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MASTER'S THESIS

THE ROLE OF BRAND PERSONALITY ON SYMBOLIC
CONSUMPTION: AN APPLICATION ON FASHION
INDUSTRY

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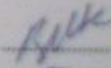
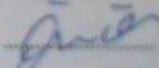
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this master's thesis titled as "The Role of Brand Personality on Symbolic Consumption: An Application on Fashion Industry" has been written by me without applying the help that can be contrary to academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that all materials benefited in this thesis consist of the mentioned resources in the reference list. I verify all these with my honor.

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ABSTRACT

Master's Thesis

**The Role of Brand Personality on Symbolic Consumption: An Application on
Fashion Industry**

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In today's world, consumption refers to the way individuals express themselves. Consumers focus on the products' aesthetics features and brand more than functional features. Individuals evaluate the personal characteristics of brand and make their choices according to these evaluations. At this point, consumers' buying behavior is being shaped and it is critical for companies to follow this change. It is essential for marketing to research into what symbolic and functional features of a brand that generates brand identity mean for consumers.

The purpose of this research is to understand if there is a relationship between symbolic consumption and brand personality. Therefore the relation between perceived quality and symbolic functions of brand will be revealed. For this reason, a model which presents reasons of consumers' brand choices with paying with respect to brand's symbolic and functional characteristics has been developed. An online survey was applied to test this model.

From the results of survey it is observed that symbolic characteristics of brands in textile and apparel industry are also influential besides functional features of brands. It is also observed that symbolic characteristics alongside with functional characteristics are effective variables to increase the perceived quality of brand. Psychological and sociological needs became effective parameters of brand choice.

Keywords: Brand, Brand Personality, Symbolic Consumption, Symbolic Characteristics, Brand Choice

ÖZET

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Günümüz dünyasında, tüketim; bireylerin kendilerini ifade ediş biçimleri anlamına gelmeye başlamıştır. Tüketiciler aldıkları ürünlerin fonksiyonel özelliklerinden çok markasına ve estetik özelliklerine odaklanmaktadır. Bireyler markanın kişilik özelliklerini değerlendirip kendilerine uygun bir marka tercih etmeye başlamışlardır. Bu noktada tüketicilerin satınalma davranışları şekillenir ve bu farklılaşmayı takip etmek oldukça kritik hale gelir. Markanın kişiliğini oluşturan sembolik ve fonksiyonel özelliklerinin tüketiciler için ne anlama geldiğini incelemek pazarlama açısından önem taşımaktadır.

Bu araştırmanın amacı; özellikle sembolik tüketim ve marka kişiliğinin arasında bir ilişki olup olmadığını anlamaktır. Dolayısıyla müşteri tarafından algılanan kalitenin markanın sembolik özellikleriyle ilişkisi açığa çıkacaktır. Bu sebeple markanın sembolik ve fonksiyonel özellikleri göz önüne alınarak tüketicinin marka tercih sebeplerini ortaya koyan bir model geliştirilmiştir. Modelin test edilmesi amacıyla internetten yayınlanan bir anket uygulanmıştır.

Anketlerde verilen bilgiler doğrultusunda, tekstil ve hazır giyim sektöründe faaliyet gösteren markaların fonksiyonel özelliklerinin yanısıra, sembolik özelliklerinin de marka seçimlerinde etkili olduğu regresyon modellemeleri ile görülmüştür. Ayrıca, algılanan kalite oranının artırılması için; markanın fonksiyonel özelliklerin yanısıra sembolik özelliklerinin de etkili

birer deęişken olduęu saptanmıřtır. Psikolojik ve sosyolojik ihtiyaçlar, marka seçiminde etkili birer parametre haline gelmiřtir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Marka, Marka Kiřilięi, Sembolik Tüketim, Sembolik Özellikler, Marka Tercihi

**THE ROLE OF BRAND PERSONALITY ON SYMBOLIC CONSUMPTION:
AN APPLICATION ON FASHION INDUSTRY**

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INTRODUCTION

In today's globalizing, changing and competitive conditions; businesses try to survive and succeed by differentiating themselves. In this sense, brand concept becomes the most important issue that creates differentiations on products from the views of consumers'.

Brand is the primary indicator which is confidential for consumers during buying process. Therefore branding timely becomes a prior reason of choice for consumers. Consumers become loyal by choosing they are familiar with. So, it is very critical for companies to strengthen the brand commitment.

Brands have various functions. Consequently, brand functions should be carefully applied in order to build a strong brand and attract customers. In today's world, there are many different brands, and brand personality can be featured for differentiation.

At this point, in some researches it is mentioned that; consumers consider congruence between brand personality and their own personality while making preferences between various alternatives. Therefore, it is important to create an effective brand personality in order to build a strong brand.

The basic question of this study is; how brand personality affects consumers' buying behaviors. So, brand and brand personality concept and additionally symbolic consumption concepts are analyzed. Increasing consumer interest on symbolic meanings of products, make brand personality more attractive. In this direction; the other question of the study is; how symbolic consumption arises and what is the contribution of brand personality to symbolic consumption. Therefore, it is tried to be clarified why brands come prior than products for consumers.

In this sense, whether the brand personality affects the consumers' symbolic consumption behavior will be investigated.

CHAPTER ONE

CONCEPTUAL APPROACH TO BRAND

1.1. BRAND

A brand is one of the most essential factors of a product. In this study, brand is defined as not only the name or logo of the company it belongs to; it is also defined as a concept which has emotional side and impact on consumers' minds. Therefore, a brand is not just a name or a symbol or a design. It is an instrument that provides company's all announcements.

1.1.1. Brand Concept

There are many approaches and definitions of brand concept. Thellefsen and Sorensen state that; "A brand is a symbol which, depending on the point of view, represents an object, for example, a product, an organization, a community or a person. This symbol is often endowed with certain lifestyle values. From the brand maker's point of view, the function of the brand is to enable the brand users to identify these lifestyle or brand values, which are unique to the brand and, based on this, to enable the brand users to distinguish and pick the brand in preference to other brands, and at the same time enable the brand users to "articulate themselves" by the aid of these brand values. Branding is the process where the brand users integrate the brand values into the brand so that this appears like a trustworthy statement."(Thellefsen and Sorensen, 2012:1)

According to Ghodeswar's definition; "A brand is a distinguishing name and/or symbol (such as logo, trademark, or package design) intended to identify the goods or services of either one seller or a group of sellers, and to differentiate those goods or services from those of competitors." (Ghodeswar, 2008:4-12).

"A brand includes everything that the product or service mean to a consumer, therefore a strong brand is valued in its ability to capture and sustain a customer's preference and loyalty."(Bengtsson and Vilic, 2012:13)

1.1.1.1. Characteristics of Brands

There are some characteristics of brand according to Klein;

- “Corporations must produce brands, not products.
- They must participate in the trend toward divesting, the world of things, since things halt the swift activity of the brand.
- Branding is necessary in the age of sameness; the only location of difference is in the image, not the product.
- Branding brings together the hip and the generic, as seen with nicely packaged bottled water.
- The brand is not about commodity but about lifestyle.
- Brands do not sponsor culture, they are culture.
- Diversity marketing is replaced with one-size-fits-all marketing.”(Klein 2000:10-11).

From these characteristics, it is understood that brand is the most valuable part of the company. It takes very long time to create a brand. Because; brands are the companies’ values that meet the expectations of customers. Branding provides differentiating the product from other similar products that belong to other companies. It is the strongest way of marketing communications channels

1.1.1.2. Elements of Brand

There are some elements of a brand. As it is mentioned by Tom Blackett, the elements start with; “Intrinsically striking.”

- ***“Intrinsically striking”***

“The visual distinctiveness of a brand may be a combination of any of the following: name, letters, numbers, a symbol, a signature, a shape, a slogan, a colour, a particular typeface. But name is the most important element of a brand as its use in language provides a universal reference point. The name is the one and only element of a brand that should never change. All other elements can change over time. For example; Shell’s famous logo has evolved significantly from the early line drawing

and Pepsi-Cola switched to all-blue livery a few years ago. But the brand name should be like Caesar: “as constant as the northern star.”(Blackett, 2004:3). Adidas changed its symbol twice however the name remained unchanged, for instance. Consumers’ eyes can get used to visual changes but they have a tendency to find change of a brand name or a slogan strange. It would be very risky for a company to change the name or the slogan of a brand because the brand name is the company’s voice, image and personality.

Yet in some cases as Blackett mentioned; “Companies generally change their names either because their function or their ownership has changed, or because their name is in some way misleading. Sometimes they revert to initials: Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing became 3M, a name that is both handier and more flexible strategically. Sometimes they combine the names of the merging companies: GlaxoSmithKline. Sometimes they opt for an entirely new name: Altria is now the new name of the tobacco, beer and foods group once known as Philip Morris. There is no right or wrong way of renaming businesses; it is as much a matter of what the company feels comfortable with and what it feels it can make work. The key is commitment and good communications.” (Blackett, 2004:3) This is the point that is previously mentioned; brand concept should create emotional connections with consumers. If marketers understand potential wishes and expectations of consumers, they are able to create brands which are linked to consumers.

- ***Creating an Indelible Impression***

Rubini represents that; “In present days, brands not only represent the name or the symbol of the company that produce products (or provide services). Nowadays consumers are so genuinely connected to brands that when they purchase any product (or utilize any service), brands so often influence their final choice.”(Rubini, 2010:5) “In developed economies consumers have an astonishing – often bewildering – selection of choice. For example; there are dozens of car manufacturers, hundreds of car models and thousands of different vehicle specifications to choose from. The days when Henry Ford offered “any colour you want as long as it is black” are now long gone. This diversity of choice puts pressure on those making or selling products or services to offer high quality, excellent value

and wide availability. It also puts pressure on them to find more potent ways of differentiating themselves and securing competitive advantage” (Blackett, 2004:4). In this environment it is necessary to differentiate your brand from the rivals. Companies should develop not only divergent but also enduring brands.

1.1.1.3. Brand Functions

“Brands are complex strategic tools that perform a variety of functions including creating demand, circumventing middlemen so that a company can reach consumers directly, controlling prices, managing quality, providing a platform for trademark enforcement, defining national identities, and satisfying a consumer’s emotional and psychological needs.”(Desai and Waller, 2010:1449).

There are some brand functions for consumers. Ceritoğlu states these functions as;

- **“Direction/Promotion Function:** Brand provides summary information to help consumers in order to choose a product in the market from within a wide range of products.
- **Habituation/Convenience Function:** Consumers’ purchasing preferences become less risky by the help of brand awareness. As a result of this consumers continually purchase the same brand and this behavior timely becomes habitual.
- **Quality Assurance:** Brand assures to consumers that they will be always presented with the same features of the product. In other words, brand is a guaranty of quality for consumers.
- **Risk Reduction Function:** Consumers make evaluations based on significant criteria during purchasing and consumer decide to purchase if brand has a position in consumers mind.
- **Identification Function:** Consumers make their purchase decisions in order to their brand preferences. The reason of this, brand provides ideal images to individuals or individuals attain intended images by the help of chosen brands’ images” (Ceritoğlu, 2006:137-138).

Thus, brands have substantial functions that create linkage between consumers and products. Consumers sometimes may not notice the name of product but the brand name will associate some meanings in consumers’ minds. “The brand

is the result of a process where certain brand values become integrated into a product, an organization, a community, etc., and where these brand values no longer meaningfully can be distinguished from these. That is, a successful brand is the result of a branding process that aims to endow an object with brand values and create a meaningful common consent which is an interpretation habit with the brand's consumer group.” (Thellefsen and Sorensen, 2012:1)

Brand is an intangible concept and it is the best tool that presents the product. As it will be mentioned in brand equity part, the major value is the brand itself. Today's modern consumers realize this value and make their preferences according to this.

1.1.2 Brand Evolution

In this part, it will be mentioned how brand concept has come to today. According to Klein; “The first brand-based products appeared at around the same time as the invention-based ads, largely because of another relatively recent innovation: The factory: When goods began to be produced in factories, not only were entirely new products being introduced but old products — even basic staples — are appearing in strikingly new forms. What made early branding efforts different from more straightforward salesmanship was that the market was now being flooded with uniform mass-produced products that were virtually indistinguishable from one another. Competitive branding became a necessity of the machine age — within a context of manufactured sameness; image-based difference had to be manufactured along with the product.” (Klein, 2000:11).

In addition to that, Blackett mentions; “In the 17th and 18th centuries, when the volume manufacture of fine porcelain, furniture and tapestries began in France and Belgium – largely because of royal patronage – factories increasingly used brands to indicate quality and origin. At the same time, laws relating to the hallmarking of gold and silver objects were enforced more rigidly to give the purchaser confidence in the product.” (Blackett, 2004:2). Therefore branding gradually becomes common. Blackett continues; “However, the wide scale use of brands is essentially a phenomenon of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The

industrial revolution, with its improvements in manufacturing and communications, opened up the Western world and allowed the mass-marketing of consumer products. Many of today's best-known consumer brands date from this period: Singer sewing-machines, Coca-Cola soft drinks, Bass beer, Quaker oats, Cook's tours, Sunlight soap, Shredded Wheat breakfast cereal, Kodak film, American Express travelers' checks, Heinz baked beans and Prudential Insurance are just some examples." (Blackett, 2004:2).

In 20th century, the situation has begun to diverge. Brands that present the products become valuable by the help of advertisements. The researches show that, especially in 1950's "perfect storm" term shows up and branding comes to whole another point. After a while it is all understood that, "brand" comes before "product". For example, people prefer Starbucks to drink coffee. Here, the priority is "Starbucks" from the viewpoint of consumers'. When companies realize this attitude, they begin to focus on branding more.

The emergence of "brand concept" and its gradual growth provided consumers to trust their product choices. As a result, in 1980s industry, business environment moved on quickly. Modern branding corresponded to these developments.

"By the end of the 1990s, brand theorists had moved well beyond considering brands as only indicating source and/or guaranteeing quality, and instead explicitly saw them as encompassing a broader array of functions." (Desai and Waller, 2010:1434).

As it is understood, one of the substantial factors that control consumers' buying behavior is trust. At this point, branding can be helpful for these consumers' choices. When consumers trust a brand it is high likely for them to purchase that brands' product in a repeated manner.

According to Desai and Waller; "From the birth of modern branding to today, businesses have used brands as a way to create demand, extract value from within the supply chain, and control prices." (Desai and Waller, 2010:1435).

It is understood that, from the birth of modern branding to today, brands became valuable tools for companies.

Wood mentions that; “Brands often provide the primary points of differentiation between competitive offerings, and as such they can be critical to the success of companies. Hence, it is important that the management of brands is approached strategically” (Wood, 2000:662)

As soon as brands were perceived as valuable assets, trademark holders understandably began to use the law to address competition related to the use of marks. “Brands are complex strategic tools that perform a variety of functions including creating demand, circumventing middlemen so that a company can reach consumers directly, controlling prices, managing quality, providing a platform for trademark enforcement, defining national identities, and satisfying a consumer’s emotional and psychological needs. These functions, separately and in combination, allow a company to differentiate products, avoid commoditization of its products or services, and distinguish the company and its goods or services from its competition, thus building loyal customer bases for which no other brand or item will suffice. Regardless of what dimension or dimensions of a brand a company pursues to build its brand, commentators recognize the power of a strong brand.” (Desai and Waller, 2010:1449).

As it is seen, brand is not just a tool that covers the product as its face. Brand is not just a name, symbol or mark that provides consumers to recognize the product. Brand has substantial and strategic assignments which enhance the value of company. Therefore, brand is a valuable asset. This value is noticeable in business environment and managers know how to convert brand dimensions into competitive advantage in business environment.

1.1.3. Brand Positioning

“Positioning is the process of influencing perceptions by specifying the attributes, benefits or images which represent differentiation.” (Kotler, 1997:53)

“A product’s marketing position is the place that differentiates from competitors’ products places in consumers’ minds.” (Mucuk, 2001:106) For instance; one of Reckitt Benckiser products which is Kosla Oxi Action Max emphasizes the “vanish pink”. In television advertisement of product it is said that this color is the

only way to make stained clothes shining cleanness. This is the positioning strategy of Kosla Oxi Action Max. At this point, Kosla Oxi Action tried to be positioned in consumers' minds as the strongest stain remover by using "Vanish Pink".

Another example is Tefal's Actifyr cooker. This cooker actually helps to cook every kind of meal with very little oil. However, the positioning strategy was wrong in the beginning. They emphasized just cooking French fries when the Actifyr first entered the market. As a result of this, people thought that they can only cook potatoes with Actifyr. Therefore the sales numbers could not reach expected level. Then Tefal decided to start repositioning process. During this process, the Actifyr cooker appeared on commercials with different kinds of meals. It is more likely for Tefal Actifyr to reach consumers with its new positioning strategy.

It can be understood that, the company has a big role in brand positioning process. The brand should reach the right targeted consumers. In this sense, brand's image and interaction with consumers should be controlled. Positioning is not constant during branding process. It is an activity that continuously changes and develops dynamically. Therefore, positioning should be continuously designated according to consumers' needs and preferences.

"These four questions should be clearly answered in order for brand positioning in the market;

Why and What for? : What brand feature should product have to provide consumers adaptation of products? What benefits and features does the brand present to the consumers? Which necessities this will meet?

For Whom? : This shows the brand's target market. This classification might be according to different criteria.

When? : This expresses the specification of usage time and place.

Against Whom? : This question is to determine the competitors. Which brand's or brands' customers are targeted? What is the extent of this competition?" (Tek and Ozgul, 2005:279).

"A brand does not simply signal a product's utilitarian attributes; it can also have a particular meaning, which makes the product personally meaningful and intrinsically relevant for the consumer." (Ligas and Cotte, 1999:610)

During brand positioning process, marketers should focus on their own environment. Imitating other brands positions will just cause an increase of brand awareness of those brands. This creates a danger to direct consumers to other brands. At this point, brand positioning is a substantial concept that provides consumers emotions and ideas about brands even firms in their minds. Companies should position their brands clearly in order to be enduring in consumers' minds.

1.1.4. Brand Equity

As Aaker's definition "Brand Equity is a set of assets (and liabilities) linked to a brand's name and symbol that adds to (or subtract from) the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or that firm's customers. (Aaker, 1996:7)

According to Kotler; "Brand equity is the added value endowed on products and services. It may be reflected in the way consumer think, feel, and act with respect to the brand, as well in the prices, market share, and profitability the brand commands for the firm." (Kotler, 1997:280)

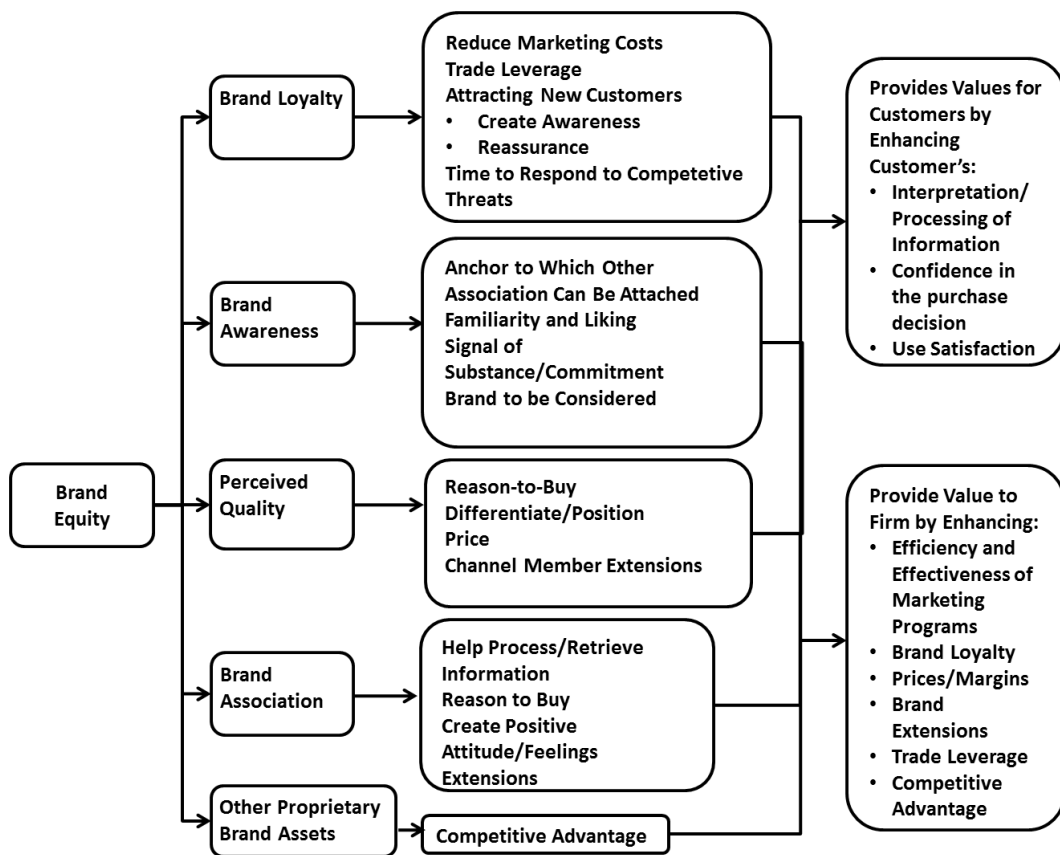
On the other hand Keller defines Brand Equity as; "The effect of the brand on the consumers' response to the marketing activities associated with a particular product."(Keller, 1993:1) Also Keller mentions that; "There have been two general motivations for studying brand equity. One is financially based motivation to estimate the value of a brand more precisely for accounting purposes (in terms of asset valuation for the balance sheet) or for merger, acquisition, or divestiture purposes. A second reason for studying brand equity arises from a strategy-based motivation to improve marketing productivity. Specifically, brand equity is conceptualized from the perspective of the individual consumers and a conceptual framework is provided of what such knowledge implies for marketing strategies." (Keller, 1993:2)

"The concept of brand equity has been debated both in the accounting and marketing literatures, and has highlighted the importance of having a long-term focus within brand management" (Wood, 2000:662)

Even brand equity is an intangible concept; the value of brand may be superior to the value of the product. Indeed, brand equity is the total effort that is

spent for a product. As far as it is concerned by the authors' definitions, brand equity concept is linked to both the total of consumers' awareness, knowledge, perception, relationship and valuation to that brand, and in addition to these brand equity concept is the total financial valuation of the brand in the market. Visual schema of "Brand Equity Creation Process" by David Aaker is shown as following;

Figure 1: This figure indicates all concepts of brand equity intended brand concept.



Source: AAKER, 1991: 29.

According to Figure 1, Aaker mentions that, there are major asset categories and these are;

- 1) Brand name awareness
- 2) Brand loyalty
- 3) Perceived quality
- 4) Brand association

Aaker states that; first, brand equity is set of assets. Thus, the management of brand equity involves investment to create and enhance these assets. Second, each brand equity asset creates a value in a variety of very different ways. In order to manage brand equity effectively and to make informed decisions about brand-building activities, it is important to be sensitive to the ways in which strong brands create value. Third, brand equity creates value for customer as well as the firm. The word customer refers to the both end users and those at the infrastructure level. (Aaker, 1996:8)

Marketers should understand significance of brand equity. The brand should be thought as a whole and marketing strategies should be integrated. “Because, consumers perceive the brand equity as the value added to the product compare to similar products without a brand. Brand equity, is the total perception of consumers about the brand. Brand equity concept represents a different value beyond physical and economical values. From a financial point of view brand equity represents the actual value of all future possible financial gaining.” (Dayanıklı, 2010:11)

Thus we should think brand equity as a whole concept. To the extent that Aaker mentions; “For assets or liabilities to underlie brand equity, they must be linked to the name and symbol of the brand. If the brand’s name or symbol should change, some or all of the assets or liabilities could be affected and even lost, although some might be shifted to the new name and symbol. Four principal brand assets categories provide an understanding about exactly how each category underlies brand equity.” (Aaker, 1996:8)

1.1.5. Brand Awareness

“The brand awareness is not the simple acknowledgment of a brand. More the brand is well-known, than more consumers are inclined to buy its products. In this sense, the awareness is not just concerning the fact that a brand exists; it includes knowing and recognizing its image and product range. And as we saw in the previous subchapter, the brand awareness is the fundamental first step to achieve any brand loyalty.”(Rubini, 2010:24)

1.1.5.1 Brand Recognition: Familiarity and Liking

“Recognition reflects familiarity gained from past exposure. Recognition does not necessarily involve remembering *where* the brand was encountered before, *why* it differs from other brands, or even what the brand’s product class is. It is simply remembering that there was a past exposure to the brand.” (Aaker, 1996:11) Later on, it will be stated in detail how important brand differentiation is.

“The awareness level of brands carried by a store helps buyers form merchandise quality inferences that influence their perceptions of retail image. The presence of a brand(s) having strong awareness, recognition, and quality perceptions – an “anchor brand” influences buyers’ inference-making and impressions of retail image. This perspective suggests that brand and retail managers need to be concerned not only with the influence that specific anchor brands’ images have on a retail store’s image, but also the effect that the overall image of the brand mix carried by a store has on buyers’ perceptions of a retail store’s image.”(Porter and Claycomb, 1997:373)

According to Aaker Research in psychology, recognition alone can result in more positive feelings toward nearly anything, whether it is music, people, words or brands. Economists tell us that consumer affinity for the familiar brand is not just an instinctive response. When consumers see a brand and remember that they have seen it before (perhaps even several times), they realize that the company is spending money to support the brand. Since it is generally believed that companies will not spend money on bad products, consumers take their recognition as a “signal” that the brand is good. (Aaker, 1996:11)

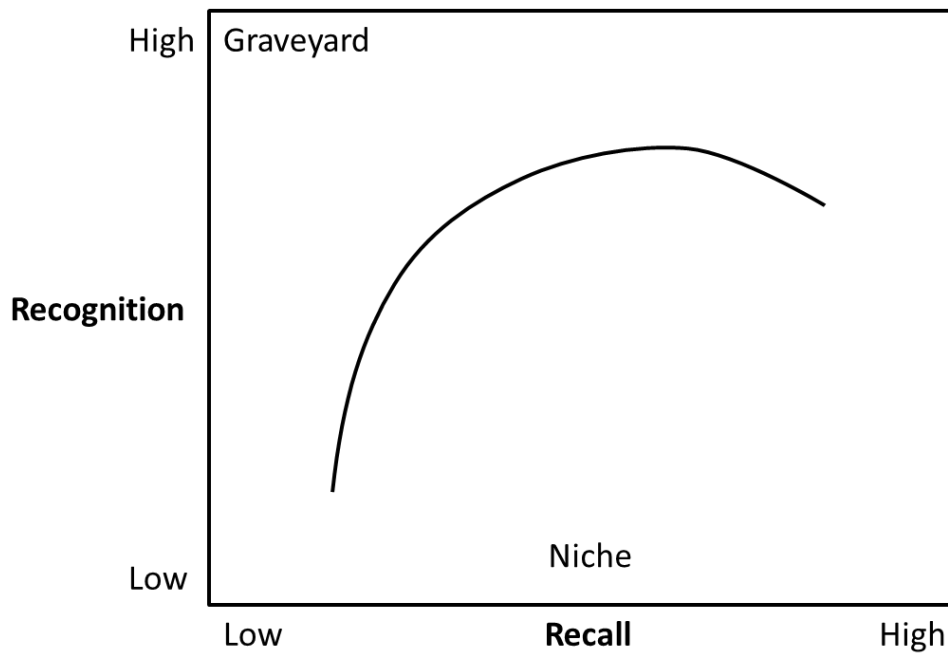
1.1.5.2. Brand Recall

Aaker mentions; “Brand is said to have recall if it comes to consumers’ minds when its product class is mentioned. Whether or not a customer recalls your brand can be the deciding factor in getting on a shopping list or receiving a chance to bid on a contract. There are two exceptions each of which reveals the importance of recall. One exception is healthy niche brands, which fall below the line because they are not known to a substantial group of consumers, and therefore have relatively low overall recognition. But because they do have among their respective loyal customer groups, their low recognition is not necessarily an indication of poor performance. And healthy niche players sometimes have the potential to expand recognition and thus the scope of their customer base.” (Aaker, 1996:12)

Therefore, marketers should better show competitive performance in order to have dominant brand recognition in consumers’ minds.

The second exception is the graveyard, an area in the upper-left-hand corner populated by brands with high recognition but low recall. Being in the graveyard can be deadly: Customers know about the brand, but it will not come to mind when considering a purchase. One point of graveyard model is that high recognition is not necessarily the mark of a strong brand-it is associated with weak ones as well. If the brand is moving away from the graveyard, sales and market share can be expected to increase. Thus the graveyard model provides evidence that recall is as important as recognition. The model is shown as Figure-2.

Figure 2: The Graveyard Model



Source: Aaker, 1996: 15.

1.1.5.3. Brand Name Dominance

According to Aaker; “The ultimate awareness level is brand name dominance where, in a recall task, most customers can only provide the name of a single brand” (Aaker, 1996:15) In order to avoid losing a trademark, a firm should begin protecting it early in its life, starting with the selection of the name itself. It is also important to be rigorous about how the brand name is used.

1.1.5.4. Creating Awareness

Creating awareness is an essential concept that drives customer’s interest to the brands. There are some tools that marketers currently prefer to implement.

“Marketers would like to promote their brands to consumers with an interest in a particular category of product, matching the profile of their customers in terms

of demographics, lifestyles, and/or psychographics. Sporting events attract spectators and media viewers with a specifically defined interest.” (Nicholls et al., 1999:368)

According to Aaker; “Getting consumers to recognize and recall your brand thus can considerably enhance brand equity.” (Aaker, 1996:17)

1.1.6. Perceived Quality

“Business performance is based on the behavior of customers, whether they choose to buy a particular product or service. And that behavior is based a great deal on the perception customers have of the brand: how relevant it is to them and how differentiated it is from the other brands in the same category” (Bennett, 2010:1)

Actually, perceived quality is related with brand’s performance. It is stated that; “A brand becomes successful only if its owners have an accurate perception of its constitutional assets. Among the most important assets of a brand, one of them is the value than customers grant to that brand.” (Abdolvand and Nasimi, 2012:74)

As Aaker’s definition, perceived quality is a brand association that is elevated to the status of a brand asset for several reasons: (Aaker, 1996:17)

- Among all brand associations, only perceived quality has been shown to drive financial performance.
- Perceived quality is often a major (if not the principal) strategic trust of a business.
- Perceived quality is linked to and often drives other aspects of a brand is perceived.

Actually, perceived quality is the total expectations and images of customers for a product or a brand.

1.1.7. Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is a key consideration when placing a value on a brand that is to be bought or sold, because a highly loyal customer base can be expected to generate very predictable sales and profit stream.

Achouri and Bousloma represent that, “Loyalty is a routine purchasing behavior. It is perceived as a positive result of a recurrent relation between buyer and seller.”(Achouri and Bousloma, 2010:9) In their study, it is stated that; “The literature on loyalty to a brand distinguishes two types of approaches to this concept: a behaviorist or operational approach which keeps the behavioral dimension of loyalty. According to this approach, the consumer is loyal when he or she regularly buys the same brand. Yet this approach suffers some failings, namely the fact that it does not take into account the attitude component of loyalty. Following the shortcomings of the behavioral approach, a cognitive or conceptual approach is keenly observing the intentional side of loyalty. This approach suggests that in order to qualify a recurrent buyer as loyal, it is equally convenient to be sure that he or she has developed a favorable attitude towards the brand. This would single out loyalty from others types of identical purchase.” Also as it is cited in their study, “Consequently, according to the attitude approach, loyalty is accounted for by the consumers’ favorable attitudes towards a product or a brand, and is expressed through consumption acts (Trinquecoste, 1996).” (Achouri and Bousloma, 2010:9)

To extent that Aaker represents; “The impact of brand loyalty on marketing costs is often substantial: It is simply much less costly to retain customers than to attract new ones. A common and expensive mistake is to seek growth by enticing new customers to the brand while neglecting existing ones. The loyalty of existing customers also represents a substantial entry barrier to competitors in part because the cost of enticing customers to change loyalties is often prohibitively expensive.” (Aaker, 1996:21) Actually, loyal consumers are emotionally attached to the brand and thus they show frequent purchase behavior.

It is also critical for the firms to track the loyal customers. According to Tam; “Brand loyalty can help provide ample time for the firm to response to competitors’ newly launched products. Hence, the firm could make good use of the time lapse to develop more superior products in order to compete with its rivals.” (Tam, 2007:17)

“In fact, customers who are loyal to a particular kind of brand always attempt to buy it permanently and have no interest in buying other brands. Loyalty is an important concept in marketing strategies.” (Dolatabadi et al., 2012: 298)

So, high loyal existing customers are very important groups. Firms tend to take these loyal groups for granted. Because, there can be a significant potential to increase business from the very loyal customers. Furthermore, there is a risk that loyal customers can be enticed away by a competitor if the performance of the product or service is not improved. For these reasons, firms should avoid diverting resources from the loyal core to the non-customers and price switchers.

1.1.8. Brand Association

In Aaker's "Managing Brand Equity" book, it is emphasized that brand equity is supported in great part by the associations that consumers make with a brand. These associations might include product attributes, a celebrity spokesperson, or a particular symbol. Brand associations are driven by the brand identity—what the organization wants the brand to stand for in the customer's mind. A key to building strong brands, then, is to develop and implement a brand identity. (Aaker, 1996:25)

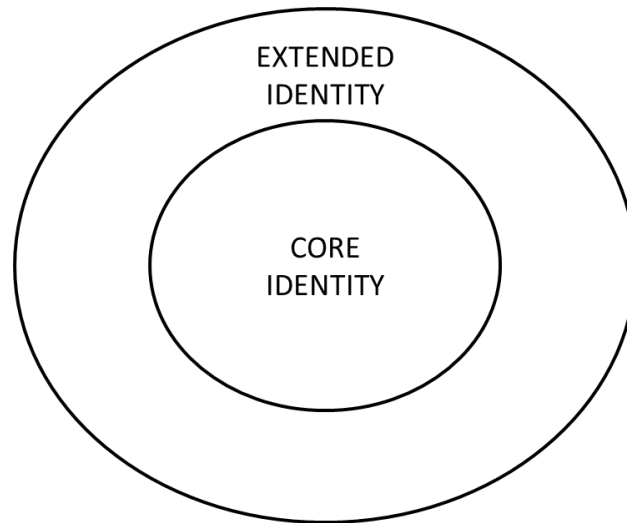
1.1.9. Brand Identity

Ghodeswar defined brand identity as; "a unique set of brand associations implying a promise to customers and includes a core and extended identity. Core identity broadly focuses on product attributes, service, user profile, store ambience and product performance. Extended identity is woven around brand identity elements organized into cohesive and meaningful groups that provide brand texture and completeness, and focuses on brand personality, relationship, and strong symbol association." (Ghodeswar, 2008:5)

According to Harris and de Chernatony, "Brand identity is associated with identity, vision and culture, positioning and relationship of the brand." (Harris and Chernatony, 2001:245)

Brand identity concept should be evaluated as of being the fundamental term that contains the whole brand.

Figure 3: The Identity Structure



Source: Aaker, 1996: 86.

“Brand identity structure includes a core and extended identity. The core identity- central, timeless essence of the brand-is most likely to remain constant as the brand travels to new markets and products. The extended identity includes brand identity elements, organized into cohesive and meaningful groupings that provide texture and completeness.” (Aaker, 1996:68)

“Brand management starts with the concept of brand identity.” (Saviolo, 2008:9). According to Sorayaei and Hasanzadeh; “The most significant and exclusive properties of the brand will appear in its identity. Identity of the brand determines its exclusiveness, ideals and targets, values and indicators for identification of a brand. Brand identity involves various dimensions such as apparent and graphical components, personality and relation of the brand with its customers, culture and quality” (Sorayaei and Hasanzadeh, 2012:79)

Related to this issue, Rodrigues mentions; “As the brand concept is understood as a name, a symbol, an image, it produces the identity recognition. By identity, the consumer is influenced in the decision to purchase the brand. The brand identity adds a set of associations and images that allows the consumer to recognize it and consider it in their decision process.”(Rodrigues, 2011:2) Generally consumers would prefer to purchase noticeable and desirable products by other people. The brand identity creates this feeling for consumers at this point. Indeed brand should be

in a relationship with the consumer. Also, “The brand identity frameworks have always quoted brand personality as a dimension or a facet of brand identity, namely those traits of human personality that can be attributed to the brand. Among other dimensions are the brand inner values (its cultural facet), the brand relationship facet (its style of behavior and conduct), the brand reflected consumer facet, and the brand physical facet (its material distinguishing traits).” (Pandey, 2009:28)

As Boatwright’s view; “Fulfilling customer value is not just a goal for branding, nor is it simply the “identity” customer’s associate as the core representation of the company. Rather, it is the fundamental goal for a successful company, one that must coherently drive all aspects of the company. Thus the identity of the brand must be inextricably linked to customer needs, and it must be consistent with the company’s capabilities and its branded products.” (Boatwright et al., 2009:38)

1.1.9.1. Dimensions of Brand Identity

According to Aaker, brand identity should be evaluated into four perspectives; “brand as a product, brand as organization, brand as person and brand as symbol” (Aaker, 1996:68). These perspectives can be sum up as below.

Brand as Product

According to Aaker, “A product should be associated to the brand. For instance, Haagen-Dazs is associated with ice cream; Visa is associated with credit card. A strong link to a product class means that the brand will be recalled when the product class is cued.” (Aaker, 1996:80) Associating brand to a product will help consumers to form a buying habit. For instance, if a person used to drink Starbucks Coffee, he or she would not prefer to drink Gloria Jean’s Coffee. Besides enjoying the taste of Starbucks, he or she also likes the ambiance of the coffee shop. The perception of brand is linked to product itself.

Brand as Organization

Aaker mentions that; “The brand as organization perspective focuses on attributes rather than those of the product or service. Organizational attributes are more enduring and more resistant to competitive claims than product attribute.” (Aaker, 1996: 82) It is easy to copy a rival company’s product, however duplicating an organization with unique people, values etc. is almost impossible. Or it is easy to compare iPhone and Blackberry. However it is harder to compare RIM and Apple Companies.

Brand as Person

For this concept, Aaker suggests that; “Like a person, a brand can be perceived as being upscale, competent, impressive, trustworthy, fun, active, humorous, casual, formal, youthful, or intellectual.” (Aaker, 1996:83) For instance, people think that İş Bankası is “reliable” so they keep their money there. For example; Network Clothing Company provides “elegant and serious” appearance for people.

According to Herbst; “A brand differs from a product in that it has a personality. The analogy to human beings has been chosen quite deliberately here, since a brand is characterized by features that distinguish it from other brands, features that communicate with the customer or viewer, and features that make it likeable and in the end make people prefer one brand over another.” (Herbst, 2011:22) For example; the substantial reflection of brand personality is the relationship between brand and consumer personality. Consumers have tendency to search similar characteristics through the brand they purchase. It will be discussed in brand personality part in detail.

Brand as Symbol

“The brand can be used to stand for something beyond itself; in short, it has become a symbol. Consumers feel closer to brands that the brand can be said to reside with them. Thus consumers know that Nike is winning; that Marlboro represents independence; and that Rolls Royce is the epitome of luxury, quality and status.”(Ranjan and Jain: 2011:8) For instance, Lacoste reminds classic polo neck t-shirts, Audi emblem; nested four rings, Burger King red etc. Symbols are meaningful because of reminding some characteristics about the brand. They may be simple, enjoyable, colorful and superior. The main point is, the symbols should be remarkable.

1.1.9.2. Importance of Brand Identity

It is known that; brand is the source of the product. At this point, it is once more understood how important brand identity is. Because: “Firms can’t manage directly the sense behind their brands but they have to manage it through brand identity as perceived by the market.” (Saviolo, 2008:9)

Actually, brand identity contains all dimensions of the brand concept. These dimensions represent consumer expectations, reliance, and the quality of the products in other words; overall brand. Therefore brand identity is a substantial network that establishes strong relationship between brand and consumers.

“A new understanding of the role of brand identity suggested that the benefits of strong branding far exceed the narrow interpretations of the previous age. Strong brand identity increases any brand for consideration. It facilitates customer retention and loyalty and it allows for quicker new product acceptance. With this new realization that a brand is an experience, we know that customers shape the brand.” (Kathman, 2002:31)

As it is understood, brand identity is a significant concept that is used for strategic planning in businesses. Therefore brand identity is a strategic planning tool that provides intended brand image in consumers’ minds.

1.1.10. Brand Image

“Brand image is the current view of the customers about a brand. It can be defined as a unique bundle of associations within the minds of target customers. It signifies what the brand presently stands for. It is a set of beliefs held about a specific brand. In short, it is nothing but the consumers’ perception about the product. It is the manner in which a specific brand is positioned in the market. Brand image conveys emotional value and not just a mental image. Brand image is nothing but an organization’s character. It is an accumulation of contact and observation by people external to an organization. It should highlight an organization’s mission and vision to all. The main elements of positive brand image are - unique logo reflecting organization’s image, slogan describing organization’s business in brief and brand identifier supporting the key values.

Brand image is the overall impression in consumers’ mind that is formed from all sources. Consumers develop various associations with the brand. Based on these associations, they form brand image. An image is formed about the brand on the basis of subjective perceptions of associations’ bundle that the consumers have about the brand. Volvo is associated with safety. Toyota is associated with reliability and Mercedes is associated with luxury.

The idea behind brand image is that the consumer is not purchasing just the product/service but also the image associated with that product/service. Brand images should be positive, unique and instant. They can be strengthened using brand communications like advertising, packaging, word of mouth publicity, other promotional tools, etc.”(<http://www.managementstudyguide.com/brand-image.htm>, 09.11.2011)

“Brand image can be defined as perceptions about a brand as reflected by the cluster of associations that consumers connect to the brand name in memory” (Rio et al., 2001:411)

According to Srivastava; “Every brand carries with an image and possesses and identity, which should be communicated effectively to the target group” (Srivastava, 2010:340)

“Brand images provide the basis for product extensions, by creating a sense of fit between the brand and the new product, or by giving consumers a reason to buy the new product.” (Porter and Claycomb, 1997:375)

According to authors, brand image is not only the name of the product but also it is the perceived quality from the consumers’ point of view. Sometimes the terms, brand identity and brand image seem similar.

“Brand image takes place when brand associations held in the mind of consumers are conveyed onto a consumer’s perception about a brand.”(Farzana, 2012:93)

According to Jean-Noel Kapferer, identity precedes image: “An obsession with image tends to attach greater importance to appearance than to inner reality. But brand identity is a richer, more substantial concept to embrace.” To help clarify how these concepts differ, Figure-4 presents a detailed comparison of brand image and brand identity.

Figure 4: Brand Image vs. Brand Identity

Brand Image	Brand Identity
Appearance	Substance
More in receivers side	More in senders side
Passive	Active
Reflects superficial qualities	Reflects enduring qualities
Tactical	Strategic
Backward looking	Forward looking
Associations already there	Associations aspired to

Source: <http://www.probrand.com/pdfs/excerpt.pdf>, 09.11.2011

As the comparison illustrates, these two concepts are quite different. There’s also a simple way to sum up and understand the essence of the two terms: image is how market perceives you; identity is who you really are. Meanly, identity comes from the brand itself. Image comes from the consumers’ side.

CHAPTER TWO

BRAND PERSONALITY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH SYMBOLIC CONSUMPTION

2.1. BRAND PERSONALITY

Brand personality is one of the substantial tools that make the brand valuable. In this part, this concept will be studied in detail.

2.1.1. A Conceptualization of Brand Personality

“Brand personality is the set of human personality traits that are both applicable to and relevant for brands” (Azoulay and Kapferer, 2003:151) “The concept of brand personality is increasingly gaining in importance within the successful management of brands. A personality-directed brand management enables a company to better exploit the non-product-related, emotional benefits of a brand and to establish customer-brand relationships. However, in order to succeed a company needs to know about the various dimensions of the brand personality construct and how to manage them efficiently.”(Lückerath, 2010:14)

2.1.2. Basic and Relevant Theories of Brand Personality

We know that; the brand concept is a substantial point through consumer preferences. Consumers have a tendency to purchase familiar products, the products they have tested or trusted before. Additionally, in some situations consumers try to associate their personality with the brand’s personality. Actually this should be possible with a strong brand image. If marketers create effective brand image, then consumers can perceive the personality of brand. At this point, brand personality intends to establish an emotional relationship with consumers. This provides the brand to get a different position compare to the competitors.

“First of all, it should be noted that, consumers are in search of identities which are similar to theirs. Individuals are generally in search of similar structures of their own. It is derived from the instinct of not to be alone and to affirm them. In that case the individual will always prefer the brands that are closer to him/her personality. Secondly, individuals try to make their dreams come true by brands. With this effort, they aim to achieve to their wishes with an artificial way. Generally, this situation which occurs insensibly means individuals’ effort to buy something which is not in him/her. The personality traits that are charged to brands create illusions of some characteristics which individual does not have. In turn, consumers are pushed to purchase promised characteristics by selecting a brand” (Kuşakçioğlu, 2003:139). With this view; Kusakcioglu may emphasize that, consumers lose their personalities through brand personalities. Actually; consumers do not lose their identities in no way. Perhaps they try to create an image and gain utility by this way. Because, consumers just purchase a brand in order to gladden them. However, associating the self to a brand personality sometimes can be an exaggeration. This will be mentioned more in detail in symbolic consumption part.

“Consumer behavior researches proved many times that brand personality is an important concept. For instance, it is determined; brands provide consumers an opportunity to express their actual and ideal selves. In other words, it is understood, individuals not only consume products for daily usage and functional benefits, but also they wish to reflect desired image. For this reason, brand personality is a critical determinant of consumers’ brand/product selection.” (Aksoy and Özsoyer, 2007:1)

According to Aaker; “Customers often interact with brands as if they were people, especially when the brands are attached to such meaningful products as clothes or cars. Even if they do not give their possessions a personal nickname (as many do their cars), it is not uncommon to hear people, especially when the brands are attached to such meaningful as clothes or cars.” (Aaker, 1996:142)

2.1.3. Dimensions of Brand Personality

The Big Five Model of Brand Personality is acknowledged by David Aaker. These important dimensions will be expressed in this part. It is shown as below;

Sincerity

- *Down to Earth:* family-oriented, small-town, conventional, blue-collar, all-American
- *Honest:* sincere, real, ethical, thoughtful, caring
- *Wholesome:* original, genuine, ageless, classic, old-fashioned
- *Cheerful:* sentimental, friendly, warm, happy

Excitement

- *Daring:* trendy, exciting, off-beat, flashy, provocative,
- *Spirited:* cool, young, lively, outgoing, adventurous
- *Imaginative:* unique, humorous, surprising, artistic, fun
- *Up-to-date:* independent, contemporary, innovative, aggressive

Competence

- *Reliable:* hardworking, secure, efficient, trustworthy, careful
- *Intelligent:* technical, corporate, serious
- *Successful:* leader, confident, influential

Sophistication

- *Upper Class:* glamorous, good-looking, pretentious
- *Charming:* feminine, smooth, sexy, gentle

Ruggedness

- *Outdoorsy:* masculine, Western, active, athletic
- *Tough:* rugged, strong, no-nonsense

In Big Five model it is shown that; a strong competent brand means a reliable brand. It can be seen a reliable brand is reflected as hardworking, secure, efficient, trustworthy, and careful. If Sony represents itself as a competent brand, it might be perceived as a secure, efficient, confident and leader brand. Eti is also a sincere brand. When people see Eti products, they most likely remember classical biscuits,

warm home ambience with tea. It sounds great for children to have various friendly Eti chocolates. Louis Vuitton is a sophisticated brand with its feminine style, for instance. Its glittering accessories and handbags appeal to upper classes.

Turkcell is in Excitement brand category. It is cool, young and lively with its “Gencturkcell” tariff. Sometimes having a Turkcell line is perceived as being trendy or flashy. Also, the little cute children who act in Turkcell advertisements make the brand happy and fun. Caterpillar is a kind of Ruggedness brand. For example, Caterpillar boots are reflected as hard-wearing. Actually, Cat Footwear formed by the merge of Caterpillar Inc. and Wolverine World Wide. Caterpillar Inc. is known as strong heavy construction equipment producer. As a matter of fact Wolverine World Wide is the footwear producer. After merge of these two companies, Cat Footwear perceived as hard, athletic and masculine brand.

According to Park; “Consumers who are interested but anxious about pursuing close interpersonal relationships strive for acceptance by valued others, and want to look more sincere. They found that these consumers were more likely to choose Gap (a sincere brand) rather than Abercrombie and Fitch (an exciting brand) to signal that they possess the ideal sincere self-image” (Park, 2011:2)

Brands sometimes may have complicated characteristics as individuals. For example, Nokia is relatively high on Excitement; Nokia E71 is artistic and feminine whereas Nokia N9 is smooth and exclusive that can be categorized Sophisticated. On the other hand Nokia is high on Competence; this means Nokia is a reliable brand with its high quality and technical features. By its classical slogan; “Connecting People” Nokia is perceived as friendly, warm and family-oriented. As a conclusion, brands have different characteristics as people. Brand personalities rely on different dimensions according to Aaker’s Big Five Model. Their personalities relatively high on one dimension and sometimes they may have complex characteristics. Consumers correspond to these dimensions of brand personality and make their choices according to these characteristics. Brand personality is a fundamental concept that forms a strong relationship between brand and consumer personality. Therefore it is substantial for brands to have reflective personality.

Figure 5: Pictures of Brands



2.1.4. The Relationship between Consumer and Brand Personality

As it is specified in the beginning, brand personality is the set of human personality traits. Thus, there are some similarities between human and brand characteristics. According to Açar and Anın; “A brand can be perceived as impressive, reliable, enjoyable, funny, formal, and intellectual like a person. A brand personality can create a strong brand with some kind of ways. For instance, if consumer’s personality is understood, then it will be easier to create a brand. For example an Apple user may define himself as a creative or regular person. Secondly, humans’ personalities may affect their relationships; this may underlie the brand-consumer relationship. For example, Dell can be a professional that helps hard works. Thirdly, a brand personality makes contribution by transmitting a product’s character. For example; Michelin Man’s strong and energetic characteristics remark that Michelin tires are strong and energetic.” (Açar and Anın, 2007:12)

It is understood that consumers prefer brands with personalities that match with their personalities. It is important to create strong brand personality however it should be more important to create brand personalities which appeal to consumers’ personalities.

J. Aaker views brand personality as differing from human personality. And human personality traits are understood through behavior, physical characteristics, attitudes, and beliefs; whereas brand personality is generated through the contact the consumer has with the brand. (J. Aaker, 1997:348) Thus asserts that “Though some dimensions (or factors) of human personality may be mirrored in brands, others may not.” For instance; when a woman purchases Calvin Klein Be Perfume, she thinks the smell matches with her characteristics. CK logo represents a meaning for her. It is the brand which she uses, it is her. When consumers match the brand with their individualistic characteristics, they start being happy by using that brand. Because they engage with the brand they have chosen. This is one of the concepts that marketers claim to form. One general practice is creating personal perfumes. Jennifer Lopez, Naomi Campbell, David Beckham perfumes are just some examples. Marketers aim, when a consumer buys Jennifer Lopez Perfume she would feel as beautiful, attractive as Jennifer Lopez is. By this way, brand loyalty increases and consumer buying behaviors become recognizable.

“Customers expect more from brands they have strong relationships with – they expect relationship-worthy brands to do two things: meet their needs better than others, and treat them in a way that demonstrates they know and value them as customers.” (Burnett and Hutton, 2007:344). Thus, customers have tendency to buy the brands which seem alike with their regular preferences.

“Prior research has focused on self-expressive function of brand personalities, showing that consumers are attracted to brands with appealing personalities as a way to signal who they are or want to be.”(Park, 2011:34)

“Besides there are so many effective factors on brand preference, consumers’ emotional and symbolic perceptions are also very important for brand choice. At this point, it is hard to position a new brand against globally known brands which also have brand personality. Yet despite this, many local or national brands enter the market every day and they either stay or exit the market depending on being perceived by consumers or not” (Torlak and Özmen, 2006:361).

Brand personality concept is the ongoing process of brand management. All dimensions of brand should be performed perfectly before creation of a brand. A brand will have a personality only with this critical effort.

“The personal identification function is related to the fact that consumers can identify themselves with some brands and develop feelings of affinity towards them. In the literature on brand influence, a basic theory refers to the congruence between the consumer's behavior, his self-image and the product image. This theory is based on the idea that individuals can enrich their self-image through the images of the brands they buy and use.” (Rio, Vazquez, and Iglesias, 2001:414) According to authors’ view, it is understood that there is congruence between brands and consumers. It is because of consumer’s self-attachment to a specific brand.

“Also a strong, favorable brand personality can provide consumers with emotional fulfillment, image enhancement, an increased willingness to remain loyal to the brand, to try a new brand or brand extension and to pay premium prices for a brand.”(Khan and Farhat, 2011:5)

She states that “There is a relationship between consumers and the brand. If its brand personality traits match and complement those of consumers, or the brand can express consumers’ social status, they will feel more familiar and more contented with the brand.”(She, 2011:17)

Consumers wish to have an image that reflects them in their social life. Brands’ personalities help them reveal the desirable images and characteristics.

2.1.5. Importance of Brand Personality

It is known that, the relationship between brand personality and consumer is one of the substantial dimensions. Because, brand personality has an extreme impact on consumer’s purchasing behavior. Furthermore, consumers reach the desired life standards by purchasing the target brands’ products.

As it is stated by Özgüven and Karataş; “Brand personality is critical, because in some cases product resembling occurs and brand personality provides differentiation at this point. Therefore, brand personality can be effective through brand differentiation, emphasizing emotional characteristics and being meaningful and valuable for consumers.” (Özgüven and Karataş, 2010:145). Also, strong relationship between brands and consumers creates loyalty. Therefore, brand personality has a substantial side through brand building process.

The importance of brand personality can be examined into two manners;

- The Position of Brand Personality in Consumers' Mind
- Differentiation through Brand Personality

2.1.5.1. The Position of Brand Personality in Consumers' Mind

“Although marketers facilitate the creation of a brand personality and its meanings, ultimately it is the consumer who perceives and interprets meanings of brands and their characteristics.” (Strizhakova et al., 2008:89) It is understood that, brands are mostly important for consumers. Therefore marketers should take consumers' perception into consideration while creating a brand.

A brand personality can built a strong brand with several alternatives. For example, consumers can express their personalities by the help of brand personalities. In fact people perceive brands as individuals, and if they are individual then the brands should impress consumers with their personalities. Therefore it should be easy for marketers to attribute personal characteristics to a brand.

According to Sweeny and Brandon; “Not only do consumers view themselves as active in the consumer–brand relationship in terms of what they receive from the brand, they also form a perception of the brand as playing an active role because of the firm's marketing actions. In this view of the brand, the consumer views the brand as an active partner and asks, “What are you saying to me?” rather than viewing the brand as passive and assessing it in terms of “What characteristics can I infer that you have?”(Sweeny and Brandon, 2006:645). Actually, consumers perceive brand sometimes as their friends sometimes one of their faces. Therefore consumers have considerable expectations from a brand.

For instance, in L'Oreal advertisements, there is a common slogan; “L'Oreal, because you worth it.” Here, the marketers emphasize that, women are important and they deserve qualified products. In order to be important and desirable, women should prefer L'Oreal products.

As it is understood, consumers identify their personalities with the brand personalities. As a result of this, they sometimes express themselves by the help of the brands they preferred.

2.1.5.2. Differentiation through Brand Personality

Nowadays, it is seen that there are a lot of similar brands competing in marketing environment. Companies produce almost the same products however the indicative element is the brands' personality at this point. Tangible assets are sometimes easy to imitate however it is not easy to imitate personality of brands as intangible assets are. At this point, if companies can build strong brand personality, then they are able to get ahead of competitors.

“One of the most important criteria for consumer evaluation of brand perception is the brand personality. A distinct brand personality helps to create brand distinctiveness and at the same time helps the marketer identify the key personality factor which can then help brand extension by creating a generalization of stimuli, thereby reducing the rate of rejection.” (Pandey, 2009:27)

It is stated that, “The precondition to create a strategic brand and keep ahead of your competitors is to have very different positioning in the market against your competitors. This differentness of brand positioning will empower the brand and in long term will increase the loyalty of consumers.”(Dursun, 2009:84)

“A comprehensive understanding of brand personality also empowers brand managers to better manage the brand and develop insights into the problems and possible options for change in a brand's personality position. For example, a brand that is too aggressive might be shifted to encompass a more assertive quality instead, or a more distinctive personality can be generated for a brand that is too close in personality to a competitor.” (Sweeny and Brandon, 2006:640).

Freling and Forbes state that; “Consumers are also likely to rely on information about a brand's personality as a surrogate for intrinsic product attributes. That is, brand personality may influence product perceptions, especially when evaluating intrinsic product attributes is difficult.” (Freling and Forbes, 2005:405)

They light the way of the importance of brand personality differentiation such as, “Evaluating intrinsic product attributes is often difficult for product categories in which differences among the intrinsic attributes of competing brands are hard to discern. Thus, in this instance, brand personality may provide the means for making a given brand stand out in the crowd. Stated differently, when intrinsic cues are very

similar for competing brands, brand personality may create a basis for differentiation. For parity products, then, the presence of claims communicating a strong, positive brand personality (i.e. providing extrinsic and intrinsic cues) should lead to relatively higher product evaluations in comparison to the presence of claims that merely inform consumers about the product's features and benefits (i.e. provide intrinsic cues only)"(Freling and Forbes, 2005:405).

According to Ghose; "Marketing managers commonly face the task of understanding how consumers perceive the firm's brand in relation to those of competitive brands". (Ghose, 1993:5)

According to Wallenkint, "Advertising is often considered one of the most effective media for communicating with the consumer. Very often the consumer is captive, sitting in front of a television screen or reading a magazine. This provides an opportunity to establish a relationship with the consumer, a relationship in which the advertising can communicate both a personality and the position. Every advertisement should be thought of as a contribution to the brand personality." (Wallenkint, 1998:15) Wallenkint states the importance of advertising on brand personality concept by emphasizing brand personality's communication with consumers through print advertisements and television advertisements.

Park mentions that; "Brand personalities can also be appealing as instrument for real self-improvement, in effect, motivating consumers to develop personal qualities like those associated with the brand's personality."(Park, 2011:34)

As it is mentioned before, managers have long sought to differentiate their brands from others as one means of achieving competitive advantage according to Siguav et al.; they state that, "Marketers should create meaningful and distinctive brand personalities in the minds of consumers." (Siguav et al., 1999:48)

"It is not as easy for consumers to agree on the brand's third component, its characterization (personality). The brand becomes something (or someone) personal for the consumer, and its specific attributes play a key role in one's life. Characterization has a dual purpose; not only does it assist in drawing the individual consumer closer to the product, but it can also appeal to a larger audience by creating a shared awareness of its meaning". (Ligas and Cotte, 1999: 611)

Finally it is stated that; “A good solution for making brand superiority is through brand personality. Sticking personalities to brand helps in making a different identity and then end to better desirability for consumers.” (Dolatabadi et al., 2012: 295)

Nowadays, every individual has different economical standards. They may afford to purchase a holiday service, dressing, food etc. Herein, consumers try to find the most suitable product or service for themselves within different alternatives. In other words, consumers wish to have products/brands which are similar to their characteristics. For this reason, brands should give meanings to consumers’ nature. As a result of this, brands try to have more characteristics and gradually realize that they have their own personalities; thus, brand personality concept is getting more important.

2.2. SYMBOLIC CONSUMPTION

In today’s life, individuals express themselves by the way of consumption. This shows that, symbolic consumption concept becomes one of the determinants in our lives. First of all, the subject of consumer behavior should be stated in order to understand the symbolic consumption concept.

2.2.1. Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior is one of the most dynamic dimensions of marketing science. According to Kotler, “Consumer behavior is the study of how individuals, groups and organizations select, buy, use, and dispose of goods, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy their needs and wants.” And he adds, “A consumer’s buying behavior is influenced by cultural, social, and personal factors.”(Kotler, 1997:190)

He claims that consumers around the world vary tremendously in age, income, education level, and tastes. They also buy an incredible variety of goods and services. How these diverse consumers relate with each other and with other elements of the world around them impact their choices among various products, services, and companies (Kotler and Armstrong, 1997:159). It is understood that

consumer behavior may depend on several reasons. The conditions constantly change and as a result of this consumer's actual buying behavior differentiate according to circumstances. According to Nelson, "Consumers are continually making choices among products, the consequences of which they are but dimly aware. Not only do consumers lack full information about the prices of goods, but their information is probably even poorer about the quality variation of products simply because the latter information is more difficult to obtain. One can, for example, readily determine the price of a television set; it is more difficult to determine its performance characteristics under various conditions or its expected need for repairs."(Nelson, 1970:311)

In some circumstances even consumers do not realize why they are purchasing that product. As it is mentioned before, consumption behavior may depend on several reasons. At this point, the main thing is to understand consumer needs and wants in order to manage the marketing in business manner.

2.2.2. The Concept of Symbolic Consumption

First of all, it has to be understood what motivates the consumer while spending their money. "Consumption (i.e. expending money to acquire goods and services) is instrumental to the satisfaction of needs and wants. The extent to which goods and services can indeed serve that purpose depends on their properties. In many cases it can be conjectured that these properties functionally depend on the product characteristics. Yet, there are important exceptions."(Witt, 2010:17)

To begin with; "Symbol is a concept that represents an object however it does not have a natural relationship with represented object in the strict sense." (Mutlu, 1998:302) These signs can be word, gesture, logo, picture etc.

"Symbolic consumption is the process through which consumers buy, consume, and dispose of products and services on the basis of their meaning to themselves and others. Consumers buy and use goods and services for the utility/psychological benefits delivered and the things that they represent. Therefore part of consumption is symbolic." (Copyright Atomic Dog Publishing, 2002, access date: 5.01.2012) Also, Armutlu represents the concept of symbolic consumption as;

“From the point of view studies where the importance of symbolic consumption is emphasized, symbolic consumption might be defined as a process where desires are in the foreground instead of needs and consumers integrate with both themselves and others by consuming images.” (Armutlu, 2008:12)

Solomon states; “A theory of symbolic consumption must account for the mechanism(s) by which the consumption of products is related to the rest of social behavior.” (Solomon, 1983:326) Some consumers think that “I have to consume, it is better if I buy more. I will gain more money to purchase more.” Consumption is very important for production according to them. Consumption provides satisfaction for their social visions.

According to Elliott and Wattanasuwan; “All voluntary consumption carries, either consciously or unconsciously, symbolic meanings; if the consumer has choices to consume, s/he will consume things that hold particular symbolic meanings. These meanings may be idiosyncratic or widely shared with other people. For example, using recycled envelopes may symbolize ‘I care for the environment.’ going to classical concerts may represent ‘I am cultured.’ supporting gay rights may signify ‘I am open-minded’, or buying unbranded detergent may mean ‘I am a clever consumer.’” (Elliott and Wattanasuwan, 1998:133)

For example in Turkey, if a man smokes Marlboro then he emphasizes that he is cool. If a girl drinks Diet Coke then she emphasizes; ‘I am watching my weight’ or buying DKNY watch may mean ‘I am catching trends and I love quality’.

The symbolic relationship with product may be the statement of brand consumption. For example, consumer buys elegance by buying a smart dress, a fit body by drinking a diet coke, high living standards by driving a luxury car. This is also related with hedonic consumption which is similar to symbolic consumption.

According to authors; “Hedonic consumption designates those facets of consumer behavior that relate to the multi-sensory, fantasy and emotive aspects of one’s experience with products” (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982:92). As it is mentioned in chapter one; there is an emotional relationship between brands and consumers. Consumers have a tendency to purchase the brands that match their personality.

It is stated that “In order for conspicuous consumption to be rewarded and thus maintained in society, individuals must attach symbolic meaning to products which infer something about their owner.” (Schoenbachler, Ayers and Gordon, 2004:1) Regarding this; “As recognized since long, consumption serving to signal social status, group membership, or self-esteem is a socially contingent activity. The corresponding expenditures are motivated mainly by the symbolic value they have for transmitting the signal. However, this presupposes some form of social coordination on what are valid, approved symbols. Unlike consumption not serving signaling purposes, the technological characteristics of the goods and services consumed may be secondary—what counts, is their socially agreed capacity to function as a symbol.” (Witt, 2010:17) As it is understood, symbolic consumption is highly related with social coordination of consumers. We will see more in detail in self-concept part.

Meanly, consumers try to say something with the brands they have chosen. As cited in a study “Brand choice can send meaningful social signals to other consumers about the type of person using that brand (Wernerfelt 1990).”(Han, et al., 2010:9) “

Witt represents as; “In a sense, thus, symbolic consumption is the form of consumer behavior least dependent on technological product characteristics. In the present paper it may therefore serve as a vantage point for a discussion of the role of motivational factors underlying consumption and their influence on the evolution of consumption over time.” (Witt, 2010:18)

According to Levy, “Several years of research into the symbolic nature of products, brands, institutions, and media of communication make it amply clear that consumers are able to gauge grossly and subtly the symbolic language of different objects, and then to translate them into meanings for themselves.”(Levy, 1959:120)

In the symbolic consumption manner, it is shown that, desires come prior than needs. Consumers interact with their own and society by consuming the symbols.

As cited in Natalia and Rotem’s research study; “In line with the limited literature available about the congruence between human and brand personality (e.g. Dolich, 1969; Hamm and Cundiff, 1969; Shank and Langmeyer, 1994; Vitz and

Johnston, 1965), we expect that consumers with different personality types would prefer brands with personalities that match their own.” (Maehle and Shneor, 2010: 51)

To extend with Solomon emphasizes; “If the focus of symbolic consumption is broadened to consider the a priori impact of material symbolism on behavior, the role of products in general theories of social behavior may be upgraded. In addition, marketers should be made more aware of the significance of products as determinants of behavior. An abundance of products and services from clothing, automobiles, cosmetics, and furniture to restaurants, office environments, and airlines are rich in symbolic content. The nature of consumers' interactions with these symbol systems may determine their attitudes toward them and toward themselves.” (Solomon, 1983:327)

Related to this, social desirability is one of substantial concepts. “Social desirability is a personality trait rendering the individual acceptable in social or interpersonal relations. It is related to social acceptance, social approval, popularity, social status, leadership qualities, or any quality making him a socially desirable companion.” (<http://www.reference.md/files/D012/mD012928.html>/accessdate:08.01.2012).

In this manner, consumers may have tendency to show consumption symbolism in terms of their social desirability.

2.2.2.1. The Significance of Symbolic Consumption

First of all, consumption concept is one issue that drives customer motivation. In today's world, marketers seek to estimate consumers' expectations and motivate them through their products and services. Related to this, Witt mentions; “Consumption is a highly complex phenomenon. There is not only an enormous variety of goods and services to choose from, but usually also a multitude of motivations consumers pursue with their purchasing decisions.” He continues, “It is well possible that some intrinsic characteristics –e.g. physical visibility or natural scarcity – increase the chances of some product to be accepted as a symbol. But the

same intrinsic characteristics may be possessed by many more goods and services than those factually serving as accepted symbols.” (Witt, 2010:18-19)

It is mentioned that; “Symbolic consumption involves reciprocal and reflexive relationships between products (tastes and distastes) and consumers (positive and negative selves) within their social contexts.”(Hogg et al., 2009:148) Actually, consumers create some fantasies in their dream worlds and they believe to realize these fantasies by consuming something. According to Odabaşı, “In postmodern culture, which is termed as transition from production culture to consumption culture, products are consumed symbolically instead of functionality.”(Odabaşı, 2004:92-95).

Related to this view; Sönmez and Karataş state that, “Consumers tend towards to understand and benefit from the products and their brands. As a result of this, the concept of “symbolic consumption” becomes the essential element of postmodern consumption culture. It is a fact that, consumers try to correspond and assimilate their identities with products and brands’ symbolic benefits. (Sönmez, Karataş, 2010:13)

We can sum up some issues that result symbolic consumption according to Odabaşı;

- Consumers wish to identify themselves and play a role.
- Consumers try to define their social status.
- It is important to create social status and protect this.
- Consumers want to reflect their identity to people and to their own.
- In brief, social desirability concept plays an important role in “symbolic consumption” process. (Odabaşı, 2006:85)

According to Uztuğ, consumers gain symbolic benefit from their consumptions. “A brand’s symbolic benefit is related with the psychological satisfaction level of consumers. As also identified self-expression benefit, symbolic necessity provides, enriching the self, role position, group membership or self-knowledge incentives.” (Uztuğ, 2003:153)

2.2.2.2. Symbolic Consumption and Consumers

Levy emphasizes that, consumer behavior changes over time. According to him; “At the heart of all this is the fact that the consumer is not as functionally oriented as he used to be--if he ever really was. Aesthetic preferences have changed somewhat. For example, we no longer go in for stained glass lamps and antimacassars, although the latter were perhaps more attractive than transparent couch covers. Moreover, the diversity of ways in which people can spend their money has had an impact on motivation:

People buy things not only for what they can do, but also for what they mean. At one level, society has to concern itself with bread for sustenance, and appropriate agencies must see it that our breads are sufficiently nourishing, enriched, and not poisonously refined. But the consumer is no longer much interested in bread as the staff of life. In the first place, he (or she) is probably on a diet and not eating bread; in the second place, he is apt to be more concerned with whether to buy an exotic twist, to do something "interesting" with a pancake flour, or to pop in a brown-and-serve roll that will come hot to the table to the moderate surprise of the guests.

When people talk about the things they buy and why they buy them, they show a variety of logic. They refer to convenience, inadvertence, family pressures, other social pressures, complex economic reasoning, advertising, and pretty colors. They try to satisfy many aims, feelings, wishes, and circumstances. The pleasure they gain from buying objects is ever more playful. The question is less: "Do I need this?" More important are the ideas: "Do I want it?" "Do I like it?"” (Levy, 1959:118) This is one of the main issues to be examined in this research. Consumers make their purchases unconsciously, in other words consumers consciously purchase goods for their symbolic meanings. With respect to this, Azizağaoğlu states that, “Marketers usually ignore subliminal. However consumers purchase the goods for their emotional meanings rather than apparent reasons.” (Azizağaoğlu, 2010:38) For instance, a girl buys iPhone just because it is trendy to use it. Azizağaoğlu continues, marketers’ outside world messages may be perceived very differently and powerfully by consumers. In other words, marketing activities play important role to reveal consumers’ inner worlds” (Azizağaoğlu, 2010:38)

Nowadays, consumption concept generates identities because individuals express themselves by their consumption habits. Additionally, it is seen that, consumers make their consumptions for symbolic meanings instead of rational manner.

“When consumers enter new phases of their lives, or take on new roles, they tend to be insecure and feel uncertain about how to behave.” (Piacentini and Mailer, 2004:253) Related to this, Shipman’s view, “Consumption of symbolic goods expands, with growing focus on the value of other people’s knowledge, talent and time being purchased, over and above (or instead of) any physical inputs. And symbolic consumption of goods expands, with the ability to appreciate and enjoy taking priority over outright possession and ownership.” (Shipman, 2004:281) In this manner, it is understood that priority changes may drive people to make symbolic consumption. For example, a general director of a company may prefer to have Mercedes instead of Fiat. He can think that, his job title and position requires more luxurious cars.

“During the consumption period which is directed by symbols’ game, products are identified as personal characteristics, targets, social models and symbols of psychological objects. Consumers not only spend their money but also spend their energy in the market. The objects on the shelves and standards are important for them.”(Azizağaoğlu, 2010:41) Actually, individuals are communicating with the products and this communication is the result of relationship between consumers and society. At this point, symbols are meaningful for consumers. Because, sometime later, symbols start to absent to consumers’ personalities. This will be mentioned in detail in Self part.

“Although the consumer learns and develops consumption symbols through socialization processes and exposures to mass media (e.g., advertising), it does not mean that everybody who possesses the same product bought it for the same symbolic meaning.” (Elliott and Wattanasuwan, 1998:133) Consumers may have different expectations from products so products may represent different meanings among consumers.

2.2.3. Positive and Negative Symbolic Consumption

As it is mentioned before, consumers started to value “consumption” more than “production” in today’s world. In other words, consumers become “consumed consumers” which is negative side of overconsumption. It would be better for consumers if they can reduce the negative effects of over consumption.

“Through the socialization process the consumer learns not only to agree on shared meanings of some symbols but also to develop individual symbolic interpretations of his/her own. The consumer uses these symbolic meanings to construct, maintain and express each of her/his multiple identities” (Elliott and Wattanasuwan, 1998:132)

As it is mentioned; “The positive and negative aspects of symbolic consumption could vary by cultural context, particularly because of potentially differing views of the self in relation to the social group across individualistic and collectivistic cultures. (Hogg et al., 2009:156) For instance, the self-concept is more important in individualistic cultures which are related with symbolic consumption. However, in collectivist cultures such as Turkey, consumers will be more concerned about what others think about him or her. Related to this, “Research shows that different self-systems characterize individualistic and collectivistic societies that notions of the self (particularly independent versus dependent views of self) may vary cross culturally.” (Markus and Kitayama, 1991:246) There are explicit differences on consumer behavior between different cultures.

As it is understood, symbolic tools are meaningful for consumers. They include some messages that consumers can perceive these in their own ways. According to Orhan, some symbolic messages are such like these;

- Fortune, power and superiority: Most of consumers have tendency to show of stuffs they have bought to their environment in order to appear strong. For instance; branded shoes, Cuban cigars are another way to say “I have got the power.”
- Adolescence: In recent years, adolescence image seemed to be important. For instance girls do not try to wear as their mothers from now on. On the contrary, mothers try to wear as their daughter.

- Sexual Attraction: The language of objects is a sexual language at the same time. A lighter, bed lining or a car can be feminine or masculine. These products transfer charm to the opposite sex. For instance, perfume etc.
- Creativeness, pleasure: Consumers like to add their creativeness while meeting their needs because they wish to reflect their interests. For instance, the preference of which tie to wear on a shirt depends.
- Love: People need to express the love inside them. Therefore they purchase the stuffs they would like. The need of loving stuff is common between consumers which do not have balanced life and some aesthetic feelings strengthen this love. Emotional commitment can be to a fantastic car or to just a little pencil.
- Loyalty: The products can be an expression of loyalty to the past. For instance, some people use the same toothpaste brand since their youngness.” (Orhan, 2002:14-15).

These examples show us, how people attach importance to brands and products they use. According to individuals, the symbols represent their own. Therefore sometimes the symbolic consumption is exaggerated. This negative consumption transforms consumers to consumed consumers. Thus, it is better for consumers to balance their consumption level.

2.2.4. The Self and Symbolic Consumption

The self-concept should be analyzed deeply within the frame of symbolic consumption. Therefore “the self-concept” will be stated in detail in this section. After that, the linkage of self-concept to symbolic consumption will be stated.

2.2.4.1. Self-Concept

According to Rosenberg, “self-concept” denotes the “totality of the individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to him as an object” (Rosenberg 1979:7)

Arnould et al. follow a definition by stating that the self-concept is “an organized configuration of perceptions of the self, which are available to awareness”,

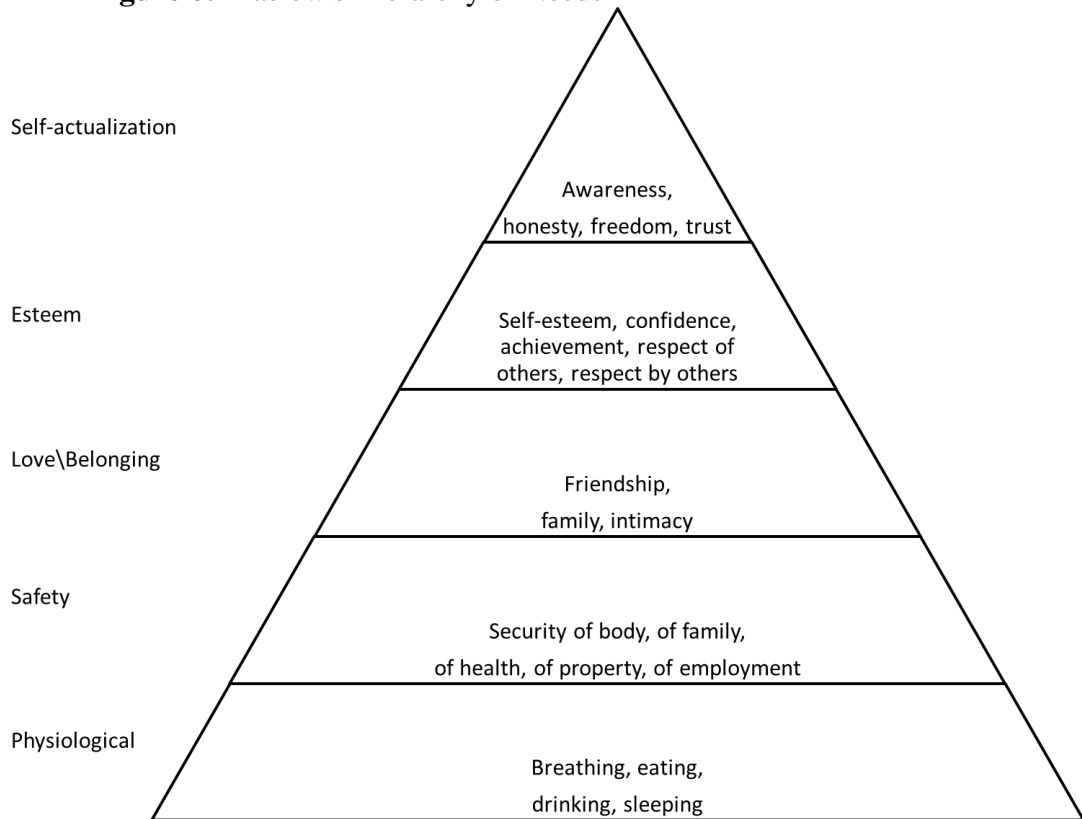
which means that self-concepts are “perceptions people have about themselves” (Arnould et al 2005:388). Additively, Sirgy represents “However, self-concept has been treated from various points of view. For example, psychoanalytic theory views the self-concept as a self-system inflicted with conflict. Behavioral theory construes the self as a bundle of conditioned responses. Other views, such as organismic theory, treat the self in functional and developmental terms; phenomenology treats the self in a wholistic form; and cognitive theory represents the self as conceptual system processing information about the self. Symbolic interactionism, on the other hand, views the self as a function of interpersonal interactions.” (Sirgy, 1982:287) There are different evaluations about self-concept.

According to Quandt; “The self-concept refers to: all perceptions that an individual has of himself; especially emphasized are the individual’s perceptions of his value and his ability.” He continues; “There are two aspects of self-concept about which most psychologists appear to agree:

- 1) The perception of self that an individual has included his view of himself as compared to others (self-perception), his view of others see him (self-other perception), and his view of how he wishes he could be (self-ideal).
- 2) The perceptions of self that an individual has are largely based upon the experiences that he has had with those people who are important to him (significant others). Thus, such people can effect change in the individual’s self-concept”(Quandt, 1973:5)

It is understood, individuals care about how they are perceived from the eyes of the others. Especially, social self-concept is very meaningful in this manner. Actually this view comes from the idea of belonging to a social group. Related to this, when we interpret the Maslow’s Pyramid;

Figure 6: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Source: Kotler and Keller, 1997: 202.

The third level is “Social Needs” which includes individual need to belong to a group and be loved by others. Relationships such as friendships, romantic attachments and families help fulfill this need for companionship and acceptance, as involvement does in social, community or religious groups. In other words, individuals prefer to be the part of community or to be preferred by others. After satisfying first three needs, the fourth level of self-esteem needs becomes more important. These include the need for things that reflect on self-esteem, personal worth, social recognition and accomplishment. These are related with individuals’ social beings.

As cited in Lückcrath research, “In a more and more saturated market the motivation that is underlying the purchase decision has changed. Consumers do not primarily purchase products to satisfy their basic physiological and safety needs anymore but to reach higher-order goals. Social needs, self-esteem needs and the

need for self-actualization come to the fore and play an important role in the purchase of products. Thus, brands are increasingly positioned within the emotional- and experiential world (Hieronimus, 2003).” (Lückerath, 2010:30)

2.2.4.2. The Relationship Between Self and Symbolic Consumption

“The individual in postmodern society is threatened by a number of “dilemmas of the self”: fragmentation, powerlessness, uncertainty and a struggle against commodification.” (Giddens, 1991:201) Related to this; Elliott and Wattanasuwan express; that “The implications for marketers of this perspective of the creative consumer searching for identity through consumption, are that it is essential to understand the concept and dynamics of self, the symbolic meaning of goods and the role played by brands.” And they continue; “The nature of the self-concept is complex: the consumer may possess a variety of actual selves (or roles) and a variety of possible or ideal selves. If the consumer possesses a multiplicity of role identities, how can these multiple selves coexist in harmony? How does each identity develop? And how does the consumer express each self in a particular social situation? We live in a symbol-rich environment and the meaning attached to any situation or object is determined by the interpretation of these symbols. Through the socialization process the consumer learns not only to agree on shared meanings of some symbols but also to develop individual symbolic interpretations of his/her own.

According to Meer; “Consumers develop relationships with brands based on their symbolic value. As a result, the brand becomes alive and is no longer a passive object but an active partner in the consumer’s mind. According to the familiarity theory, humans use themselves as models of the world because of their extensive knowledge of themselves. In other words, people use their own self-schema as a source of labels and concepts by which to interpret the outside world”(Meer, 2010:15)

The consumer uses these symbolic meanings to construct, maintain and express each of her/his multiple identities.” (Elliott and Wattanasuwan, 1998:132) Additionally; attachment to objects as symbols of security, as expressions of self-concept, and as signs of one's connection to or differentiation from other members of

society is a usual and culturally universal function of consumption. (Wallendorf and Arnold, 1988:532)

At this point, symbolic interactionism is a notion that should be mentioned about. According to Solomon; “Symbolic interactionism focuses on the process by which individuals understand their world. It assumes that people interpret the actions of others rather than simply reacting to them. Thus a person's relation to physical (objective) reality is mediated by the symbolic environment.” As Solomon’ view, this is related with the reflection of “Seeing yourself as others see you”. With this view, “The major emphasis of symbolic interaction theory is thus on the social nature of self-definition. The self is defined largely through interaction-one's attitude toward oneself is basically determined by the same processes that impel one to assign meaning to other social objects. A corollary to this supposition is that one's self-image is in part determined-via role taking- by estimates of how others are evaluating one-self.” (Solomon, 1983:321) Here in, it is understood that, the development process of self-concept is parallel with individuals’ social lives. Under the evaluation of this view, social factors direct the personal behavior of individuals with the idea of self-concept.

“Symbolic associations and self-expression seem to be more related to the social status conveyed by brands, thus manufacturer brands can capitalize in their communication strategies on their high attachment score and on the emotions that the customer may feel.”(Lefebvre et al., 2009:18)

Actually, people perceive themselves from the eyes of the others. By viewing they from different perspectives cause creating behaviors, attitudes and identities. Therefore the social roles of individuals are converted into the self-concept. Related to this; “Consumers use the brands to bolster their self-concept by purchasing them in order to emphasize the capability to induce exclusivity and a distinguished brand identity.”(Mkhize, 2010:16)

Elliott mentions that; “Self-identity must be validated through social interaction and that the self is embedded in social practices. Endeavors to create the consumer’s self-identity often involve the consumption of products, services, and media and there is always a tension between the meanings we construct for ourselves and those we are exposed to socially and this dialectical tension requires active

negotiation of meaning” (Elliott and Wattanasuwan, 1998:132) This view brings up the same point; social self-concept is parallel with self-symbolism.

Armutlu states that; “The main purpose of symbolic consumption is stated as to protect and improve consumers’ identity. People, whose consuming purpose is to protect and improve their identities, expect that the products they consume to be compatible with their identities and besides they also want to make a consumption which is well-liked and approved by others. By using symbolically meaningful product, individuals integrate with social meaning of the product. By this way they interact with themselves, families, friends and other important people around their social environment. Thus person ensures both intrinsic and extrinsic identity improvement.” (Armutlu, 2008:64)

Tucker pointed out that “There has been an implicit concept that consumers can be defined in terms of either the product they acquire or use or in terms of the meanings products have for them or their attitudes towards products”. (Tucker, 1957:139) Because, consumers sometimes try to be in their social environment with the products they consume. This is because symbolic consumption takes part in their lives.

Kotler mentions; “People usually chose products appropriate to their roles and status. Consider the various roles a working mother plays. In her company, she plays the role of brand manager, in her family, she plays the role of wife and mother; at her favorite sporting events, and she plays the role of avid fan. As a brand manager, she will buy the kind of clothing that reflects her role and status in her company.” (Kotler and Armstrong, 2001:170) As it is seen, people care about how they are perceived by other people in society which they belong to.

So that we can conclude the self and symbolic consumption as; consumers consume in order to possess role identities, personal attributes, relationships, fantasies, and other symbols that individuals use for the purposes of self-creation and self-understanding.

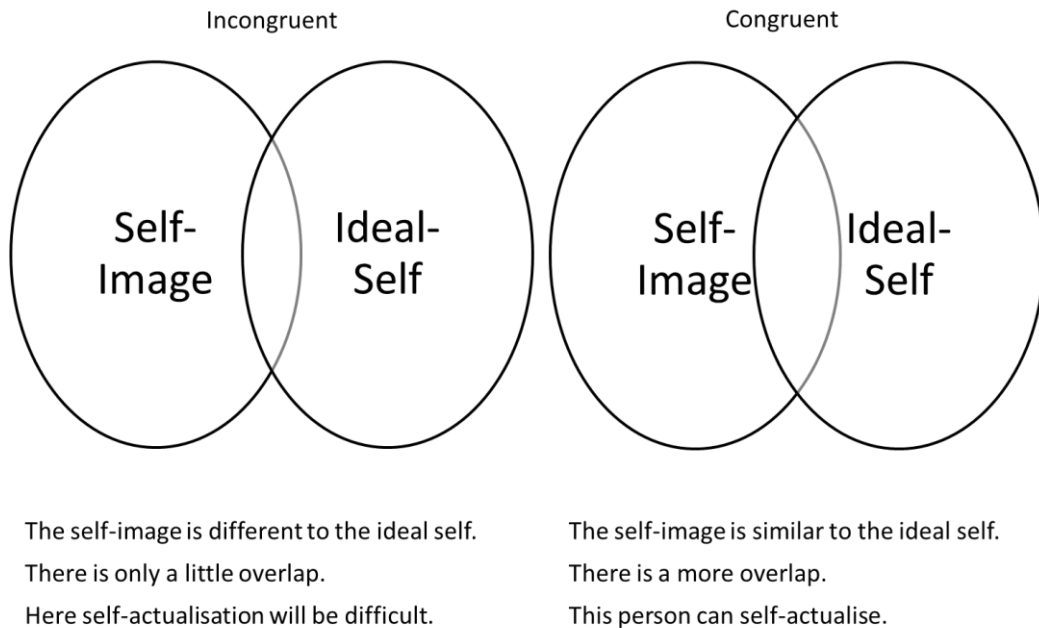
2.2.5. Congruency Theory and Symbolic Consumption

In this part, the relationship between self-concept and self-image will be explained in order to represent the congruency theory.

As it is represented in previous parts; the self-concept is how people think about and evaluate themselves. According to Kuhn, “The self has been called an image, a conception, a concept, a feeling, internalization, a self-looking at oneself.” (Kuhn, 1954:68) At this point, the actual and ideal self-concept should be represented. As it is identified; “Actual self is your representation of the attributes that you believe you actually possess, or that you believe others believe you possess. The “actual self” is a person's basic self-concept. It is one's perception of their attributes (intelligence, athleticism, attractiveness, etc.). In contrast with, ideal self is your representation of the attributes that someone (yourself or another) would like you, ideally, to possess (i.e., a representation of someone's hopes, aspirations, or wishes for you). The “ideal-self” is what motivates individuals to change, improve and achieve. Additionally, when people have a sense of the difference between their actual self and their social ideal self, an individual will experience feelings of shame and unworthiness. Shame that is often experienced when there is a failure to meet a significant other’s goals or wishes involves loss of face and presumed exposure to the dissatisfaction of others” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-Discrepancy_Theory/ 30.01.2012)

“The consumer can achieve self-congruence by consuming a brand with a personality that he or she regards as similar to either the actual or ideal self”(Malär et al., 2011:36)

Figure 7: Congruency Theory



Source: <http://www.simplypsychology.org/carl-rogers.html>: 30.01.2012)

With this approach, it can be seen from the Figure-7- if the distance between a person's actual and ideal selves is less there is congruence between these and if the distance gets broader then there is incongruence.

From the view of self-congruity theory, Sirgy defines self-congruity as "The process of involving the match or mismatch between a stimulus representing a perceived self-image and a referent self-image. He expresses that; Self-congruity theory asserts that consumer behavior is partially determined by the congruence resulting from a psychological comparison involving the product-user image or brand image and the consumer's self-concept (i.e. actual self-image, ideal self-image, social self-image). This psychological comparison can lead to high self-congruity when the consumer perceives the product user image or brand image to match that of his or her self-image." (Sirgy, 1986:14)

2.2.6. Self-Attachment to Brand Personality

After analyzing the self and congruence theory, it could be looked at these concepts with consumer behavior approach. Actually, consumers' purchase intention is positively related with the higher degree of congruence. Related to this, "Consistency and congruence also play an important role in establishing the relationship between self-concept, the individual's image, and the final purchase behavior. Previous studies have shown that self-congruence is an important factor in directing consumer preference."(Khan and Bozzo, 2012:3)

It is stated that; "Brand attachment could strengthen consumer satisfaction. When a consumer is attached to the brand, each experience of consumption is pleasurable and leads to positive emotions and a favorable evaluation" (Belaid and Behi, 2010:8)

"People are more concerned about their ideal self-congruence for conspicuous products, and there is no role of ideal self-congruence for inconspicuous products. So while making advertising for a new brand, marketers should give more importance to the ideal self-congruence of the target market for conspicuous products rather than their actual self-congruence, to make this brand as a preferred brand of the target market" (Khan and Bozzo, 2012:14) For instance, it is seen Dove Face Crème advertisement in picture-2. Here in, Nil Karaibrahimgil's pure beauty is emphasized as "ideal self". Meanly, the marketers want to reflect the idea of "How consistent does the image of the Nil with self-perception of myself?" The message is; if the Nil's face is your ideal, then buy Dove and you will be seen as her.

Figure 8: A picture of Dove advertisement with Nil Karaibrahimgil



Actually, consumers have tendency to prefer the brands which are perceived consistent with their self-concepts. At this point, celebrity products are much more preferable from the view point of consumers. For instance, Victoria Beckham is one of the popular celebrities in recent years. Her physical appearance, fashion style, haircut, living standards are aspired by most women. Famous fashion designers make special collection just for her. Many women perceive their ideal as Victoria Beckham. Therefore marketers use this opportunity. For example, Victoria acted in commercials of LG. She was the user of LG Fashion Touch Phones. Also, she represented the underwear's of Emporia Armani in one commercial. As a result, women who would like to be as her may purchase these products.

It is understood that, consumers need to consume products which are congruent with their ideal self-images. This is related with consuming brands which are similar to their personalities as it is mentioned in this research.

2.3. THE IMPACT OF BRAND PERSONALITY ON SYMBOLIC CONSUMPTION IN FASHIONABLE PRODUCTS

“There is a growing interest in the brand personality concept, namely because it offers a systematic approach to developing ever more important symbolic benefits.” (Heine, 2012:1)

From the beginning of this study, it is understood that brand concept is related with the other strategic points. The symbolic power of brand influences the brand personality focus approach. Because, as it is mentioned before, consumers link their personality to brands’. Therefore, the opportunity of expressing themselves causes strategic brand positioning occurrence.

It is mentioned that; “The consumer as an individual is utilized by products which he or she has or consumes and be positioned in social life regarding to this. One important and meaningful way to understand the role of products as social tools is to accept them as tools of communication between individuals and others. If products are going to be symbolic tools of communication, social definitions and meanings of these symbols should be understood by relevant units of society. Individuals want to reflect their life styles and for this reason they establish emotional relationship with brands.”(Akkaya, 2011:3)

Through this information, the importance of consumption concept is emphasized as symbolism. Related to this, Başfirıncı expresses that; “As consumption objects, products and brands have potential to address consumers’ subliminal and effect consumers thoughts and behaviors. To understand symbolic functions of consumption is crucial to understand and direct consumers’ ideational and behavioral processes by the help of products and brands. However, there is a technical necessity which reflects consumers’ own perspective to reveal the functions of symbolic consumption more than data gathering methods that assume consumers make rational decisions.” (Başfirıncı, 2011:184)

Finally, Lückerrath conclude symbolic consumption as; “It can be said that consumers do not only use brands as reflective symbols of their own self-concepts but also as a kind of self-extension. This means that they do not necessarily buy a certain brand in order to support their real or ideal self but to extend their own

personality by characteristics which they do not primarily possess themselves. By developing a relationship with a brand the consumer can benefit from the brand's characteristics without adopting them.”(Lückerath, 2010:50)

2.3.1. Fashion Structure

Consumer behavior is interrelated with fashion for many years. The significance of fashion has many effects on consumers' purchasing behavior and social functions of consumers. As a result of this, fashion industry affects the brand strategies of companies. In this part of the study, fashion structure will be analyzed briefly in order to linkage the impacts of brand personality on symbolic consumption.

2.3.1.1. General Perspective of Fashion

Starting with, According to Craik, fashion performs the functions of a "mask" disguising the "true" nature of the body or person. (Craik, 1994:4)

There are many of different views about fashion. According to Ertürk; “Fashion is not a product directly. It is defined as a phenomenon engaged with culture and a “symbolic product”. Also, a fashion can occur in any time and change in terms of different circumstances.” (Ertürk, 2011:7) According to Penpece, “Fashion represents individuals' behavior model and serves for social integration by imitation. People have tendency to be different from the others and these differences satisfy them” (Penpece, 2006:88). Actually fashion is something as a trend which sometimes drags people to the same way while they wish to differentiate themselves. This dilemma can be solved according to Zorlu's view. He represents that; “Fashion has two functions which are combination and separation. Fashion separate one class from others because of social status differentiations. However, it combines one group with existing styles and separates other class while creating differences with different styles.” He continues, “The scene of social forms, aesthetic judges and humanistic expressions continuously change by the effects of fashion. Fashion, especially latest fashion primarily spread between upper classes and effects on them. In case, the lower social classes start to imitate upper classes' styles after a while. Then the upper

classes leave that trend whose earlier styles were imitated by the lower classes.”(Zorlu, 2002:44). Actually it is understood that, the process between lower classes and upper classes continuously renews. As a result of this fashion does not stay for a long time, it changes constantly.

In the beginning of fashion, it is seen that, “With its beginnings in the late 17th century, the fashion industry is a global sector that works to meet the demand for apparel and dictates the trends for what should be worn. This industry consists of five distinct and separate levels. These levels are haute couture, luxury wear, affordable luxury wear, mainstream clothing, and discount clothing. The production part of the industry, that which takes the concept for a piece of apparel all the way to the hands of those who purchase it, is made up of four basic sectors. These sectors include producers of the goods necessary to make the apparel, those who create the pieces, those who advertise and market the goods, and those who sell the goods.”(Power and Hauge, 2008:130). Thus, it is understood that fashion concept is a considerable amount of substantial.

It is mentioned that; “Fashion and fashion clothing is one industry in which brand undoubtedly plays a significant role. Despite the omnipresence of brands in today’s fashion scene, the branding of fashion goods is a relatively new phenomenon. In comparison to many other industries, fashion was rather late in adopting the principles of Fordist mass production (i.e., standardized products made in large batches). Until the 1960s, clothes and fashion was basically a craft-orientated industry.”(Power and Hauge, 2008:130). And according to them; with larger volumes and levels of standardization, came a greater pressure for producers and retailers to differentiate their products.

Timely fashion gets integrated with the brand concept. In today’s life it is easy to realize this. For instance it is preferred to say “My Mango skirt” instead of “My white skirt”. The products are called with their brand names. Fashion is in the middle of life.

For centuries people have used clothes and other body decoration accessories as a form of nonverbal communication to indicate occupation, rank, gender, locality, wealth and status. Clothes are the main attributes of person’s everyday life and his/her individuality.

According to Penpece, “Rapid change of fashion may be caused by boring spiritual effects. Meanly, owning a lot of anxious times result fashion changes to be faster. Because, a much more important element in fashion is desire to be different.”(Penpece, 2006:88). Related to this, for example people may think that, “I do not pay any attention to what my style or my clothes mean for others. However, my clothes can show a lot to other people.” Even though people reflect that they do not care the fashion; they notice how they are perceived by other people.

Zorlu states that; “In metropolis life; human stood out from traditional morals and earned freedom. This situation has led to feel loneliness. In this social environment there are two factors which determine humans' lifestyle. First of these factors is money which gathered every moral in itself; second is fashion which maintains the sustainability of materialized world morals. From this point of view; in modern world consumption/shopping integrates person with the society.”(Zorlu, 2002:45) It is claimed that; “The world of fashion has witnessed a dramatic shift in the way in which fashion styles are determined away from an intrinsic interaction between fashion and regional environmental factors towards the dominance by global fashion capitalism.”(Azuma and Fernie, 2003:413)

As a result of this, a huge competition occurs in fashion industry. Related to this, it is mentioned as; “Today’s fashion market place is highly competitive and the constant need to “refresh” product ranges means that there is an inevitable move by many retailers to extend the number of “seasons”, i.e. the frequency with which the entire merchandise within a store is changed. In extreme cases, typified by the successful fashion retailer Zara, there might be 20 seasons in a year. The implications of this trend for supply chain management are clearly profound.”(Christopher et al., 2004:396).

To mention some about Turkey’s fashion; “Today's fashion in Turkey has taken its shape with being in change over centuries. Actually Turkish society lived under effect of Ottoman fashion for a long time, but after that fashion in Turkey started to follow fashion in Europe especially France and Italy. Progress in Europe fashion has revealed to a new art and culture perception. Renewed with time and even a dynamic European fashion has irradiated Turkish fashion. After this, Turkey both has kept its

own cultural structure and has been under effect of Europe in its fashion progress.”(Penpece, 2006:88)

2.3.1.2. Fashion Brand

According to Brenninkmeyer “Fashion can be seen as the point where the material product in the form of clothes meets the immaterial aspect of what looks good at a given point in time”(Brenninkmeyer, 1962:6). There is the physical good that is a garment. It is enriched by symbolic and immaterial values and the end the result is fashion.

“Clothing can fulfill a number of functions beyond mere functional performance such as warmth or protection. It says how important an individual is, tells others how much status an individual has, what the individual is like (e.g., professional, sexy, casual). As such, how involved consumers become in their clothes provides a deeper understanding of the dynamics of consumer behavior and the nature and role of the product category of fashion clothing in society.”(O’Cass, 2000:547)

As it is mentioned before, brand concept starts to be substantial by the end of 1990’s. Firms developed some strategies in terms of branded products. Related to this, branding is one of the sustaining factor for fashion industry. Actually it is hard to separate brand and fashion concepts. These concepts feed each other.

According to Power and Hauge, “If the rise of brand has become a preoccupation for many clothing and fashion firms, then the mechanisms by which brands are built often go counter to common ideas of what activities and motivations are involved in product development. Most usually we think that product development is motivated by a desire to sell the product at a profit, or that the product itself must be first and foremost in the minds of the developers. The importance of brand brings with it a reorganization of what the most strategically important activities and concerns of the firm may be. Crucially there tends to be less emphasis on products’ individual characteristics.” (Power and Hauge, 2008:132) They continue as; “The current dominance of brand thinking in the industry reflected an institutional shift in the fashion industry. This institutional shift means that firms

must compete within a highly branded marketplace where their own branding strategies (and ant strategies) will account for their long-term survival. The fact that brand is a central institution in fashion does not just imply a greater need to pay attention to advertising and image; it also brings with it a series of new possibilities for diversification and risk management, and thus organizational changes within and between firms. Not least of these have been firm growth and consolidation and the emergence of global fashion conglomerates that are not just about clothing but luxury goods in general. Thus, building brands and brand loyalty now takes pole position”. The importance of brand concept has been mentioned at the beginning of the study. However here it is understood that brand concept is vital for fashion industry. Firms show more efforts in order to attract the attention of consumers. For instance, Mavi Jeans which is a worldwide known brand used Kıvanç Tatlıtuğ in their advertisements. This well-known brand used a popular actor for its fashionable jeans which leads to a good combination to attract more attention.

2.3.1.3. Consumer Brand Preferences Through Fashion

According to Meneses and Rodrigues; “Fashion appears as a fascinating array of joy and vanities, a passing, ephemeral phenomenon in perfect harmony with the definition of present time. Thus, fashion becomes a value of instant consumption that is exploited to the maximum in a mentality that transforms all consumer interest into the present. “Live like there’s no tomorrow” seems to be the happy maxim behind this orientation that sings the praise of the present and of fashion. However, according to psychoanalysis, orientation to the present is not a mere frivolity, insofar as the notion of conscience is assimilated, but is where the inhibiting forces of the super-ego from the past meet the liberating forces of the subconscious from the future.”(Meneses and Rodrigues, 2010:84) Actually this is one of the explanations where symbolic consumption comes from. People, who are consumed consumers, forget the reason of consuming while purchasing something. Sometimes they think as; what I wear and how and when I wear it, provides others with shorthand to subtly read the surface of a social situation. Meantly, people spend a lot of their time to their

physical appearance also people spend money on clothes as their financial status allows.

However the question is; according to what we are buying. Actually, consumer preferences depend on many reasons. It is mentioned that, “Purchasing process is affected by the factors of consumer individual evaluations. The degree of different needs and different purchasing habits may direct consumer buying behavior. A group of consumers consider their needs towards shopping. On the other hand, other group shows instinctive buying behavior. While some consumers view shopping as essential passion, some other group take pleasure during and after shopping and they figure out this as a satisfied experience.”(Yüksel and Erkmen, 2008:687) Fashion covers most part of the answer. For instance, most of the women buy gifts from Koton to their female friends. Because, Koton branded suits are fashionable nowadays. It is not just the clothes even house furniture consumption is related to trends and fashion. For example, IKEA style decorations are very trendy. Perhaps people can purchase the same furniture cheaper, however the point in here is to own a stylish IKEA furnish. It is understood that, fashion and brand concepts are integrated. After brand concept became vital for companies, fashion gets the substantial position.

2.3.2. Brand Personality and Symbolic Consumption Through Fashion Brands

According to Belk, materialism is “The importance a consumer attaches to worldly possessions. At the highest levels of materialism, such possessions assume a central place in a person's life and are believed to provide the greatest sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction.” (Belk, 1984:291) This means that people look to possessions to bring them happiness. They then use these possessions to make things and other people behave or respond the way they desire. They go through life by thinking about well-being depends on what we have or do.

Actually this should remind us of symbolic consumption. Because in that part, people make the consumption in order to be the part of certain society. Related to this issue Shipman mentions that; “When consumption moves to the symbolic

realm, equally distinctive display can be made with less material requirement. Because it is detachable from, and more durable than, volatile market valuations of wealth, different vintages of rich find shared interest in shifting the contest to conspicuous taste conspicuous consumption, from the physicality of consumption to the conspicuity of preferences. This moves it from the world of material to that of symbolic goods consumption, in both its main interpretations. Consumption of symbolic goods expands, with growing focus on the value of other people's knowledge, talent and time being purchased, over and above (or instead of) any physical inputs. And symbolic consumption of goods expands, with the ability to appreciate and enjoy taking priority over outright possession and ownership." (Shipman, 2004:279)

Buying some nice clothes is normal for people and everybody does it once in a while. While on the other hand, buying 5 or 6 exclusive branded sports cars means this person wants to show off. People want to fit in so they wear and use certain brand names because of the status they gain from them. Therefore it is understood that, in today's society, materialism takes part in every person's life, no matter what social class they are. However it is not nice to convert these desires into materialism. The negative side of the symbolic consumption takes control in these circumstances.

2.3.3. Consumers' Symbolic Consumption within Fashion Brands

Consumer behavior depends on many conditions. These conditions may be economical, cultural, social etc. However, in symbolic consumption manner, consumers tend to consume goods as objects. Related to this, Twitchell mentions that, "Consumers pay a premium to acquire a garment that other people can identify, because in addition to aesthetics, high fashion consumers express who they are or want to be through the brands they wear." (Twitchell, 2002:92).

Actually, consumers consume fashion instead of a product at this point. Because for example, buying branded clothes is stylish between girls or having a sports car is a symbol of being powerful between men. Related to this, Yanıklar represents that; "This kind of living standards in other words, claiming latest fashion clothes, furniture, luxurious automobiles, games, sports, wines and special educated

dogs and racers and staff like these signifies status superiority.” (Yanıklar, 2006:149) Being cool and stylish is an important indicator for consumers in symbolic consumption manner. Therefore these kinds of consumers especially prefer latest fashion.

According to Odabaşı, “The meaning or benefit that consumers acquire from products depend on the degree of those products symbolical meanings. In a similar way, depending on product groups provide actively classifying consumer society members into groups. For instance, professional senior staffs and business people prefer Burberry Coat or suit, Vakko tie, BMW or Mercedes car while mid-level workers prefer Levi’s Jeans, Mc Donald’s, Pizza Hut and they prefer shopping from Carrefour, Carousel and such like these places.” (Odabaşı, 2006:94). Because, in modern consumer societies, it is thought that, individuals’ life style appearances represent social status and success.

Consumers prefer brands with personalities that match with their own as it is specified before. It is understood from the Aaker’s viewpoint; “A brand personality needs to be desirable and important enough to matter to the person using the brand. The person should feel better because of an association with the brand more upscale when driving a Lexus, younger when drinking Pepsi, sophisticated when wearing Channel Perfume, or laid-back when drinking Miller Lite.” (Aaker, 1996:159)

Consumers can express their personalities by the help of brand personalities. There can be such an inference that; consumers prefer the brands which are similar to their personality. Therefore, personalities of brands direct consumers to consume symbolically in order to improve their own identities and be accepted by the society.

CHAPTER THREE

APPLICATION ON FASHION INDUSTRY

3.1. THE AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to reveal the relationship between brand personality, symbolic consumption and perceived quality. Therefore the design of research is relational.

The research questions are;

1. Is there a relationship between symbolic consumption and perceived quality?
2. Do brand functional and symbolic characteristics affect the consumers' buying behavior?
3. Is there a relationship between brand personality and symbolic consumption?

According to these questions the following hypotheses are developed.

H₀: Brand's functional characteristics have no effects on perceived quality of brand.

H₁: Brand's functional characteristics have effects on perceived quality of brand.

H₀: Brand's symbolic characteristics have no effects on perceived quality of brand.

H₂: Brand's symbolic characteristics have effects on perceived quality of brand.

H₀: There is no relationship between brand's functional characteristics and brand's symbolic characteristics.

H₃: There is a relationship between brand's functional characteristics and brand's symbolic characteristics.

Summarizing the research design is as follows;

1. Firstly the aim of the study is revealed.
2. The research questions are identified.
3. A questionnaire related to research questions is conducted via internet.
4. Convenience sampling method is used in order to reach the samples.
5. The reliability of the data is tested.
6. Regression analyses are applied in order to explain the relationship among variables.
7. Hypotheses are explained through results.
8. Conclusion and recommendations are given

A questionnaire is applied in order to test the hypotheses. The questionnaire is adapted from Arzu Azizağaoğlu's doctoral thesis. (Azizağaoğlu, 2010:96-99) The data resulted from the questionnaire were examined with SPSS. Reliability tests and factor analysis of questionnaire are applied after analysis of descriptive statistics. The significance level is ($p=0.05$) in all analysis and $p<0.05$ level was searched for statistical meaning.

In this study; the analyses are applied on fashion brands. Because, this sector has wide range of brands and as a result of this it is easy to confer the respondents' consumption behavior.

Representative respondents who live in İzmir and İstanbul are tried to be selected in order to minimize the bias. Convenience sampling method is applied to reach different demographic characteristics.

In regression analyses, it has been tried to interrelate relations between perceived quality and brand loyalty, and brand's functional features and symbolic features. The level of significance of these relations is calculated.

3.1.1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The questionnaire study was conducted with 242 respondents; however 36 of them answer the questions incorrect or incomplete. Therefore, 206 respondents are counted, including 121 female (58.74%) and 85 male (41.26%). The questionnaire was applied via internet. The respondents' demographic characteristics are shown as follows;

Table 1: Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Characteristics		n	%	Demographic Characteristics		n	%	
Gender	Female	121	58.74	Average Income Level	Less than 500 TL	19	9.22	
	Male	85	41.26		501-1000 TL	23	11.17	
Marital Status	Married	54	26.21		1001-1500 TL	37	17.96	
	Single	152	73.79		1501-2000 TL	32	15.53	
Age	16-20	16	7.77		2001-2500 TL	31	15.05	
	21-25	60	29.13		2501-3000 TL	21	10.19	
	26-30	91	44.17		3001-3500 TL	13	6.31	
	31-35	24	11.65		More than 3500 TL	30	14.56	
	36-40	9	4.37		Occupational Class	Don't work	8	3.88
	41-45	5	2.43			Retired	2	0.97
	56-60	1	0.49	Workman		13	6.31	
Education Level	Primary School	1	0.49	Public Servant		44	21.36	
	High School	8	3.88	Student	59	28.64		
	Associate's Degree	11	5.34	Self-Employment	21	10.19		
	Bachelor's Degree	136	66.02	Private Sector	59	28.64		
	Postgraduate	50	24.27					

As it is seen in the Table 1, 26.21% of respondents are married and 73.79% of them are single. If the respondents are analyzed according to their ages; it is seen that 36.9% of them are 16-25; 44.17% of them are between 26-30 age intervals. When it is analyzed in terms of education level, it is seen that respondents have highest ratio with Bachelors' Degree which is 66% and have Master's Degree with the ratio of

24.27%. On the other hand almost 20% of them have maximum 1,000 TL income level and 33% of them have 1,001-2,000 TL income level.

3.1.2. Respondents' Brand Preferences

Respondents categorized their mostly preferred brands from 17 different brands that were presented in the questionnaire. According to results, Zara is the most selected brand with 21.36%. Koton is preferred after Zara with 16.5% rate. Mango and Mudo brands take part as third brand with 7.77% selection ratio and Diesel is the last one with 0.49% as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Brand Preference Ratios

Brand	n	%	Brand	n	%
Zara	44	21.36	Mavi Jeans	9	4.37
Koton	34	16.50	Adidas	8	3.88
Mango	16	7.77	Lacoste	8	3.88
Mudo	16	7.77	Nike	6	2.91
LCW	15	7.28	Polo	3	1.46
Defacto	14	6.80	Benetton	2	0.97
Tommy	10	4.85	Dockers	2	0.97
Beymen	9	4.37	Diesel	1	0.49
İpekyol	9	4.37			

3.1.3. Brand Preference Distribution by Gender

The respondents' brand preferences by gender are shown below table. Zara is selected by 20.8% of female and 21% male. Male respondents prefer Mudo after Zara with 10.5% and Adidas with 9.4% selection ratio. On the other hand; in female side, the order of preferences start with Zara by 20.8%, Koton by 20.8% and Mango by 12.8% selection ratios.

Table 3: Brand Preferences Distribution by Gender

Brand	n (Male)	% (Male)	n (Female)	% (Female)
Adidas	8	9.41	0	0.00
Benetton	0	0.00	2	1.60
Beymen	4	4.71	5	4.00
Defacto	7	8.24	7	5.60
Diesel	1	1.18	0	0.00
Dockers	2	2.35	0	0.00
İpekyol	0	0.00	9	7.20
Koton	8	9.41	26	20.80
Lacoste	5	5.88	3	2.40
LCW	7	8.24	8	6.40
Mango	0	0.00	16	12.80
Mavi Jeans	3	3.53	6	4.80
Mudo	9	10.59	7	5.60
Nike	3	3.53	3	2.40
Polo	2	2.35	1	0.80
Tommy	8	9.41	2	1.60
Zara	18	21.18	26	20.80

The respondents are asked what specifications they consider while they buy clothes. As it is seen in Table 4; most of respondents express that they select their clothing because of its Model/Cut/Design with 60.6 % ratio. Comfort of use is the

second reason that is selected with 12.6% ratio and price is third most preferred reason with 12% ratio. It is understood that consumers have aesthetic considerations and this is the strongest indicator for them while choosing a brand.

Table 4: Clothing Selection Reasons

Clothing Selection Reasons	n	%
Model/Cut/Design	125	60.68
Comfort of use	26	12.62
Price	25	12.14
Fabric design etc.	20	9.71
Brand	7	3.40
Color	1	0.49
Used of sanitary materials	1	0.49
Sold Store	1	0.49

Clothing selection reasons by gender are shown below the Table 5. The first reason for both male and female is Model/Cut/Design while secondary reason is price on male side with 9.2% and comfort on female side with 6.8%. It is understood that; male respondents are more money driven than female respondents. Also results show that; female respondents are mostly concentrated on the products' model/design while they are shopping.

Table 5: Clothing Selection Reasons Distribution by Gender

Clothing Selection Reasons	n (Male)	% (Male)	n (Female)	% (Female)
Model/cut/design	35	16.99	90	43.69
Comfort of use	12	5.83	14	6.80
Price	19	9.22	6	2.91
Fabric design etc.	11	5.34	9	4.37
Brand	5	2.43	2	0.97
Color	1	0.49	0	0.00
Used of sanitary materials	1	0.49	0	0.00
Sold Store	1	0.49	0	0.00

The respondents were given 17 brands and asked to prefer one of them. Table 6 shows the details why they have preferred that brand.

Brand's preference reasons by gender are shown below the table. The first reason both male and female is "Appropriate for Style" with 20% in Male side and 32% in Female side. Thus, it can be said that both women and men care about their physical appearance. The model of clothes, meanly; "having a style" is an important indicator for consumers. For female respondents, the second important indicator while preferring the brand is to be suitable for every social condition. Actually, this is a convenient way for shopping. However for Male respondents it is different, they care about quality more.

Table 6: Brand Preferences Reasons Distribution by Gender

The Reason of Preferring the Brand	n (Male)	% (Male)	n (Female)	% (Female)
Reasonable Price	9	4.37	5	2.43
Variety of Clothes for Every Social Conditions	14	6.80	33	16.02
Quality	20	9.71	17	8.25
Appropriate for Style	42	20.39	66	32.04
Total	85	41.26	121	58.74

Table 7 shows; brand preference reasons through selected brands. According to respondents' answers it is clarified that; Zara is selected because providing "Variety of Clothes for Every Social Conditions" with the ratio of 35% and also it is shown as "Appropriate for Style" with the ratio of 24 %. The respondents who have preferred Beymen mostly selected this brand because of its quality with the ratio of 16%.

Table 7: Brand Preference Reasons Distribution by Brands

Brand	Reasonable Price		Variety of clothes for every social conditions		Quality		Appropriate for Style		TOTAL	
	n	%	N	%	n	%	N	%	N	%
Adidas		0.00	1	2.33	3	8.11	4	3.57	8	3.88
Benetton		0.00	1	2.33		0.00	1	0.89	2	0.97
Beymen		0.00		0.00	6	16.22	3	2.68	9	4.37
Defacto		0.00	5	11.63	1	2.70	8	7.14	14	6.80
Diesel		0.00		0.00		0.00	1	0.89	1	0.49
Dockers		0.00		0.00	1	2.70	1	0.89	2	0.97
İpekyol		0.00	2	4.65	2	5.41	5	4.46	9	4.37
Koton	5	35.71	6	13.95		0.00	23	20.54	34	16.50
Lacoste		0.00	2	4.65	4	10.81	2	1.79	8	3.88
LCW	7	50.00	4	9.30	2	5.41	2	1.79	15	7.28
Mango	1	7.14	4	9.30	1	2.70	10	8.93	16	7.77
Mavi Jeans	1	7.14		0.00	4	10.81	4	3.57	9	4.37
Mudo		0.00	1	2.33	2	5.41	13	11.61	16	7.77
Nike		0.00		0.00	5	13.51	1	0.89	6	2.91
Polo		0.00		0.00	1	2.70	2	1.79	3	1.46
Tommy		0.00	2	4.65	3	8.11	5	4.46	10	4.85
Zara		0.00	15	34.88	2	5.41	27	24.11	44	21.36
TOTAL	14	100.00	43	100.00	37	100.00	112	100.00	206	100.00

3.1.4. Respondents' Shopping Styles

Respondents were asked what kind of consumer they are. It is seen that 34.5% of them meet their needs with least cost. On the other hand, 34% of them are consumers who have sudden purchase decisions. 15% of respondents shop for fun and excitement and 12% of them view shopping as a passion as shown in Table 8. Here it is understood that; money is an important indicator for consumers. They try to pay less money with maximum benefits. On the other hand most of them show sudden buying behavior.

Table 8: Respondents' Shopping Styles

Shopping Style	N	%
Meet the needs with least cost	71	34.47
Sudden Purchasing Decision	70	33.98
Shop for Fun and Excitement	31	15.05
Shopping Passion	26	12.62
Other	8	3.88
Grand Total	206	100.00

Table 9 shows; respondents' shopping styles through brands they have preferred in the first question of questionnaire. According to this; 34.47% of respondents who meet the needs with least cost, mostly preferred Koton with approximately ratio of 20%. Respondents who have sudden purchasing decision or shop for fun and excitement or perceive shopping as passion preferred Zara with highest rate in their segments.

Table 9: Respondents' Shopping Style through Brand Preferences

Brand Preferences	Shopping Passion		Shop for Fun and Excitement		Sudden Purchasing Decision		Other		Meet the needs with least cost		TOTAL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Adidas		0.00		0.00	3	0.00		0.00	5	7.04	8	3.88
Benetton		0.00		0.00	1	0.00		0.00	1	1.41	2	0.97
Beymen	2	7.69	2	6.45	3	0.09		0.00	2	2.82	9	4.37
Defacto	1	3.85		0.00	7	0.00		0.00	6	8.45	14	6.80
Diesel		0.00		0.00	1	0.00		0.00		0.00	1	0.49
Dockers		0.00		0.00	1	0.00		0.00	1	1.41	2	0.97
İpekyol	4	15.38	2	6.45	2	0.09		0.00	1	1.41	9	4.37
Koton	4	15.38	5	16.13	11	0.23		0.00	14	19.72	34	16.50
Lacoste		0.00	3	9.68	2	0.14		0.00	3	4.23	8	3.88
LCW	1	3.85		0.00	4	0.00		0.00	10	14.08	15	7.28
Mango	3	11.54	3	9.68	5	0.14		0.00	5	7.04	16	7.77
Mavi Jeans		0.00	3	9.68	3	0.14	2	25.00	1	1.41	9	4.37
Mudo	2	7.69	2	6.45	5	0.09		0.00	7	9.86	16	7.77
Nike		0.00	1	3.23	3	0.05	1	12.50	1	1.41	6	2.91
Polo	1	3.85	1	3.23		0.05		0.00	1	1.41	3	1.46
Tommy	2	7.69		0.00	5	0.00	1	12.50	2	2.82	10	4.85
Zara	6	23.08	9	29.03	14	0.41	4	50.00	11	15.49	44	21.36
Total	26	100.00	31	100.00	70	1.43	8	100.00	71	100.00	206	100.00

Respondents are asked to select a personal characteristic that match with their own. 31.5% of respondents identify themselves as cheerful while 19.4% of them identify themselves as honest and 15% of them identify as calm.

Table 10: Respondents' Personal Characteristics

Personal Characteristics	n	%
Cheerful	65	31.55
Honest	40	19.42
Calm	31	15.05
Energetic	23	11.17
Flexible	15	7.28
Brave	11	5.34
Serious	8	3.88
Touchy	6	2.91
Shy	6	2.91
Aggressive	1	0.49
Grand Total	206	100.00

The following table shows; brand preferences and personal characteristics comparison. According to this, touchy respondents with 2.9 % prefer Defacto with 33.3 %. On the other hand, 25 % of serious respondents prefer Tommy. Cheerful consumers who are 33.55 % of all respondents mostly preferred Koton and Zara with the same rate 18.46 %. This can reflect that; Zara and Koton have similar brand personality characteristics. Respondents who have calm characteristics mostly preferred Koton. Actually in this table it is seen that Zara and Koton brands are preferred with different characteristics. Therefore it is understood that Zara and Koton are the brands that respondents can find “variety of clothes for every social conditions”.

Table 11: Brand Preferences and Personal Characteristics of Respondents

Brand	Touchy (%)	Brave (%)	Serious (%)	Shy (%)	Honest (%)	Energetic (%)	Flexible (%)	Cheerful (%)	Calm (%)	Aggressive (%)	Grand Total (%)
Adidas	0.00	9.09	0.00	16.67	7.50	4.35	0.00	1.54	3.23	0.00	3.88
Benetton	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.50	0.00	0.00	1.54	0.00	0.00	0.97
Beymen	0.00	9.09	0.00	0.00	5.00	8.70	6.67	3.08	3.23	0.00	4.37
Defacto	33.33	9.09	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	6.67	6.15	6.45	0.00	6.80
Diesel	0.00	9.09	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.49
Dockers	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00	2.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.97
İpekyol	16.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.50	0.00	6.67	7.69	3.23	0.00	4.37
Koton	0.00	0.00	12.50	33.33	25.00	4.35	13.33	18.46	19.35	0.00	16.50
Lacoste	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00	5.00	8.70	6.67	1.54	3.23	0.00	3.88
LCW	16.67	0.00	12.50	0.00	2.50	4.35	6.67	9.23	12.90	0.00	7.28
Mango	16.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.50	4.35	13.33	13.85	6.45	0.00	7.77
Mavi Jeans	0.00	18.18	0.00	16.67	2.50	13.04	0.00	3.08	0.00	0.00	4.37
Mudo	16.67	9.09	12.50	16.67	7.50	0.00	6.67	7.69	6.45	100.00	7.77

Nike	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	8.70	6.67	1.54	6.45	0.00	2.91
Polo	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.35	0.00	1.54	3.23	0.00	1.46
Tommy	0.00	9.09	25.00	0.00	2.50	0.00	0.00	4.62	9.68	0.00	4.85
Zara	0.00	27.27	12.50	16.67	22.50	39.13	26.67	18.46	16.13	0.00	21.36
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

3.2. RELIABILITY TESTS AND FACTOR ANALYSIS

3.2.1. Brand's Functional Characteristics

Brands' functional characteristics are tried to be revealed by considering respondents brand preferences. The statements' reliabilities are analyzed in Likert scale. The reliability of statements resulted 0,912 (Cronbach Alpha) given as functional characteristics. The answers of questions are analyzed by the help of factor analysis.

Barlett Test of Sphericity and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin results were analyzed in order to provide sufficient level of factor analysis. KMO should be more than 0.5%. KMO test is resulted as 0.812. Barlett Test of Sphericity is resulted adequate. ($\chi^2 = 2893.5$; $p = 0.001 < 0.05$)

The questions are analyzed with VARIMAX rotation method in order to express the brand's functional characteristic. Likert type questions' marking frequencies and distribution percentages were given. The meanings of questions those were given in and Accessories" and etc. This grouping method is applied in all modeling such as, out which sub-group mostly affects consumers' behavior.

Table 12: Brands Functional Characteristics

Functional Characteristics	Specification Type	Classification of Characteristics	Mean	Std Deviation
Clothes belong to that brand are meticulously prepared.	Functional Specifications	Sewing Specifications-Quality	3,58	0,98
Clothes belong to that brand have include high quality materials	Functional Specifications	Sewing Specifications-Quality	3,72	0,98
Clothes belong to that brand have nice patterns	Functional Specifications	Sewing Specifications-Quality	4	0,88
Clothes belong to that brand have good technical specifications	Functional Specifications	Sewing Specifications-Quality	3,68	0,92
Clothes belong to that brand have long-wearing sewing	Functional Specifications	Sewing Specifications-Quality	3,87	0,98
I can find all colors from this brand's clothes	Functional Specifications	Color and Accessories	4,11	0,9
This brand's accessories are nice	Functional Specifications	Color and Accessories	3,91	0,88
This brand's label information is clear	Functional Specifications	Color and Accessories	3,97	0,95
I can find any type of clothes from this brand	Functional Specifications	Aesthetics-Comfort	4,1	0,84
This brand makes me more attractive and elegant	Functional Specifications	Aesthetics-Comfort	3,82	0,95
Clothes belong to that brand are casual	Functional Specifications	Aesthetics-Comfort	4,12	0,9
I can find clothes that are suitable for time and environment	Functional Specifications	Aesthetics-Comfort	4,08	0,9
I can find suitable clothes for my body in this brand	Functional Specifications	Aesthetics-Comfort	4,24	0,86
I can find clothes that I am looking for in this brand	Functional Specifications	Aesthetics-Comfort	4,15	0,85

3.2.2. Symbolic Characteristics of Brand

Brands' symbolic characteristics are tried to be revealed by considering respondents' brand preferences. The statements' reliabilities are analyzed in Likert scale. The reliability of statements resulted 0.898 (Cronbach Alpha) given as symbolic characteristics. The answers of questions are analyzed by the help of factor analysis.

Barlett Test of Sphericity and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin results were analyzed in order to provide sufficient level of factor analysis. KMO should be more than 0.5%. KMO test is resulted as 0.798. Barlett Test of Sphericity is resulted adequate. ($\chi^2 = 3245$; $p = 0.001 < 0.05$) The questions are analyzed with VARIMAX rotation method in order to express the brand's functional characteristic. Likert type questions' marking frequencies and distribution percentages were given. According to answers with 40.9 % ratio of variance can be explained.

Table 13: Brand's Symbolic Characteristics

Symbolic Characteristics	Specification Type	Classification of Characteristics	Mean	Std Deviation
This brand matches with my image	Symbolic Specifications	Personal	4	0,93
This brand reflects my style	Symbolic Specifications	Personal	3,88	0,94
This brand is appropriate for my moral values	Symbolic Specifications	Personal	3,18	1,15
I look like I want to be with this branded clothes	Symbolic Specifications	Personal	3,9	0,92
This brand is appropriate for my personality	Symbolic Specifications	Personal	3,84	0,93
My family members like this brand	Symbolic Specifications	Group Membership	3,65	1,11
Celebrities use this brand	Symbolic Specifications	Group Membership	3	1,3
I think there are common directions with people who use this brand	Symbolic Specifications	Class	2,58	1,19
I feel confident and comfortable with this branded clothes in society	Symbolic Specifications	Class	3,32	1,12
I can catch the trends with this brand	Symbolic Specifications	Personal	3,46	1,25
This brand is appropriate to my social status	Symbolic Specifications	Personal	3,73	1
Other people have an idea about my social status when I wear this branded clothes	Symbolic Specifications	Class	2,68	1,31
Wearing this brand clothes provide other people trust me	Symbolic Specifications	Class	2,32	1,29
I gain respectability by this brand	Symbolic Specifications	Class	2,43	1,31
This brand provides me look precious and special	Symbolic Specifications	Class	2,46	1,33
This brand provides me look successful	Symbolic Specifications	Class	2,5	1,3

3.2.3. Perceived Quality

These brands' perception of quality characteristics are tried to be revealed by considering respondents brand preferences. Those seven statements' as shown in table below reliabilities are analyzed in Likert scale. The reliability of statements resulted 0.715 (Cronbach Alpha) given as Perceived Quality characteristics. The answers of questions are analyzed by the help of factor analysis. Barlett Test of Sphericity and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin results were analyzed in order to provide sufficient level of factor analysis. KMO should be more than 0.5%. KMO test is resulted as 0.812. Barlett Test of Sphericity is resulted adequate ($\chi^2 = 2748$; $p = 0.001 < 0.05$). The questions are analyzed with VARIMAX rotation method in order to express the brand's perceived quality.

Table 14: Brand's Perceived Quality

Perceived Quality	Specification Type	Classification of Characteristics	Mean	Std Deviation
This brand's clothes made of high qualified fabric and sewing	Perceived Quality	Durability	3,89	0,9
The brand is quality certified	Perceived Quality	Performance Specialty	3,89	0,93
This the most qualified brand in the world	Perceived Quality	Performance Specialty	3,2	1,18
There are superior aspects of this brand than the others	Perceived Quality	Performance Specialty	3,5	1,01
This brand quality is worth the money I paid for	Perceived Quality	Durability	3,71	1,02
This branded clothes have no defective parts	Perceived Quality	Durability	3,44	1,14
This brand meets the expectations	Perceived Quality	Performance Specialty	3,75	0,98

3.2.4. Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is implemented in order to explain the relationship between variables; Brand's symbolic characteristics, Brand's functional characteristics and Perceived Quality. The regression is applied in two separate stages.

1. Perceived Quality as dependent variable; variables which belong to Brand's Symbolic Characteristics and Brand's Functional Characteristics are accepted as independent variables. These independent variables' effects on perceived quality are examined.

2. Brand's Symbolic Characteristics as dependent variable; Brand's Functional Characteristic is accepted as independent variable and the effects of independent variable on brand's symbolic characteristics are examined.

3.2.4.1. The Regression Analysis between Perceived Quality and Brand's Symbolic Characteristics and Brand's Functional Characteristics

From the analysis; it is understood that, the relationship between perceived quality (DV) and two independent variables can be explained as 61.4%. After the analysis, the results are evaluated and it is seen that the regression is sufficient.

Table 15: The Regression Analysis between Perceived Quality and Brand’s Symbolic Characteristics and Brand’s Functional Characteristics

Independent Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p
	β	Std. Dev.	β		
Constant	0.000	0.012		-0.010	0.682
Brand’s Functional Characteristics	0.588	0.024	0.588	17.250	0.001
Brand’s Symbolic Characteristics	0.412	0.029	0.412	16.200	0.000
F	498.22				
P	0.000				
R	0.715				
R ²	0.618				
Adjusted R ²	0.614				

It is understood that; the effect of “Brand’s Functional Characteristics” determines Perceived Quality. Also, Brand’s Symbolic Characteristics have high and meaningful effects on perceived quality. Namely, 1 unit increase of brand’s functional characteristics corresponds to 0.588 unit increase of perceived quality; and 1 unit increase of brand’s symbolic characteristics correspond to 0.412 unit increases of brand’s symbolic characteristics.

Table 16 shows in detail the subgroups of brands’ functional and symbolic characteristics shown as Table 15. It is seen that; the most effective variable is “Sewing Specifications-Quality”. Entities which belong to personal classifications

Table 16: The Regression Analysis between Perceived Quality and Brand's Symbolic Characteristics and Brand's Functional Characteristics (Subgroup)

Independent Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p
	β	Std. Dev.	β		
Constant	0.000	0.018		-0.019	0.925
Sewing - Quality Specifications	0.419	0.031	0.419	15.210	0.001
Color and Accessories Specifications	0.392	0.008	0.392	14.220	0.001
Aesthetics-Comfort Specifications	0.286	0.045	0.286	11.240	0.000
Personal Specifications	0.389	0.051	0.389	10.800	0.001
Group Membership Specifications	0.185	0.062	0.185	8.150	0.000
Class Specifications	0.192	0.070	0.192	7.550	0.000
F	245.22				
P	0.000				
R	0.698				
R ²	0.551				
Adjusted R ²	0.549				

As it is seen; $p < 0.05$ so we reject H_0 . Therefore we accept H_1 ; there is a relationship between perceived quality and symbolic consumption.

H_0 : There is no relationship between perceived quality and symbolic characteristics

H_1 : There is a relationship between perceived quality and symbolic characteristics

Also; we accept H_{1b} and reject H_{0b} .

H_0 : Brand's functional characteristics have no effects on perceived quality of brand.

H_2 : Brand's functional characteristics have effects on perceived quality of brand.

3.2.4.2. The Regression Analysis between Brand's Symbolic Characteristics and Brand's Functional Characteristics

The subgroups of Brand's symbolic characteristics and brand's functional characteristics are analyzed. The regression model is proved 65.4% rate.

The effects of symbolic consumption are analyzed. It is understood that Sewing-Quality Specifications has meaningful effects on symbolic consumption.

Table 17: The Regression Analysis between Brand's Symbolic Characteristics and Brand's Functional Characteristics

Independent Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p
	β	Std. Dev.	β		
Constant	0,001	0,019		-0,030	0,841
Sewing -Quality Specifications	0,518	0,028	0,522	17,220	0,000
Color and Accessories Specifications	0,498	0,019	0,499	16,220	0,000
Aesthetics-Comfort Specifications	0,355	0,024	0,356	11,250	0,000
F	288,55				
P	0,000				
R	0,728				
R ²	0,685				
Adjusted R ²	0,654				

We can link the characteristic of brand to brand personality. After the analysis there might be understood that; there is an indirect relationship between brand personality and symbolic consumption.

H₀: There is no relationship between brand's functional characteristics and brand's symbolic characteristics.

H₃: There is a relationship between brand's functional characteristics and brand's symbolic characteristics.

CONCLUSION

In today's changing social environment, individuals' behaviors and habits are becoming diverse. Consumers do not purchase only for their basic needs rather make their purchase decisions according to their brand preferences. At this point the brand personality concept comes into prominence. Meantly, current consumers express themselves with brands and associate their personality with the brand's personality. As a result of this, brands are increasingly positioned within the emotional and experiential world of the consumers and non-functional product attributes such as the symbolic meaning.

The starting point is Brand Personality concept. While analyzing this concept, it is realized that, functional characteristics and symbolic characteristics of brand form the personality. Also, this personality is tried to be linked consumers' behavior. According to the articles which have referred to in this research, there is a common thinking as "brands have personalities or human-like characteristics that distinguish them from each other, and these personalities are important to consumers and consumers become "engaged" with brands, meaning that they feel special emotional and symbolic connections with certain brands." (Goldsmith, 2012:11)

So, brand personality is a fundamental concept that forms a strong relationship between brand and consumer personality. Actually it is mentioned in the beginning as brand has an emotional side and impact on consumers' minds. After that, consumers find out the symbolic meaning of products. As a result of this, they interact with their own and society by consuming the symbols, because symbolic consumption is related with social coordination of consumers. Related to this, Kotler and Armstrong (2001) state that; "A person belongs to many groups-family, clubs, organizations. The person's position in each group can be defined in terms of both roles and status. A role consists of the activities people are expected to perform according to the persons around them. Each role carries a status reflecting the general esteem given to it by society." (Kotler and Armstrong, 2001:170)

According to the data gathered from questionnaires, it is understood that fashion clothing brands have symbolic characteristics besides functional

characteristics. In regression analysis, it is understood that; symbolic characteristics are effective indicators through consumers' brand selection process.

It is seen that; brand's symbolic characteristics are important variables that increase the ratio of perceived quality as well as brand's functional characteristics. Therefore, psychological and sociological needs become efficient parameters for consumers' brand preferences.

The thesis has addressed the issue of brands and the way of brand personality impacts on symbolic consumption. The first part takes the role of brand concept. It is understood that brand has substantial and strategic assignments which enhance the value of company. The second part starts with the conceptualization of brand personality. It is mentioned that brand personality's role within the brand building process is important in order to increase a brand's value. With respect to this, symbolic consumption concept is emphasized.

Consumers' buying behavior can be viewed clearly if brands from other sectors are reviewed. However, for this research; concentrating on a specific segment is preferred. For the further researches, researcher may focus on multiple sectors. This may provide detail information about different brand personalities and consumers' symbolic consumption.

Also the marketing departments of companies should consider the changing behavior of consumers. Meantly, consumers consume products as objects, so symbolic consumption is getting more important. Therefore, if marketing departments concentrate on the indicators that motivate consumers, then it will be easier to understand and attract them with emphasizing the personalities of brands.

Finally, in the light of this study; it is understood that priority changes may drive consumers to make consumption. By using a symbolically meaningful product, individual integrates the attributed social meaning of product and communicates with his/her family, friends and other important people in a social manner. Thus, the personalities of brands affect our preferences, living styles and consumption behavior.

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APPENDIX

MARKA TERCİHLERİMİZİ NEYE GÖRE BELİRLİYORUZ?

Değerli Katılımcı,

Markalar günlük yaşamımızın ayrılmaz bir parçası haline gelmeye başlamıştır. Hatta bazı markalar kendimizi ifade etmemizde önemli roller üstlenmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, marka kişiliği ve tüketicilerin sembolik tüketimleri arasındaki ilişkiyi belirlemektir. Akademik amaçlı olan bu anket çalışmasında vereceğiniz cevaplardaki samimiyet ve doğruluk araştırmanın kalitesi açısından önemlidir. İlginiz ve katılımınızdan dolayı teşekkür ederim.

Özge GARİP

Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi-SBE

* Gerekli

MARKA TERCİHİ *

Marka Listesi

Zara	Mavi Jeans
Koton	Adidas
Mango	Lacoste
Mudo	Nike
LCW	Polo
Defacto	Benetton
Tommy	Dockers
Beymen	Diesel
İpekyol	

1.Pantolon, etek, gömlek, kazak, t-shirt, elbise, takım elbise vb. dış giyim ürünlerini seçerken aşağıdaki özelliklerden en çok dikkate aldığımız 3 tanesini işaretleyiniz.

- Markası
- Kumaş deseni, dökümü vb.
- Modeli / kesimi / tasarımı
- Rengi
- Rahatlığı

- Fiyatı
- Sağlığa uyumlu malzemelerin kullanılması
- Reklamı
- Satıldığı mağaza

2. İlk soruda seçtiğiniz markayı tercih etme nedeniniz hangisidir?(Lütfen size en uygun gelen ifadeyi işaretleyiniz.)

- Her ortama uygun çeşitlilikte giysiler bulabileceğim bir markadır.
- Tarzıma uygun giysileri olan bir markadır.
- Fiyatı uygundur.
- Kalitelidir.
- Diğer (Lütfen yazınız.)

3. Nasıl bir tüketicisiniz? (Lütfen size en uygun gelen ifadeyi işaretleyiniz.)

- İhtiyaçlarını en az maliyetle karşılayan
- Ani satın alma kararları veren
- Alışveriş tutkunu
- Alışverişi eğlence, heyecan vb. gören
- Diğer (Lütfen yazınız.)

4. Kendinizi nasıl tanımlarsınız? (Lütfen size en uygun gelen ifadeyi işaretleyiniz.)

- Neşeli
- Cesur
- Esnek
- Dürüst
- Alıngan
- Sakin
- Çekingen

- Ciddi
- Saldırgan
- Enerjik

ek. s. 2

II.MARKANIN SEMBOLİK ÖZELLİKLERİ / Lütfen ilk soruya verdiğiniz yanıtı (markayı) düşünerek aşağıdaki ifadelere katılma derecenizi 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 yazan kutulardan uygun olanına X işareti koyarak belirtiniz.

a- Bu markanın imajı benim imajıma uygundur.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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b- Bu marka tarzımı yansıtır.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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c- Bu marka manevi değerlerime uygundur.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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d- Bu markaya ait giysiler beni olmak istediğim gibi gösterir.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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e- Bu marka kişiliğime uygundur.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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f- Ailemdeki diğer kişiler bu markayı beğenir.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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g- Bu marka ünlü kişilerin kullandığı bir markadır.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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h- Bu markayı kullanan diğer kişilerle aramda ortak yönler olduğunu düşünüyorum.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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ı- Bu markaya ait giysilerle toplum içinde kendimi daha rahat ve güvenli hissediyorum.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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i- Bu marka ile modayı takip edebilirim.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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j- Bu marka sosyal statüme uygundur.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		
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k- İnsanlar üzerimde bu markanın isimlerini ya da logolarını gördüklerinde toplumdaki yerim hakkında fikir sahibi olurlar.

ek. s. 4

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		
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l- Bu markayı giymek insanların bana güven duymalarına yardımcı olur.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		
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m- Bu marka toplum içerisinde bana saygınlık kazandırır.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		
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n- Bu marka benim değerli ve özel biri olarak görünmeme yardımcı olur.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		
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o- Bu marka zengin görünmemi sağlar.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		
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ö- Bu markaya ait giysilerle başarılı biri olduğumu gösterebilirim.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		
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III. MARKANIN FONKSİYONEL ÖZELLİKLERİ / Lütfen ilk soruya verdiğiniz yanıtı (markayı) düşünerek aşağıdaki ifadelere katılma derecenizi 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 yazan kutulardan uygun olanına X işareti koyarak belirtiniz.

a- Bu markada kullanım amacıma uygun giysiler bulabilirim.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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b- Bu marka beni daha şık ve çekici gösterir.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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c- Bu markaya ait giysiler rahattır.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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d- Ortama ve zamana uygun giysileri bu markada bulabiliyorum.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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e- Bedenime uygun giysileri bu markada bulabiliyorum.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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f- Bu markada aradığım modelleri bulabiliyorum.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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g- Bu markaya ait giysiler en ince ayrıntılar düşünülerek titizlikle tasarlanmıştır.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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h- Bu marka, hammaddesi kaliteli kumaş kullanır.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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ı- Kullanılan kumaşların desenlerini beğeniyorum.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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i- Kullanılan kumaşların teknik özellikleri (sağlamlık, dökümlülük, nem alma, buruşmazlık, leke tutmazlık vb.) iyidir.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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j- Bu markaya ait giysilerin dikişleri düzgün ve sağlamdır.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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k- Bu markada aradığım renkte giysiler bulabilirim.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		
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l- Bu markaya ait giysilerde kullanılan fermuar, düğme, nakış, baskı vb. unsurlar hoşuma gider.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		
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m- Giysilerdeki etiket bilgileri yeterli ve anlaşılırdır.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		
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IV. ALGILANAN KALİTE ve MARKA BAĞLILIĞI / Lütfen ilk soruya verdiğiniz yanıtı (markayı) düşünerek aşağıdaki ifadelere katılma derecenizi 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 yazan kutulardan uygun olanına X işareti koyarak belirtiniz.

a-Bu markaya ait giysilerin kumaş ve dikiş kalitesi iyidir.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		
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b-Bu marka kalite onaylıdır.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		
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c-Bu marka dünyanın en kaliteli markalarından biridir.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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d-Bu markanın benzerlerine göre daha üstün özellikleri vardır.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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e-Kaliteli olduğu için bu markaya ödediğim paraya değer.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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f- Bu markaya ait giysilerde defo olmaz.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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g- Bu markanın giysileri her zaman beklentilerimi karşılar.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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h- Bu markanın giysileri çabuk eskimez.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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1- Giysilerde bedenime uygun düzeltmeler yapılır.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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i- Satın aldıktan sonra giysilerle ilgili bir sorunla karşılaştığımda yardımcı olunacağını bilirim.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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j- Bu markayı sürekli satın alırım.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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k- Bu marka benim ilk tercihlerim arasındadır.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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l- Bu marka bende alışkanlık yapmıştır.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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m- Bir giysi alacak olsam yine bu markayı tercih ederim.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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n- Bu markayı kullanmaktan memnunum.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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o- Bu markayı başkalarına tavsiye ederim.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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V.BU MARKAYI TERCİH EDİYORUM ÇÜNKÜ; /Lütfen ilk soruya verdiğiniz yanıtı (markayı) düşünerek aşağıdaki ifadelere katılma derecenizi 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 yazan kutulardan uygun olanına X işareti koyarak belirtiniz.

a- Bu markalı giysiler kalite göstergesidir

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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b- Bu markalı giysiler moda uygun olmaktadır

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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c- Bu markalı giysiler kişilere toplumsal prestij kazandırmaktadır.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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d- Bu markalı giysiler özgün modellere sahiptir.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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e- Bu markalı giysilerin fiyatları uygundur.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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f- Bu markalı giysilerin belirli bir imajı vardır.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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g- Bu markalı giysilerde istenilen modeli bulmak daha kolay olmaktadır.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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h- Bu markalı giysiler tanınırlık ve bilinirliğe sahiptirler.

1 2 3 4 5

1 ila 5 aralığında bir değer seçin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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VI.DEMOGRAFİK ÖZELLİKLER

1.Cinsiyetiniz

- Kadın
 Erkek

2. Medeni durumunuz

- Evli
 Bekar

3.Yaşınız

- 16-20
- 21-25
- 26-30
- 31-35
- 36-40
- 41-45
- 46-50
- 51-55
- 56-60
- 61 ve üstü

4.Eğitim durumunuz

- İlköğretim
- Lise
- Önlisans
- Lisans
- Lisansüstü

5.Mesleğiniz

- İşçi
- Memur
- Esnaf
- Serbest Meslek
- Öğrenci
- Emekli
- Çalışmıyor

Diğer:

6.Ortalama aylık geliriniz

- 500 TL ve altı
- 501-1000 TL
- 1001-1500 TL
- 1501-2000 TL
- 2001-2500 TL
- 2501-3000 TL
- 3001-3500 TL
- 3501 TL ve üzeri

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