

**USING ASSOCIATIONS TO CREATE POSITIVE BRAND
ATTITUDE FOR GENERATION Y CONSUMERS:
APPLICATION IN FASHION RETAILING**

**JENERASYON Y TÜKETİCİLERİ İÇİN MARKA
ÇAĞRIŞIMLARI İLE OLUMLU MARKA TUTUMU
YARATMAK: MODA PERAKENDECİLİĞİNDE
UYGULAMA**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to understand which brand associations create positive brand attitude and purchase intention in the minds of Generation Y consumers for the fashion retailing in Turkey. Generation- Y, born between 1977 and 1994, represents 15 million people in Turkey. The concepts of brand associations and attitude are discussed in the light of current literature and empirical findings are interpreted on the subject matter. The results of the study show that several brand associations, namely convenience, value for money and experiential shopping, have significant effects on positive brand attitude.

ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı Türkiye’de moda perakendeciliğinde Jenerasyon Y için olumlu marka tutumu ve satın alma niyeti yaratan marka çağrışımlarını belirlemektir. 1977 ve 1994 yılları arasında doğan Jenerasyon –Y Türkiye’de 15 milyon insanı temsil etmektedir. Marka çağrışımları ve tutumu mevcut yazın ışığında tartışılmış ve konu ile ilgili ampirik bulgular yorumlanmıştır. Çalışmanın sonuçları birkaç marka çağrışımının; kolaylık, değer ve deneyimsel alışverişin olumlu marka tutumu üzerinde önemli etkisi olduğunu göstermiştir.

Brand attitude, brand associations, generation Y, fashion retailing
Marka tutumu, marka çağrışımları, Jenerasyon Y, moda perakendeciliği

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1. INTRODUCTION

Young people born from 1977 to 1994, referred to as Generation Y¹, are considered as an emerging, wealthy market of potential customers that exert a different pattern of consumer behavior than other generation segments. These young people have grown up in strong economic times and are very well educated and self-assured^{2,3}. This is a generation that seeks change, is comfortable with technology and strives for individuality. They are very much quality and fashion oriented, most shop from high-end boutiques, which import from Italy, France and Spain^{4,5,6,7,8,9}. Being early adopters, they act as trend setters for the market influencing other segments^{10,11}. They are the adults of tomorrow who will dominate the market and ignoring this strong market will be very risky for the companies. Among marketing strategies that the companies develop, especially brand strategies become more important for Generation Y, since they use brands as forms of self-expression^{12,13}. Keller¹⁴ states that, Generation Y consumers will be more likely to purchase and become more loyal towards the brand with high brand equity perception in their minds. Thus, for marketers, it is very important to understand what creates brand equity for the markedly different Y Generation and how they should be targeted for forming positive brand attitude and purchase intention.

There is an increase in the last years in the number of articles related with branding and brand equity. Brand as one of the most valuable assets of the firm, has a significant role in creating and sustaining customer relationships, loyalty and thus is a critical factor in the firm's financial goal

¹ Joyce WOLBURG and J. POKRYWCZYNSHI, "A psychographic Analysis of Generation Y College students", *Journal of Advertising Research*, 2001, vol. 41, no.5,p. 33-53.

² Amy GLASS, "Understanding generational differences for competitive success", *Industrial and commercial training*, 2007, Vol.39, no. 2,p.98-103.

³ Sherry CLAUSING, Doris KURTZ , Judith PRENDEVILLE AND Janet WALT, "Generational Diversity-the nexters", *Association of operating room nurses Journal*, vol. 78, no.3, 2003,p.323-340.

⁴ Pamela PAUL, "Getting Inside Gen Y", *American Demographics*, Sept., 2001, p. 44-48.

⁵ Aron O'CASS and Kenny LIM, "Toward Understanding the Young Consumer's Brand Associations and Ethnocentrism in the Lion's Port", *Psychology & Marketing*, vol. 19, no.9, 2002, p. 759-775.

⁶ Maria PIACENTINI and Graig MAILER, "Symbolic consumption in teenagers' clothing choices", *Journal of Consumer Behavior*, Vol. 3, no.3, 2004, p.251-262.

⁷ Jessica SEBOR, "Y Me", *Customer Relationship Management*, 6 (2), 2006, p. 24-29.

⁸ David PERRY, "Beyond Boomers: Gen Y Offers a Great Opportunity", *Furniture Today*; May 29, 2006, p. 40-42.

⁹ Michael WILSON, "Defining Gen Y. Chain Store Age", March 2007, p. 35-40.

¹⁰ SEBOR, p. 24-29.

¹¹ Linda MORTON, "Targeting Generation Y", *Public Relations Quarterly; Academic Research Library*; summer, Vol.47, no. 2, 2002, p. 46-49.

¹² Dan, LIPPE, "It is all in creative delivery", *Advertising Age*, Vol. 72, no. 26, 2001, p.58-59.

¹³ David, AAKER, "Measuring Brand Equity across Products and Markets", *California Management Review*, Vol. 38, no. 3, 1996, p. 02-120.

¹⁴ Kevin, KELLER, "Conceptualizing, Measuring and Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 57, 1993,p.1-22.

realization^{15,16}. Branding is “the process by which a company, a product name, or an image becomes synonymous with a set of values, aspirations, or states, such as youth, independence, trustworthiness, quality, or performance¹⁷”. According to Keller¹⁸, brands represent values beyond the functional benefits of products, which the consumer can relate to. Therefore, a company uses brands to create meaning and attach values to a standardized product¹⁹. Brand equity is defined as the value of the brand perceived by the consumers that results in a change in consumer thoughts about the product performance against the competitors²⁰. As such, consumers’ brand attitude, brand preference and purchase decision is very much effected by brand equity²¹. Although brand equity is quite developed and studied in the literature, researchers failed to address the relative influences of brand equity and its drivers on the brand evaluation process and behavior of Generation Y²². Accordingly, the aim of this study is to assess the influence of one important dimensions of brand equity, namely the brand associations on brand attitude and purchase intentions of Generation Y.

In this scope, Turkey is chosen as the context of the study since there are approximately 15 million people, referred as Generation Y in the country. The focus of the study is specified as the fashion retailing sector since data shows that the 46% of the total ready to wear purchasing belongs to the segment including people under the age of 28, where most of Generation Y is located²³. Thus, understanding what dimensions of brand equity create positive brand attitude and purchase intention in the minds of Generation Y consumers for the fashion retailing in Turkey is timely and warranted. A literature review about the related concepts is performed and a framework explaining the relationship of brand associations and brand attitude is developed and tested for this end.

¹⁵ AAKER, p.02-120

¹⁶ Boonghee YOO, Naveen DONTU and Sungho LEE, “An Examination of Selected Marketing Mix Elements and Brand Equity”, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, vol. 28, no.2, 2000, p. 195-211.

¹⁷ Helen VAID, *Branding: Brand Strategy, Design and Implementation of Corporate and Product Identity*. New York, NY: Watson-Guptill Publications, 2003.p. 12..

¹⁸ Kevin, KELLER, “Advertising and Brand Equity,” in *handbook of Advertising*, eds. Gerard J. Tellis and Tim Ambler, Sage Publications, 2007.

¹⁹ Pennie, FROW, *Customer Relationship Management: From Strategy to Implementation*, Cranfield School of Management, UK, 2002.

²⁰ Carol SIMON and Mary SULLIVAN, “The Measurement and Determinants of Brand Equity: A Financial Approach”, *Marketing Science*, winter 1993, vol.12 no.1.

²¹ KELLER, p.35

²² Violet LAZAREVIC and Sonja PETROVIC-LAZAREVIC, “Increasing Brand Loyalty of Generation Y for Future Marketers”, *Monash University Working Paper Series*, Vol. 28, no.07, nov. 2007.

²³ AC Nielsen, New York, NY, *Consumer and designer brands: A global AC Nielsen Report*, 2006

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Brand management is an area of increasing importance to marketers and practitioners since 1980s. One of the challenges facing today's brand managers is the creation and maintenance of strong brands with equity since brand equity is a critical factor in a firm's realization of its financial goals^{24,25,26,27}. Brand equity can be defined as the differential effect that brand knowledge has on consumer response to marketing of a brand²⁸. Brand equity has many dimensions discussed thoroughly in the literature²⁹. Some of them can be listed as follows: brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, brand loyalty, and other proprietary assets³⁰; brand knowledge in the sense of brand awareness, brand associations- attributes, benefits, images, thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and brand experiences³¹; overall quality and choice intention³²; loyalty and image³³. In summary, the source of brand equity is actually the user of the brand. Brand equity is created through his/her perceptions (e.g., awareness, brand associations, perceived quality), and behavior (e.g., brand loyalty, willingness to pay premium price).

Brand associations/ image are found to be at the core of brand equity in most of the discussions^{34,35}. Aaker³⁶ defines brand associations as the category of a brand's assets and liabilities that include anything "linked" in memory to a brand. Keller³⁷ defines brand associations as informational nodes linked to the brand node in memory that contains the meaning of the brand for consumers. Accordingly, Aaker³⁸ argues that brand associations could result from product attributes, intangibles, customer benefits, relative price, use/application, user/ customer, celebrity/ person, lifestyle/ personality, product class, competitors, country/ geographic area, and usage situation.

²⁴ AAKER, p.02-120

²⁵ Kevin, KELLER, "Advertising and Brand Equity," in handbook of Advertising, eds. Gerard J. Tellis and Tim Ambler, Sage Publications, 2007.

²⁶ YOO, p.195-211

²⁷ Carol SIMON and Mary SULLIVAN, "The Measurement and Determinants of Brand Equity: A Financial Approach", Marketing Science, winter 1993, vol.12 no.1.

²⁸ KELLER, p.45

²⁹ Boonghee YOO, Naveen DONTU and Sungho LEE, "An Examination of Selected Marketing Mix Elements and Brand Equity", Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, vol. 28, no.2, 2000, p. 195-211.

³⁰ David AAKER, Managing Brand Equity, New York, the Free Press, 1991.

³¹ Kevin, KELLER, Building, Measuring and Managing Brand Equity. Second Edition, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 2003.

³² Manoj AGARWAL and Vithala RAO, "An Empirical Comparison of Consumer-Based Measures of Brand Equity", Marketing Letters, Vol. 7, no. 1, 1996, p.223-247.

³³ Alan SHOCKER and Barton WEITZ, "A perspective on brand equity principles and issues", Summary of Marketing Science Institute Conference Report, 1998, p. 88-104.

³⁴ David AAKER, Managing Brand Equity, New York, the Free Press, 1991.

³⁵ SHOCKER and WEITZ, p. 88-104.

³⁶ AAKER, p.02-120

³⁷ Kevin, KELLER, "Advertising and Brand Equity," in handbook of Advertising, eds. Gerard J. Tellis and Tim Ambler, Sage Publications, 2007.

³⁸ AAKER, p.02-120

Farguhar and Herr³⁹ suggest types of brand associations as product category, usage situation, product attribute, and customer benefits. Biel⁴⁰ divides them into corporate image, product image, and user image. Finally, Keller⁴¹ classifies them into product-related attributes, non-product-related attributes such as price, user imagery, usage imagery, and brand personality.

Consumers use brand associations to help process, organize, and retrieve information in memory. Keller⁴² and Aaker⁴³ agree that brand associations are one of the main dimensions of brand equity and have a great importance in attitude formation and finally purchase decisions and loyalty. Brand attitude is defined as consumers' overall evaluation of a brand⁴⁴. Hawkins, Best & Coney's⁴⁵ suggest that attitude has three components; cognitive, affective, and behavioral. Cognitive component refers to consumer's knowledge and beliefs about a brand. The more positive they are, the easier it is for the individual to retrieve or recall the brand. Consumer's feelings or emotional reactions to a brand represent the affective component of an attitude. Individuals develop favorable attitudes toward the brand if they positive feelings and emotional reactions. The behavioral component of an attitude represents individual's overt behavior to the brand. In the literature, brand attitude is conceptualized as part of the brand equity. To form brand attitudes, the existence of brand associations that are salient in a brand is a must. Thus,

Hypothesis 1: Brand attitude is positively related to the extent to which brand associations are evident in the brand.

³⁹ Peter FARQUAR and Paul HERR, "The dual structure of brand associations", in Aaker, D.A., Biel, A. (Eds), *Brand Equity & Advertising: Advertising's Role in Building Strong Brands*, Erlbaum, Hillsdale, NJ, 1993, p.263-77.

⁴⁰ Alexander, BIEL, "How Brand Image Drives Brand Equity", *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol. 32, no.6, 1992, p.12-19.

⁴¹ Kevin, KELLER, "Conceptualizing, Measuring and Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 57, 1993,p.1-22.

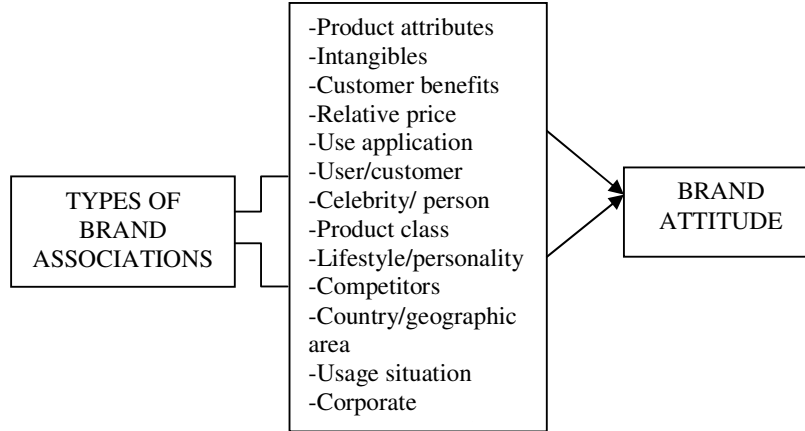
⁴² Kevin, KELLER, "Brand Equity", *Handbook of Technology Management*, ed. Richard Dorf. CRC Press Inc., 1998, 12:59-12:65.

⁴³ David AAKER, *Managing Brand Equity*, New York, the Free Press, 1991.

⁴⁴ Andrew MITCHELL and Jerry OLSON, "Are Product Attribute Beliefs the Only Mediator Of Advertising Effects on Brand Attitude?" *Journal of Marketing Research*, vol. 18, no. 3, 1981, p. 318-332.

⁴⁵ Dell HAWKINS, Roger BEST and Kenneth CONEY, *Consumer Behavior: Building Marketing Strategy*, 8th Edition, 2001.

Figure 1: Proposed Framework



3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Data collection

Data collection was carried out through the administration of structured questionnaires with 338 people born between 1977 and 1994, referred to as Generation Y. The sample was composed of 57 percent women and 43 percent men. The majority of the sample (44 percent) is graduated from high school. 62 percent of the sample had an income ranging from 500 to 2000 TL. As expected, 84 percent asserted that they enjoy fashion shopping, majority (62 percent) went fashion shopping more than once in a month. The questionnaire was developed to measure the sample's brand associations and brand attitude regarding their preferred fashion retailing brand that they most frequently visited.

3.2. Measure Development

All measurement items and their assessments are provided in Tables 1 and 2. Also provided in the afore-mentioned tables are the factor loadings of the items of the constructs in the model (principal components analysis using varimax rotation), obtained from exploratory factor analysis of each construct individually.

3.2.1. Brand Associations

A list of items measuring brand associations in fashion retailing were developed based on prior literature. Thompson and Chen⁴⁶ put forward in their research that there are eight different types of associations evident in the consumers, minds and hearts for fashion retailing. They are listed as physical characteristics (e.g., price, sales promotions, location, assortment, and styling), abstract characteristics (e.g., atmosphere and environment,

⁴⁶ Keith THOMPSON and Yat Ling CHEN, "Retail Store Image: A Means-End Approach", *Journal of Marketing*, vol. 4, no.6, 1998, p. 161-173.

global perception, reputation, quality, service), shopping benefits (e.g., nice feelings, avoid risks, guarantee, socialize, convenient, be respected), ownership benefits (e.g., nice feeling, enhance appearance, self-expressive), functional benefits (e.g., not waste money, spend money wisely, save time, better time allocation, durability, facilitate shopping), hedonistic values (e.g., enjoyment and happiness, quality of life, sense of well being), personality values (e.g., self image, self-esteem), and social life values (e.g., sense of belongingness).

To understand whether this scale fits to the Turkish Generation Y context, a preliminary study was conducted. 28 marketing students, belonging to the Generation Y were asked to rate the appropriateness of the brand associations for fashion retailing on a scale ranging from (1) poorly related, to (7) highly related. All of the associations that were rated above 5.0 were included in the analysis. Additionally, the respondents were asked to indicate other brand association dimensions related to fashion retailing. Accordingly, the dimensions mentioned at least once were also included in the final list. The final brand association list included 33 variables. The respondents in the final sample were then asked about their brand association perception for their preferred fashion retailing brand on a Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly agree to (5) strongly disagree. The related factor analysis results for brand associations in fashion retailing are shown in Table 1. The factors were named as personality and image, shopping experience, convenience, functional product, usage situation, value for money.

3.2.2. Brand Attitudes

Attitudes are a popular research topic in marketing studies, especially because of their predatory power on consumer behavior⁴⁷. Brand attitude is conceptualized as relatively enduring consumers' overall evaluations of a brand. There have been different measurements of brand attitude as a uni-dimensional or multidimensional construct. Bruner and Hensel⁴⁸ alone reported 66 published studies measuring brand attitude. Some of the studies treated brand attitude as a separate construct, whereas some other studies treated brand attitude and purchase intention as single constructs⁴⁹. Our study followed the latter approach and a multidimensional brand attitude scale was used to capture both the consumer evaluations and their purchase intention as brand attitude. The scale was developed based on Hawkins, Best & Coney's⁵⁰ study, measuring attitude in three dimensions; cognitive, affective, and behavioral. The respondents were asked to indicate their agreement, on a Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly agrees to (5) strongly disagree. The factor analysis results on Table 2 proved that all elements grouped under one factor, namely the brand attitude.

⁴⁷ MITCHELL and OLSON, p. 318-332.

⁴⁸ Gordon BRUNER and Paul HENSEL, "Multi-item Scale Usage in Marketing Journals: 1980-1989", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 21, 1993, p. 339-344.

⁴⁹ Nancy SPEARS and Surendra SINGH, "Measuring Attitude Toward the Brand and Purchase Intentions," *Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising*, vol. 26, no.2, 2004

⁵⁰ Dell HAWKINS, Roger BEST and Kenneth CONEY, *Consumer Behavior: Building Marketing Strategy*, 8th Edition, 2001.

Table 1: Brand Associations Factor Analysis

Items	Factor loadings	Eigen values	Variance exp.	Reliability
F1: Personality and Image		5.885	17.833	0.900
The brand preferred by my friends	0.747			
Designer label	0.739			
Environmental friendly image	0.737			
Upper-class status	0.719			
Modern image	0.683			
Feeling of self confidence, self-assurance	0.652			
The brand preferred by celebrities	0.614			
Good reputation	0.610			
Innovativeness	0.601			
Targeted at young age-group	0.574			
Stylish image	0.572			
The brand signals the social status	0.569			
F2: Shopping Experience		3.533	10.706	0.820
Responsive sales personnel	0.746			
Younger sales personnel	0.720			
High inventory	0.672			
Offering unique store experience	0.568			
Well-known store name	0.559			
Wide range of colors	0.551			
F3: Convenience		3.356	10.170	0.786
Find shops everywhere	0.700			
Find the goods everywhere	0.697			
Offering wide product mix	0.675			
Having assorted sizes	0.613			
Good return policy	0.527			
F4: Functional Product		3.193	9.675	0.792
Fashionable; Stylish, Trendy clothing	0.825			
Well fitting clothes	0.728			
Comfortable clothes	0.720			
Functional products (e.g., easy to iron, anti-transpirante)	0.570			
F5: Usage Situation		2.723	8.252	0.723
Used for work	0.804			
Used elegantly	0.716			
Daily usage	0.669			
F6: Value for Money		2.433	7.373	0.882
Good value for money	0.742			
Attractive store layout	0.679			
Low price offering	0.674			
Total variance explained (%)			64,010	0.943

Table 2: Brand Attitude Factor Analysis

Items	Factor loadings	Eigen values	Variance exp.	Reliability
F1: Brand Attitude		5.760	64.004	0,928
Being my favorite brand	0,850			
Delighted to choose it	0,841			
Deriving pleasure from using brand	0,819			
Continuous intention to purchase	0,808			
Liking the experience of using the brand	0,798			
Recommending to friends	0,785			
Intention to buy frequently	0,751			
Intention to purchase	0,730			
Intention to buy in surplus amount	0,709			
Total variance explained (%)			64.004	0.928

4. FINDINGS

The mean values for the associations and brand attitudes are presented in Table 3. The mean values for the brand association dimensions show that respondents associate personality and image, convenience, usage situation and shopping experience higher with their most preferred fashion retailing brand when compared to the other dimensions. Their brand attitude, on the other hand, is somewhat at a mediocre level.

Table 3: Mean Values for the Associations and Brand Attitudes

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Personality and image	2.815	1.036	312
Convenience	2.702	1.036	312
Usage situation	2.618	1.760	312
Shopping experience	2.532	0.998	312
Brand attitude	2.460	1.108	312
Value for money	2.339	1.129	312
Functional product	2.185	1.034	312

The hypothesized model is tested using stepwise multiple regression analysis. First of all, the zero-order correlations across the study constructs were examined in order to understand the relationships between the constructs of interest. Concerning the antecedents of brand attitude, amongst all variables explored, shopping experience, value for money, and convenience had the highest correlations with brand attitude. The multiple regression result for brand attitude is displayed in Table 4. The above mentioned three brand associations, shopping experience, value for money, and convenience, are capable of explaining a significant variance, and the overall proportion of variance explained in the dependent variable is 63.5 percent ($p < 0.05$). Regarding the effects, all three associations had positive

relations with the formation of brand attitude. Shopping experience associations (Standardized Regression Coefficient/ $\beta=0.389$, $p<0.05$), value for money ($\beta=0.248$, $p<0.05$), and convenience ($\beta=0.227$, $p<0.10$) are found to be positively related to brand attitude in respective order. The three other brand associations, namely, personality and image, functional product, and usage situation, did not exert significant relationships with brand attitude. Thus, hypothesis one is partially supported since not all the brand associations had significant relationship with brand attitude.

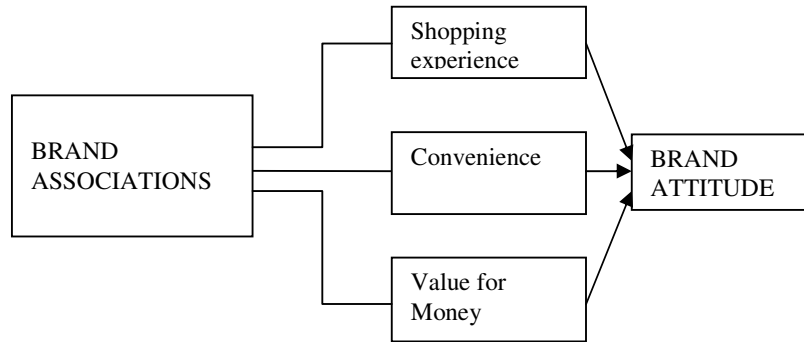
Table 4: Regression Results on Brand Attitude

Factors	Unstand. β	Std.erro r	Std. β	t value	Signific.
Constant	.191	.110		1.746	0.082
Shopping experience	.432	.072	.389	6.028	0.000**
Value for money	.354	.051	.360	6.896	0.000**
Convenience	.129	.064	.121	2.032	.043**
R= 0.799 $R^2=0.639$ Adjusted $R^2=0.635$ F Value= 4.128** df:1 Note. *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01.					

5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The importance of brand associations for fashion retailing in Turkey is of paramount given the fact that there is huge potential for fashion retailing in Turkey. In fact, many national and international fashion retailers are opening their stores at a fascinating rate all over the country in the last years. Since there are 15 million Generation Y consumers, this group represents both the actual and potential consumers for the fashion retailers. Therefore, it is very important to understand which brand associations create positive brand attitude and thus lead to brand preference and purchase intention for these young consumers. This paper attempted this end, and in general, the results showed that Generation Y consumers in Turkey bears positive brand attitude when they associate the fashion retailing brand with (1) shopping experience, (2) value for money, and (3) convenience. Accordingly, Figure 2 depicts the modified framework of factors affecting brand attitude of Generation Y consumers in fashion retailing sector.

Figure 2: Modified Framework of Factors Affecting Brand Attitude of Y Generation Consumers in Fashion Retailing Sector



Shopping experience occurs during the consumer interaction with the store's physical environment, its employees, and its offerings⁵¹. There are many studies investigating the effects of store atmosphere environment and salesperson on creation of positive shopping experience⁵². Today's highly competitive retail environment forces the companies to seek new avenues to capture customer attention, favorability and loyalty. Previous studies support our findings that creating shopping experiences is one of the most effective ways to capture Generation Y consumers⁵³. Hence retailers, to create a bond between the brand and the consumer and to provide favorable brand attitude, should give emphasis to creating a shopping experience with memorable, unique, friendly atmosphere and young, knowledgeable, responsive sales personnel.

Previous research suggests contradictory results for perception of price on Generation Y, some research suggests price is not that important⁵⁴, whereas some other research suggests price perception of value are related to brand preference⁵⁵. Our research supports the latter approach and asserts that positive associations related with price, namely 'value for money' have significant explanatory power for positive brand attitude. This might be because of the special context that Turkey is in with frequent economic crises, which makes it hard for young people to forgo price considerations in their fashion shopping behavior and brand attitude formation. Even though

⁵¹ Michael HUI and John BATESON, "Perceived Control and the Effects of Crowding and Consumer Choice on the Service Experience," *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 18 (September), 1991, p.174-184.

⁵² Chezy OFIR and Itamar SIMONSON, "In Search of Negative Customer Feedback: The Effect of Expecting to Evaluate on Satisfaction Evaluations," *Journal of Marketing Research*, (May), 2001, p.170-182

⁵³ Tami, DOWER, "A New Pea in the Radio Pod" *Marketing*, September, 2005, p. 82-84

⁵⁴ Dan, LIPPE, "It is all in creative delivery", *Advertising Age*, Vol. 72, no. 26, 2001, p.58-59.

⁵⁵ Aron, O'CASS and Kenny LIM, "The Influence of Brand Associations on Brand Preference and Purchase Intention: An Asian Perspective on Brand Associations", *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 14 (2/3), 2001, p.41-69.

for Generation Y, retail stores act as a common gathering place where they spent a big portion of their disposable income⁵⁶, less spending power of the Turkish group may force them to act more cautious and give importance to price issue in their brand preferences. Therefore, if the fashion retailers do not want to miss this segment in Turkey, they should apply value-based pricing strategy, and create an affordable image in the eyes of Generation Y.

Today, especially in big cities, time poor consumers do not want to spend time and effort for their shopping. Traffic and crowdedness create negative psychological effects on the retail customers, which may increase the cost of the marketing offer against the benefits; thus diminishes the perceived value for consumers⁵⁷. Generation Y is a group known for their impatience and quest for speed⁵⁸. Given the fact that the study context is Istanbul, one of the biggest metropolitan cities of the world, it is not very surprising that Generation Y favors convenience; wants the stores and brands available in variety at every possible location. For the retailers, this implies an intensive distribution strategy. Another implication may be that 'click-and-mortar' strategy should also be followed by 'brick and mortar' retailers to increase availability, comfort, and speed in shopping since Generation Y consumers with their technological comfort and skill are far more comfortable shopping online⁵⁹. This strategy may act as a differentiator for the retailers.

The functional product associations do not have a significant influence on brand attitude according to our study, along with usage situation, personality and image associations. As Keller⁶⁰ asserts functional attributes are less influential and differentiating in brand equity formation. Therefore, it is no surprise that functional product associations do not have significant power in explaining brand attitude. Besides, Generation Y sees shopping as not a simple act but a social activity that they spend time browsing through stores and socializing⁶¹. Thus, their focuses on the purchasing process, not afterwards, maybe the reason of the insignificant relationship between usage situation and brand attitude. The associations related to personality and image also does not exert a significant influence on brand attitude. The previous research suggests that for Generation Y, brand is

⁵⁶ Craig MARTIN and L. W. TURLEY, "Malls and consumption motivation: an exploratory examination of older Generation Y customers", *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, Vol. 32 No.10, 2004, p.464-75

⁵⁷ Philip KOTLER, and Garry ARMSTRONG, *Principles of Marketing*, Prentice Hall Publishing, 8th Edition, NY, 1999.

⁵⁸ Simone DANIELS, Simone, "Gen Y Considerations for the Retail Industry", *Retail Therapy, The ACRS Thought Leadership Series*, June, 2007, <http://www.buseco.monash.edu.au/centres/acrs/research/whitepapers/generation-y.pdf> (13.05.2009).

⁵⁹ Jonews LANG LASELLE, "How to bring boomers back to the malls", special report, 2003, <http://209.85.129.132/search?q=cache:o0iQZsJkRt8J:www.joneslanglasalle.com/microsites/retail/pdfs/JLL> (17.05.2009)

⁶⁰ Kevin, KELLER, "Advertising and Brand Equity," in *handbook of Advertising*, eds. Gerard J. Tellis and Tim Ambler, Sage Publications, 2007.

⁶¹ Laura DIAS, "Generational buying motivations for fashion", *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, vol. 7 No.1, 2003, p.78-86.

a reflection of self image and that these young consumers prefer brands that reflect themselves or their ideal image^{62,63}. For our sample, the factor with the highest mean is this association, namely, personality and image, which makes it clear that it is associated with fashion retailing. However, it is found to be not related to brand attitude. Therefore, this unexpected finding needs further investigation as to understand the reasons underlying this insignificant relationship in the Turkish context in order to make sound suggestions for the retailers concerned.

This study represents a preliminary approach to understand the linkages between brand associations and attitude in fashion retail format. The context is limited to Turkey. Further investigation may be carried across countries and differences in the consumer perceptions may be revealed thereon. Also since retailing has various classifications, there is room for repetition of this study for different retail formats. Cross cultural and sectoral studies will help to fully understand the relationship between brand associations and attitude.

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