

Full Length Research Paper

Leather and leather products industry in Turkey: Marketing developments

Gonca Telli Yamamoto^{1*}, Özgür Şekeroğlu² and Eser Eke Bayramoğlu³

¹Department of Information Systems and Technologies, School of Applied Sciences, Okan University, Akfirat Campus, Formula 1 Yani, 34959 Istanbul, Turkey.

²Distance Learning Center, Okan University, Kadikoy Campus, Uzunçayır Cad. No:4/A, 34722 Hasanpaşa-Kadıköy / Istanbul, Turkey.

³Department of Leather Engineering, School of Engineering, Ege University, 35100 Bornova/Izmir, Turkey.

Accepted 12 October, 2011

Leather industry covers many disciplines as sub-industries and it has played a driving role for the exports of Turkey for many years with the internal harmony of those sub-industries. However, the leather industry's production orientedness seriously impacts sectoral development especially during the outbreaks of global crises. The augmentation of competition in the leather industry after 1995, rising barriers in penetration to global markets and the occurrence of international crises denote marketing as the leading problem in the world trade. Marketing has strayed from the conventional function and transformed into a structure used highly in various scales and in different environments. In this context, the identification of the situation in Turkey is important and necessary for the sectoral continuity in the milieu of global competition. This study identifies the marketing approaches in the leather industry through a face to face survey with the member companies of the association of leather industrialists.

Key words: Turkey, leather industry, marketing, promotion, research.

INTRODUCTION

The augmentation of competition in the leather and leather products industry after 1995, rising barriers in penetration to global markets and the occurrence of international crises denote marketing as the leading problem in the world trade. Effective marketing policies are heading the leading solutions that would emancipate the profitability of leather and leather products enterprises from haphazardness and troubles, thus, ensuring their sustainability. Marketing has strayed from the conventional function and transformed into a structure used highly in various scales and in different environments. Electronic/mobile marketing strategies and methods can be considered as the phenomena which gradually gain further importance.

Enterprises currently live in a continuously changing environment. The effects of the economic crisis force the companies in several markets all around the world and

enterprises should rethink their marketing strategies in order to cope with the major changes in the business environment (Şerbănică et al., 2009). Some studies also examine how companies perceive various aspects of their competitive environment and to highlight key marketing strategies used in order to face the competition in their countries (Zaharia et al., 2009).

Leather industry enterprises are continuously influenced by the social, cultural, technological, political and legal changes around them on both strategic and tactical terms. The leather industry must keep up with the changes around it for its survival and competitiveness against its rivals. In the competitive environment, the improvement of the leather industry's current situation and the development of its export potential depend on taking advantage of the information technologies and choosing e-commerce as an important way. The marketing activities and the e-marketing efforts which occur following the general tendencies at present are among the issues that should primarily and carefully be observed in the leather industry (Yamamoto et al., 2009b).

*Corresponding author. E-mail: gonca.telli@okan.edu.tr.

Leather and leather products industry covers many disciplines as sub-industries and it has played a driving role for the exports of Turkey for many years with the internal harmony of those sub-industries as a labour-intensive industry. It is one of the oldest and most rooted sectors in the history of commerce of Turkey. Leather has currently begun being used for more different purposes, rather than just being a protective material as it was in history. As stated on the web site of International Council of Tanners, currently, people have gone into a further search for more aesthetically-appealing and softer shoes and clothes on the web (ICT, 2010).

For sustainability, development and profitability, an industry must be in good communication with its surroundings, and realize the right marketing activities by communicating the right messages to the right masses and individuals. The structure of the leather industry is currently based on maintaining and sustaining the quality, while branding and promotion must be encouraged for penetrating into world markets and achieving success. The leather and leather products industry of Turkey has an important development potential. However, in addition to the conventional problems of the industry, the negative economic developments in recent year have shown that the required concern is not shown for effective promotion and marketing activities. Besides, the Turkish industrialists who draw attention in the world markets with high-quality products could not obtain the deserved status in the world markets due to failing to give enough weight to exports and promotion.

On the other hand, the overall economic crisis in the world has also impacted the industry and certain problems out of the agenda have been faced. Those most important among such problems are the economic crisis in the destination countries of foreign trade, rapid increase in short-term liabilities and inability to tolerate the liabilities, lacking researches in foreign markets, lacking marketing activities and promotion, insufficient incentives, tax increases, banks' failure to utilize commercial loans sufficiently and operating capital loss of enterprises.

The applications such as web 2.0 have brought a new dimension to human relations and shopping. Currently internet impacts the leather industry similar to other industries in terms of both production, identifying the demand and interaction. Therefore, the importance of promoting leather products has increased further. So far, similar to that in all industries in Turkey, the enterprises of the leather and leather products industry have focused on product and high-quality production, while attention has not been paid to marketing; instead, the issues such as quality in production activities have been dealt with. However, the end of shuttle trade with Russia, the volatile course of tourism obligated increasing marketing activities in the industry, similar to that in other industries.

The augmentation of competition in the leather and leather products industry after 1995, rising barriers in

penetration to global markets and the occurrence of international crises denote marketing as the leading problem in the world trade. Effective marketing policies are heading the leading solutions that would emancipate the profitability of leather and leather products enterprises from haphazardness and troubles, thus ensuring their sustainability. Marketing has strayed from the conventional function and transformed into a structure used highly in various scales and in different environments. Electronic/mobile marketing strategies and methods appear as the phenomena which gradually gain further importance. In this context, the identification of the situation in Turkey is important and necessary for sustainability in the milieu of global competition. Therefore, our study identifies the marketing approaches in the leather industry through a face to face survey study conducted on the marketing activities in the leather industry of Turkey.

MARKETING AND PROMOTION IN THE LEATHER INDUSTRY

Promotion is the disclosure/announcement of the products and services of a company, the features of such products, their corporate identity, method of production and technology together with the emotional bounds loaded on the manufactured elements, to wide public masses, in order to ensure that such masses adopt, embrace, and want those products and services. Promotions and publicities of the companies can be conducted on different channels. Companies publicity efforts from the past to the present have included mass communication media such as TV channels, radios, newspapers and magazines, as well as outdoor promotion instruments, in addition to these, events such as exhibitions where the products are displayed and opportunities for developing cooperation and partnership occurred. Each channel introduces the products and services, their features and the corporate identity to wide public masses through designs, demonstrations and various uses according to their peculiar characteristics. Generally, the marketing departments and the advertising or promotion agencies and their associates identify the form or design of explaining these products and details to consumers.

The communication in this sense is not a normal flow of information. The communication must include creating a strategy in a manner to develop a desire, intent, appreciation and adoption and finally purchasing behaviour of the consumers. The commercial films, posters, billboards, ad wraps, radios, and tens of channels aim to evoke the consumers' interest and desire to buy the products and services of the companies. To do that, famous faces that influence people, humorous discourses, acts, expressions, impressive visuals, and photographs with stories are used with an attempt to influence the consumer. Lately, the development of technology, especially the

creation of the internet with the simultaneous access of millions of people and with the ability to measure that medium with fast and accurate techniques has gradually began to eliminate the older channels such as TV and radio, which are difficult to measure.

Recently, companies have begun to realize their related communications on the internet, or they began to develop methods and strategies to reach the consumer on this medium. Currently, many major brands have channelled their advertising and promotion investments to the internet. The adoption of shopping on the internet also influenced these ventures. On the internet, the companies access consumers and influence them with banners, embedded links, pop-ups and e-mail marketing techniques. Nevertheless, the older channels have gradually begun to lose their importance. After the development of the internet, together with the companies' inclination towards it, the most influenced channels include printed media such as newspapers and magazines. Other channels are also impacted, with a decrease in their advertising income either. Even some of the daily papers and magazines shifted from printed media and started to appear on the Internet. According to the opinions of marketing and advertising specialists, the earlier media will diminish in time. Gradually, the internet will be able to manage the communicating bridge between companies and consumers on its own (Blog Reklam, 2010).

Marketing, in its narrowest sense, is the total of activities realized in order to deliver the product to the customer (the person who needs it). This is the main task of an enterprise and naturally, the basic cash income to survive is obtained in this way. Basic marketing is the activities conducted for the customer to decide on buying the product. Promotion constitutes a major portion of these works. The actions to be taken for the hand over of the product after the customer makes the buying decision are sales. However, the concepts of marketing and sales are frequently confused.

According to Kotler (2000), marketing is a *sine qua non* to realize the sales, to strengthen the brand, to access the consumers-customers in every sense, and to have a place in the market. The changes in the market have developed depending on the development of technology, globalization and increase in the consumer's level of education. As a result of this change, the definition of marketing, the marketing mix, role and the organizational structure of the enterprise have also changed. Increasing competition has also changed the marketing process together with the organizational structure. The purpose of marketing began with the identification of the customer's needs, producing the most suitable product for the customer's needs, to present it to the customers, and thus obtaining profit. On the other hand, marketing became the most important function of an organization; and with the integrated marketing approach, marketing has not become a task for everyone at the enterprise

(Kotler, 2000; Kotler and Turner, 1993; Yamamoto, 2003).

In addition, Aaker (2010) indicates that certain opportunities and threats will appear in marketing in the next ten years and beyond regarding the social activities of enterprises. Especially in today's competitive environment, the need, obligation and target of each unit (companies, brands, organizations, individuals) to come to the fore obligates this diversity.

Promotion and marketing are also the leading instruments of creating a demand. The development of existing markets and creation of new markets mostly depends on the effectiveness of promotional activities (Women Entrepreneurs Supporting Project, 2008).

The examples of sectoral promotions show that mostly promotion related with tourism and cultural values are highlighted in the general literature (Özdipçiner, 2010; Çelik, 2005; Sari and Kozak, 2005; Muğan et al., 2002). These activities were considered in terms of the country's promotion in general. In addition, it is possible to say that the promotions realized by different sectors from time to time in order to develop their marketing activities and refer to wider masses also contribute indirectly for the promotion of the country from time to time. Besides, research conducted in 2008 on the examination of branding problems of the Turkish ready wear industry stated that the importance of Turkish brands' crossing the borders, setting aside contract manufacturing and obtaining a positive image in the international platform was continuously emphasized in various publications and meetings (Ağaç, 2008).

Because the factors such as the size of structure, size of the market, competitive enterprises and environmental conditions will also be examined with the marketing and promotion concept, it is obvious that companies can increase their profit potentials with various marketing policies and promotional applications. Together with understanding the importance of marketing and promotional activities, market researches will also gain importance. With marketing researches, only after the data on the marketing problems of enterprises are collected and analyzed in a systematic and unbiased manner, concrete steps may be taken on the lack of marketing and promotion, which is one of the leading problems beyond the leather and leather products industry.

In this context, a general evaluation of the public institutions and civil society support as well as the efforts on leather promotion will be provided.

The governmental and non-governmental organizations supports for leather promotion

Certain studies started after noticing the importance of sectoral promotion in the leather industry of Turkey. In 2005, in order to introduce the Turkish leather to domestic and foreign markets, to increase the marketing and export potential, and to realize the projects prepared, Union of Istanbul Leather and Leather Products

Exporters and the Union of Aegean Leather and Leather Products Exporters were founded with the support from the companies acting in the leather industry and under the coordination of the Foreign Trade Under secretariat (DTG, 2010). Leather Promotion Group was founded through the cooperation of Foreign Trade Under secretariat with the Turkish leather industry in order to realize a marketing that would accelerate exports in the Turkish leather and leather products and shoe industries, and to conduct related market development activities, to create a promotional strategy, to increase the market share of the industry in the entire world, mainly in the exports market, to set the image of Turkish leather in the world, and to organize permanent activities on the issues such as research and development, marketing, promotion and branding. The activities of the Leather Promotion Group (DTG) are as follows:

- i. Promotion activities towards the tourists visiting Turkey; within the scope of this activity, billboards are rented in the Foreign Lines Terminals of Istanbul and Antalya Airports, and Turkish Leather is promoted to incoming tourists.
- ii. Promotion campaign towards the domestic market of Turkey; this campaign aims to create Turkish leather image domestically, enhance the use of leather products in our daily lives, and raising awareness of the consumer. The mentioned campaign was broadcast on various TV channels in the previous years. Celebrities wore Turkish leather and supported from the heart, and the announcements created a great echo in Turkey.
- iii. Foreign promotional activities; foreign promotional activities aim at increasing the market share of the leather, leather products and shoe industry mainly in the target market USA, and in the entire world; realizing permanent activities on marketing, promotion and branding, and creating Turkish leather image in the world.

Leather Promotion Group began its foreign promotion activities in 2006 and the sector chose the USA as the target market. Leather Promotion Group organizes various activities such as exhibitions, meetings, buying and trade committees, workshops, and advertisements to the press and broadcast organizations mainly in the target market USA, and in all world countries.

Apart from the leather promotion group, various associations and organizations under the body of the leather industry also conduct promotion-related activities from time to time and participate in exhibition organizations. There are various non-governmental organizations acting for the leather industry of Turkey (1 foundation, 19 associations, 3 chambers, 3 unions, etc.).

The non-governmental organizations of the leather industry in Turkey are highly scattered and realized at a very low sectoral level. TÜRDEV, TSDS and İTKİB appear as the unifying bodies. Some of these organizations are also represented internationally. For example,

TSDS is a member of ICT (International Council of Tanners) and DETEK is a member of International Union of Leather Technologists and Chemists (IULTCS). These organizations represent Turkish Leather industry at international forums and commissions. These non-governmental organizations are involved in various activities in the leather industry to protect the interests of the sector and for the promotion of the sector. Most of them try to continue their activities with donations and subscription fees as they are bounded by the law of associations; therefore, their effectiveness is limited; indicating that they are highly affected from the legal restrictions.

Exhibitions and activities for leather promotion

Various exhibition activities that managed to reach international scale have been organized in the leather industry for the last twenty years. These exhibitions are varied greatly on sub-industrial basis and according to areas of specialization after 1995. In general, the exhibitions held in Turkey are: IDF (Istanbul Leather Fair), TÜYAP, AYSAF and AYMOD (DTG, 2006).

Apart from exhibitions, various scientific activities and conferences are also organized. IULTCS 2nd Eurocongress Istanbul, held at Istanbul Hilton Hotel in 2006 is an example of such conferences. 2nd European Leather Convention, which is to be realized at an international level for the first time, under the leadership of DETEK -a member of IULTCS-, and the IULTCS 32nd World Congress, which is to be held in Istanbul in 2013 are the other examples.

The organization of these exhibitions and scientific events is required for Turkey to become one of the most important leather hubs; especially as an instrument for branding and using a certain advantage for competing with other countries. The success of exhibitions is an evident criterion for clearing the way for the industry and ensuring its sustainability. These exhibitions should be more authentic; they should cover the entire sector and refrain from being scattered. Although the differences in the activity seasons of the sub-sectors appear as a problem beyond obtaining this integrity, a midway must be founded.

Publications and brochures for leather promotion

Apart from scientific activities of the leather industry (leather processing, leather apparel, accessories), there are some periodical publications, which are not enough in terms of quantity.

In order to promote the Turkish leather industry abroad within the scope of the activities started in July 2010 under IGEME, the introductory brochure in English titled "Leather Products from Turkey" can be considered as an

important development as it has been widely circulated abroad and highly appreciated by foreign business milieu.

The brochure provides both general information on the sector and the contact details and product details of the manufacturers and exporters in Turkey; and it is stated that the photographs of the products will be used in the brochure for a general promotion of the products. The brochure will be sent to the Economy and Trade Undersecretaries abroad, IGEME-like foreign trade organizations of foreign countries and to the exporters to who apply to IGEME. In addition, it will be distributed at the fairs and exhibitions abroad with an aim to create additional demand for the industry in foreign markets (IGEME, 2010).

Under the crisis environment experienced in the leather and leather products industry, the companies will be able to manage the crisis seriously with the new strategies especially to be developed in the field of marketing, by creating new opportunities from the crisis. The biggest problems that the industries encounter during the crisis periods are marketing problems. Because, consumer demands decrease, spending tendencies decline, and the confidence in the manufacturers, products and services reduce in such periods. The companies that manage to realize crisis management effectively are able to overcome these periods with minimum damage. Leather industry should also develop new marketing strategies and accelerate marketing efforts in this period in order to overcome the experienced crisis with the least damage.

One of the biggest mistakes of companies during crisis periods is suspending the promotional activities. Most companies prefer to wait until the crisis ends. However, the promotional activities in the crisis periods are very influential and strong, contrary to the general assumption. First of all, advertising becomes as influential as it had never been before, because there are hardly any promotional activities in the crisis periods, and the companies that advertise are immediately noted; the consumer immediately notes this promotional activity. Due to the scarce promotional activities in that period, the promoted company gives a positive message to the consumer indicating that it continues its activities despite the crisis, and it is a reliable company. Owing to these messages, the companies that realize promotional activities can seriously expand their market shares. New and different products are hardly ever offered to the market in the crisis periods. Offering new and different products in the crisis periods may not be immediately sold but ensure "visibility" to the consumer. The products and services which might have been lost among thousands of products during the normal times will be immediately noticed during the crisis periods. Crisis can be considered as the best time for launching different products that would draw the consumer's interest.

Always, the most important thing is to keep continuous communication with the customers, and it becomes even more important during the crisis periods because, being

remembered at those times are more valuable for the customers. This is, in a sense, considered as CRM and it should also be considered as a psychological interaction. The companies which become successful in customer relations can more easily overcome the crisis periods. Giving free of charge consulting to customers, extending payment maturities, offering the products and services that would not harm the company very much and will in a sense, result in the appreciation of the customers. The most important point that should not be forgotten is that crisis is a temporary situation. After the crisis, all companies are obliged to spend much money and time in order to reinstate the lost customers. It is even possible to get out of the crisis with gains by protecting the customer portfolio with better customer relations, instead of losing customers.

Becoming a brand is also important for becoming a company that creates value for the customer. The customers may obtain well known brands more easily. This opinion indicates the necessity that the leather industry should attach more importance to branding processes and the investments to become a brand. According to a research by MS and L in 2009, the most influential factors in choosing a brand can be seen in Figure 1.

Collecting data on new markets, analyzing those data, following up the changes in customer demands, and following up the changes that occur in the market, grasping new market trends, and putting emphasis on promotional activities may enable grasping major advantages in the leather and leather products industry.

In this study, a face to face survey study has been conducted on the marketing activities in the leather industry of Turkey, pursuing to identify the marketing approach in the industry.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A face to face questionnaire with 15 questions has been implemented in this study, and the questionnaire data of the leather enterprises have been entered the SPSS program and assessed with descriptive statistics, graphs, chi square and reliability analysis methods (SPSS, 2010).

The principle mass of the research includes 400 companies acting in the Turkish Leather Industry and which are the members of the Leather Industrialists Association of Turkey. However, only 82 of these companies could be reached. These are mostly production companies. The names of the companies have not been indicated due to commercial reasons, and they have been described by numbers during the assessment. The applied 82 questionnaires have been assessed with SPSS methods (SPSS, 2010). The results of the questionnaire have been evaluated as reliable according to SPSS analysis method. The hypotheses used during the research are as follows:

H₀: Exhibitions are the most preferred practices for the promotion of leather and leather products.

H₁: Exhibitions are not the most preferred practices for the promotion of leather and leather products.

H₂: The promotional activities of the leather industry in Turkey are



Figure 1. The most important factors in choosing a brand (Source: Hugley, 2010).

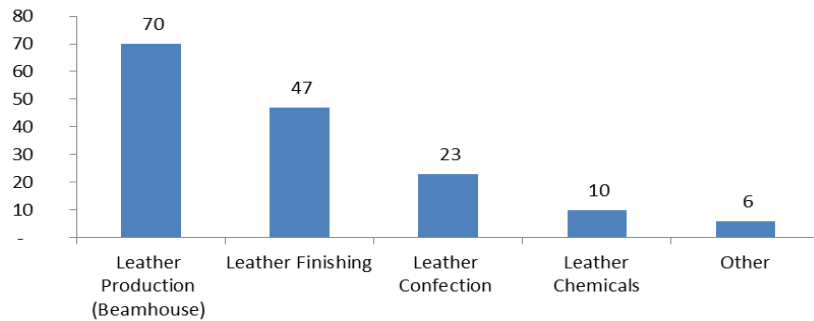


Figure 2. Bar chart on the sectors of participants.

sufficient.

H₃: The promotional activities of the leather industry in Turkey are not sufficient.

H₄: The promotional activities of the unions are sufficient.

H₅: The promotional activities of the unions are not sufficient.

H₆: The most effective element in leather promotion is advertisement.

H₇: The most effective element in leather promotion is not advertisement.

H₈: Promotion to the consumers during the crisis is the reason why the consumers prefer the product.

H₉: Promotion to the consumers during the crisis is not the reason why the consumers prefer the product.

H₁₀: The most highly regarded promotion tool for the sector is the web page.

H₁₁: The most highly regarded promotion tool for the sector is not the web page.

FINDINGS

Of all the companies that participated in the study, 86.4% are leather production, 58% are finishing, 28.4% are leather confection and 12.3% are leather chemical companies. The layout of the participating companies in the leather industry is as shown in Figure 2. Accordingly, most of the participants can be considered as manufacturing companies.

In the question that aims to assess the effectiveness degrees of the elements required for the promotion of the leather industry, 26.3% of the participants indicated advertisements as highly effective, 51.3% as effective, 13.8% as neither effective/nor ineffective; 32.5% indicated the bulletins as highly effective, 51.3% as effective, and 12.5% as neither effective/nor ineffective, while 74.1% of the participants indicated exhibitions as highly effective in the promotion of leather industry, and 21% as effective. Accordingly, H₀ has been accepted and H₁ has been rejected. 46.3% of the participants indicated that they found web page highly effective in the promotion of leather industry, while 45% said it was effective. Accordingly, H₆ has been accepted and H₇ has been rejected.

To the question directed to the participants to learn whether they find the promotional activities realized in the leather industry is sufficient or not, 72.8% of the participants replied as sufficient and 27.2% as insufficient (Figure 3). The lack of promotional activities in the leather industry can be clearly understood as a result. In this context, H₂ has been rejected and H₃ has been accepted.

The evaluation of opinions on the participants' promotional activities in the leather industry is provided as Figure 4. Accordingly, again, it is possible to say that

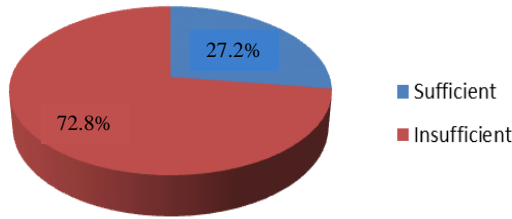


Figure 3. Participants' opinions on sufficiency of promotional activities in the leather industry.

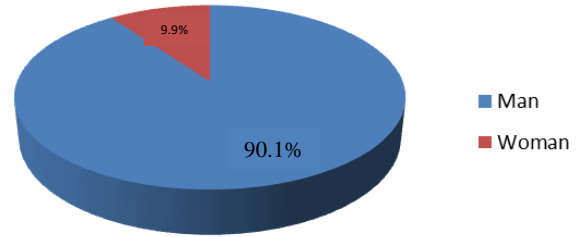


Figure 6. Gender-based distribution of the participants

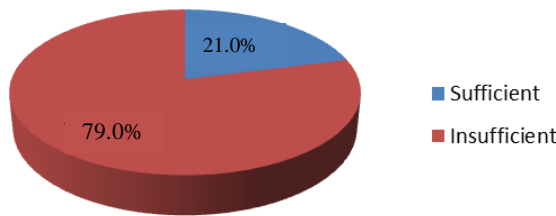


Figure 4. Participants' opinions on sufficiency of promotional activities realized by the unions in the leather industry.

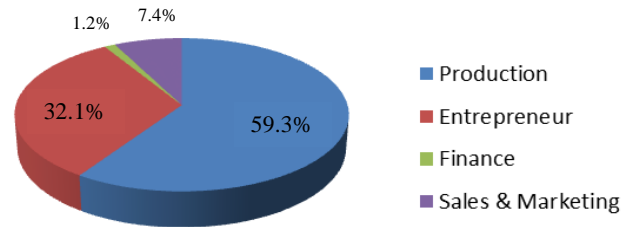


Figure 7. Department-based distribution of the participants.

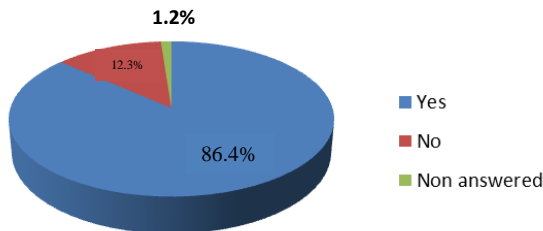


Figure 5. Having a web page for the participants' organizations in the leather industry.

these activities are mostly insufficient. As a result, H₄ has been rejected and H₅ has been accepted.

The effectiveness factors of the elements that lead to the consumers' preference of the products in the leather industry are assessed by the participants as follows. 31.3% indicated advertising as very important, 48.8% as important and 12.5% as neither important/nor unimportant; while 90.1% indicated quality as very important. 92.6% of the participants indicate that confidence in the company is an important factor for being preferred. 87.7% of the companies indicate the immediate obtainability of their products is important in being preferred. 85.2% of the participants indicate warranty as very important, 77.5% indicate the sales personnel as very important, 71.3% indicate the selling point as important, 56.3% indicate word of mouth as important and 27.8% indicate other promotions as important. 44.3% indicate promotions as neither important/nor unimportant. According to the findings, H₈ has been rejected and H₉ has been accepted.

According to the participants, in the order of importance of the vehicles used for promotion in the leather industry, web page ranks first (57.7%), mobile phone second (49.3%), magazines third (44.9%), radio fourth (44.6%), billboard and word of mouth creation fifth (40.5 and 35.9% respectively), newspaper sixth (48.1%) and TV 7th (51.3%). According to these findings, H₁₀ has been accepted and H₁₁ has been rejected. 86.4% of the participants have a web page while 12.3% do not (Figure 5).

Among the participants with a corporate web page; 95.7, 80, 84.3 and 88.4% respectively indicated that they found the home pages, announcements, pictures, and design sufficient. 42% of the participants said brochures are very important and 50.6% said they are important for effective exhibition promotions; 40 and 43.8% respectively indicated stand design as very important and important; respectively 38.3 and 49.4% indicated posters as very important and important; 57.7% indicated introductory movie as important, and 59.3% indicated promotion materials such as hat, pencil and file as neither important/nor unimportant. 90.1% of the participants are male and 9.9% are female (Figure 6).

The departments of the participants are as shown in Figure 7. Accordingly, most of the participants work in production. The evaluation of the income level data of the participants is shown in Figure 8. 91.4% of the participants are university graduates (Figure 9). 68.2% of those who found leather industry's promotional activities sufficient find the promotional activities of the unions in the leather industry sufficient, while 31.8% find them insufficient. 88.2% of those who found the promotional activities of the unions in the leather industry sufficient

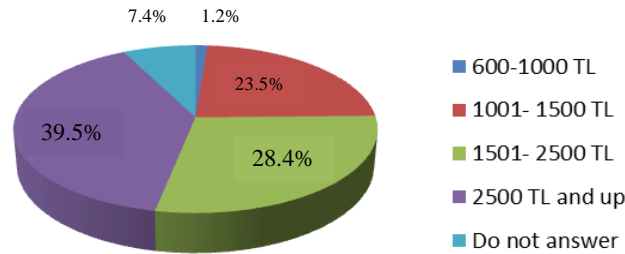


Figure 8. Descriptive statistics on the income level of the participants.

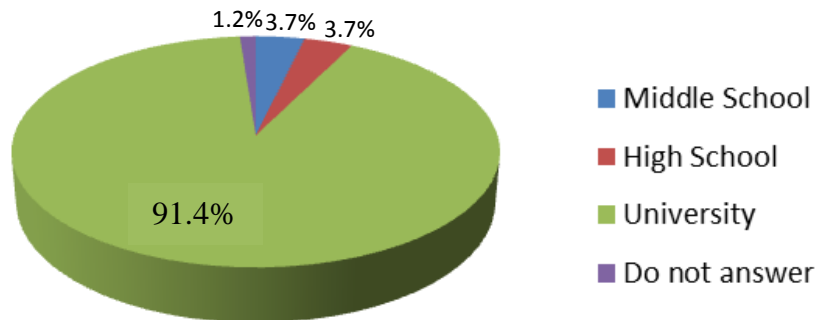


Figure 9. Descriptive statistics on the education level of the participants.

find the promotional activities of the leather industry sufficient, while 11.8% find them insufficient. According to chi-Square analysis, it is possible to say that there is a $p < 0.01$ meaningful relation between the answers of the participants to the questions “do you find the leather industry’s promotional activities sufficient?” and “do you think the promotional activities of the unions in the leather industry are sufficient?”

Conclusion

Marketing bears a distinguished importance for the survival and sustainability of the leather industry under the current very fast and global conditions of commerce and competition. The promotional activities to be conducted must be in an accurate and organized scope.

In this study, among 400 actively running companies in Turkey that are the members of the leather industrialists association which have been visited, only 82 of them, which are mostly production companies, could be contacted. The results of the survey study showed that various promotional activities have been conducted both by certain unions and associations that work for the sector’s benefit in Turkey, and by the companies’ with their own efforts; however, these activities are very limited in terms of promoting the industry. Industrial fairs are also gradually paid more importance; however, participation to these fairs is still inadequate and inefficient.

According to these results, the development of the leather industry depends on giving a higher emphasis on promotional activities, and effectively using the new promotional channels by immediately accommodating into the rapidly developing global conditions of competition and commerce. After all, waiting for a demand from outside will not result in any benefits.

Non-profit organizations and groups are required to spend great efforts on promoting in order to strengthen the marketing of the industry. However, the activities of the non-profit organizations and groups in the industry seem insufficient. There are various organizations such as the union of leather exporters, DETEK, leather Industrialists association, etc., in Turkey. In addition, Leather Promotion Group (DTG) is willing to make the Turkish leather a world brand; however, the efforts conducted in this regard are inadequate. Materials such as promotional kits (Euroleather online shop) are prepared by such organizations but these kits are not capable of ensuring sufficient promotion.

Tendencies for marketing through web pages gradually increase in the world. Retailing through web sites has now become a generally-accepted concept (McKinsey and Company, 2003). Leather industry is also expected to consider this concept, complete the infrastructural works about sales through e-commerce, and take immediate steps in this regard.

Branding may be considered as a concept which has been on the agenda of Turkey for nearly ten years.

Especially from the perspective of the textile and ready wear industry, in addition to the high production strength, the development of the design capacity also appears as an important factor. Having a prestigious brand in international markets is critical. Indeed, very serious changes are currently being observed in the retail industry. In this context, different and new channels are gradually attracting more attention especially for promotion. Using web pages and taking advantage from digital technologies are gradually becoming more important. Albeit, except for certain companies, any related efforts are not observed in the leather industry. The number of companies aiming to become a global Turkish leather brands such as Desa, Beta, Derimod, etc., is not more than five.

Under the current global economic crisis, leather companies are struggling to survive. The companies opt to reduce their capacities due to stagnancy during the crisis. Because of downsizing their capacities, most companies do not pay attention to promotional activities at all. However, serious activities can be realized in terms of promotion and marketing without a high cost.

For example, the cost of a proper web page is very low, while the cost of opening a blog is almost none. In addition, social media network also creates a new promotion and marketing option. First, web page must be taken into consideration. Currently, e-mails, social networks, banners, blogs, etc., are used for promotion. In addition, in order to base the marketing activities of the leather industry via the Internet on a more robust foundation, initially a web page must be prepared, it must be updated, the web page must be infused, and the efforts to actively use web pages in the commercial aspect must be expanded. The existing web pages should also be made functional in this regard.

Ensuring continuity in increasing exports is important for the continuation of development in the industry. This can only be possible by spending denser efforts on international marketing in order to increase the share in the existing market and for penetrating into new markets instead of waiting for the orders of foreign buyers (Yamamoto et al., 2009a). This requires concentration on promotion at fairs, which is the common opinion. For better integration of the world market with the industry, exhibition and brand incentives must be increased, and appealing financial resources to support the companies on coming together to open marketing offices and stores abroad must certainly be created.

REFERENCES

- Aaker AD (2010). Marketing Challenges in the next decade. *J. Brand Manage.*, 17: 315-316.
- Ağaç S (2008). A Study to investigate the Turkish Clothing Industry Branding Problems. *Text Garment*, 1: 1-10.
- Blog R (2010). <http://blog.reklam.com.tr/pazarlama/tanitim- nedir/1121/#ixzz17eKZ9kFO>, (referred on 12/12/2010).
- Çelik K (2005). Tourism Resources Information System (TKBS) Building: Example of Gumushane TMMOB Chamber of Surveying Engineers. 10. Turkey Map Scientific and Technical Conference, Ankara, Turkey.
- DTG (2010). Textile, Leather and Clothing Industry Leather and Leather Goods Sub-Committee Special Commission. <http://www.turkishleather.com/dtg/home.aspx> (referred on 14/12/2010).
- Hugley A (2010). The Dna of Brand Distinction 2010, Transition, Transformation and Activism in The New Consumer Economy, Ms&L.
- ICT (2010). <http://www.tannerscouncilct.org/perspective.htm> (referred on 14/10/2010).
- İGEME (2010). Leather and Leather Products Report, Potential Markets. <http://www.igeme.org.tr/pg/section-pg-sec.cfm?id=San13> (referred on 01/07/2010).
- İGEME (2010). <http://igeme.blogspot.com/2010/07/turk-deri-sektoru-konulu-ingilizce.html> (referred on 11/09/2010). Supporting the women entrepreneurship Project (2008). Marketing, Sales and Promotion, Ankara, p. 7.
- Kotler P, Turner RE (1993). Marketing Management- Analysis, Planning, -Implementation and Control, Canadian 7th Ed., Prentice Hall. Inc.
- Kotler P (2000). Marketing Management. The term. Nejat Muallimoğulları, Millennium Edition.
- McKinsey and Company (2003). Potential Effects of Draft Retail Law on Efficiency of the Retail Sector, p. 12.
- Muğan E, Ongan DS, Güngör S, Kızıllırmak A (2002). Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework Examples of Civil Architecture of Trabzon Province. *Gazi University TTEF J.*, 1: 189-206.
- Özdipçiner NS (2010). Electronic Marketing on Tourism. *İnternet Appl. Manage. J.*, 1(1): 5-22.
- Sarı Y, Kozak M (2005). Use of Information Technology in the Scope of Direct Marketing Efforts of Tourism Enterprises. *IIB Dergisi*, 1:19.
- SPSS (2010), <http://www.spss.com> (referred on 22/06/2010).
- Şekeroğlu ÖK (2010). A Research for E-Marketing Roadmap for Leather Industry. *Ege Uni Science Ins.* Unpublished PhD Thesis, p. 94.
- Şerbănică D, Constantinescu M, Căescu ŞC (2009). The Influence Of The Global Economic Crisis On The Strategic Marketing Instruments Used By Companies On The Romanian B2B Market. *Transform. Bus. Econ.*, 8(3): 18- 44.
- Yamamoto GT (2003). Integrated Marketing. *Mediacat Spring*, Istanbul.
- Yamamoto GT, Bayramoğlu EE, Yılmaz B, Şekeroğlu KÖ (2009a). Commerce Entrepreneurship and E-Marketing in Leather Industry, International 7th Knowledge, Economy and Management Congress Proceedings, Yalova:1950.
- Yamamoto GT, Bayramoğlu EE, Yılmaz B, Şekeroğlu KÖ (2009b). Leather Industry E-Commerce and E-Marketing Entrepreneurship, International Entrepreneurship Congress, Izmir University of Economics, Izmir, 11:3.
- Zaharia R, Cruceru AF, Anghelută AV (2009). Competitive And Anti-Competitive Strategies On The Romanian Market. *Transform. Bus. Econ.*, 8(3): 18-60.