

Social Media Driven Brand Love: An Investigation on Turkish Customers

Sosyal medya etkili marka aşkı: Türk müşteriler üzerinde bir inceleme

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Along with the development and the use of Internet and the opportunity of two-way communication that Web 2.0 provides enable consumer-brand interactions via social media. The very significant social media usage rates in Turkey demonstrate a necessity for business to use social media effectively with respect to marketing communications in order to build up and sustain relationship with consumers. The main objective of this research is to propose and test a social media integrated brand love model with the intention of gaining an understanding whether consumer-brand relationship in social media develops brand love. Therefore, this study investigates both the influence of quality (as social media driven brand love antecedent) and social media driven brand love core elements (passion-driven behaviors, self-brand integration, positive emotional connection, long-term relationship, anticipated separation distress, overall attitude valence and attitude strength) on social media driven brand love consequences. Data were collected through an online survey with a sample size of 235 respondents. The proposed model and hypotheses were tested via structural equation modeling and multiple linear regression analysis. The results demonstrate that anticipated separation distress, passion-driven behaviors and positive emotional connection indicate the most significant influence on social media driven brand love among proposed seven brand love constructs. Furthermore, quality has a significant but a weak influence on brand love consequences.

Keywords: Brand love, Social media, Consumer-Brand relationships, Consumer behavior, Turkey

Jel Codes: M31.

İnternetin gelişmesi ve yaygınlaşması ile beraber Web 2.0'nin iki yönlü iletişim imkanı tanınması, sosyal medya üzerinden tüketici ile marka arasındaki etkileşimi olanaklı hale getirmiştir. Türkiye'de sosyal medya kullanım oranlarının son derece yüksek olması da işletmelerin pazarlama iletişimi açısından sosyal medyayı tüketicilerle ilişki geliştirmek ve sürdürmek üzere etkin kullanması gerektiğine işaret etmektedir. Bu çalışmanın temel amacı sosyal medyada tüketici-marka ilişkilerinin marka aşkı gelişmesini sağlayıp sağlayamadığını anlamaya yönelik olarak sosyal medya ile bütünleştirilmiş bir marka aşkı modeli önermek ve test etmektir. Bu amaç dolayısıyla çalışmada kalitenin (sosyal medya etkili marka aşkının belirleyicisi) ve sosyal medya etkili marka aşkı ana unsurlarının (tutku temelli davranış, öz-marka entegrasyonu, olumlu duygusal bağlantı, uzun dönem ilişki, öngörülen ayrılık ızdırabı, genel tutum değeri ve tutum gücü) sosyal medya etkili marka aşkı sonuçları üzerindeki etkisi araştırılmıştır. Online anket 235 tüketiciye uygulanmıştır. Önerilen model ve hipotezlerin test edilmesinde yapısal eşitlik modeli ve çoklu doğrusal regresyon analizi kullanılmıştır. Araştırma sonuçları, öngörülen ayrılık ızdırabı, tutku temelli davranışlar ve olumlu duygusal bağlantının yedi ana unsur arasında sosyal medya etkili marka aşkı üzerinde en güçlü etkiye sahip olan unsurlar olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Buna ek olarak kalitenin marka aşkı sonuçları üzerinde anlamlı fakat zayıf bir etkisi belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Marka aşkı, Sosyal medya, Tüketici-Marka ilişkileri, Tüketici davranışı, Türkiye

Jel Kodları: M31.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Relentless technological improvements with the advent of the Internet have radically transformed organizations' marketing communications eliminating boundaries in terms of delivery of information beyond time and space. Internet users now can actively interact and collaborate with each other in the new era of Web 2.0, as if they were both the owner and the participant of the contents in the Internet, which is contrast to Web 1.0, where users were only passive viewers of already generated contents. Adapting this new era of communication supported by Web 2.0, organizations are encouraged to move from mass communications to more targeted, two-way communications (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Today, two-way communications between consumers and organizations enabled consumers to participate in marketing process more than ever, transforming into a highly transparent business to customer relationship formed in a way that previously unforeseeable.

Scholars have adopted a keen interest in consumers' love toward brands (products) (Ahuvia, 1993; Albert & Merunka, 2013; Albert et al., 2009; Albert et al., 2008; Batra et al., 2012; Bauer et al., 2007; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2014; Lastovicka & Sirianni, 2011; Rageh Ismail & Spinelli, 2012; Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014). Brand love phenomena are associated with different antecedents in the literature such that brand intimacy, brand commitment, brand passion (Bauer et al., 2007) hedonic products and self-expressive brands (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006); excitement (Rageh Ismail & Spinelli, 2012); brand identification and brand trust (Albert & Merunka, 2013); quality (Batra et al., 2012). Furthermore, to our knowledge, brand love consequences have been separately taken into consideration such that WOM (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Batra et al., 2012; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Rageh Ismail & Spinelli, 2012; Wallace et al., 2014), willingness to pay (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Albert et al., 2009; Albert et al., 2008), brand loyalty (Batra et al., 2012; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Unlike the extant literature, this research will incorporate separate brand love consequences (brand loyalty, WOM and resistance), and take these into consideration as a single concept. Though prior studies offer important insights into brand love phenomena, future research may bridge important gaps in these empirical examinations. Branding literature has mostly focused on other brand love antecedents less on quality (Batra et al., 2012). Additionally, quality, being an understudied concept, has been associated mostly with brand love than brand love consequences. Hence, the present study addresses this gap and conducts such an investigation on how quality influences brand love consequences.

Building and maintaining a consumer-brand relationship has been a primary theme in marketing. Albert & Merunka (2013) have investigated the role of consumer-brand relationship on brand love. Alternatively, He et al. (2012) have revealed that consumer-brand relationship predicts brand loyalty. In the social media context, the growing literature has focused on social media interactions and their effect on consumer-brand relationship (Hudson et al., 2016), along with predicted purchase intentions (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010), relational benefits (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014b), WOM (Hudson et al., 2015) brand loyalty (Jahn & Kunz, 2012). Whilst much research has conducted to develop concepts related to consumer-brand relationship and social media, there is limited attempt to document a comprehensive understanding whether consumer-brand relationship in social media to develop brand love, and how this social media driven brand love affects brand love consequences.

Stressing this lack of social media based consumer-brand relationship related brand love studies, no major relevant contributions to the literature has been made in highly social media connected countries other than the United States. This study bridges this gap by forming a research setting in Turkey. As of December 2016, Turkey is registered as a population with 79,814,871 (TÜİK, 2017). Similarly, CIA findings gathered on July 2016 reveal that Turkey is ranked 20th most populated country in the world (CIA, 2017). Beyond Turkey's population importance worldwide, Turkey has a decent level of Internet penetration level around 60% placing it outside of the world's 50 most connected nations. In terms of number of Internet users, it is stated that nearly 48 million people have access to the Internet in Turkey as of January 2017, and YouTube, Facebook and Instagram constitute the most active social media platforms in Turkey with penetration rates of 57%, 56% and 45% respectively (Kemp, 2017).

This paper opens as follows. The next section presents an overview of theoretical background followed by conceptual model and hypotheses. Following that is a discourse of methodology and findings. The paper concludes with discussion, implications, limitations and future research recommendations.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Social Media

Many aspects of digital world are yet to be assigned a clean-cut definition due to the technology's vagueness and its rapidly changing existence. Therefore, tremendous definitions have been proposed regarding social media, and we will depict quite a few. Social media is the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into interactive dialogue (Baruah, 2012). Marketo (2010) described social media as the production, consumption and exchange of information through online social interactions and platforms. Because the phenomena of social media did not replace anything, it is hard to define social media as it is, however, Kahlow (2009) summarized the concept of social media in a very simple way that he defined it as a user controlled media. A notable conceptualization made by Kaplan & Haenlein (2010:61) associating social media with digital technology, and they describe social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content."

Conforming to Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) definition, Web 2.0 aggregated a basis for social media along with other technological improvements. The term Web 2.0 is defined as a network, "spanning all connected devices; Web 2.0 applications are those that make the most of the intrinsic advantages of that platform: delivering software as a continually-updated service that gets better the more people use it, consuming and remixing data from multiple sources, including individual users, while providing their own data and services in a form that allows remixing by others, creating network effects through an "architecture of participation," and going beyond the page metaphor of Web 1.0 to deliver rich user experiences." (O'Reilly, 2007: 17). Although Web 2.0 seems to highlight an update over Web 1.0 by term itself, it is rather a change in usage of web sites.

This interactive, open source and user controlled change improved web experience, collaboration, knowledge and market power of the users as participants in business (Kim & Ko, 2012). Web 2.0 has introduced the following activities to the Internet users: (1) a shift in locus of activity from the desktop to the Web, (2) a shift in locus of value production from the firm to the consumer, (3) a shift in the locus of power away from the firm to the consumer, (4) creation of informal users' networks facilitating the flow of ideas, information, knowledge, and (5) promoting innovation and creativity by allowing the efficient generation, dissemination, sharing and editing of content (Berthon et al., 2012; Kim & Ko, 2012). Web 1.0 era applications such as web pages, encyclopedia pages, and other content publishing online environments replaced by blogs, wikis, and collaborative projects in era of Web 2.0 and social media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Dialog and social networking allow the democratization of knowledge and information, transforming individuals from content consumers to content producers (Constantinides, 2014).

Since the introduction of social media, the growth of social media has been near exponential, new platforms start to appear day by day. Therefore, it is essential to take into account such a classification scheme. According to Kaplan & Haenlein (2010), social media can be classified best by combining two different theories arguably media research (social presence, media richness) and social processes (self-presentation, self-disclosure). Moreover, social media zones can be categorized as the following: (1) Blogs, (2) social networking sites, (3) virtual social worlds, (4) collaborative projects, (5) content communities, and (6) virtual game worlds (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Brand related social media classification is available in the literature. Martins & Patrício (2013) emphasize the difference between online brand communities and social media brand pages, and introduces company social networks, which is alluded to brand fan pages in the literature (Kunz, 2012; Leeflang et al., 2012). This study focuses on brand fan pages and consumer interactions with the brand via brand fan pages. Unlike in brand communities, members of brand fan pages are also connected to their friends who may not be fan of the particular brand (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). This indicates that brand fan pages can be a determinant of a possible consumer-brand relationship by emphasizing member's self-identity. Brand fan pages are used as a medium of brand communication (Jahn & Kunz, 2012) where brands offer product oriented activities and content (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014a) including promotions (Sung et al., 2010). Furthermore, consumers interacted with brand fan pages are more likely to be loyal to the brand (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2006; Kunz, 2012).

2.2. Consumer-Brand Relationship in Social Media

The theory of consumer-brand relationship has given a new direction in branding theory (e.g., Fournier, 1998; Franzen, 1999). Brands act as a mediator between organizations and customers, which establishes a long-term relationship (Aaker, 1996; Fournier, 1998; Keller, 1993). This long-term relationship refers to consumer-brand relationship in previous studies (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998; Fournier, 1998; Franzen, 1999). According to Chang and Chieng (2006:935) consumer-brand relationship is defined as "the tie between a person and a brand that is voluntary or is enforced interdependently between the person and the brand". Their definition is mostly based on Blackston (1993) proposing that cognitive, emotional and

behavioral processes prevail between consumers and brands through the combination of the processes. Alternatively, Fournier (1998) relates consumer-brand relationship to interpersonal relationships. Subsequently, in the consumption context, consumer-brand relationship can be highlighted as a win-win partnership that provides mutual benefits for both consumers and brands (Park & Lee, 2005). The growing literature has adopted brand relationship quality (BRQ) model of Fournier (1998) to measure the strength of a brand related interactions between consumers and brands. This model is constructed as a multidimensional model introducing six dimensions of brand relationship quality: love/passion, self-connection, interdependence, commitment, intimacy and brand partner quality (Fournier, 1998).

With the advent of social media, consumers' brand related interactions have become "multidirectional, interconnected, and difficult to predict" (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010). These interactions in the social media terminology correspond to following, replying, tweeting, sharing, liking, participating and etc. that premise a proactive engagement between consumers and brand (Hudson et al., 2015). Hollebeek (2011:565) refers proactive interaction between consumers as customer brand engagement and defines it as "a customer's level of cognitive, emotional and behavioral investment in specific brand interactions". Nonetheless, the extent to which consumer-brand relationship evolves into a love relationship, which constitutes the focus of this study, depends on the level of intensity. This is supported by the extant studies suggesting that the more consumers invest in the relationship, the stronger their relationships become (Algesheimer et al., 2005; Fournier, 1998; Wulf & Odekerken-Schröder, 2001) in social media (Jahn & Kunz, 2012).

2.3. Brand Love

Studies regarding love initialized by Rubin's (1973:265) work, in which love is defined as "an attitude held by a person toward a particular other person, involving predispositions to think, feel, and behave in certain ways toward that other person" (cited in Rageh Ismail & Spinelli, 2012). Prior researches on love have proposed different types of love (Hatfield & Rapson, 1994; Lee, 1977; Sternberg, 1986). Lee (1977) compared types of love to the color wheel, and propose six types of love: Eros, Ludos, Storage, Mania, Pragma and Agape. Alternatively, Hatfield & Rapson (1994) identified two major types of love: Compassionate love and passionate love. Then Sternberg (1986) has proposed a triangular theory of love with three components: Intimacy, passion and decision/commitment. Shimp & Madden (1988) have offered a notable conceptual model of consumer-object relationships based on Sternberg's triangular theory of love, and eight types consumer-object relationships (Nonliking, Liking, Infatuation, Functionalism, Inhibited Desire, Utilitarianism, Succumbed Desire, Loyalty) are proposed as key dimensions of consumer-object (brand) relationships in the context of consumption. With the contribution of Shimp & Madden's (1988) conceptual model and its three components (liking, yearning and decision/commitment), brand love conceptualization has been pioneered. In a comprehensive way, Carroll & Ahuvia (2006) define brand love as "the degree of passionate emotional attachment that a person has for a particular trade name."

Most extant studies on brand love establish their basis from interpersonal love theory and apply interpersonal love theories to the marketing context. There is a debate over the

applicability of interpersonal love theory in the context of brand love. Fournier (1998) claim that brand relationships can be formed in “interpersonal domain”. Nevertheless, some scholars have remained contested whether interpersonal love theories are applicable to the product (object) concept (Albert et al., 2008; Batra et al., 2012; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Albert et al. (2009) argue that emotional relationship between consumer and brand become liking, yearning and decision/commitment, which is in line with findings of Shimp & Madden (1988), rather than a romantic love relationship. Carroll & Ahuvia (2006) propose that brand love includes: Passion, attachment, positive evaluations of the brand, positive emotions in response to the brand and declarations of love for the brand, by not referring to the interpersonal love theory.

Brand love relationship is an enduring process that differs from a simple brand liking (affect). Carroll & Ahuvia (2006) found that brand love involves an integration of the brand into consumer’s identity, which is not possibly achieved by simple brand liking. Furthermore, brand love relationship can last for decades and involves numerous affective, cognitive, and behavioral experiences (Fournier, 1998). Therefore, the growing literature considers brand love merely more a relationship rather than a simple brand liking. Subsequently, scholars have proposed several brand love dimensions as well as describing brand love as a prototype (Albert et al., 2008; Batra et al., 2012). This helps to decrease the complexity of already fuzzy and complex concepts such as emotions or love (Fehr 2006; Shaver et al. 1987 cited in Batra et al., 2012), and furthermore unidimensional brand love measurement may lead to fail to catch the complexity of love (Albert et al., 2013). Regardless of studying different dimensions, the extant literature agrees upon that brand love possesses characteristics such as “(1) passion for a brand, (2) brand attachment, (3) positive evaluation of the brand, (4) positive emotions in response to the brand, and (5) declarations of love toward the brand” (Ahuvia, 1993; Albert et al., 2008; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Whang et al., 2004). As a contribution to the literature, Albert et al. (2008) identify six first-order dimensions of brand love (idealization, intimacy, pleasure, dream, memories, and unicity). Alternatively, Batra et al. (2012) described the brand love phenomena that include antecedents (quality), core elements (passion-driven behaviors, self-brand integration, positive emotional connection, long-term relationship, anticipated separation distress, overall attitude valence and attitude strength), and consequences (loyalty, WOM, resistance to negative information about the brand).

3. CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Based on the literature review, we propose two models adapted from Batra et al. (2012) to pursue new insights for consumer-brand relationships in the context of social media. In the previous section, the given brand love conceptualizations have been made in the context of traditional marketing, to be more concise, the advent of social media engagement in consumer-brand relationships was neglected. Therefore, these modified models take account social media engagement while conceptualizing brand love. The first model predicts the effect of high quality on social media driven brand love consequences (loyalty, WOM and resistance to negative information about the loved brand), whereas the second model predicts the effects of social media driven brand love core elements on social media driven brand love consequences. Nevertheless, in this study we propose a unified and single brand

love consequences rather than taking into account brand love consequence subdimensions – loyalty, WOM and resistance – separately.

3.1. Model 1: Quality to Brand Love Consequences

Product specifications are salient determinants of consumer-brand relationship. Among product attributes, perceived quality is the key antecedent of building brand love (Batra et al., 2012). Perceived quality is an outcome of consumers' subjective judgment towards a product (Aaker, 1991; Zeithaml, 1988). In the study of Batra et al. (2012) association regarding loved brands and their exceptional performance mostly reflects to consumers' benefits. This view can be related to theory of love that Murstein (1988) claims the very existence of love is to provide benefits for both sides. Thus, not surprisingly we propose quality as an antecedent of brand love in the context of social media mediated consumer brand relationship, as its relation to brand love has been mentioned in previous studies (Albert et al., 2008; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014). Furthermore, social media based consumer's brand engagement leads increased brand loyalty and perceived quality (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2014). Model 1 is drawn in Figure 1. Hinge upon the above evidences, we postulate the hypothesis:

H1: Quality has a significant influence on brand love consequences

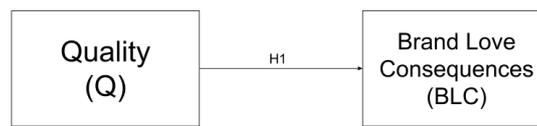


Figure 1. Model 1 - Quality to Brand Love Consequences

3.2. Model 2: Social Media Driven Brand Love Core Elements to Brand Love Consequences

In this model, we predict the influence of brand love core elements (that of Batra et al. (2012) on brand love consequences (loyalty, WOM and resistance) (Batra et al., 2012) in the social media context. Rather than taking into consideration brand love consequence subdimensions – loyalty, WOM and resistance – separately, we unify them under the second order brand love consequences dimension. Model 2 is depicted in Figure 2. Accordingly, for Model 2 we posit the following hypothesis:

H2: Social media driven brand love core elements have a significant influence on brand love consequences.

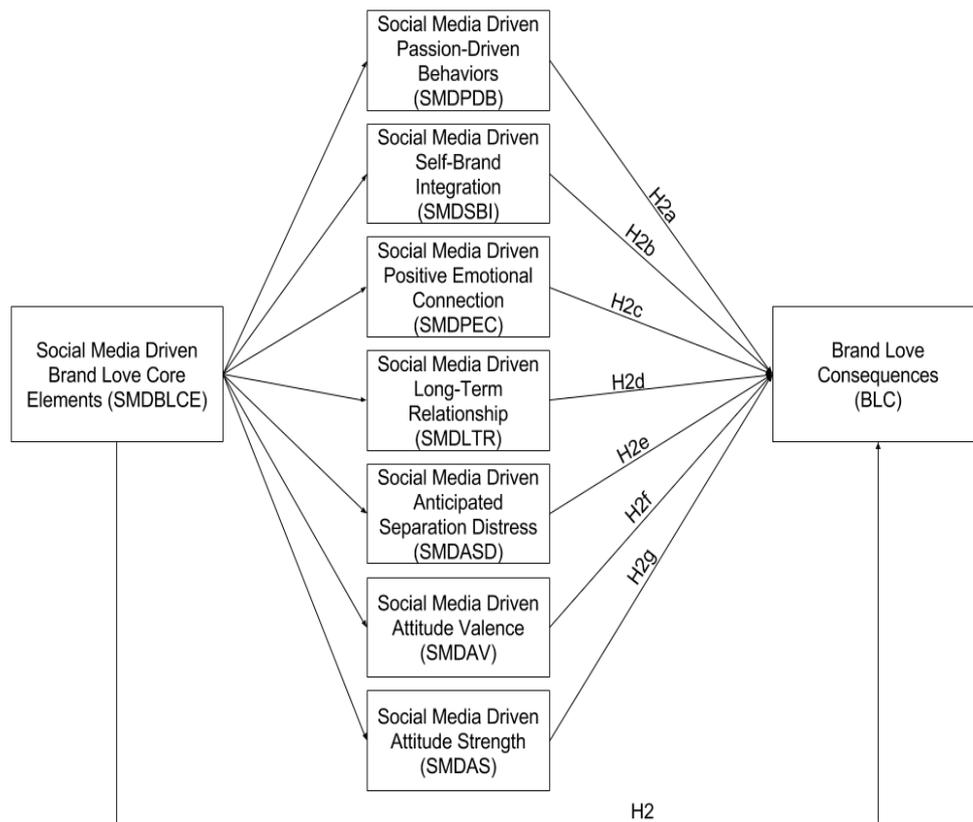


Figure 2. Model 2 - Social Media Driven Brand Love Core Elements to Brand Love Consequences

3.2.1. Social Media Triggered Passion-Driven Behaviors and Brand Love Consequences

Passion-driven behaviors include willingness to invest, passionate desire to purchase loved brand products and involvement with the brand (Batra et al., 2012). Passionate desire is mentioned in the study of Belk et al. (2003) revealed that intense desire captivates individuals' mental perceptions, leading them to think about the object often and positively. The relationship between passion and brand love was investigated in previous studies and it is found to be significant (Albert et al., 2009; Sarkar et al., 2012). Alternatively, scholars have found that brand passion positively influences WOM which we postulate it as a dimension of brand love consequences (Albert et al., 2013; Matzler et al., 2007; Sarkar et al., 2012). Albert et al. (2013) have also found salience of the link between passion and willingness to pay more. Moreover, involvement as well as past interactions with the brand constitute a key dimension of brand love. Involvement is consumer's continuing commitment regarding thoughts, feelings and behavioral response to a product (Gordon et al., 1998). Hollebeek et al. (2014) has uncovered that involvement is an antecedent to consumer brand engagement in social media, which Gómez-Suárez et al. (2017) link consumer brand engagement to brand love. Involvement is also associated to brand loyalty (brand love consequences) and even influences brand loyalty (Sadasivan et al., 2011). Therefore, we propose:

H2a: Social media triggered passion-driven behaviors have a significant influence on social media driven brand love consequences.

3.2.2. Social Media Driven Self-Brand Integration and Brand Love Consequences

Self-brand integration includes current self-identity, desired self-identity and intrinsic rewards (Batra et al., 2012). Consumer-brand relationships form a basis to give meaning to consumers' lives through enhancing of their self-identity (Chernev et al., 2011; Fournier, 1998). This view is supported by McEwen (2005) reporting that the motivation behind consumers' building a relationship is to express current self-identity and enhance it (cited in Tuškej et al., 2013). Similarly, consumers tend to attach brand's identity if the brand and consumer share common senses, and thus these common senses enable consumers to express and maintain their self-identities in a more accurate way (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). Extant literature indicates that the more consumers incorporate their self-identity with the brand, the more brand loyal they become (Liu et al., 2012), or addresses self-expressive brands have positive influences on brand love (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006) and brand love consequences such as brand loyalty (Ruane & Wallace, 2015) and positive WOM (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Ruane & Wallace, 2015). Furthermore, Wallace et al. (2014) have extended the study on influence of self-expressive brands on brand love and positive WOM in the context social media, and given support to the previous studies. Based on these, we postulate:

H2b: Social media triggered self-brand integration has a significant influence on social media driven brand love consequences.

3.2.3. Social Media Driven Positive Emotional Connection and Brand Love Consequences

Positive emotional connection includes intuitive fit, emotional attachment and positive affect (Batra et al., 2012). Consumers involved in a consumer-brand relationship may develop a favorable connection with the brand, and in consumption context can be summarized as extreme positive attitudes towards a brand (Thomson et al., 2005) that lead to an emotional attachment (Bauer et al., 2007). According to Thomson et al. (2005) positive attitudes towards a brand can be developed without a long-lasting brand experience, since they are reliant on evaluative reactions. Scholars investigating brand engagement in social media have found that emotional attachment is greater in social media (Hudson et al., 2015) and it leads consumers to spread positive WOM and influence prospective customers through recommendations in social media (Malciute & Chrysochou, 2013). Excitement can be categorized among positive affect prompted through brand attachment. Rageh Ismail & Spinelli (2012) suggest that excitement will have a positive effect on building brand love. Additionally, positive attitudes can be transformed into a more powerful emotion such as desire and passion. In addition to this, social media based brand communities affect consumers to develop positive emotional connection (Munoz Velez, 2013) and social media campaigns can generate more positive responses on consumers than other communication channels do (138% higher) (Neff, 2012). In the light of the given views, we propose:

H2c: Social media triggered positive emotional connection has a significant influence on social media driven brand love consequences.

3.2.4. Social Media Driven Long-Term Relationship and Brand Love Consequences

Consumers develop a strong relationship with an organization as a return of the organization's prior efforts to build a relationship with consumers (Wulf & Odekerken-Schröder, 2001). These efforts in social media increase consumers' trust towards brands, and consumers perceive a higher level of relationship quality with the brand (Gensler et al., 2013). It should be also noted that long-term relationship takes into account the past behavior and history with the loved brand. For that reason, as Guadagni & Little (1983) state that past behavior is often a good predictor of future behavior, long-term relationship may imply a higher level of brand love. In addition to this, an interpersonal relationship study conducted on Facebook revealed that as the relationship matures, relationships developed through Facebook are more likely to retain, and the usage of Facebook increases the intensity of the relationship, which in turn leads to a long-term relationship (Farrugia, 2013). Therefore, we propose:

H2d: Social media triggered long-term relationship has a significant influence on social media driven brand love consequences.

3.2.5. Social Media Driven Anticipated Separation Distress and Brand Love Consequences

Brands play a more important role than a mere constructive instrument in consumer-brand relationship, consumers rather perceive them as a relationship partner (Fournier, 1998). Correspondingly, consumers tend to maintain contagiousness towards their consumer-brand relationship partners, and when the relationship is in the most intense, consumers feel separation distress and notice the absence of the brand when unavailable (Matzler et al., 2007; Thomson et al., 2005; Whan Park et al., 2010). Emerging these with social media, social media brand fan pages decrease the psychological distance and hence strengthen the attachment to the brand (Jahn & Kunz, n.d.). Although social media seems to reduce the distance between consumer and brand, according to attachment theory, stronger emotional attachments may lead consumers to perceive brands a more irreplaceable (Bowlby et al., 1992), which in turn increases separation distress. Consistent with Facebook interpersonal relationships, this can be also administered to consumer-brand relationship since brands are perceived as a relationship partner by consumers (Fournier, 1998). Consequently, we verbally state the following hypothesis:

H2e: Social media triggered anticipated separation distress has a significant influence on social media driven brand love consequences.

3.2.6. Social Media Driven Attitude Valence and Brand Love Consequences

Consumers are often emotional and irrational, and brands are positioned individuals' cognitive and emotional basis (Gordon, 2006 cited in Pawle & Cooper, 2006). Consumers' attitude valence is also referred to brand commitment (Tuškej et al., 2013), and brand commitment is an indicator of consumer satisfaction with brand choice (Warrington & Shim, 2000). A more direct empirical relationship between satisfaction and brand loyalty have been suggested by Carroll & Ahuvia (2006) concluding that satisfied consumers are more likely to generate brand loyalty in consumer-brand relationship. The study conducted by Ranaweera & Menon (2008) has concluded that satisfaction influences WOM positively. In the social media context, Gu & Ye (2014) have posited that consumer-brand related interactions in

social media increase future satisfaction of complaint consumers. It is therefore hypothesized:

H2f: Social media triggered attitude valence for the brand has a significant influence on social media driven brand love consequences.

3.2.7. Social Media Driven Attitude Strength and Brand Love Consequences

Having frequent interactions with, or thoughts about the brand are determinants of attitude strength (Batra et al., 2012). Brand attitude strength more reflects to guide purchase behavior than attitude valence (Whan Park et al., 2010). This is supported by Kim (2003) imposing that consumers held attitude strength are more likely to develop strong intentions to purchase which may lead them to brand loyalty through brand commitment. In social media, intensity of brand's engagement determines consumers' attitude toward the brand (Naylor et al., 2012). Correspondingly, Schivinski & Dabrowski (2014) have hypothesized that brand fan pages positively influence consumers' attitude toward a brand. Consistent with the given evidences, we hypothesize:

H2g: Social media triggered attitude strength towards the brand has a significant influence on social media driven brand love consequences.

4. METHODOLOGY

Being formed on examining consumer-brand relationship in social media to the extent of brand love, this study consists of two proposed models as given in the previous section. In Model 1, the context of social media was neglected while measuring, whereas Model 2 introduces the social media context to brand love core elements. Data were collected through an online survey. Nevertheless, two filter questions employed to the respondents in order to make sure that respondents are qualified enough to be included in the research. The first filter question measured whether respondents currently have an active social network sites account, while the second question examined whether respondents are actively engaged with their loved brands in social media through either company social networks or brand fan pages (Kunz, 2012). Since "like" is an indicator of brand engagement in social networks (Wallace et al., 2014) we asked respondents whether they like/follow/subscribe to their loved brands and all respondents were asked to consider their loved brands that they are engaged in social media while answering the brand love questions. Being a current social media user and a social media engaged consumer with the loved brands, respondents were selected as eligible and completed the survey, with a sample size of 235.

The questionnaire consists of 3 sections. The first part includes demographic questions. Social media engagement related two questions constitute the second part. The third part of the questionnaire includes the questions regarding social media driven brand love and traditional brand love. Measurement scale was basically drawn from Batra et al. (2012) and we identified 76 variables to empirically test hypotheses postulated in Model 1 and Model 2. While developing Model 2 measurements, we integrated the social media context into brand love core elements (Batra et al., 2012). Nonetheless, only the measurements reflecting to consumer-brand relationship perceptions in social media are integrated to social media context, whereas other cognitive brand and product related measurements are remained same. Similarly, perceived quality and brand love consequences are deemed to be cognitive

measurements, and hence such social media context integration was neglected. Finally, all the measurements were conducted as 5-point Likert scale (ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree).

5. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Demographic characteristics of the respondents are as shown in Table 1. Profile of the respondents indicates that among the 235 survey respondents, females are the majority (69.2%). Since most of the respondents are undergraduate students more than a half of them are younger than 25. Besides, majority of the respondents live in 3 and 4 people families and 42.1% of their household income exceeds 5000 TL per month. Thus, the profile of the respondents reflects mainly the young Turkish social media user consumers.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Age	%	Occupation	%
18-24	52,8	Housewife	3,0
25-34	28,1	Civil servant	18,3
35-44	17,9	Student	48,1
45-54	1,3	Merchant-Craftsman	1,3
Total	100,0	Private sector employee	13,2
		Other	16,1
		Total	100,0

Household Income (TL)		Households	
1.300 and lower	6,0	1 person	0,4
1.301-2.000	15,0	2 person	6,7
2.001-3.000	18,4	3 person	29,5
3.001-4.000	11,1	4 person	34,4
4.001-5.000	7,3	5 person	14,3
5.001-6000	5,6	6 and over	14,7
6001 and over	36,8	Total	100,0
Total	100,0		

Education		Gender	
High school and lower	42,9	Female	69,2
Undergraduate	36,1	Male	30,8
Graduate	21,0	Total	100,0
Total	100,0		

Model fit estimates are listed in Table 2. The model that we suggest in order to test social media driven brand love fits well. Standardized regression coefficients indicate that the all brand love core elements are positive and significant and consistent with the expectations. Although all hypotheses are accepted, path coefficients for anticipated separation distress, positive emotional connection and passion driven behaviors are higher.

Table 2. Path Coefficients and Model Fit Statistics for Social Media Driven Brand Love Core Elements

Social Media Driven Brand Love Core Elements	Path Coefficients (N=235)
Social Media Driven Brand Love → Passion-Driven Behaviors	0,97
Social Media Driven Brand Love → Self-Brand Integration	0,91
Social Media Driven Brand Love → Positive Emotional Connection	1,00
Social Media Driven Brand Love → Long-Term Relationship	0,90
Social Media Driven Brand Love → Anticipated Separation Distress	1,25
Social Media Driven Brand Love → Attitude Valence	0,78
Social Media Driven Brand Love → Attitude Strength	0,84
Passion-Driven Behaviors → Willingness to Invest	0,80
Passion-Driven Behaviors → Desire	0,89
Passion-Driven Behaviors → Involvement	0,86
Self-Brand Integration → Current-Self	0,92
Self-Brand Integration → Desired-Self	0,90
Self-Brand Integration → Life Meaning	0,96
Self-Brand Integration → Attitude Strength 1	0,83
Positive Emotional Connection → Intuitive Fit	0,92
Positive Emotional Connection → Emotional Attachment	0,87
Positive Emotional Connection → Positive Affect	0,91
Model Fit Statistics	
Chi-Square/df	2,6851
P	<0,001
RMSEA	0,085
NNFI	0,97
CFI	0,97
SRMR	0,11

Marketing in nature, suggests high quality is a corner stone for creating loyalty, positive WOM and resistance to negative information. Following this baseline, we first investigate the relationship between quality and consequence components with regards to social media. As it can be seen from Table 3 results indicate predictive model fits well. However, results demonstrate a significant but a weak relationship between high quality and loyalty, positive WOM and resistance to negative information in the context of social media ($R^2 = 0,029$).

Table 3. Path Coefficients and Model Fit Statistics for Model 1

Model 1: Quality to Brand Love Consequences	Path Coefficients (N=235)
Quality → Q1	0,82
Quality → Q2	0,91
Quality → Q3	0,81
Brand Love Consequences → CONS1	0,74
Brand Love Consequences → CONS2	0,68
Brand Love Consequences → CONS3	0,84
Brand Love Consequences → CONS4	0,79
Model Fit Statistics	
Chi-Square/df	2,6662
P	<0,001
RMSEA	0,084
NNFI	0,95
CFI	0,97
SRMR	0,0039

Table 4 illustrates the relationship between higher order brand love and consequence components. Model fit indexes indicate a perfect fit. Results claim that social media driven higher order brand love factor significantly explains more than a half of variance of brand love consequences ($R^2 = 0,56$).

Table 4. Path Coefficients and Model Fit Statistics for Model 2

Model 2: Social Media Driven Brand Love to Brand Love Consequences	Path Coefficients (N=235)
Social Media Driven Brand Love → SMD Passion-Driven Behaviors	1,00
Social Media Driven Brand Love → SMD Self-Brand Integration	0,89
Social Media Driven Brand Love → SMD Positive Emotional Connection	1,00
Social Media Driven Brand Love → SMD Long-Term Relationship	0,90
Social Media Driven Brand Love → SMD Anticipated Separation Distress	1,33
Social Media Driven Brand Love → SMD Attituded Valence	0,81
Social Media Driven Brand Love → SMD Attitude Strength	0,86
Social Media Driven Brand Love → Brand Love Consequences	0,75
Model Fit Statistics	
Chi-Square/df	3,3524
P	<0,001
RMSEA	0,10
NNFI	0,95
CFI	0,95
SRMR	0,46

In Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), number of information fragments in input matrices should be higher than estimated model parameters (Çelik & Yılmaz, 2016). While estimating the effect of Brand Love Core Elements on Brand Love Consequences – the relationship between brand love consequences and Model 2 sub-dimensions - we have noted that number of model parameters exceeded our input matrices. Hence, in Model 2, we applied Multiple Linear Regression to estimate sub-dimensions influence Brand Love Consequences. First, the mean values of sub-dimensions are calculated, and then the effect of sub-dimensions on Brand Love Consequences is examined.

As it can be seen in Table 5, Model 2 yielded a good fit and is determined to be significant with multiple linear regression ($F=23,966$; $p\leq 0,001$; $R^2 = 0,608$). VIF results were found to be less than 10, meaning that collinearity among model sub-dimensions is not established. In Model 2, the WIR (Willingness to Invest Resources), OAV (Overall Attitude Valence), and AS2 (Attitude Strength 2) influence Brand Love Consequences significantly ($p\leq 0,001$) with beta coefficients of $\beta=0,25$, $\beta=0,389$, $\beta=0,412$ respectively.

Table 5. Multiple Linear Regression

Model 2: Social Media Driven Brand Love to Brand Love Consequences	Standardized Beta Coefficients (N=235)
WIR (Willingness to invest resources) → Brand Love Consequences	0,250
PDU (Passionate desire to use) → Brand Love Consequences	-0,111
TDP(Things done in past) → Brand Love Consequences	-0,021
CSI(Current self identity) → Brand Love Consequences	-0,021
DSI(Desired self identity) → Brand Love Consequences	0,014
LM(Life meaning) → Brand Love Consequences	-0,066
AS1 (Attitude strength 1) → Brand Love Consequences	0,149
IF (Intuitive fit) → Brand Love Consequences	-0,045
EA(Emotional attachment) → Brand Love Consequences	0,054
PA (Positive affect) → Brand Love Consequences	-0,113
LTR (Long term relationship) → Brand Love Consequences	0,078
ASD (Anticipated separation distress) → Brand Love Consequences	-0,139
OAV (Attitude valence) → Brand Love Consequences	0,389
AS2 (Attitude Strength 2) → Brand Love Consequences	0,412

6. CONCLUSION

6.1. Discussion

As an emerging market, Turkey's developing infrastructure for accessing internet, results in rising internet penetration rates, and thus, accessibility of the social networks. Social media engagement has gradually plays a vital role in social life in Turkey. Particularly for the young, level of interactions via social media is amazing not only for human relations but also for the relationships with their favorite brands. The main contribution of the study is to test

higher order brand love prototype suggested by Batra et al. (2012) in terms of social media. To our knowledge, this is the first study investigating the traditional brand love by incorporating consumers' social media interactions with brands, and suggests a scale for social media driven brand love. Although there exist a few studies regarding fan pages and brand love or "like" focused brand love (Wallace et al., 2014) they are lacking combining consumers' brand page interactions thoroughly with the brand love components.

Far beyond a simple liking, love relationship with a brand may transferred into virtual world, thanks to Web 2.0. Thus, we tested the higher order brand love prototype proposed by Batra et al. (2012) in the social media context. However, we did not ignore the fact that quality is one of the main antecedents for such an intense feeling. And, even for love relationships created by the interactions via social media, there should be some solid consequences.

Reflecting aforementioned view, we propose two models regarding the relationships between antecedent and consequences, and brand love core elements and consequences. Model 1 results indicate that quality has a positive effect on brand love consequences. This finding provides a new support for the notion that quality has a positive effect on loyalty (Chi et al., 2009; Erdoğan & Büdeyri-Turan, 2012; Simsek & Noyan, 2009) and WOM (de Matos & Rossi, 2008; Kudeshia et al., 2016; Wallace et al., 2014; Yasin & Shamim, 2013)

Consistent with the findings of Albert & Merunka, 2013; Batra et al., 2012; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Wallace et al., 2014, Model 2 statistics reveal that social media driven brand love has a strong effect on consequences. Hence, our findings regarding Model 1 and 2 supports that even they do not very keen on considering quality when they are building up a relationship with their loved brands via social media, once Turkish customers build up a love relationship with a brand they are intended to stay loyal, resist to negative information and talk positive to others.

In terms of social media driven brand love, study results demonstrate that among the 7 core elements anticipated separation distress has the strongest impact. Since social media engagement increases the attachment intensity (Jahn & Kunz, 2012), this result is quite understandable due to the fact that consumers feel anxiety/worry when they are separated from their loved one (beloved brand) as they personalize the relationship through interpreting the brand as a partner. Positive emotional connection is the other significant element as study results reveal. This finding makes sense particularly in the social media context in which emotional attachment is greater (Hudson et al., 2015). In addition, social media's very nature including fun, excitement, pleasure, building bonds between the sides, creation of relationships, making connections, etc. describes well the great influence of positive emotional connection on social media driven brand love. One of the other noteworthy elements is passion driven behavior indicating that high involvement through the interactions via social media enhances the desire and willingness to invest more time and money.

Social media driven brand love focused this study points out some important issues for practitioners. As virtual world proposes so many opportunities for companies to interact their customers, the intensity of interaction will last through a love relationship. From this point of view, any company that wants to build up a love relationship between customers

and its brand(s) should consider first not to disconnect with its customers on social network sites due to avoiding separation distress on customers. Companies should frequently keep in touch with their customers and answer their questions right away (Gamboa & Gonçalves, 2014). To create and maintain fun and excitement and take attention which will turn out to likes and comments brand pages should post image-rich contents (Sabate et al., 2014).

6.2. Limitations and Further Research

We have some recommendations for future research. First and foremost, due to the fact that we unified the brand love consequences further research should focus on the consequences of social media driven brand love separately and adapt them in the social media context. For instance, the relationship between social media driven brand love core elements and electronic word of mouth should be studied. As it is widely accepted, today's one of the most important issue is the heavy Internet and/or social media users. Although all of the respondents in our study have an account at least one social networking site and follow/like/subscribe to their loved brand's social network we did not focus on the intensity of social media usage. Thus, following studies may focus on the differences between light and heavy social media users in terms of social media driven brand love. Furthermore, even though we consider perceived quality as the sole antecedent of social media driven brand love, results direct us to question whether the very existence of other more significant antecedents of brand love in the social media context.

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