups have equal variances (p=0.15>0.05). Therefore it is not necessary to perform any multiple comparisons tests.

On the other hand, the ANOVA analysis results below show that corporate image perceptions of sales managers, sales experts and sales representatives are not different from each other (p=0.675 >0.05). Besides, test of homogeneity of variances was conducted by using Levene's test. According to this test results, these groups have equal variances as well (p= 0.776>0.05). Therefore it is also not necessary to perform any multiple comparisons tests.

Table 6.29: ANOVA Analysis for Image Perceptions of Dealers According to Their Work Experience at Mercedes-Benz and Their Positions at Mercedes-Benz Dealers

ANOVA Analysis for Work Experience at Mercedes-Benz					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-value
Between Groups	0.087	2	0.043	1.024	0.369
Within Groups	1.568	37	0.042		
Total	1.655	39			
ANOVA Analysis for Dealers' Positions at Mercedes-Benz					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-value
Between Groups	0.035	2	0.017	0.398	0.675
Within Groups	1.62	37	0.044		
Total	1.655	39			

6.2.3 Summary

In order to summarize the results above, comparison between four brands is explained in this section.

Customer's Perceived Image of Four Manufacturers:

For the image perception of customers for the mentioned four brands among different age groups ANOVA analysis results is compared. According to the results, average corporate image perception of customers differs among each age groups for Mercedes-Benz, BMW and Audi ($p < 0.01$). But this is not true for Volvo.

When it comes to comparison of image perceptions of four brands among customers according to different income groups, ANOVA analyses results show that average corporate image does not differ among each income levels for Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo ($p > 0.01$).

The comparison of ANOVA analyses for image perceptions of four brands among customers according to different education levels show that average corporate image differs among each education levels for Mercedes-Benz, BMW and Audi ($p < 0.05$) but not differs for Volvo ($p > 0.05$).

The results of the t-test for corporate image perceptions of customers for the four carmakers according to their genders show that average corporate image differs among genders for Mercedes-Benz, men have higher image perception of the company rather than women ($p < 0.05$). But there is no difference for the other brands; BMW, Audi and Volvo as $p > 0.05$.
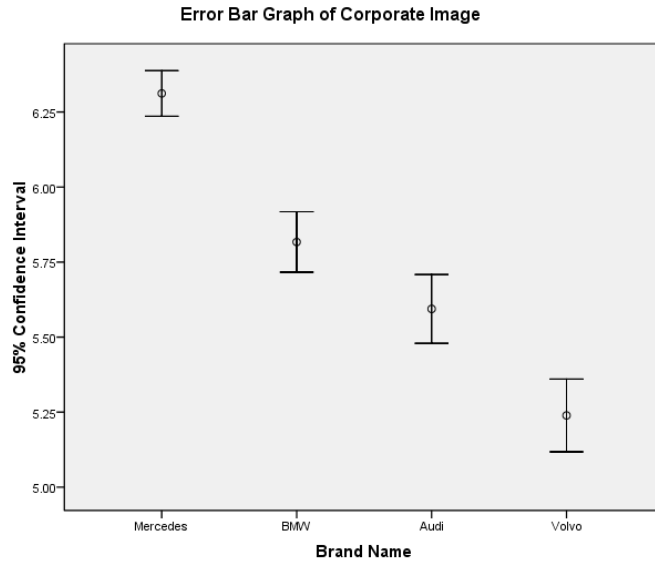
Figure 6.1: Perceived Corporate Image of Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo among Customers

Figure 6.1 shows the 95percent confidence interval graph of perceived corporate image of four car makers. As it can be seen from Figure 6.1, perceived corporate image of Mercedes-Benz is the highest. So the four automobile companies have different perceived image from higher to lower; Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo, respectively.

Also the Scheffe tests conducted before supports this claim that means of corporate image perceptions of customers for four automobile brands are different.

Mercedes-Benz Dealers' Perceived Image of Four Manufacturers:

When it comes to the corporate image perception of the dealers for the mentioned four automobile companies, Figure 6.2 below shows the 95 percent confidence interval graph of perceived corporate image of four car makers.
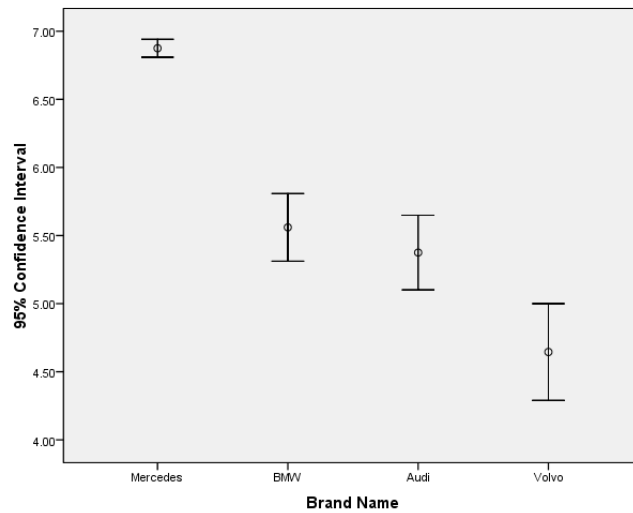
Figure 6.2: Perceived Corporate Image of Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo among Dealers

As it can be seen from Figure 6.2, perceived corporate image of Mercedes-Benz is the highest. So the four automobile companies have different perceived image from higher to lower; Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo, respectively.

According to t-test results for corporate image perceptions of Mercedes-Benz dealers, corporate image of perceptions are not different for the dealers who have work experience in other automobile company before and for the ones who haven't. Also, corporate image perceptions are not different for the dealers who have between 11 and 15 employees and who have more than 15 employees at their dealer.

On the other hand, the results of ANOVA analyses show that work experience at Mercedes-Benz do not affect the corporate image perceptions of dealers and corporate image perceptions are not differ according to the dealers' position at the dealership.

6.3   ANALYSIS ON CONCEPTS PRESENTED IN THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

6.3.1 Analysis on Concepts for Consumer Data

In order to analyze the conceptual framework and the hypothesis developed, related questions have been analyzed first. The questionnaire has started with "Corporate Brand

Awareness" questions including the recall and recognition questions. The Table 6.30 below presents the "first three" automobile companies recalled by the respondents.

Table 6.30: The First Three Automobile Companies Recalled by Customers

Automobile Brand Name	First recalled		Second recalled		Third recalled	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Audi	20	10	19	9.5	27	13.5
BMW	25	12.5	58	29	33	16.5
Fiat	1	0.5	1	0.5	6	3
Ford	13	6.5	11	5.5	9	4.5
Honda	5	2.5	5	2.5	9	4.5
Hyundai	4	2	2	1	5	2.5
Mercedes-Benz	94	47	43	21.5	38	19
Opel	4	2	5	2.5	12	6
Porsche	5	2.5	1	0.5	4	2
Renault	3	1.5	10	5	13	6.5
Toyota	8	4	10	5	14	7
Volkswagen	13	6.5	18	9	16	8
Volvo	5	2.5	10	5	8	4
Citroen	0	0	1	0.5	2	1
Ferrari	0	0	4	2	3	1.5
Nissan	0	0	1	0.5	1	0.5
Peugeot	0	0	1	0.5	0	0

As it is shadowed on the table above, the first recalled company is Mercedes-Benz which was selected by 47 percent of the respondents. The second recalled company is BMW with the percentage of 29. Third recalled company was also rated as Mercedes-Benz by the 19 percent of the respondents.

The Table 6.31 below shows how familiar the respondents are for the four mentioned automobile companies. The mean levels, related with the 7-point likert scale (1- Not familiar at all, 2- Not familiar, 3- Slightly familiar, 4- Neither familiar nor unfamiliar, 5- Moderately Familiar, 6- Familiar and 7- Extremely Familiar), show that customers rated Mercedes-Benz as they are most familiar with (6.12).

Table 6.31: Distribution of Corporate Brand Awareness, Corporate Distinctiveness, Corporate Reputation, Price Premium and Corporate Identification Levels of Four Brands among Customers

Corporate Brand Awareness				
Variables	**Mercedes-Benz**	**BMW**	**Audi**	**Volvo**
Mean	6.12	5.74	5.47	5.05
Std. Deviation	0.92	1.13	1.36	1.39
Corporate Distinctiveness				
Variables	**Mercedes-Benz**	**BMW**	**Audi**	**Volvo**
Mean	6.48	6.29	6.09	5.28
Std. Deviation	0.84	0.90	1.09	1.42
Corporate Reputation				
Variables	**Mercedes-Benz**	**BMW**	**Audi**	**Volvo**
Mean	6.13	5.73	5.66	5.07
Std. Deviation	0.87	0.95	0.92	1.05
Price Premium				
Variables	**Mercedes-Benz**	**BMW**	**Audi**	**Volvo**
Mean	5.60	5.45	5.40	4.65
Std. Deviation	1.13	1.18	1.17	1.29
Identification				
Variables	**Mercedes-Benz**	**BMW**	**Audi**	**Volvo**
Mean	3.87	3.07	2.95	2.75
Std. Deviation	1.81	1.50	1.43	1.29

Besides, Mercedes-Benz has the highest corporate distinctiveness, corporate reputation, price premium and identification level of the respondents among its competitors. The attributes about these four concepts were asked with 7-point likert-scale. (1-strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3-somewhat disagree, 4- neither agree nor disagree, 5- somewhat agree, 6- agree, 7- strongly agree).

According to the table above, consumers agree with the attributes about corporate distinctiveness of Mercedes-Benz (6.48), BMW (6.29) and Audi (6.09) whereas they somewhat agree for Volvo (5.28). The perception of corporate reputation is comparable higher for Mercedes-Benz (6.13) among its competitors; BMW (5.73), Audi (5.66) and Volvo (5.07). The price premium levels of four carmakers so the amount that the consumers are willing to pay is respectively; Mercedes-Benz (5.60), BMW (5.45), Audi (5.40) and Volvo (4.65). When it comes to make the analysis of the identification level

of respondents, even though the agreement level of the consumers are relatively lower than the previous questions, it is possible to say that the respondents were more identified with Mercedes-Benz (3.87) as an automobile brand.

Table 6.32 below shows the corporate brand associations, and the ratings of the respondents for the attributes within this concept. Also, it summarizes the ratings of the respondents according to their level of agreement to the "Corporate Image Attributes" for Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo.

Table 6.32: Distribution of Corporate Brand Association Ratings and Level of Agreement to the "Corporate Image Attributes" of Customers among the Four Automobile Companies

Corporate Brand Associations Level		
Brands	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
Mercedes-Benz	6.27	0.46
BMW	5.79	0.61
Audi	5.59	0.73
Volvo	5.24	0.74
Perception of Corporate Image		
Brands	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
Mercedes-Benz	6.31	0.54
BMW	5.82	0.72
Audi	5.59	0.82
Volvo	5.24	0.87

Accordingly, Mercedes-Benz has the highest corporate brand association's level considering the partner associations; corporate brands perceive quality as well as the organizational associations. Partner associations involve brands, persons, places, product categories and institutions. Corporate brand's perceived quality involve financial performance and trust of business whereas organizational associations involve society/community orientation, innovation, concern for customers, presence and success and local vs. global measures. In total, 3 main and 12 sub-categories have been taken as corporate brand association's measurement criteria. The results' average has been taken for the table in order to make a meaningful analysis.

On the other hand, the "Corporate Image Attributes" for Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo involves;

i.   A company with a strong, distinctive character

ii.   A company which leads successful communication with its stakeholders

iii.   A company which has a good perception by its stakeholders

iv.   A company which offers high prestige by its products

v.   A company which has well-known, respectful and desirable products

Accordingly, Table 6.32 shows that Mercedes-Benz has the highest corporate image rating among its main competitors.

For a better comparison of corporate brand associations between four carmakers perceptual mapping has been conducted. According to perceptual mapping (Figure 6.3) of customers for corporate brand associations following concepts are analyzed; financial performance, trust of business, innovation, quality, concern for customers, society & community orientation, people (employees' qualification level), presence and success of the companies. From the 7-point likert scale ratings the four companies got different perception ratings from the customers.
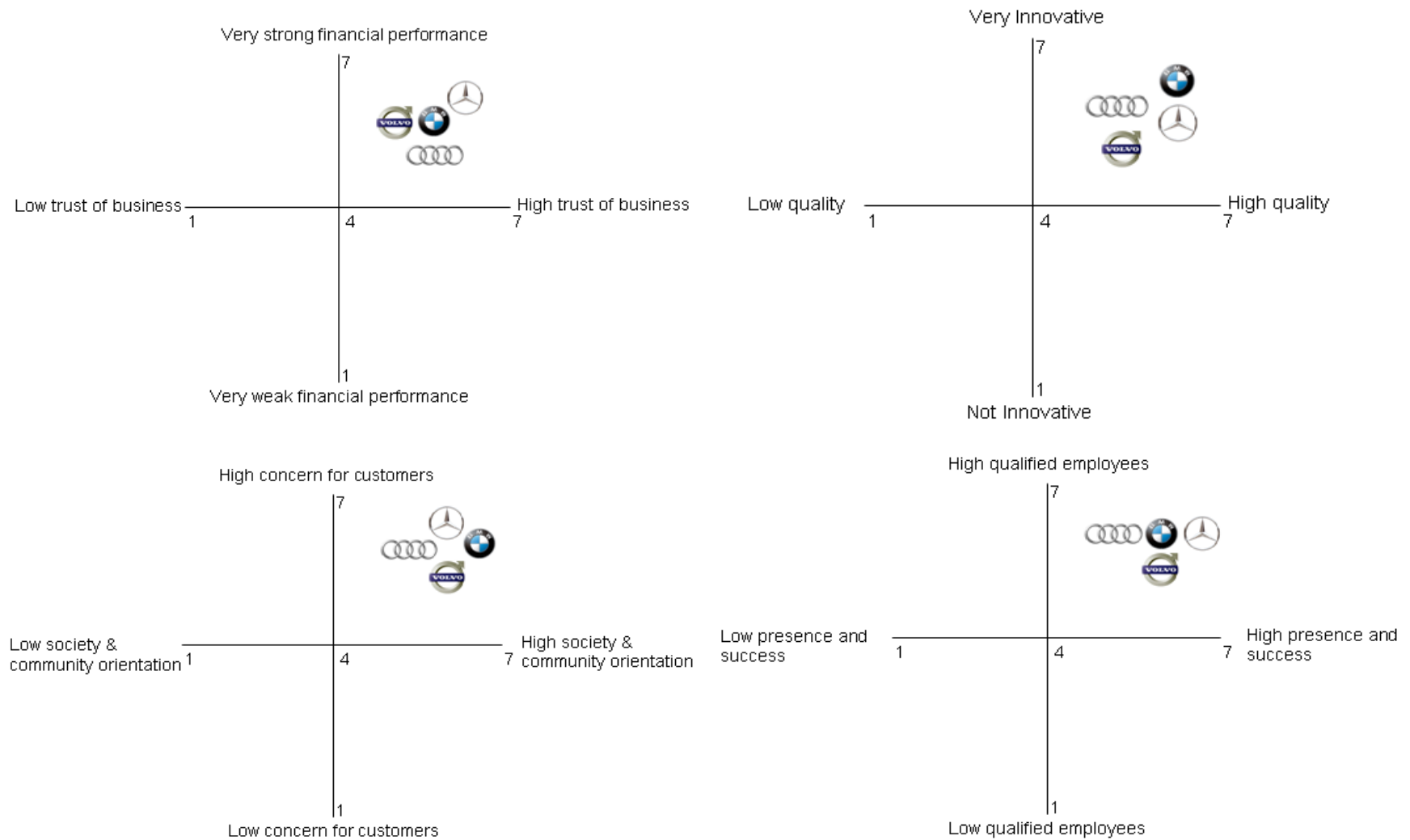
Figure 6.3: Perceptual Mapping of Corporate Brand Associations for four carmakers; Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo

When the financial performance and trust of business are compared, it is seen that Mercedes-Benz is better perceived than its competitors. Respectively, Mercedes-Benz's financial performance is 6.5, BMW 6, Audi 5.1 whereas Volvo 5.8. For the trust of business Mercedes-Benz was rated as 6.6, BMW 6, Audi 6 and Volvo 5.8.

With the comparison of innovativeness and quality that the four carmakers offer, it is seen that regarding to innovativeness BMW (6) is perceived as the best company. Audi is the second (5.8), Mercedes-Benz is the third (5.5) and Volvo is the fourth (5.2). On the other hand, quality level of BMW and Mercedes-Benz (6.2) is perceived the same, whereas it is perceived the same for Volvo and Audi (5.3) as well.

The comparison of concern for customers and society & community orientation shows that the customers believe Mercedes-Benz (6.2) has the highest concern for customers. BMW is rated as the second (6) and Audi is rated as the third (5.8). Volvo is rated as 5 on the fourth place. For the society & community orientation, BMW (6.5) has the highest and better perception of the customers. Mercedes-Benz and Volvo follows with the 6 and Audi is rated with 5.1.

With the comparison of employee qualification an presence& success of the companies, the figure shows that Mercedes-Benz is perceived as the most successful company. (6.7) BMW and Volvo follows with 6 and Audi is perceived as the least successful one among the others with 5.5. For the employee qualification level, Mercedes-Benz, BMW and Volvo is perceived at the same level of 5.8, whereas customers think that the qualification level of Volvo's employees' is lower (5).

Finally, to be able to analyze the Conceptual Framework, correlation analysis of customers' perceptions for Mercedes-Benz brand has been implemented. The answers of potential& existing customers of Mercedes-Benz supported to find out if the hypothesis developed were supposed to be accepted or rejected. Table 6.33 below shows the relationships in details between the variables.

Table 6.33: Correlation Analysis between Concepts for Consumers

Attributes	Tests	Corporate Distinctiveness	Corporate Reputation	Satisfaction	Price Premium	Corporate Brand Identification	Corporate Brand Awareness	Corporate Brand Loyalty	Corporate Brand Associations
Correlation Analysis of Mercedes-Benz									
Corporate Distinctiveness	Pearson Correlation								
Corporate Reputation	Pearson Correlation	0.532*							
Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	-0.136	-0.128						
Price Premium	Pearson Correlation	0.371*	0.613*	0.008					
Corporate Brand Identification	Pearson Correlation	0.155**	0.242*	-0.104	0.216*				
Corporate Brand Awareness	Pearson Correlation	0.362*	0.449*	-0.061	0.326*	0.105			
Corporate Brand Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	-0.041	0.059	0.485*	0.003	-0.059	-0.039		
Corporate Brand Associations	Pearson Correlation	0.351*	0.392*	-0.144	0.334*	0.387*	0.351*	0.082	
Corporate Image	Pearson Correlation	0.374*	0.356*	0.011	0.283*	0.255*	0.388*	0.127	0.579*

* p < 0.01 - Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

** p< 0.05 - Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

This table indicates the relationships between different variables involved in the conceptual framework.

According to the table 6.33 above, there is a relationship between corporate distinctiveness and corporate brand identification. Also, there is relationship between corporate reputation and corporate brand identification. On the other hand, there is not a relationship between price premium and corporate brand loyalty.

There is a positive relationship between satisfaction and corporate brand loyalty but there is not a relationship between corporate brand awareness and corporate brand identification. There is a relationship between corporate brand identification and corporate brand loyalty whereas there is also relationship between brand awareness and corporate brand associations. Also there is a relationship between corporate brand identification and corporate brand associations. But there is not a relationship between corporate brand loyalty and corporate brand associations whereas there is a relationship between corporate brand associations and corporate image.

As a results, the analyses show that consumers think that; there is a relationship between corporate distinctiveness and corporate brand identification (H1), there is a positive relationship between corporate reputation and corporate brand identification (H2), there is a relationship between satisfaction and corporate brand loyalty (H4), there is a relationship between brand awareness and corporate brand associations (H7), there is a relationship between corporate brand identification and corporate brand associations (H8), there is a relationship between corporate brand associations and corporate image (H10).

In order to see the direction of the relationship and to analyze the hypotheses developed, regression analysis has been conducted.

Table 6.34: Regression Analysis of Customers' Corporate Brand Identification

Independent Variable	Corporate Identification (Std. Beta Coefficients)	Adjusted R Square	VIF	F	p-value
Corporate Distinctiveness	0.037	0.05	1.395	6.234	0.648
Corporate Reputation	0.222		1.395		0.007*

*p<0.01

According to the regression analysis above, corporate distinctiveness and corporate reputation are independent variables whereas corporate identification is dependent variable. As p=0.648>0.01, there is not a positive relationship between corporate distinctiveness and corporate brand identification. So H1 hypothesis should be rejected. On the other hand, as p= 0.007<0.01, there is a positive relationship between corporate reputation and corporate brand identification, so H2 hypothesis should be accepted.

Table 6.35: Regression Analysis of Customers' Corporate Brand Loyalty

Independent Variable	Loyalty (Std. Beta Coefficients)	Adjusted R Square	VIF	F	p-value
Price Premium	-0.001	0.22	1	15.358	0.988
Satisfaction	0.485		1		0*

*p<0.01

Table 6.35 shows the regression analysis of dependent variable corporate brand loyalty and independent variables; price premium as well as satisfaction. Accordingly, as p=0.988>0.01, there is not a positive relationship between corporate brand loyalty and price premium. Therefore H3 hypothesis should be rejected. On the other hand, as p= 0.00<0.01, there is a positive relationship between corporate brand loyalty and satisfaction, so H4 hypothesis should be accepted.

When it comes to H5 and H6 hypotheses, as it is shown in Figure 4.4, they both have direct relationship with concepts. Therefore correlation results are also valid for these both hypotheses. So, H5 was developed as; there is a positive relationship between corporate brand awareness and corporate brand identification. As the p-value=0.140>0.05, the null hypothesis should be accepted and H5 hypothesis should be rejected. H6 was developed as; there is a positive relationship between corporate brand identification and corporate brand loyalty. As the p-value=0.551>0.05, the null hypothesis should be accepted and H6 hypothesis should be rejected.

Table 6.36: Regression Analysis of Customers' Corporate Brand Associations

Independent Variable	Brand Associations (Std. Beta Coefficients)	Adjusted R Square	VIF	F	p-value
Corporate Brand Awareness	0.266	0.183	1.002	8.632	0.004*
Corporate Brand Identification	0.369		1.004		0*
Corporate Brand Loyalty	0.114		1.005		0.206

*$p<0.01$

According to the regression analysis Table 6.36 above, corporate brand awareness, corporate brand identification and corporate brand loyalty are independent variables whereas corporate brand association is dependent variable. As p= 0.004<0.01, there is a positive relationship between brand awareness and corporate brand associations, so H7 hypothesis should be accepted. Besides, as p=0<0.01, there is a positive relationship between corporate brand identification and corporate brand associations. So, H8 hypothesis should be accepted. On the other hand, as p=0.206>0.01, there is not a positive relationship between corporate distinctiveness and corporate brand identification. So H9 hypothesis should be rejected. On the other hand, as p= 0.007<0.01, there is a positive relationship between corporate brand loyalty and corporate brand associations. So, the null hypothesis should be accepted and H9 hypothesis should be rejected.

Finally, as H10 hypothesis has also indicates the direct relationship between corporate brand associations and corporate image, correlation analysis results are also valid here. Accordingly, H10 was developed as; there is a positive relationship between corporate brand associations and corporate image. As the p-value=0.000<0.01, the H10 hypothesis should be accepted.

As a results, the accepted hypotheses show that the consumers think that; there is a positive relationship between corporate reputation and corporate brand identification (H2), there is a positive relationship between satisfaction and corporate brand loyalty (H4), there is a positive relationship between brand awareness and corporate brand associations (H7), there is a positive relationship between corporate brand identification

and corporate brand associations (H8), there is a positive relationship between corporate brand associations and corporate image (H10).

The analyses of the hypotheses changes the conceptual framework created before. If only the accepted hypotheses are considered, then the new formation of corporate image would be as the Figure 6.4 below.
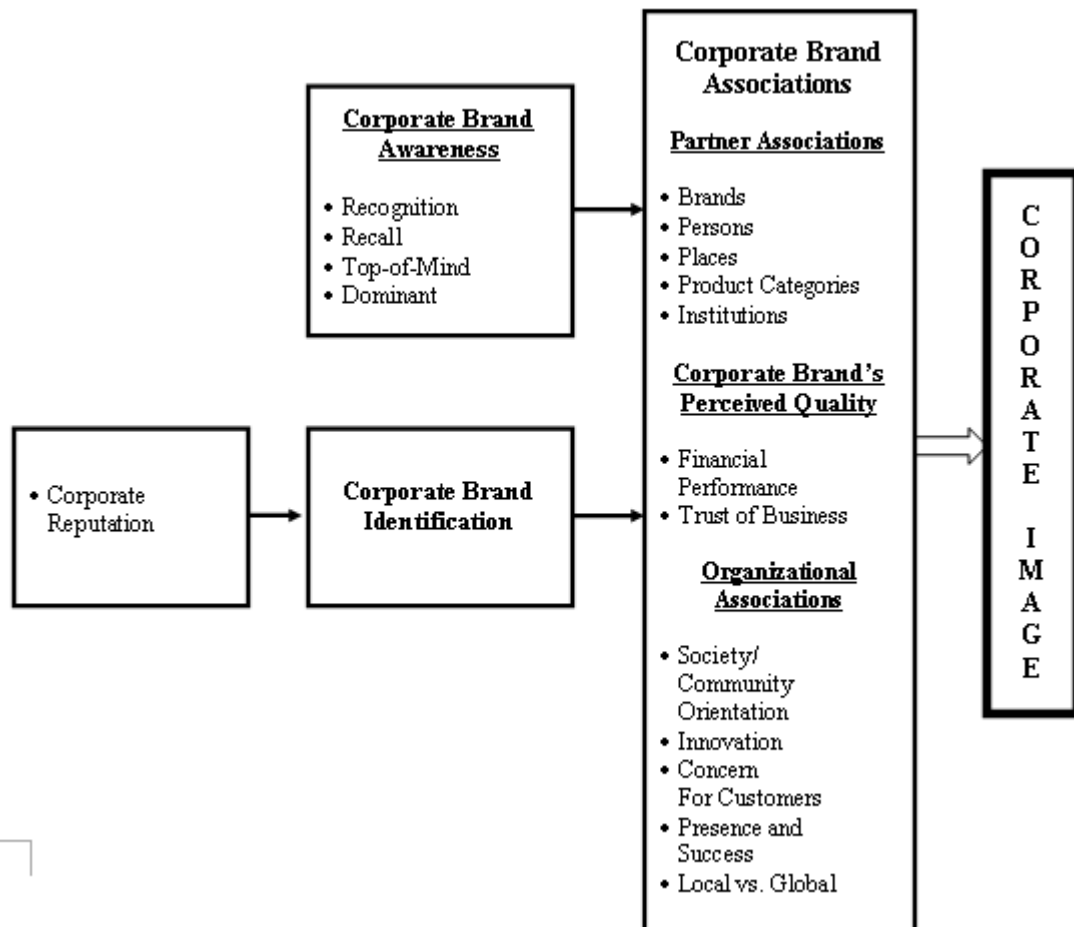
**Figure 6.4: Revised Formation of Corporate Image Based on the Customers'
Perceptions**

6.3.2 Analysis on Concepts for Dealer Data

In order to analyze the conceptual framework and the hypothesis developed, the same questions used as the ones used in Study I. The questionnaire has started with "Corporate Brand Awareness" questions including the recall and recognition questions.

The Table 6.37 below presents the "first three" automobile companies recalled by the respondents.

Table 6.37: The First Three Automobile Companies Recalled by Dealers

Automobile Brand Name	First recalled		Second recalled		Third recalled	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Mercedes-Benz	37	92.5	1	2.5	1	2.5
Ferrari	2	5	1	2.5	3	7.5
Porsche	1	2.5	1	2.5	1	2.5
Audi	0	0	4	10	21	52.5
BMW	0	0	23	57.5	3	7.5
Dodge	0	0	1	2.5	0	0
Fiat	0	0	0	0	1	2.5
Honda	0	0	1	2.5	1	2.5
Jaguar	0	0	1	2.5	1	2.5
Nissan	0	0	0	0	1	2.5
Opel	0	0	1	2.5	0	0
Renault	0	0	1	2.5	0	0
Tofas	0	0	0	0	1	2.5
Toyota	0	0	1	2.5	3	7.5
Volvo	0	0	4	10	3	7.5

As it is shadowed on the table above, the first recalled company is Mercedes-Benz which was selected by 92.5 percent of the respondents. The second recalled company is BMW with the percentage of 57.5. Third recalled company was rated as Audi by the 52.5 percent of the respondents.

According to the Table 6.38 below, Mercedes-Benz has the highest corporate brand awareness, corporate distinctiveness, corporate reputation, price premium and identification levels of its dealers, among its competitors. The attributes about these four concepts were asked with 7-point likert-scale (1-strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- somewhat disagree, 4- neither agree nor disagree, 5- somewhat agree, 6- agree, 7- strongly agree).

Table 6.38: Distribution of Corporate Brand Awareness, Corporate Distinctiveness, Corporate Reputation, Price Premium and Corporate Brand Identification Levels of Four Brands among Mercedes-Benz Dealers

Corporate Brand Awareness				
Variables	**Mercedes-Benz**	**BMW**	**Audi**	**Volvo**
Mean	7.00	6.18	6.15	5.70
Std. Deviation	0.00	0.75	0.77	0.79
Corporate Distinctiveness				
Variables	**Mercedes-Benz**	**BMW**	**Audi**	**Volvo**
Mean	6.85	5.43	5.23	4.93
Std. Deviation	0.36	0.84	0.86	1.10
Corporate Reputation				
Variables	**Mercedes-Benz**	**BMW**	**Audi**	**Volvo**
Mean	6.71	5.10	4.90	4.76
Std. Deviation	0.47	0.92	1.10	0.82
Price Premium				
Variables	**Mercedes-Benz**	**BMW**	**Audi**	**Volvo**
Mean	6.65	4.93	4.50	4.35
Std. Deviation	0.53	1.34	1.26	1.22
Corporate Brand Identification				
Variables	**Mercedes-Benz**	**BMW**	**Audi**	**Volvo**
Mean	6.55	1.97	1.97	1.87
Std. Deviation	0.55	0.83	0.77	0.66

According to the table above, dealers are completely familiar with Mercedes-Benz (7.00) among its competitors. Besides, they strongly agree with the attributes about corporate distinctiveness of Mercedes-Benz (6.85), whereas they somewhat agree for BMW (5.43), Audi (5.43) and Volvo (4.93). The perception of corporate reputation is comparable higher for Mercedes-Benz (6.71) among its competitors; BMW (5.10) , Audi (4.90) and Volvo (5.75). The price premium levels of four carmakers are respectively; Mercedes-Benz (6.65), BMW (4.93), Audi (4.50) and Volvo (4.35). When it comes to make the analysis of the identification level of dealers, the agreement level of the dealers are relatively higher than the competitors'. So, it is possible to say that the dealers are more identified with Mercedes-Benz (6.55) as an automobile brand.

Table 6.39 below shows the corporate brand associations, and the ratings of the respondents for the attributes within this concept. Accordingly, Mercedes-Benz has the highest brand association's level among its dealers considering the partner associations; corporate brands perceive quality as well as the organizational associations.

Table 6.39: Distribution of Corporate Brand Association Ratings of Dealers among the Four Mentioned Automobile Companies

Corporate Brand Associations Level			
Attribute	**Brands**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
Perceived Quality	Mercedes-Benz	6.73	0.41
	BMW	5.44	0.87
	Audi	5.53	0.76
	Volvo	4.93	0.84
Partner Associations	Mercedes-Benz	6.63	0.39
	BMW	5.46	0.73
	Audi	5.29	0.66
	Volvo	4.64	0.67
Organizational Associations	Mercedes-Benz	6.69	0.38
	BMW	5.49	0.71
	Audi	5.39	0.67
	Volvo	4.76	0.89
Brand Associations	Mercedes-Benz	6.68	0.34
	BMW	5.46	0.68
	Audi	5.41	0.59
	Volvo	4.77	0.62

Finally, to be able to analyze the Conceptual Framework, correlation analysis of dealers' perceptions for Mercedes-Benz brand has been implemented. The answers of Mercedes-Benz dealers supported to find out if the hypothesis developed were supposed to be accepted or rejected. Table 6.40 below shows the relationships in details between the variables.

Table 6.40: Correlation Analysis between Concepts for Dealers

Attributes	Tests	Corporate Distinctiveness	Corporate Reputation	Satisfaction	Price Premium	Corporate Brand Identification	Corporate Brand Awareness	Corporate Brand Loyalty	Corporate Brand Associations
					Correlation Analysis of Mercedes-Benz				
Corporate Distinctiveness	Pearson Correlation								
Corporate Reputation	Pearson Correlation	0,80							
Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	0,65	0,67						
Price Premium	Pearson Correlation	-0,26	-0,14	0,07					
Corporate Brand Identification	Pearson Correlation	0,03	0,09	0,33	0,04				
Corporate Brand Awareness	Pearson Correlation	0,36	0,45	-0,06	0,33	0,10			
Corporate Brand Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	0,23	0,21	0,28	0,31**	0,16	-0,04		
Corporate Brand Associations	Pearson Correlation	0,01	0,14	0,31	0,17	0,07	0,35**	0,16	
Corporate Image	Pearson Correlation	0,09	0,07	0,41	0,28	0,16	0,39	-0,16	0,24

** $p < 0.05$ - Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

This table indicates the relationships between different variables involved in the conceptual framework.

According to the Table 6.40 above, here is a no relationship between corporate distinctiveness and corporate brand identification and no relationship between corporate reputation and corporate brand identification. On the other hand, there is a relationship between price premium and corporate brand loyalty.

There is no relationship between satisfaction and corporate brand loyalty and no relationship between corporate brand awareness and corporate brand identification. Besides, there is no relationship between corporate brand identification and corporate brand loyalty. But here is a relationship between brand awareness and corporate brand associations. There is no relationship between corporate brand identification and corporate brand associations, corporate brand loyalty and corporate brand associations, finally no relationship between corporate brand associations and corporate image.

As a result, the analysis shows that the dealers think that; there is a relationship between price premium and corporate brand loyalty (H3), there is a relationship between brand awareness and corporate brand associations (H7).

In order to see the direction of the relationship and to analyze the hypotheses developed, regression analysis has been conducted.

Table 6.41: Regression Analysis of Dealers' Corporate Brand Identification

Independent Variable	Corporate Identification (Std. Beta Coefficients)	Adjusted R Square	VIF	F	p-value
Corporate Reputation	0.166	-0.043	2.826	0.204	0.55
Corporate Distinctiveness	-0.099		2.826		0.722

*p<0.01

According to the regression analysis above, corporate distinctiveness and corporate reputation are independent variables whereas corporate brand identification is dependent variable. As p=0.55>0.01, there is not a positive relationship between corporate reputation and corporate brand identification. So H1 hypothesis should be rejected. On the other hand, as p= 0.722>0.01, there is not a positive relationship between corporate distinctiveness and corporate brand identification, so H2 hypothesis should also be rejected.

Table 6.42: Regression Analysis of Dealers' Corporate Brand Loyalty

Independent Variable	Loyalty (Std. Beta Coefficients)	Adjusted R Square	VIF	F	p-value
Price Premium	0.258	0.116	1.005	3.553	0.096*
Satisfaction	0.29		1.005		0.062*

* p<0, 10

Table 6.42, shows the regression analysis of dependent variable corporate brand loyalty and independent variables; price premium as well as satisfaction. Accordingly, as p=0.096<0.10, there is a positive relationship between corporate brand loyalty and price premium. Therefore H3 hypothesis should be accepted. On the other hand, as p= 0.062<0.10, there is a positive relationship between corporate brand loyalty and satisfaction, so H4 hypothesis should also be accepted.

For the analysis of H5 and H6 hypotheses, as it is shown in Figure 4.4, they both have direct relationship with concepts. Therefore correlation results are also valid for these both hypotheses. So, H5 was developed as; there is a positive relationship between corporate brand awareness and corporate brand identification. This hypothesis should be rejected as p=0,14> 0.05. Besides, H6 was developed as; there is a positive relationship between corporate brand identification and corporate brand loyalty. This hypothesis should also be rejected as p=0,32> 0.05.

Table 6.43: Regression Analysis of Dealers' Corporate Brand Associations

Independent Variable	Brand Associations (Std. Beta Coefficients)	Adjusted R Square	VIF	F	p-value
Corporate Brand Identification	0.044	-0.026	1.027	0.501	0.789
Corporate Brand Loyalty	0.149		1.027		0.37

*p<0.01

According to the regression analysis above corporate brand identification and corporate brand loyalty are independent variables whereas corporate brand association is dependent variable. As all the dealers were strongly agreed that their corporate brand awareness of Mercedes-Benz is at the highest level, it was not possible to involve H7

(relationship between corporate brand awareness and corporate brand associations) in regression analysis.

On the other hand as $p=0.789>0.01$, there is not a positive relationship between corporate brand identification and corporate brand associations. So, H8 hypothesis should be rejected. Also, as $p=0.37>0.01$, there is not a positive relationship between corporate brand loyalty and corporate brand associations. So H9 hypothesis should also be rejected.

Finally, as H10 hypothesis has also indicates the direct relationship between corporate brand associations and corporate image, correlation analysis results are also valid here. Accordingly, H10 was developed as; there is a positive relationship between corporate brand associations and corporate image. As the p-value$=0.13>0.01$, the H10 hypothesis should be rejected.

6.3.3 Summary

Comparing the hypothesis analyses of corporate image perceptions of consumers and dealers, it is possible to say that there are significant gaps between the perceptions of these two groups.

According to the customers and dealers corporate distinctiveness does not affect corporate brand identification. On the other hand, customers think that there is a positive relationship between corporate reputation and corporate brand identification whereas for dealers this statement is not valid. Customers think that there is no relationship between price premium and corporate brand loyalty. But dealers think the opposite way around. This shows Mercedes-Benz customers' willingness to pay for its products is not high enough as the dealers think for the company's price premium.

On the other hand, both groups agree that their satisfaction level affects their corporate brand loyalty in a positive way. The both groups do not see any relationship between corporate brand awareness and corporate brand identification also between corporate brand identification and corporate brand loyalty. Besides, existing& potential customers of Mercedes-Benz find a positive relationship between corporate brand awareness and corporate brand associations.

The customer group believes that there is a positive relationship between corporate brand identification and corporate brand associations also corporate brand associations and corporate image, whereas dealers of the company do not support these statements. Finally, both sides believe that there is no relationship between corporate brand loyalty and corporate brand associations.

As a matter of fact, these differences and gaps are the results of different sizes of sample groups. The surveys were applied to 200 customers and 40 dealers. On the other hand, customers rated their agreement levels to the concepts objectively whereas Mercedes-Benz dealers usually supporting the best performances and ratings for Mercedes-Benz brand. As conclusion, the corporate image perception level of the dealers is much higher than the perception of potential & existing customers of Mercedes-Benz automobile company.

6.4 CORPORATE IMAGE GAPS AMONG DEALERS AND CUSTOMERS OF MERCEDES-BENZ

In order to analyze the image perception gaps between the existing& potential customers of Mercedes-Benz as well as its dealers, the mean levels of their image perceptions have been listed in the Table 6.44 below. The table shows that Mercedes-Benz dealers have a higher perception of the company's image than the potential& existing customers of it. When it comes to the competitors, it is the opposite way around. So the image perception of Mercedes-Benz dealers for competitor automotive companies is lower than the perception of the customers.

Table 6.44: Distribution of Mercedes-Benz Dealers and Customers' Image Perception Levels (Means)

Image Perception of Mercedes-Benz Dealers and Customers				
Brand	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mercedes-Benz	Dealers	40	6.88	0.21
	Customers	200	6.31	0.54
BMW	Dealers	40	5.56	0.78
	Customers	200	5.82	0.72
Audi	Dealers	40	5.38	0.86
	Customers	200	5.59	0.82
Volvo	Dealers	40	4.65	1.11
	Customers	200	5.24	0.87

In order to be able to make a deeper analysis, t-test has been used between two groups; Mercedes-Benz dealers and potential& existing customers of the company. Table 6.45 shows the results of the t-test.

Table 6.45: Independent Sample t-test of Mercedes-Benz Dealers and Customers

Independent Samples Test of Dealers and Customers					
Brand	t	df	P-Value. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Mercedes-Benz	6.45	238	0.00	0.56	0.09
BMW	-2.03	238	0.04	-0.26	0.13
Audi	-1.53	238	0.13	-0.22	0.14
Volvo	-3.76	238	0.00	-0.59	0.16

According to the table above, in 1 percent confidence interval level, the image perception of Mercedes-Benz dealers is higher than the image perception of the customers for Mercedes-Benz. In 5 percent confidence interval level, the image perception of customers is higher than the image perception of the Mercedes-Benz dealers for BMW. In 1percent confidence interval level, the image perception of customers is higher than the image perception of the Mercedes-Benz dealers for Volvo. When it comes to Audi, there is no gap between the image perception of the customers and Mercedes-Benz dealers for that automobile brand.

7. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS AND STRATEGIES DEVELOPED BASED ON THE GAP QUALITIES TO IMPROVE OVERALL COMPANY IMAGE

In general all these four companies should be aware of the benefits of corporate image which obtains corporate brand awareness, corporate brand identification, corporate brand loyalty, corporate brand associations and corporate brand identity. All these components of corporate image help in establishment of corporate identity, so corporate culture, image, and reputation. A good management of communication channels, internal and external help an organization survive in the long run as corporate image is a long term nature.

If the conceptual framework suggested in this thesis is used, it should become clear just how pervasively the corporate image attributes are used in appraising customer value. Several implications for marketing practice can be drawn from the proposed model. First, companies should consider the importance of strong corporate image. Successful corporate image management establishes a favorable reputation with an organization's stakeholders which will be translated by stakeholders into a propensity to buy that organization's products and services, to work for or to invest in the organization. A favorable corporate reputation gives an organization a competitive advantage

Also, the company should consider whether image benefits will actually have any influence on consumers' attitudes towards its brand and ultimately their purchase intention. The conceptual framework model suggests that, in terms of impacting a consumer's attitude towards a brand, corporate brand associations as well as corporate identity play an important role. The model can inspire the company CEO, corporate brand manager, the marketing manager, brand strategist to assess the whole range of opportunities of brand image activities offered through internal and external communication.

The corporate brand association base framework, combined with the strategic direction for core values can be an efficient roadmap in order to create improved brand resonance with consumers and integrate corporate brand marketing programs. Moreover the corporate brand association model is based on the basic assumption that partner brands in the surrounding environment should and could be viewed as an inclusive part of the corporate brand's own territory. The model can be used as a mental map for all sorts of linking between a corporate brand and other brand associations (sub-brands, ingredients, co-brands and alliances) people (employees and endorsers), places (country of origin and channels), or things (events, causes, third party endorsements). So, the model should be considered seriously by the Mercedes-Benz management level.

In order to strengthen the perceived corporate image among the potential and existing customers, marketing and brand managers must search for opportunities to optimize resource allocation in their brand portfolios as product markets continue to change. Managers must also find new and more cost-effective ways of differentiating and energizing their corporate brands.

However, there are serious challenges to face-staying relevant, creating value propositions, managing associations, adapting the corporate brand to different contexts, and making the corporate brand identity happen. The corporate image model proposed in this thesis can be a helpful device for meeting some of these challenges and for designing more market based and inclusive brand architecture by linking brand equity concepts with the corporate brand. From a marketing perspective, this can facilitate business development processes and collaborative positioning processes in the marketplace.

The model should encourage managers to take a more balanced approach to strengthen brand image, since once they have completed their brand plans, they then need to undertake market research to assess how their intentions are perceived by consumers. Through customer interviews, gaps between dealers' intentions for the brand and the way consumers perceive it can be identified then appropriate corrective action can be taken. As long as managers better appreciate their strengths and weaknesses, they can start to consider how their brand can better protect its market position and identify more appropriate strategies to gain more market share at their competitors' expense.

Implications for Academics and Researchers

For further studies, researchers or academicians can approach to that subject in many ways. For instance, the effect of brand image on corporate image can be examined by setting the attributes of brand image and corporate image.

Additionally, in order to develop this study, a communication model can be proposed by examining the perception of communication channel members, especially the perception of dealers and sales force of these companies. Benefits of corporate communication; management communication, organizational communication and marketing communication can be examined in details. The corporate brand associations and the equity sources involved in conceptual framework offer a potential agenda for new researches and further theory development about the nature and design of corporate brand management. In addition, research on the brand equity side; the corporate brand association framework can facilitate the discovery of brand equity sources outside the identity of the corporate brand.

All these can be done in different sectors, but choosing especially the finance companies such as banks, GSM operators and telecommunication sectors will be a good contribution to literature and business life of Turkey as these sectors have prior importance in the current economical structure of Turkey.

8. CONCLUSION

As it can be seen from the findings of both studies implemented to customers and dealers of Mercedes-Benz Company, Mercedes-Benz's image is perceived better than the other three carmakers; BMW, Audi and Volvo. BMW comes after Mercedes-Benz in the second place. Within both studies applied to customer and the dealers, Mercedes-Benz got the highest ratings to the attributes of corporate image; a company which has strong distinctive character, leads successful communication with its stakeholders, has a good perception by its stakeholders, has well-known, respectful and desirable products. The gaps between Mercedes-Benz and the other companies are too much whereas BMW, Audi and Volvo's perceived image is closer to each other. (Figure 6.1 and 6.2)

On the basis of first recalled company, Mercedes-Benz was firstly remembered in both studies. Besides when it comes to corporate brand identification, it is clear that both the customers and the dealers mostly identified themselves with Mercedes-Benz as an automobile brand. The both group evaluated the attributes for corporate brand identification of Mercedes-Benz in a positive way.

According to the findings, Mercedes-Benz is better than all the other three manufacturers on the basis of strong financial performance, safe & reliable products, high technology & quality products, constellation of other brands, qualified& well-educated employees, powerful country of origin, wide product range, partnership with other institutions, high society/ community orientation, innovativeness, strong presence and globalization. The existing and potential customers, as well as the dealers of the company states that Mercedes-Benz corporate brand associations regarding to the attributes above are higher than the three other competitors of the company.

This thesis was drawn to examine how the meaning of corporate identity and image could be better understood whilst also addressing how the deconstruction of one of the other elements could provide deeper insight into the meaning of corporate image. This objective was addressed through the development of a conceptual model.

This approach also contributes to the corporate marketing literature by giving insight into a firm's perception of the meaning of corporate image.

In practice, in order to understand the value and importance of corporate image, it is important to gain insight into what meanings stakeholders are likely to make of the corporate image.

In an era where the boundaries between corporate entities have become less distinct, where there is a blurring of the margins between the internal and external environment, the corporate image management has emerged as a particularly important concept. Successful corporate brand management can provide a sustainable competitive advantage to a company if it is characterized by value, rarity, durability, inappropriatability, imperfect imitability, and imperfect substitutability.

In the thesis, brand management is explained as the process of narrowing the gap between brand identity and brand reputation, so the perceived image among the organization's stakeholders. Therefore, image perception analysis have been applied to the customers and dealers of Mercedes-Benz as the dealers play a crucial role in the corporate brand management process. It is therefore crucial that management level of the company adopt a synergy between dealers' actions, resulting in optimizing consumers' satisfaction.

According to the survey analysis, the corporate image perception of Mercedes-Benz among its potential & existing customers is very good. But when it is compared with the image perception of the company among its dealers, the customers' perception is comparably lower than the dealers' perception. This creates a big gap between these two groups. While the dealers mostly are quite satisfied with the company, extremely loyal and strongly trust the image as well as the quality of the products, the customers' perception stays behind. Especially, the dealers are well-identified with Mercedes-Benz brand which is not the case when it comes to the customers of the company. On the other hand, while the dealers strongly agree that the corporate distinctiveness, corporate reputation and price premium values of Mercedes-Benz is high, the customers somewhat agree with these attributes for the company.

As the dealers are the face of the company to external world, it is very important that they are at the same page with it. The gaps for the image perceptions among customers and dealers should be taken care by the management of the company. The company should work on increasing the image perception among its customers. These work should also been done by the involvement of dealers. Strategic actions should be taken in order to eliminate the gap between the two groups.

It is necessary that the company analyses what kind of brand and communications know-how will be required in the future and what steps are needed so that this kind of know-how can be obtained or developed. Indeed, at best, all operations in the company are guided by the corporate brand image. That is why the building and management of the brand requires such broad-ranging knowledge and expertise. All these broad-ranging knowledge should be considered initiating internal programs to communicate the brand's image to employees; especially the dealers as they are the first contact person of the potential & existing customers.

Correlation and regression analysis results show the gaps between perceived corporate image of Mercedes-Benz among its customers and dealers. According to the dealers, price premium and satisfaction have positive relationship with their corporate brand loyalty. On the other hand, all the other concepts like corporate brand awareness, corporate brand identification as well as corporate brand loyalty have no impact on corporate image according to them. For customers, the analysis shows that their image perception is different than the dealers. Customers don not see any relationship between price premium and corporate brand loyalty. Besides, according to them, corporate brand awareness and corporate brand identification concepts have a positive impact on their corporate image perceptions.

The results of this study might be helpful for Mercedes-Benz, in order to compare their perceived images in Turkey as well as the perceive images of its competitors among its existing and potential customers and dealers. The results might assist them to develop a better corporate image management strategy in the future. Also, this study can be a base for the ones who would like to do a research in this area. Besides, the literature part of the thesis will enlighten people in terms of how to manage a good corporate brand image.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1- Questionnaire for Existing & Potential Customers

BAHÇEŞEHİR ÜNİVERSİTESİ

Questionnaire

This questionnaire is part of the master thesis of Ezgi Yıldız, master student at the Marketing Masters Program of Bahcesehir University. The objective of this survey is to determine the different components of corporate image/ identity in the automobile industry.

The information gathered by your support will be kept strictly confidential and only be used in aggregated analysis for the thesis - individual respondents will not be recognized.

Thank you very much in advance for your support of my thesis. In case you should have any questions regarding this questionnaire, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Ezgi Yıldız - ezgi.ezgiyildiz@gmail.com
Assist. Prof. Elif Karaosmanoğlu - karaosman5@itu.edu.tr

Section I
1. Could you please write the first three automobile companies' names as you recall.

1- ....
2- ....
3- ....

2. How familiar are you with the automobile companies below?

Company	Not familiar	Not familiar	Slightly familiar	Neither Familiar nor unfamiliar	Moderately familiar	Familiar	Extremely familiar
Mercedes-Benz							
BMW							
Audi							
Volvo							

3. On the basis of the statements below, please evaluate the companies, **Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo** according to your level of agreement.

(7- Strongly disagree, 6- Disagree, 5- Somewhat disagree, 4- Neither agree nor disagree, 3- Somewhat agree, 2- Agree, 1- Strongly agree)

Statements	Company	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
[…] is a company which has a distinctive identity and stands out from its competitors	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] is a company which does what it promises	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] is a company which has better reputation than other automobile companies	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] is a company which produces products that I would pay more for than for the competitors' brands	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] is a company which has ideally priced products according to the benefits it offers (good price/quality balance)	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

4. Do you have a driver's license?

☐ Yes   ☐ No (Please go to Question 6)

5. For how long have you had a driver's license?

☐ Less than 5 years   ☐ More than 5 years

6. Do you/ does your family have a car?

        ☐ Yes   ☐ No (Please go to Question 8)

7. What is the brand of your car? ....

8. Have you/ has your family ever had Mercedes-Benz before?

        ☐ Yes   ☐ No (Please go to Question 11)

9. On the basis of your experience, how satisfied are you with Mercedes-Benz?

Com-pletely Dis-satisfied	Mostly Dis-satisfied	Some-what Dis-satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dis-satisfied	Some-what Satisfied	Mostly Satisfied	Com-pletely Satisfied

10. On the basis of your experience with Mercedes-Benz, please evaluate the statements below, according to your level of agreement.

(7- Strongly disagree, 6- Disagree, 5- Somewhat disagree, 4- Neither agree nor disagree, 3- Somewhat agree, 2- Agree, 1- Strongly agree)

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I will continue to buy this brand because I am satisfied and acquainted with the brand							
I will use this brand in spite of competitors' deals							
I would buy additional products and services from this brand							

11. If you would have a chance to buy a car now, which brand would you prefer the most?

☐ Mercedes-Benz ☐ BMW ☐ Audi ☐ Volvo
☐ Other (Please Specify)……………

Section II

1. The following statements aim to understand your feelings towards Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements according to these companies.

(7- Strongly disagree, 6- Disagree, 5- Somewhat disagree, 4- Neither agree nor disagree, 3- Somewhat agree, 2- Agree, 1- Strongly agree)

Statements	Company	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
[…]'s successes are my successes	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
I am interested in what others think about […]	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
When someone praises […], it feels like a personal compliment	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
If a story in the media criticized […], I would feel embarrassed	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
When someone criticizes […]it feels like a personal insult	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

2. Considering an ideal automobile company, please evaluate the companies Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo according to the statements below.

(7- Strongly disagree, 6- Disagree, 5- Somewhat disagree, 4- Neither agree nor disagree, 3- Somewhat agree, 2- Agree, 1- Strongly agree)

Statements	Company	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
[…] is a company which has strong financial performance	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] is a company which produces safe and reliable products	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] is a company which has high technology and quality products	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] is a company which has constellation of other brands	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] is a company which has qualified, well educated employees and service personnel	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] is a company which has a powerful country of origin	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

[…] is a company which has a lot of products in different categories	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

[…] is a company which has a lot of partnerships with other institutions	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

[…] is a company which has high society/ community orientation and is sensitive towards environmental issues	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

[…] is a company which is innovative	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

[…] is a successful company which has a strong presence	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

[…] is a company which is global	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

3. Considering Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo, please rank the attributes below according to your level of agreement.

(7- Strongly disagree, 6- Disagree, 5- Somewhat disagree, 4- Neither agree nor disagree, 3- Somewhat agree, 2- Agree, 1- Strongly agree)

Statements	Company	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
[…] is a company which has a strong, distinctive character	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] is a company which leads successful communication with its stakeholders	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] is a company which has a good perception by its stakeholders	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] is a company which has high prestige products	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] is a company which has well- known, respectful and desirable products	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

Section III

1. Gender   [ ] Male   [ ] Female

2. Age group   [ ] 25 and below   [ ] 26 - 35

          [ ] 36 - 45   [ ] 46 and above

3. Education level   [ ] Secondary   [ ] High School   [ ] Undergraduate

                                            [ ] Masters   [ ] PhD   [ ] Other

4. Marital status   [ ] Married   [ ] Single

                                            [ ] Widowed   [ ] Divorced

5. Occupation   [ ] Student

                                            [ ] Self-employed

                                            [ ] Blue collar / Administrative / Secretarial Position

                                            [ ] Management Positions

                                            [ ] Professionals (Engineers, Doctors, Lawyers...etc.)

                                            [ ] Other (Please specify: ....)

6. What is your family's net income monthly?

       ☐   Lower than 2.500 TL

       ☐ 2.501-5.000 TL

       ☐ 5.001-7.500 TL

       ☐ More than 7.501 TL

7. How many people live in your household?...................

          ———— THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION————

APPENDIX-2 Mevcut ve Potansiyel Müşterilere uygulanan anket

Anket

Bu anket Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Pazarlama Programı master öğrencisi Ezgi Yıldız'ın bitirme tezidir. Bu araştırmanın amacı, otomotive sektöründe kurumsal imaj ve kimliğin farklı öğelerini belirleyebilmektir.

Sizin destekleriniz ile toplanan bu bilgiler tamamen gizli tutulacak ve sadece bu tez çalışması içinde toplu olarak kullanılacaktır ve bireysel cevaplar belli olmayacaktır.

Bu tez çalışmasına vereceğiniz destek için teşekkür ederiz. Eğer bu anket ile ilgili herhangi bir sorunuz olursa lütfen aşağıdaki e-mail adreslerinden bize ulaşınız.

Ezgi Yıldız - ezgi.ezgiyildiz@gmail.com
Assist. Prof. Elif Karaosmanoğlu - karaosman5@itu.edu.tr

Bölüm 1
1. Şuan aklınıza gelen ilk üç otomobil firmasının adını yazınız.
   1.................
   2.................
   3.................

2. Aşağıdaki otomobil firmalarını ne kadar tanıyorsunuz?

Firma	Hiç tanımıyorum	Tanımıyorum	Çok az tanıyorum	Ne tanıyorum ne tanımıyorum	Orta derecede tanıyorum	Tanıyorum	Çok iyi tanıyorum
Mercedes-Benz							
BMW							
Audi							
Volvo							

3. Aşağıdaki ifadelere katılma derecenize göre, şu otomobil firmalarını değerlendiriniz, **Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi, Volvo.**

(7- Tamamen katılmıyorum, 6- Katılmıyorum, 5- Biraz Katılmıyorum, 4- Bir fikrim yok, 3- Biraz Katılıyorum, 2- Katılıyorum, 1- Tamamen Katılıyorum)

İfadeler	Firma	Tamamen katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Biraz katılmıyorum	Ne katılıyorum ne katılmıyorum	Biraz katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Tamamen katılıyorum
[…]ayrıcalıklı kimliği olan ve rakiplerinin arasından sıyrılan bir firmadır	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] sözünü tutan bir firmadır	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] diğer otomobil firmalarına göre itibari çok daha iyi olan bir firmadır.	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] diğer markaların ürünleri ile karşılaştırıldığında ürettiği ürünlere gönüllü olarak daha fazla para ödeyebileceğim bir firmadır	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] ürünlerinin sunduğu faydaya bağlı olarak ideal fiyatlandırma yapan bir firmadır (iyi ürün/fiyat dengesi)	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

4. Ehliyetiniz var mı?

☐ Evet ☐ Hayır (Lütfen soru 6'ya geçiniz)

5. Ne kadar zamandır ehliyetiniz var?

☐ 5 yıldan az ☐ 5 yıldan fazla

6. Sizin ya da ailenizin arabası var mı?

☐ Evet ☐ Hayır (Lütfen soru 8'e geçiniz)

7. Arabanızın markası nedir?.....................................

8. Aileniz ya siz hiç Mercedes-Benz marka otomobile sahip oldunuz mu?

☐ Evet ☐ Hayır (Lütfen soru 11'e geçiniz)

9. Deneyimlerinize dayanarak, Mercedes-Benz'den ne kadar memnun olduğunuzu değerlendirir misiniz?

Tamamen memnuniyetsizim	Oldukça memnuniyetsizim	Az çok memnuniyetsizim	Ne memnunum ne memnun değilim	Az cok memnunum	Oldukça memnunum	Tamamen memnunum

10. Mercedes-Benz ile deneyimlerinize dayanarak, lütfen aşağıdaki ifadeleri katılma derecenize göre değerlendiriniz.

(7- Tamamen katılmıyorum, 6- Katılmıyorum, 5- Biraz Katılmıyorum, 4- Bir fikrim yok, 3- Biraz Katılıyorum, 2- Katılıyorum, 1- Tamamen Katılıyorum)

İfadeler	Tamamen katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Biraz katılmıyorum	Ne katılıyorum ne katılmıyorum	Biraz katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Tamamen katılıyorum
Bu markayı tercih etmeye edeceğim çünkü ürünlerinden memnunum ve firma aşinalığım var							
Rakiplerinin kampanyalarına rağmen bu markayı kullanmaya devam edeceğim							
Bu markaya ait ekstra ürün ve servis almayı tercih ederim							

11. Eğer şu an yeni bir araba alma şansınız olsaydı, aşağıdaki markalardan hangisini daha çok tercih ederdiniz?

☐ Mercedes-Benz   ☐ BMW   ☐ Audi ☐ Volvo
☐ Diğer (Lütfen belirtiniz) ....

Bölüm II

1. Aşağıdaki cümleler Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi ve Volvo firmaları ile ilgili düşüncelerinizi anlamak içindir. Lütfen aşağıdaki ifadeleri katılma derecenize göre değerlendiriniz.

(7- Tamamen katılmıyorum, 6- Katılmıyorum, 5- Biraz Katılmıyorum, 4- Bir fikrim yok, 3- Biraz Katılıyorum, 2- Katılıyorum, 1- Tamamen Katılıyorum)

İfadeler	Firma	Tamamen katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Biraz katılmıyorum	Ne katılıyorum ne katılmıyorum	Biraz katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Tamamen katılıyorum
[…]'nın başarısı benim başarımdır	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
Başkalarının[…] ile ilgili ne düşündüğünü önemsiyorum	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
Başkaları […]'i övdüğünde kişisel bir övgü almış gibi hissediyorum	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
Basında […] eleştirildiğinde, kendimi mahçup hissediyorum	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
Birileri […]'i eleştirdiğinde bunu kişisel bir eleştiri gibi algılıyorum	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

2. İdeal bir otomobil firmasını düşünerek, lütfen aşağıdaki ifadeleri şu otomobil firmalarına göre değerlendiriniz; Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi ve Volvo.

İfadeler	Firma	Tamamen katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Biraz katılmıyorum	Ne katılıyorum ne katılmıyorum	Biraz katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Tamamen katılıyorum
[…] güçlü finansal performansa sahip bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] emniyetli ve güvenilir ürünler üreten bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] yüksek teknoloji ve kaliteye sahip ürünleri olan bir şirkettir.	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] diğer markalara öncülük eden bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] kalifiye, iyi eğitimli çalışanları ve servis personeli olan bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] menşei ülkesi sağlam olan bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…]değişik ürün kategorilerinde bir çok ürünü olan bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

İfadeler	Firma	Tamamen katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Biraz katılmıyorum	Ne katılıyorum ne katılmıyorum	Biraz katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Tamamen katılıyorum
[…]diğer kurumlar ile işbirliği yapan bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

İfadeler	Firma							
[…] toplumsal konulara yönelik ve çevreye duyarlı bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

[…] yenilikçi bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

[…]pazarda güçlü varlığı olan başarılı bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

[…]global bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

3. Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi ve Volvo markalarını düşünerek aşağıdaki ifadelere katılma derecenize göre değerlendiriniz.

(7- Tamamen katılmıyorum, 6- Katılmıyorum, 5- Biraz Katılmıyorum, 4- Bir fikrim yok, 3- Biraz Katılıyorum, 2- Katılıyorum, 1- Tamamen Katılıyorum)

İfadeler	Şirket	Tamamen katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Biraz katılmıyorum	Ne katılıyorum ne katılmıyorum	Biraz katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Tamamen katılıyorum
[…] güçlü ve kendini ayırt edebilen karaktere sahip bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] sosyal paydaşları ile başarılı iletişimi olan bir şirkettir.	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] sosyal paydaşları üzerinde iyi izlenimi olan bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] yüksek prestij sunan ürünlere sahip bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] tanınmış, saygı duyulan ve arzu edilen ürünlere sahip bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

Bölüm III

1. Cinsiyet   [ ] Bay   [ ] Bayan

2. Yaş grubu   [ ] 25 yaş ve altı   [ ] 26-35 arası

                              [ ] 36-45 arası   [ ] 46 yaş ve üstü

3. Eğitim durumunuz   [ ] Orta okul   [ ] Lise   [ ] Üniversite

                                      [ ] Master   [ ] PhD   [ ] Diğer

4. Medeni haliniz   [ ] Bekar   [ ] Evli

                                  [ ] Dul   [ ] Boşanmış

5. İşiniz   [ ] Öğrenci

                         [ ] Serbest meslek

                         [ ] Teknik / Ofis Yönetimi / Sekreter Pozisyonu

                         [ ] İdari pozisyon

                         [ ] Profesyonel (Mühendis, Doktor, Avukat...vb.)

                         [ ] Diğer (Lütfen belirtiniz: ....)

6. Ailenizin aylık net geliri nedir?

     ☐ 2.500 TL'den az

     ☐ 2.501-5.000 TL arası

     ☐ 5.001-7.500 TL arası

     ☐ 7.501 TL'den yüksek

7. Ev halkınız kaç kişiden oluşmaktadır?..................

————KATILIMINIZ İÇİN ÇOK TEŞEKKÜR EDERİZ ————

APPENDIX-3 Questionnaire for Mercedes-Benz Dealers

BAHÇEŞEHİR ÜNİVERSİTESİ

Questionnaire

This questionnaire is part of the master thesis of Ezgi Yıldız, master student at the Marketing Masters Program of Bahcesehir University. The objective of this survey is to determine the different components of corporate image/ identity in the automobile industry.

The information gathered by your support will be kept strictly confidential and only be used in aggregated analysis for the thesis - individual respondents will not be recognized.

Thank you very much in advance for your support of my thesis. In case you should have any questions regarding this questionnaire, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Ezgi Yıldız - ezgi.ezgiyildiz@gmail.com
Assist. Prof. Elif Karaosmanoğlu - karaosman5@itu.edu.tr

Section I
1. Could you please write the first three automobile companies' names as you recall.

     1- ....
     2- ....
     3- ....

2. How familiar are you with the automobile companies below?

Company	Not familiar at all	Not familiar	Slightly familiar	Neither Familiar nor unfamiliar	Moderately familiar	Familiar	Extremely familiar
Mercedes-Benz							
BMW							
Audi							
Volvo							

3. On the basis of the statements below, please evaluate the companies, **Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo** according to your level of agreement.

(7-Strongly disagree, 6- Disagree, 5- Somewhat disagree, 4- Neither agree nor disagree, 3- Somewhat agree, 1- Strongly agree)

Statements	Company	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
[…] is a company which has a distinctive identity and stands out from its competitors	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] is a company which does what it promises	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] is a company which has better reputation than other automobile companies	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] is a company which produces products that I would pay more for than for the competitors' brands	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] is a company which has ideally priced products according to the benefits it offers (good price/quality balance)	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

4. On the basis of your experience, how satisfied are you about being an employee of Mercedes-Benz as its authorized dealer?

Com-pletely Dis-satisfied	Mostly Dis-satisfied	Some-what Dis-satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dis-satisfied	Some-what Satisfied	Mostly Satisfied	Com-pletely Satisfied

5. On the basis of your experience with Mercedes-Benz, please evaluate the statements below, according to your level of agreement.

(7-Strongly disagree, 6- Disagree, 5- Somewhat disagree, 4- Neither agree nor disagree, 3- Somewhat agree, 1- Strongly agree)

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I will continue to work for this company because I am satisfied and acquainted with the company							
I prefer to work for this company in spite of the competitors' companies							
I suggest others to work for this company							

6. If you would have a chance to buy a car now, which brand would you prefer the most?

☐ Mercedes-Benz ☐ BMW   ☐ Audi   ☐ Volvo
☐ Other (Please Specify) ……………

Section II

1. The following statements aim to understand your feelings towards Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements according to these companies.

(7-Strongly disagree, 6- Disagree, 5- Somewhat disagree, 4- Neither agree nor disagree, 3- Somewhat agree, 1- Strongly agree)

Statements	Company	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
[…]'s successes are my successes	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
I am interested in what others think about […]	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
When someone praises […], it feels like a personal compliment	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
If a story in the media criticized […], I would feel embarrassed	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
When someone criticizes […]it feels like a personal insult	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

2. Considering an ideal automobile company, please evaluate the companies Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo according to the statements below.

(7-Strongly disagree, 6- Disagree, 5- Somewhat disagree, 4- Neither agree nor disagree, 3- Somewhat agree, 1- Strongly agree)

Statements	Company	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
[...] is a company which has strong financial performance	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[...] is a company which produces safe and reliable products	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[...] is a company which has high technology and quality products	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[...] is a company which has constellation of other brands	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[...] is a company which has qualified, well educated employees and service personnel	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[...] is a company which has a powerful country of origin	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[...] is a company which has a lot of products in different categories	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

[…] is a company which has a lot of partnerships with other institutions	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

[…] is a company which has high society/ community orientation and is sensitive towards environmental issues	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

[…] is a company which is innovative	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

[…] is a successful company which has a strong presence	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

[…] is a company which is global	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

3. Considering Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Volvo, please rank the attributes below according to your level of agreement.
(7-Strongly disagree, 6- Disagree, 5- Somewhat disagree, 4- Neither agree nor disagree, 3- Somewhat agree, 1- Strongly agree)

Statements	Company	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
[…] is a company which has a strong, distinctive character	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

[…] is a company which leads successful communication with its stakeholders	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

[…] is a company which has a good perception by its stakeholders	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

[…] is a company which has high prestige products	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

[…] is a company which has well- known, respectful and desirable products	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

Section III

1. Have you ever worked for another automobile company before?

☐   Yes   ☐   No (Please go to Question 4)

2. Which automobile company have you worked for?

....

3. How long have you worked for that company?

☐ Less than 1 year

☐ Between 1 and 3 years

☐ Between 3 and 5 years

☐ More than 5 years

4. How long have you been working for Mercedes-Benz?

☐ Less than 1 year

☐ Between 1 and 3 years

☐ Between 3 and 5 years

☐ More than 5 years

5. How many people work at the Mercedes-Benz dealer you work for, including blue and white collar employees?

☐ Less than 5

☐ Between 5 and 10

☐ Between 11 and 15

☐ More than 15

6. In which city is your dealer located?

....

7. What is your position in your dealer?

☐ Dealer owner

☐ Sales Manager

☐ Sales Specialist

☐ Sales Staff

☐ Other (Please Specify ....)

──────── **THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION** ────────

APPENDIX-4 Bayilere Uygulanan Anket

Anket

Bu anket Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Pazarlama Programı master öğrencisi Ezgi Yıldız'ın bitirme tezidir. Bu araştırmanın amacı, otomotive sektöründe kurumsal imaj ve kimliğin farklı öğelerini belirleyebilmektir.

Sizin destekleriniz ile toplanan bu bilgiler tamamen gizli tutulacak, sadece bu tez çalışması içinde kullanılacak ve bireysel cevaplar belli olmayacaktır.

Bu tez çalışmasına vereceğiniz destek için teşekkür ederiz. Anket ile ilgili herhangi bir sorunuz olması durumunda lütfen aşağıdaki e-mail adreslerinden bize ulaşınız.

Ezgi Yıldız - ezgi.ezgiyildiz@gmail.com
Assist. Prof. Elif Karaosmanoğlu - karaosman5@itu.edu.tr

Bölüm 1

1. Şuan aklınıza gelen ilk üç otomobil firmasının adını yazınız.

1- ....
2- ....
3- ....

2. Aşağıdaki otomobil firmalarını ne kadar tanıyorsunuz?

Firma	Hiç tanımıyorum	Tanımıyorum	Çok az tanıyorum	Ne tanıyorum ne tanımıyorum	Orta derecede tanıyorum	Tanıyorum	Çok iyi tanıyorum
Mercedes-Benz							
BMW							
Audi							
Volvo							

3. Aşağıdaki ifadelere katılma derecenize göre, şu otomobil firmalarını değerlendiriniz, **Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi, Volvo.**

(7- Tamamen katılmıyorum, 6- Katılmıyorum, 5- Biraz katılmıyorum, 4- Ne katılıyorum ne katılmıyorum, 3- Biraz katılıyorum, 2- Katılıyorum, 1- Tamamen katılıyorum)

İfadeler	Firma	Tamamen katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Biraz katılmıyorum	Ne katılıyorum ne katılmıyorum	Biraz katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Tamamen katılıyorum
[…]ayrıcalıklı kimliği olan ve rakiplerinin arasından sıyrılan bir firmadır	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

İfadeler	Firma							
[…]sözünü tutan bir firmadır	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

İfadeler	Firma							
[…]diğer otomobil firmalarına göre itibari çok daha iyi olan bir firmadır.	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

İfadeler	Firma							
[…]diğer markaların ürünleri ile karşılaştırıldığında ürettiği ürünlere gönüllü olarak daha fazla para ödeyebileceğim bir firmadır	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

İfadeler	Firma							
[…]ürünlerinin sunduğu faydaya bağlı olarak ideal fiyatlandırma yapan bir firmadır (iyi ürün/fiyat dengesi)	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

4. Deneyimlerinize göre, Mercedes-Benz'in yetkili bayisi olarak firmadan ne kadar memnun olduğunuzu değerlendirir misiniz?

Tamamen memnuniyetsizim	Oldukça memnuniyetsizim	Az çok memnuniyetsizim	Ne memnun ne memnun değilim	Az çok memnunum	Oldukça memnunum	Tamamen memnunum

5. Mercedes-Benz ile deneyimlerinize dayanarak, lütfen aşağıdaki ifadeleri katılma derecenize göre değerlendiriniz.

(7- Tamamen katılmıyorum, 6- Katılmıyorum, 5- Biraz katılmıyorum, 4- Ne katılıyorum ne katılmıyorum, 3- Biraz katılıyorum, 2- Katılıyorum, 1- Tamamen katılıyorum)

İfadeler	Tamamen katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Biraz katılmıyorum	Ne katılıyorum ne katılmıyorum	Biraz katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Tamamen katılıyorum
Bu şirketle çalışmaya devam edeceğim çünkü memnunum ve firma aşinalığım var.							
Rakip firmalara rağmen bu şirketle çalışmaya devam edeceğim.							
Diğer kişilere de bu firma ile çalışmalarını öneriyorum.							

6. Eğer şuan yeni bir araba alma şansınız olsaydı, aşağıdaki markalardan hangisini daha çok tercih ederdiniz?

☐ Mercedes-Benz ☐ BMW ☐ Audi ☐ Volvo
☐ Diğer (Lütfen belirtiniz)……………

Bölüm II

1. Aşağıdaki cümleler Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi ve Volvo firmaları ile ilgili düşüncelerinizi anlamak içindir. Lütfen aşağıdaki ifadeleri katılma derecenize göre değerlendiriniz.

(7- Tamamen katılmıyorum, 6- Katılmıyorum, 5- Biraz katılmıyorum, 4- Ne katılıyorum ne katılmıyorum, 3- Biraz katılıyorum, 2- Katılıyorum, 1- Tamamen katılıyorum)

İfadeler	Firma	Tamamen katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Biraz katılmıyorum	Ne katılıyorum ne katılmıyorum	Biraz katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Tamamen katılıyorum
[…]'nın başarısı benim başarımdır	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
Başkalarının[…]ile ilgili ne düşündüğünü önemsiyorum	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
Başkaları […]'i övdüğünde kişisel bir övgü almış gibi hissediyorum	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
Basında […].eleştirildiğinde, kendimi mahçup hissediyorum	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
Birileri […]'i eleştirdiğinde bunu kişisel bir eleştiri gibi algılıyorum	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

2. İdeal bir otomobil firmasını düşünerek, lütfen aşağıdaki ifadeleri şu otomobil firmalarına göre değerlendiriniz; Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi ve Volvo.

(7- Tamamen katılmıyorum, 6- Katılmıyorum, 5- Biraz katılmıyorum, 4- Ne katılıyorum ne katılmıyorum, 3- Biraz katılıyorum, 2- Katılıyorum, 1- Tamamen katılıyorum)

İfadeler	Firma	Tamamen katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Biraz katılmıyorum	Ne katılıyorum ne katılmıyorum	Biraz katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Tamamen katılıyorum
[…] güçlü finansal performansa sahip bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] emniyetli ve güvenilir ürünler üreten bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] yüksek teknoloji ve kaliteye sahip ürünleri olan bir şirkettir.	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] diğer markalara öncülük eden bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] kalifiye, iyi eğitimli çalışanları ve servis personeli olan bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] menşei ülkesi sağlam olan bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

[…]değişik ürün kategorilerinde bir çok ürünü olan bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

[…] diğer kurumlar ile işbirliği yapan bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

[…] toplumsal konulara yönelik ve çevreye duyarlı bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

[…] yenilikçi bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

[…] pazarda güçlü varlığı olan başarılı bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

[…] global bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

3. Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi ve Volvo markalarını aşağıdaki ifadelere katılma derecenize göre değerlendiriniz.

(7- Tamamen katılmıyorum, 6- Katılmıyorum, 5- Biraz katılmıyorum, 4- Ne katılıyorum ne katılmıyorum, 3- Biraz katılıyorum, 2- Katılıyorum, 1- Tamamen katılıyorum)

İfadeler	Şirket	Tamamen katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Biraz katılmıyorum	Ne katılıyorum ne katılmıyorum	Biraz katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Tamamen katılıyorum
[…] güçlü ve kendini ayırt edebilen karaktere sahip bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] sosyal paydaşları ile başarılı iletişimi olan bir şirkettir.	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] sosyal paydaşları üzerinde iyi izlenimi olan bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] yüksek prestij sunan ürünlere sahip bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							
[…] tanınmış, saygı duyulan ve arzu edilen ürünlere sahip bir şirkettir	Mercedes-Benz							
	BMW							
	Audi							
	Volvo							

Bölüm III

1. Daha önce başka bir otomobil şirketi için çalıştınız mı?

☐   Evet   ☐   Hayır (Lütfen Soru 4'e geçiniz)

2. Hangi otomobil şirketi için çalıştınız?

....

3. O şirkette ne kadar süre için çalıştınız?

☐ 1 yıldan az

☐ 1 ila 3 yıl arası

☐ 3 ila 5 yıl arası

☐ 5 yıldan fazla

4. Ne kadar zamandır Mercedes-Benz için çalışıyorsunuz?

☐ 1 yıldan az

☐ 1 ila 3 yıl arası

☐ 3 ila 5 yıl arası

☐ 5 yıldan fazla

5. Çalıştığınız Mercedes-Benz yetkili bayiinde mavi ve beyaz yakalılar dahil toplam kaç kişi çalışıyor?

☐ 5 kişiden az

☐ 5 ila 10 kişi arası

☐ 11 ila 15 kişi arası

☐ 15 kişiden fazla

6. Çalıştığınız yetkili bayii hangi şehirdedir?

....

7. Bu bayide sizin pozisyonunuz nedir?

- ☐ Bayi sahibi

- ☐ Satış Müdürü

- ☐ Satış Uzmanı

- ☐ Satış Elemanı

- ☐ Diğer (Lütfen belirtiniz ....)

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———— **KATILIMINIZ İÇİN ÇOK TEŞEKKÜR EDERİZ** ————

</div>

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name, Surname : Ezgi Yıldız

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Foreign Languages : English, German

Primary Education : (Gazi Mustafa Kemal Elementary School, 1995)

Secondary Education : (Orhan Dengiz Anatolian Highschool, 2001)

Undergraduate : (Dokuz Eylül University, 2006)

Graduate : (Bahçeşehir University, 2010)

Institution : Institute of Social Sciences

Program : Marketing

Publications : -

Work Experience :

Mercedes-Benz Türk A.Ş.	2007 - present
DaimlerChrysler AG	2006 - 2007
IZFAS Organization Ltd.	2004 – 2005