What Type Relationship Do We Have with Our Brands? Is the Name of this Relationship Brand Romance?

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ABSTRACT

Consumers' loyalty to a brand depends on their establishing an emotional relationship with it. This relationship may be called as brand romance. Many factors influence the emergence of brand romance (ROM), including brand novelty (BN), brand satisfaction (BS), and subjective brand knowledge (SBK). The present study evaluates brand romance dimensions such as pleasure, arousal and dominance in terms of these antecedents and outcomes as attitudinal and behavioral brand loyalty. The study was carried out with 295 consumers in Istanbul/Turkey via face-to-face questionnaires. In this study, BS, SBK, and BN have a positive influence on arousal and pleasure dimensions of brand romance whereas the effect of SBK is not statistically significant on dominance dimension of brand romance. Also arousal and dominance dimensions of brand romance are positively effective on behavioral and attitudinal loyalty whereas pleasure dimension is not statistically significant on behavioral loyalty.

Keywords: Brand Romance, Subjective Brand Knowledge, Brand Novelty, Brand Satisfaction, Brand Loyalty
JEL Classifications: M30, M31

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's consumption world, almost everything is becoming a brand, and the number of brands enterprises put on the market is increasing every day (Kruger et al., 2013). In such a competitive environment, consumer brand relationship is a necessity to keep consumers loyal to their brands and prevent them from competing brands (Hoyer et al., 2013). Consumers' emotional attachments with brands foster long-term relationships with their brands (Long-Tolbert and Gammoh, 2012. p. 391). One of these emotional attachments is brand romance (Patwardhan and Balasubramanian, 2011. p. 299). The brand romance is actually feelings and thoughts about a brand arouses in consumer's mind and according to this emotion consumer became active partners with their brands (Ruediger et al., 2012. p. 406) and in this way, maintaining consumer-brand relationships may be less expensive (Hess et al., 2011. p. 16). Thus, enterprises are aware of concepts of brand romance is important for the continuity of long-term relationships between brands and consumers. They offer their brands to consumers with the claim that they

have romantic features and combine this with their marketing strategies. Also today's consumers, not only purchase products, but also purchase emotions such as brand romance with brands (Patwardhan and Balasubramanian, 2011. p. 297-299). In such a situation, enterprises effort to raise brand satisfaction (BS), offer novelty, and inform consumers about their brands in order to create a permanent bond between their brands and consumers (Albert et al., 2008). These efforts make consumers have a more emotional approach to their brands, consider them attractive, and find them romantic. Finding a brand romantic or feelings such as romance may be the key reason for a consumer's loyalty to a brand (Amin and Malin, 2012. p. 39). Consumers who are attached to a brand with a feeling beyond liking were influenced by factors such as subjective brand knowledge (SBK), brand novelty (BN), and BS (Brown, 2002). Creating brand romance by these factors is important for enterprises (Long-Tolbert and Gammoh, 2012. p. 391). Because, true loyalty requires emotional bonding of customer with their brand (Park et al., 2009). Because of this importance the present study aims to evaluate brand romance, which reflects consumers' feelings toward the brand, in terms of

certain factors due to its effects and importance. To this end, a questionnaire was administered to younger consumers at 18 age and over in Turkey/İstanbul. In this paper, literature about brand romance, BN, SBK, BS and loyalty, and research hypotheses are first presented. Research methodology, analysis results, and the research model are then explained. Lastly, interpretations are made and recommendations are put forward based on the obtained findings.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

2.1. Brand Romance

Brands are not only products that bring benefits, but they also have sometimes, the reason we bring them into our lives is emotional liking (Sarkar, 2011. p. 89). Brand romance may be defined as feelings and thoughts about a brand in consumers' mind. According to Robert (2006) every consumer wants to have a brand he loves and also every brand expects to be loved. This idea stems from the brand's romance, which means a brand's appeal and attraction. Love, desire, pleasure, enjoyment, and excitement are from the same group of feelings with romance. They arouse a feeling of longing for a specific brand within the consumer and direct him to it. But romance is defined different from these feelings. Brand romance has defined as a response to the brand, a tendency of the brand to dominate the consumer's cognition (Patwardhan and Balasubramanian, 2011. p. 299-304). Brand romance has three dimensions: Pleasure, arousal, and dominance. The consumer brand relationship starts with pleasure dimension, which means positive ties with the brand (Mugge et al., 2010. p. 279). When the stimulus of brand gives pleasure to the consumer, this dimension occurs. Pleasure includes attraction to the brand and feelings of love, charm, desire, enjoyment, excitement, and appreciation (Patwardhan and Balasubramanian, 2011. p. 299). If these feelings are intensely felt, arousal dimension of the brand romance occurs. Also when liking, involving, positive attitudes, and affiliation reach a peak level, arousal level occurs. Therefore, arousal is proposed as the second dimension of brand romance (Holbrook and Hirchman, 1982). Dominance dimension is defined as the brand's propensity to engage the consumer's cognition (Patwardhan and Balasubramanian, 2011. p. 299). It is about consumers' cognitive process and power of dominating their mind. When brands become part of consumers' lives or consumer's psyche and lifestyle dominance dimension of brand romance may occur. Especially when brands became an inseparable part of consumer's psychological processes, dominance emerge (Oliver, 1999. p. 40). Sometimes dominance dimension may have negative results. Dominance may be perceived as negative when it limits the freedom to think or act; but when it does not limit freedom, it is actually preferred and can effect repurchase behavior or brand loyalty (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974).

The number of studies on brand romance has recently increased. Sarkar (2011) investigated the antecedents and outcomes of brand romance. The results indicated that, if the consumer has been satisfied with the brand, undergoes a positive brand experience,

and takes pleasure from it, he feels a romantic love toward the brand. Consumer with brand romance may be loyal to his brand, spread positive ideas about his brand, and willing to pay premium. There is a mediator effect of other variables such as romantic brand love and customer delight on the relationship between brand loyalty and satisfaction. Patwardhan and Balasubramanian (2011) investigate the effect of brand romance and which dimensions of brand romance predict brand loyalty more. According to the findings, the brand pleasure has more effect on brand loyalty. The other result is that brand romance explains loyalty significantly better than attitude and it is a reliable and valid construct. Amin and Malin (2012) investigate antecedents of emotional attachment and loyalty towards brands. According to the results, developing loyalty and emotional attachment to brands is depending on quality, trust, image, timeless fashion, and tradition. After these factors, consumers want to have brands more. Sarkar et al. (2012) conceptualized and measured consumers' romantic love feelings for brands. Also, the antecedents and consequences of romantic brand love constructs have been investigated. According to the results it is determined that brand love involves intimacy and passion; these two factors have significant positive influence on word-of-mouth communication and repurchase intention. Kruger et al. (2013) investigated relationships between brand loyalty, attitude, and romance. The results indicated that there are significant and positive relationships between brand romance, brand attitude and brand loyalty, but the level of loyalty is low. Patwardhan and Balasubramanian (2013) investigated the relationship between brand romance and brand love. According to the results there is a positive relationship between brand love and brand romance and brand romance may or may not develop into brand love. Also, as long as a brand offers opportunities for novel experience, the attraction stays strong. Petzer et al. (2014) researched brand romance and this feeling' influence on brand loyalty in a competitive cell phone industry. Results indicate that consumers have brand pleasure and arousal dimension of brand romance with their cell phone brands more but these brands are less dominant in their minds. The other result is that consumers not have strong levels of brand loyalty towards their brands and the three dimensions of brand romance have significant effect on brand loyalty. Some other authors have perceived emotional attachment to brand differently (Mugge et al., 2010; Belaid and Behi, 2011; Hwang and Kandampully, 2012). Although emotional attachment to brand has been a topic of interest recently (Thomson et al., 2005), there is limited studies about brand romance as emotional attachment (Patwardhan and Balasubramanian, 2011; 2013; Sarkar, 2011; Sarkar et al., 2012; Amin and Malin, 2012; Kruger et al., 2013; Petzer et al., 2014). Some studies have dealt with brand romance only in terms of its outcomes such as brand loyalty (Whang et al., 2004; Amin and Malin, 2012; Petzer et al., 2014). Few detailed studies have dealt with the antecedents and outcomes of brand romance together (Sarkar, 2011; Patwardhan and Balasubramanian, 2011, 2013; Sarkar et al., 2012; Kruger et al., 2013). Although the number of studies on the influence of brand romance on brand loyalty increased, there are limited studies evaluating the relationship between dimensions of brand loyalty and romance. For this reason, basically in this study, we tried to determine the romantic dimension which has the greatest effect on brand loyalty.

2.2. Distinguishing Brand Romance from Other Close Brand-attachment Constructs

Although there are a lot of objects in the customer's life, she/he only likes a few objects of consumption and approaches them with emotional attachment (Ahuvia, 2005). The number of products and brands a customer is emotionally attached to be quite limited (Ünal and Aydın, 2013) and so, consumers develop an intense emotional attachment to only a small object (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995). In general, attachment is defined as an emotional bond between a person and an object (Bowlby, 1980). According to the attachment theory, intensity of emotional attachment to an object predicts interaction of an individual with the object. This theory suggests that individuals who are strongly attached to a person are more likely to make sacrifices for that person (Bowlby, 1980; Hazan and Shaver, 1994). In marketing literature, emotional attachment may be explained by this theory. Likewise attachment to a person, a consumer may have strong attachment to their brands and these emotional attachments might predict their loyalty to the brand/product/retailer and willingness to make sacrifices (Thomson et al., 2005; Ünal and Aydın, 2013). Emotional attachment to brands may be explained by some brand-related constructs such as involvement, commitment, and love and brand romance. Brand romance as an emotional attachment to brands is different from other brand-related constructs which are closely related (Park et al., 2009). These constructs are in the area of relationship marketing (Fullerton, 2003). Brand romance is different from involvement which is defined as a consumer's recognition and consideration of a specific product (Traylor, 1981), personal demand, conception, and interest in the product. While romance is about realm of affect, involvement is about the realm of cognition (Zaichkowsky, 1986). It may be defined as consumer's attitudes (Guthrie and Kim, 2009) and intensity of interest for a brand/product (Park and Young, 1983). It can be used to measure the level of brand interest and brand's significance to the consumer (Guthrie and Kim, 2009). So, ıt may be said that it is not intense emotion like romance. Brand romance is also different from brand commitment. Brand commitment is defined as a desire that help maintaining a relationship (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). But brand commitment is an outcome of an attachment to the brand. But romance is the attachment itself. Unlike romanticism, with commitment consumer may be committed to the brand for reasons, like lack of competing alternatives, moral and contractual obligations. Brand romance has some similarity with brand love (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006). But ıt is different from love. Romance characterizes as an attraction and love may/may not develop eventually after brand romance. In terms romance, consumers may have an intense attraction to their brands, but they may not declare their love for these brands. Shortly, brand romance may be different from love and defined as an attraction may not develop into brand love and also love is a very strong emotional attachment than brand romance (Patwardhan and Balasubramanian, 2011). So, brand love necessitates the intensity of emotional responses toward an object than brand love (Hwang and Kandampully, 2012. p. 101). According to Patwardhan and Balasubramanian (2011) brand romance and brand love are different from each other and only the attraction component of brand love is present in romance is that "I love this brand." So, romantic love is a sub-set of complete love (Sternberg, 1986).

2.3. Brand Romance and Development of Hypotheses
2.3.1. Brand Novelty
BN means the perception of novelty in the brand (Brown, 2002). It is a result of ideas such as avoiding the routine, creating a difference, and seeking adventure and excitement with the brand (Duman and Mattila, 2005. p. 313). Perceived novelty represents a significant influence on consumers' perception, affects attitude toward the brand and increased the assessment of the brand by consumers as positive (Hetet et al., 2014). Also new experiences increase the charm of the brand in interpersonal relations (O'Halloran and Wagner, 2001). In the consumer–brand relationship, if the brand offers new experiences, level of reflecting romantic feelings increase. In other words, the greater the perceived novelty, the stronger is the attraction of the brand. However, if the brand offers similar experiences, the likelihood of having a romantic feeling toward the brand decreases (Toyama and Yamada, 2012. p. 12). Because sameness of the repeated experiences will delay unique experiences and need for change may begin. When need for change or variety begins, consumers establish a bond with their brands at a very low level (Vazquez-Carrasco and Foxall, 2006). That is to say, a brand that offers novelty may provide more arousal than a brand that just offers the same things all the time (Burnham et al., 2003. p. 119). According to the consumer-brand relationship from a stimulation perspective, we posit that as long as a brand offers opportunities for novel experience, the attraction stays strong. If novel experiences and opportunities increase, or if familiarity appears lower, attraction may be strengthened (Patwardhan and Balasubramanian, 2013. p. 74). So, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H_{1a}: BN has a positive effect on pleasure dimension of brand romance.

H_{1b}: BN has a positive effect on arousal dimension of brand romance.

H_{1c}: BN has a positive effect on dominance dimension of brand romance.

2.3.2. Subjective Brand Knowledge
Product knowledge is a concept that based on memories of consumers (Brucks, 1985) and depends on consumer's awareness about the product (Lin and Chen, 2006). Brand knowledge contains three categories such as subjective knowledge, objective knowledge, and usage experience. Objective knowledge refers to the actual knowledge about the brand whereas subjective knowledge is mostly based on perceptions and means that what the consumer knows about the brand (Brucks, 1985) or what consumers think and feel about a brand (Flynn and Goldsmith, 1999. p. 58). SBK may be defined as "people's perceptions of what and how much they know about a product class." (Park et al., 1994. p. 71); "the feeling of knowing." (Raju et al., 1995. p. 154); and "perceived knowledge" (Lin and Chen, 2006. p. 250). Usage experience refers to the consumer's experience in the process of usage. Brand knowledge is an important tool in consumer behavior and most authors believe that subjective knowledge determines consumers' feelings toward the brand more than other knowledge types (Rao and Sieben, 1992). Therefore, there may be

a relationship between brand romance and SBK. This is because a well-known brand may meet the consumer's needs, makes the consumer feel comfortable and strong emotions toward their brands (Dölarslan, 2015. p. 30). Brand attachment originated from rational and emotional brand evaluations, which may be called as brand knowledge (Keller, 2001). It may be said that this type knowledge may be effective on brand romance. So, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H_{2a}: SBK has a positive effect on pleasure dimension of brand romance.

H_{2b}: SBK has a positive effect on arousal dimension of brand romance.

H_{2c}: SBK has a positive effect on dominance dimension of brand romance.

2.3.3. Brand Satisfaction
Customer satisfaction is the ability to meet some desires and needs after consumption and the satisfaction level of the consumer is described as pleasing (Oliver, 1999). BS refers to positive attitudes and perceptions of the brand which the consumer has developed through his consumption experiences (Erciş et al., 2012. p. 1398). According to Caroll and Ahuvia (2006), BS is the degree of emotional attachment of an individual for a brand and brand emotions like romance may be experienced by some satisfied consumers. Whang et al. (2004) and Albert et al. (2008) reported that long-term positive attitudes toward the brand lead to romantic brand love. So, if the consumer has long-term satisfaction with his brand, he develops a feeling of romantic love toward the brand (Sarkar, 2011. p. 85). Satisfaction is a post-consumption evaluative judgment and not entirely cognitive (Mano and Oliver, 1993) and in order to convert satisfaction into brand love, satisfaction must be long-term. Thomson et al. (2005) have explained that satisfaction may lead to emotional attachment with a brand ıf there are interactions with the brand over time. Depends on these explains it may be said that satisfaction effect emotional attachment of consumers (Fernandez-Lores et al., 2016. p. 42). So, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H_{3a}: BS has a positive effect on pleasure dimension of brand romance.

H_{3b}: BS has a positive effect on arousal dimension of brand romance.

H_{3c}: BS has a positive effect on brand dominance dimension of brand romance.

2.3.4. Brand Loyalty
Loyalty is defined as consumers' commitment to a brand, a tool of the sustainability of a brand (Belaid and Behi, 2011. p. 39). According to a comprehensive definition, brand loyalty is "a deeply held commitment to rebuy, repatronize a preferred product in the future and repetitive same-brand purchasing." (Oliver, 1999. p. 34). In terms of this definition, there are two groups of brand loyalty such as attitudinal and behavioral loyalty (Kuikka

and Laukkanen, 2012. p. 522). Attitudinal loyalty is defined as the degree of an individual's commitment to a brand and consumers' psychological disposition (Chaudhuri and Holdbrook, 2001) and behavioral loyalty is defined as willingness to repurchase the same brand (Chiu et al., 2013). For some authors brand loyalty is created by consumer-brand relationships (Chitty, et al., 2012). The abstract features of the brand, such as romance, make it superior to other brands, strengthen brand loyalty and the consumer–brand relationship (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001. p. 82; Patwardhan and Balasubramanian, 2011. p. 304; Lazarevic, 2012; Amin and Malin, 2012. p. 39). For some authors, an emotional attachment such as brand romance increase attitudinal loyalty more (Aurier and De Lanauze, 2011. p. 823), for some others, there is an effect of pleasure dimension of brand romance on brand loyalty (Wang and Li, 2012. p. 164; Ye et al., 2012. p. 198), for some others arousal also directly influences consumers' purchase behaviors (Li et al., 2012. p. 135). When brand becomes embedded in consumers' lives, dominance dimension of brand romance may effect brand loyalty (Papista and Dimitriadis, 2012. p. 47). Brand loyalty should be greater for the brands that make consumers "happy" and "joyful" and may increase behavioral and attitudinal brand loyalty (ABL) (Dick and Basu, 1994). In addition, people may not purchase their loved brands only for their high quality. However, brands they are higher in brand affect may be purchased more often and these brands may increase attitudinal loyalty (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001. p. 84). Shortly, emotions may affect consumers' reaction about consumption behavior and brand loyalty (Kuikka and Laukkanen, 2012. p. 531). So, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H_{4a}: Pleasure dimension of brand romance has a positive effect on ABL.

H_{4b}: Arousal dimension of brand romance has a positive effect on ABL.

H_{4c}: Dominance dimension of brand romance has a positive effect on ABL.

H_{4d}: Pleasure dimension of brand romance has a positive effect on behavioural brand loyalty BBL.

H_{4e}: Arousal dimension of brand romance has a positive effect on BBL.

H_{4f}: Dominance dimension of brand romance has a positive effect on BBL.

In the light of the literature and hypotheses, the research model can be established as shown in Figure 1.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Goal
In competitive environment, every enterprise should offer both concrete benefits such as quality, guarantee, price and abstract benefits such as romance and love to consumers with their brands. Brand love has been widely discussed in the literature in recent times (Broadbent, 2012; Albert and Merunka, 2013; Fetscherin,

2014; Bernal, 2014; Kang, 2015), but not much attention has been paid to brand romance (Amin and Malin, 2012; Kruger et al., 2013; Patwardhan and Balasubramanian, 2013; Petzer et al., 2014). However, brand romance is associated with brand love. Brand romance may/may not turn into brand love. If positive aspects of concrete benefits such as brand novelty, brand satisfaction, and brand knowledge are perceived more, brand romance may turn into brand love and effect brand loyalty more rapidly (Amin and Malin, 2012). In this regard, as brand love is a result of romance, it is important to explore romance. Also, the first stage involving emotional attachment to brand is brand romance (Patwardhan and Balasubramanian, 2011. p. 299). But how brands create romance has so far been limitedly evaluated in detail. Thus, the present study aims to evaluate brand romance and its dimensions, determine which of the dimensions of the brand romance has more influence on brand loyalty. Also one of the other aim is to determine the effect of brand satisfaction, novelty, and perceived subjective knowledge on brand romance toward specific brands of specific product lines.

3.2. Sample and Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered to younger consumers at 18 age and over in Turkey/İstanbul. The questionnaire was administered to young based on the assumption that young may have the strongest emotional bonds to brands or young are more easily attached to brands. In other words, young market is always easily impacted by brands which are attractive for them (Sirchuk, 2012. p. 33). The more important reasons for obtaining feedback from these consumers were easy accessibility and budget constraints. Convenience sampling was employed as the sampling method and the data were collected via face-to-face questionnaires. A total of 322 questionnaire forms were administered and 295 were determined to be valid. The questionnaire consisted of two groups of questions: The first group measures brand romance, novelty, brand knowledge, satisfaction and brand loyalty, whereas the second group measures demographic characteristics and consumers' product group/brand which loved. The scope of the study was not limited to a single product line and brand. The main product lines and brands were determined based on the results of the preliminary survey carried out before. Automobile, telephone, white goods, furniture, clothing, cosmetics, and other were found to be the product lines reflecting the feeling of romance most. The brands used in the study were those which were considered to reflect the feeling of romance most and ranked among the top three in the above-mentioned survey. The top three brands in each product line were showed in Table 1. In this way, an attempt was made to determine the product lines and brands reflecting the feeling of romance for consumers the most. In this study brand romance was measured using Kruger et al. (2013); BN was measured using Fang (2008); SBK was measured using Flynn and Goldsmith (1999); BS was measured using Wu and Wang (2014) and brand loyalty was measured using Lau and Lee (1999) scale. The variables were prepared based on a 5-point Likert-type scale (5 = I strongly agree; 1 = I strongly disagree). The data were analyzed via SPSS 20.0 and LISREL 8.7. Descriptive statistics, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and structural equation modeling were used for data analysis.

3.3. Analysis Results

Table 2 shows the respondents' demographic characteristics. As shown, 61% of respondents were female, 39% were male, 38.6% were in the 18-22 age group, 87.1% were single, 14.2% had an income of less than 500 TL, 15.6% had an income of 501-900 TL, 46.1% had an income of 901-1300 TL, 10.2% had an income of 1301-1700 TL, 5.8% had an income of 1701-2000 TL, and 8.1% had an income of more than 2000 TL. More of the respondents at 27.1% were student and 21.4% were civil servant.

Table 1 shows the products and brands in which respondents perceive feelings of romance. In this group, especially the respondents were asked to deliver their opinions about which product line handled the issue of romance often. Then they were requested to indicate which brand within such product lines reflected the feeling of romance the most. In terms of product line, 32.5% of the respondents perceived romance more in telephone while 23.7% perceived romance more in clothing. In terms of brand, 23.1% of the respondents perceived romance more in the telephone

Table 1: Product lines and brands in which brand romance is perceived

Product line	N (%)	Brand	N (%)
Cosmetics	57 (19.3)	1. Chanel	47 (15.9)
		2. Other	43 (14.6)
		3. Armani	34 (11.5)
Automobile	40 (13.6)	1. Mercedes	88 (29.8)
		2. Audi	21 (7.1)
		3. Other	8 (2.7)
White Goods	3 (1.0)	1. Arçelik	44 (14.9)
		2. Bosch	26 (8.8)
		3. Samsung	15 (5.1)
Furniture	18 (6.1)	1. Ikea	39 (13.2)
		2. İstikbal	29 (9.8)
		3. Other	13 (4.4)
Telephone	96 (32.5)	1. Apple	68 (23.1)
		2. Samsung	25 (8.5)
		3. LG	21 (7.1)
Clothing	70 (23.7)	1. Zara	50 (23.1)
		2. Beymen	34 (8.5)
		3. Koton	25 (7.1)
Other	11 (3.7)		
Total			295 (100)

Figure 1: Research model
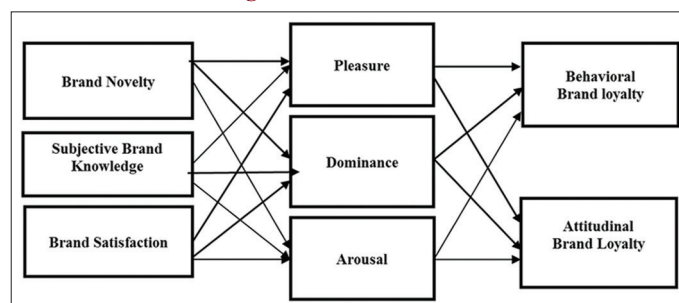
Table 2: The respondents' demographic characteristics

Characteristics	Frequency (%)
Gender	
Female	180 (61.0)
Male	115 (39.0)
Total	295 (100)
Age	
18-22	114 (38.6)
23-27	100 (33.9)
28-32	37 (12.5)
33-37	34 (11.5)
Over 37	10 (3.4)
Total	295 (100)
Income	
<500 TL	42 (14.2)
501-900 TL	46 (15.6)
901-1300 TL	136 (12.2)
1301-1700 TL	30 (10.2)
1701-2000 TL	17 (5.8)
More than 2000 TL	24 (8.1)
Total	295 (100)
Marital status	
Married	38 (12.9)
Single	257 (87.1)
Total	295 (100)
Jobs	
Student	80 (27.1)
Civil servant	63 (21.4)
Retired	17 (5.8)
Self-employed	49 (16.6)
Housewife	13 (4.4)
Other	72 (24.7)
Total	295 (100)

product line Apple while another 23.1% perceived romance more in the clothing line Zara and 15.9% of the respondents perceived romance more in the cosmetics product line Chanel. This result is consistent with the literature (Caroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Hwang and Kandampully, 2012. p. 101). When consumers perceive that a product is expressing important parts of the self, their love for these product and brand may increase. Also, with the clothing and cosmetic brands, a consumer may identify the self. Such identification encourages them to form a strong feeling toward these brands. Also, some products like fashion clothing and cosmetic products may be also more related to emotional brand attachment than are utilitarian products (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006).

The research model was tested in three stages. In the first stage, scales consisting of 35 items for the measurement of brand romance were subjected to a reliability analysis. The reliability results of the scales were good and only two items ([ROM11: Sometimes I fell I can't control my thoughts as they are focused obsessively on this brand] and [ROM12: This brand always seems to be on my mind]) were removed. In the second stage, the variables of BS, SBK, BN and brand loyalty contained in the model were tested through CFA. CFA was made to test the validity of the scales for the sample group. In the third stage, for brand romance and research model is tested by a structural equation analysis. Through the CFA, the variables displaying negative variance and having standard coefficients very close to 1.0 were checked, and unsuitable variables were eliminated (Hair et al., 1998). The

goodness-of-fit results of the model consisting of 33 ıtems and 8 variables indicated that the measurement tool had low fit. When model fit values of variables are examined, some values are seen to be below acceptable level of conformity ([CMIN/SD: BN: 9.02; SBK: 25.00; BS: 11.20], [adjusted goodness of fit index {AGFI}: SBK: 0.56] and [RMSA: BN: 0.165; SBK: 0.286; BS: 0.187; ABL: 0.111]) and ıt is needed to make modification (Hair et al., 1998; Şimşek, 2007). After modification, for BN scale "3 variables: BN4, BN5, and BN6: This brand is challenging to exiting ideas of new product category, This brand is interesting, This brand is capable of generating ideas for other brand and products," for SBK "2: SBK2, SBK4: I do not feel so knowledgeable about brand/product. When it comes to brand/product, I do not really know much about it," for satisfaction "1: BS4: I'm happy that I've bought this brand" and for BBL "2: BBL2, BBL5: I don't intent to keep buying this brand., I intend to keep buying this brand" items eliminated and scales reached acceptable level of conformity (GFI, AGFI, comparative fit index [CFI], normed fit index [NFI], non-NFI [NNFI]): 1.00 and SRMR, RMSA: 0.00). ABL scale has acceptable level and did not suggest any modifications.

Exploratory factor analysis was made via the varimax method to determine under which type of brand romance (pleasure, arousal and dominance) the statements were gathered. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value, which shows sampling adequacy, was seen to be 0.835 for brand Romance dimensions, and Barlett's test, which indicates the existence of adequate relationship between the variables, proved to be significant at the level of P < 0.001. Total variance explained was found to be %74. 777. Factors with Eigen value 1 or greater than that were extracted, as it is the standard procedure followed in prior scale development studies (Thomson et al., 2005). Exploratory factor analysis results for brand romance dimensions are as showed in Table 3. Table 3 shows that three brand-pleasure items (ROM1, ROM2, and ROM3) loaded highly on the first factor. This factor is named as brand-pleasure. Four brand arousal items (ROM5, ROM6, ROM7, and ROM8) loaded highly on the second factor. This factor is named as brand-arousal. Two brand dominance items (ROM9, ROM10) loaded highly on the third factor. This factor is named as brand-dominance. Only the items having loading 0.4 or greater were retained.

The inter-correlation between pleasure, arousal, and dominance was 0.53 which is not very high. The correlation was significant at %5. The moderate correlation indicates different factors. CFA was done to confirm the inter-correlation between three factors. The first model was tested considering all items (pleasure: ROM1, ROM2, ROM3, ROM4; arousal: ROM5, ROM6, ROM7, ROM8; dominance: ROM9, ROM10, ROM11, ROM12) under one latent construct. This model did not achieve a good fit (CMIN/DF: 402.46/51; RMSA was 0.153, GFI was 0.81; AGFI was 0.72, NFI was 0.81, NNFI was 0.78, and CFI was 0.83. Other fit indices were also not satisfactory. However, prior literature suggests that these dimension conceptually different dimensions (Patwardhan and Balasubramanian, 2011). After the relevant modifications were made the model reached to acceptable limits. After CFA analysis represent that these three factors are three distinct latent constructs.

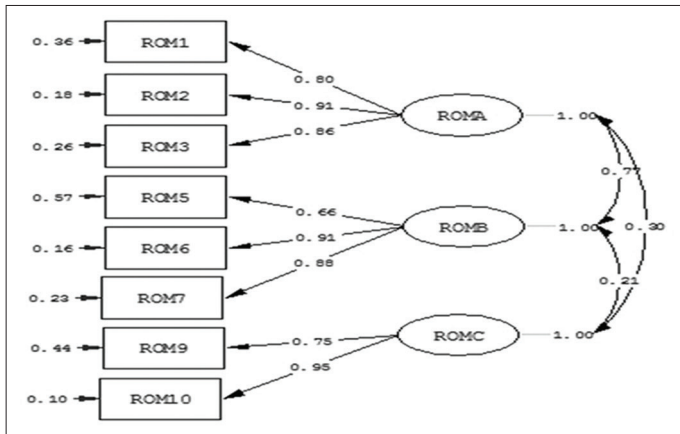**Figure 2:** Measurement model of brand romance dimensions

Figure 2 shows the standardized path estimates achieved using LISREL 8.51 software. All the path coefficients were statistically significant at 5% and measurement model is achieved a better fit (CMIN/DF: 29.07/17; GFI: 0.98; AGFI: 0.95; NFI: 0.98; NNFI: 0.99; CFI: 0.99).

But for research model there is no need for any modifications as seen in Table 4. Table 4 shows that all model fit values are in the accepted values. Table 5 shows the standard values, R^2 values, error variances, t-values, construct reliabilities, explained variance rates (EVRs), and Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the variables remaining after the recommended modifications were made. Standardized regression values were significant at the 0.05 significance level. The reliability of the scales does not necessarily mean that the models are valid. Construct reliability
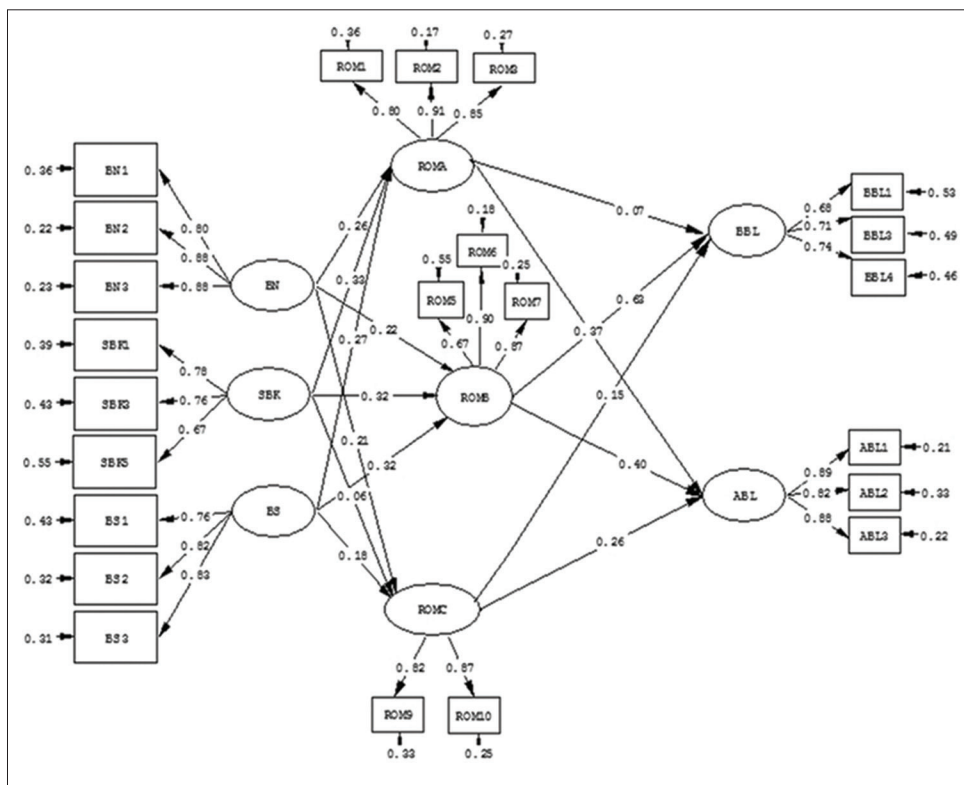
Figure 3: Path model

Table 3: Exploratory factor analysis

Variables	Factor loads	Eigen value	Percentage variance
PLE		3.119	31.192
ROM 1: I love this brand	0.842		
ROM 2: Using this brand gives me great pleasure	0.879		
ROM 3: I am really happy that this brand is available	0.418		
ARO		2.154	25.429
ROM 5: I am attracted to this brand	0.790		
ROM 6: I desire this brand	0.673		
ROM 7: I want this brand	0.693		
ROM 8: I look forward to using this brand	0.746		
DOM		1.816	18.156
ROM 9: My day-dream often include this brand	0.939		
ROM 10: This brand often dominates my thoughts	0.930		

PLE: Pleasure, ARO: Arousal, DOM: Dominance

Table 4: Fit values of the romance model

Absolute fit value	Accepted fit values	Perfect fit values	Before and after modification
Chi-square (χ^2)			430.34
Degree of freedom (df)			212
Chi-square/df (χ^2/df)	1-5	$0 \leq \chi^2/df \leq 2$	2.02
GFI	$0.90 \leq GFI \leq 0.95$	$0.95 \leq GFI \leq 1.00$	0.90
AGFI	$0.85 \leq AGFI \leq 0.90$	$0.90 \leq AGFI \leq 1.00$	0.85
SRMR	$0.05 \leq SRMR \leq 0.10$	$0 \leq SRMR \leq 0.05$	0.067
RMSEA	$0.05 \leq RMSEA \leq 0.08$	$0 \leq RMSEA \leq 0.05$	0.059
CFI	$0.95 \leq CFI \leq 0.97$	$0.97 \leq CFI \leq 1.00$	0.95
NNFI=TLI	$0.95 \leq NNFI \leq 0.97$	$0.97 \leq NNFI \leq 1.00$	0.94
NFI	$0.90 \leq NFI \leq 0.95$	$0.95 \leq NFI \leq 1.00$	0.90

AGFI: Adjusted goodness of fit index, GFI: Goodness of fit index, CFI: Comparative fit index, NFI: Normed fit index, NNFI: Non normed fit index

Table 5: Values of the variables remaining in the romance model after the modification

Variables	Standard values	R^2	Error variance	t value	CR	EVR	α
BN							
This brand is offering new ideas to market	0.80	0.64	0.11	15.93	0.89	0.73	0.87
This brand is creative	0.88	0.78	0.11	18.60			
This brand is very novel for the market	0.88	0.77	0.11	18.45			
SBK							
I know a lot about this brand/product	0.78	0.61	0.39	14.17	0.78	0.55	0.78
Among my friends, I am one of the experts in brand/product	0.76	0.57	0.53	13.63			
When I'm compared to other people, I know less about brand/product	0.67	0.45	0.63	11.74			
BS							
This brand meet my expectation	0.76	0.57	0.22	14.35	0.85	0.65	0.83
I'm satisfied with this brand	0.82	0.68	0.19	16.14			
The experience of taking this brand is joyful	0.83	0.69	0.21	16.04			
BBL							
If there is a discount on another brand, I buy the brand instead of this brand	0.68	0.47	0.66	9.37	0.75	0.51	0.77
If this brand is not available in the store when I need it, I will buy it another time	0.71	0.51	0.62	9.74			
If this brand is not available in the store when I need it, I will buy it somewhere else	0.74	0.54	0.60	9.94			
ABL							
I will defend my brand if someone else says something negative about this brand	0.89	0.79	0.08	7.48	0.89	0.72	0.88
I usually tell friends how good this brand is	0.82	0.67	0.22	18.09			
I will recommend this brand to a person who cannot decide which brand to buy	0.88	0.78	0.09	20.42			
PLE							
I love this brand	0.80	0.64	0.09	9.93	0.89	0.73	0.87
Using this brand gives me great pleasure	0.81	0.83	0.07	17.57			
I am really happy that this brand is available	0.85	0.73	0.14	16.42			
ARO							
I am attracted to this brand	0.67	0.45	0.41	8.61	0.86	0.67	0.88
I desire this brand	0.90	0.82	0.17	13.26			
I want this brand	0.87	0.75	0.21	12.94			
DOM							
My day-dream often include this brand	0.82	0.67	0.33	4.74	0.83	0.71	0.84
This brand often dominates my thoughts	0.87	0.75	0.23	9.21			

BN: Brand novelty, SBK: Subjective brand knowledge, BS: Brand satisfaction, BBL: Behavioural brand loyalty, ABL: Attitudinal brand loyalty, ARO: Arousal, PLE: Pleasure, DOM: Dominance

and explained variance must be provided for validity. A construct reliability value of more than 0.70 and an EVR of more than 0.50 indicated that the scales were reliable and valid. In addition, this result shows that the observed variables explain the dimensions they fall under adequately and consistently. Construct reliability and EVR were calculated based on the following formulas (Hair et al., 1998).

$$CR = \frac{(\sum SPC)^2}{(\sum SPC)^2 + \sum OAVE_i} \qquad EVR = \frac{\sum SPC^2}{(\sum SPC)^2 + \sum OAVE_i}$$

Where,

SPC: Standardized path coefficients, OAVE: Observed average variance extracted.

Table 6: Estimated values of the romance model

Relationships in the model	Standard value	R²	Error variance	t value*	Results
BN-Pleasure	0.26	0.49	0.51	2.57	Supported
BN-Arousal	0.22	0.49	0.51	3.00	Supported
BN-Dominance	0.21	0.15	0.85	2.33	Supported
SBK-Pleasure	0.33	0.49	0.51	4.87	Supported
SBK-Arousal	0.32	0.49	0.51	4.52	Supported
SBK-Dominance	0.06	0.15	0.85	0.75	Rejected
BS-Pleasure	0.27	0.49	0.51	3.75	Supported
BS-Arousal	0.32	0.49	0.51	4.29	Supported
BS-Dominance	0.18	0.15	0.85	1.98	Supported
PBL	0.07	0.53	0.47	1.07	Rejected
Arousal-Behavioural Loyalty	0.63	0.53	0.47	7.11	Supported
Dominance-Behavioural Loyalty	0.15	0.53	0.47	2.35	Supported
Pleasure-Attitudinal Loyalty	0.37	0.61	0.39	6.44	Supported
Arousal-Attitudinal Loyalty	0.40	0.61	0.39	6.48	Supported
Dominance-Attitudinal Loyalty	0.26	0.61	0.39	5.06	Supported

*Represents a value at the level of 5% significance. BN: Brand novelty, SBK: Subjective brand knoeledge, BS: Brand satisfaction, PBL: Pleasure behavioural loyalty

Table 6 indicates the estimated influences and t-values of the variables contained in the model. It is clear that some the influences are significant, and H_{1a}, H_{1b}, H_{1c}, H_{2a}, H_{2b}, H_{3a}, H_{3b}, H_{3c}, H_{4a}, H_{4b}, H_{4c}, H_{4e}, H_{4f} are accepted. But H_{2c}, H_{4d}, are rejected. As shown in Figure 3, BN explains brand pleasure at a rate of 0.26, brand arousal at a rate of 0.22 and brand dominance at a rate of 0.21. SBK explains brand pleasure at a rate of 0.33, brand arousal at a rate of 0.32 and brand dominance at a rate of 0.06. Consumer satisfaction explained brand pleasure at a rate of 0.27, brand arousal at a rate of 0.32 and brand dominance at a rate of 0.18. In addition, brand pleasure explains BBL at a rate of 0.07 and ABL at a rate of 0.37. Brand arousal explains BBL at a rate of 0.63 and ABL at a rate of 0.40. Lastly, brand dominance explains BBL at a rate of 0.15 and ABL at a rate of 0.26.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Today's consumers wish to show a deep interest in brands. Brand romance as a deep interest goes beyond such wishes and expectations and give meaning to consumers' lives. Because of this importance the present study aimed to determine the influences of BN, SBK, and BS on brand romance dimensions such as pleasure, arousal and dominance and the influences of brand romance dimensions (PAD) on brand loyalty.

In the present study, as product group mobile phone and apple as a telephone brand is the first choice in terms of brand romance. In second, Zara brand in clothing product category and third Chanel brand in cosmetics product category is perceived as more romantic brands. High perception of brand romance regarding telephone detected in the present study is consistent with the literature (Tsai, 2011. p. 531). The use of telephone for amusement meets hedonic needs and entertains the consumer. Moreover, as it is one of the product lines that are frequently used by the consumer in the daily life, it can cause him/her to experience various feelings during the day. It is sometimes used by the consumer as a symbolic tool of expressing his/her identity. Therefore, telephones no longer function as a communications device alone, but stand as a tool that

is used in various ways for different purposes and experiences and lead to brand loyalty with their pragmatic (e.g., mobile banking) and hedonic (e.g., games) benefits (Li et al., 2012. p. 121). High perception of brand romance in the product line of telephone found in the present study suggests businesses that consumer-brand relationship or non-material benefits are also important in the product line of technology, in which material benefits are in the forefront (Franzak and Pitta, 2011. p. 396). Developing consumer-brand relationship not only creates brand loyalty in these kinds of products (Wang and Li, 2012. p. 149) but also prevents customers from heading to competitor brands (Hoyer et al., 2013). Because of this importance, for this product group' familiarity may not improve brand romance and BN is important (Patwardhan and Balasubramanian, 2013. p. 79). Also, satisfaction is important to enhance brand romance. But satisfaction and BN is not only important. SBK is also important.

The findings of this study indicated that, BN and BS have significant positive influences on all three dimensions. This results are consistent with the literature (Whang et al., 2004; Thomson et al., 2005; Vazquez-Carrasco and Foxall, 2006; Caroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Sarkar, 2011; Sarkar et al., 2012; Patwardhan and Balasubramanian, 2013; Hetet et al., 2014; Fernandez-Lores et al., 2016). Especially excessive novelty and satisfaction will lead to excessively high brand romance levels (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974; Thomson et al., 2005). But SBK has not only a significant effect on brand dominance. So, hypotheses H_{1a}, H_{1b}, H_{1c}, H_{2a}, H_{2b}, H_{3a}, H_{3b}, and H_{3c} were supported while H_{2c} was rejected. Furthermore the effect of all three dimensions have a significant effect on ABL and the effect of brand pleasure and arousal on BBL is significant. But there is not a significant effect of brand pleasure on BBL. This results are consistent with the literature (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Sarkar, 2011; Patwardhan and Balasubramanian, 2011; Papista and Dimitriadis, 2012; Li et al., 2012; Kuikka and Laukkanen, 2012; Patwardhan and Balasubramanian, 2013; Petzer et al., 2014). Pleasure and dominance types of brand romance have more influence on attitudinal loyalty than on BBL. This result is also consistent with the literature (Sprecher and Metts, 1999). Brand loyalty is more based on brand beliefs and attitudes rather than on brand experience (Oliver, 1999; Aurier and De Lanauze 2011.

p. 823). Furthermore, the fact that arousal was found to be the type of brand romance having the biggest influence on both types of loyalty can be explained by Petzer et al. (2014), who report that arousal is the most influential variable on loyalty. Also, positive feelings about a brand may not always directly affect behavioral loyalty (Dick and Basu, 1994). Due to financial states of consumers effect of brand pleasure on behavioral brand romance may not be significant (Bandyopadhyay and Martell, 2007). So, H_{4a}, H_{4b}, H_{4c}, H_{4e}, H_{4f} are accepted. But H_{4d} is rejected.

The findings of this study imply that, in addition to concrete aspects, abstract aspects are also influential on customers' brand loyalty. One of these abstract aspects is having feelings such as romance toward the brand. According to this study results, brand romance has three dimensions such as pleasure, arousal and dominance, and this result is consistent with the literature (Sarkar et al., 2012. p. 328; Patwardhan and Balasubramanian, 2011). This means that some individuals may experience different level of romance for same brands. Because many factors affect the emergence of this feeling in consumers' mind. Same factors such as BN, satisfaction and brand knowledge may have different effect on brand romance and BS is one of the most important ones (Sarkar, 2011. p. 90). In this study, the effect of satisfaction on dominance is lower than other dimensions. So, to increase consumers' dominance emotion toward their brands, marketers must differentiate themselves using romantic contents in marketing communications as a part of consumers' identity (Burnham et al., 2003. p. 119). Marketers should provide satisfactory brands to stimulate and elicit especially pleasure and arousal (Oliver, 1999. p. 34; Mugge et al., 2010. p. 279). BS is necessary, but it may not be enough by itself because not every satisfied customer is loyal to the brand (Coyles and Gokay, 2002). Therefore, a consumer must be offered more than a brand. In addition to satisfaction, novelty in the brand and information about it may be offered. Marketers should try to reduce the variety seeking feelings of the consumer by novelty. If the consumer meets more than what he expects, he can need variety seeking less, romance and loyalty more. If novel experiences decline, or if familiarity appears excessive, this attraction may be weaken (Patwardhan and Balasubramanian, 2013. p. 75). Because consumers may perceive variety seeking with product familiarity. So, the most important contribution of the present study to the literature is that it allows understanding of the factors that make consumers develop long-term romance toward brands. Enterprises can be more aware of the need to prevent consumers from variety seeking and should take this into consideration emotional attachments when developing marketing strategies. In addition, they can notice that offering consumer's novelty in the brand, informing them of all kinds of developments about it, and making efforts to raise consumers' satisfaction will strengthen their feeling of romance and enterprises can gain competitive advantage by this way. It should be remembered that customers with high brand romance will consent to pay more money and not change their brands, which may bring more profits to enterprises. To sum up, enterprises should recognize that real brand loyalty can be achieved only with a brand that reflects romance. To increase romance by the levels of satisfaction enterprises may focus on long-term satisfaction first, because customers satisfied with a brand for a long time will find it attractive, approach it with romantic feelings, and have high loyalty to it thanks to these feelings. However, they should also be aware that satisfaction is necessary, but not enough.

Since short-term satisfaction is not enough for romantic emotions, it is a necessary condition for satisfaction to be maintained for a longer period. Various short-term loyalty programs exist. For instance, the frequent consumers of a company may be offered special discount by it. It is likely for the consumer to have a high-level satisfaction with this discount offer. This will be short-term satisfaction. When the company puts an end to the loyalty program, many consumers are likely to turn to another competitor company. In the course of the loyalty program, companies must make an attempt to provide their customers with some other experiences (besides mere price discount) that will make them delighted. Providing that such experiences become successful in making the customers delighted, the customers will start to feel a kind of romantic emotion, which might lead to loyalty that is likely to remain for a longer period. Thus, enterprises should offer consumers novelty and keep them informed of this novelty continuously. They should make an effort for their brands not to become old. They should always check whether their customers are need change, offer novelty to prevent them from experiencing variety seeking, and inform them of such novelty. Novelty should not only be in technological terms; it should cover distribution strategies, price, and product positioning as well. Furthermore, enterprises should not only treat customers as business partners who bring them profits, but develop relationships based on strong emotional bonds with them (Patwardhan and Balasubramanian, 2011. p. 304). Brand advertisements should contain much romantic themes in order to evoke romantic feeling about the brand in the mind of the consumer. It is reported in the relationship marketing literature that consumers having a real brand loyalty prefer the products of the relevant firm more, and attitudinal loyalty is the best indicator of firm-consumer relationship (Crosby, 2002). The present study also demonstrates that the influences of romance dimensions on attitudinal loyalty are generally higher.

The present study can be used to guide future research as well. Some recommendations for studies are provided. In the present study, more brand romance was perceived in telephone as apple, in clothing as Zara and in cosmetic as Chanel brand. Thus, comprehensive research can be conducted on other products and brands. The effects of brand romance can be compared in different luxury product lines where the effects of romance can be felt intensely. Based on the idea that the effect of romance is lower in products in some different markets, such as the industrial market and higher in fashion products (Kang, 2015. p. 91), the effects of romance on these product lines can be investigated and compared. Different consumers can have different levels of brand romance. Therefore, research can be conducted on different groups such as on only women, men. As romance is a concept associated with personality and it is assumed that individuals with the same level of self-monitoring will have the same level of romance (Norris and Zweigenhaft, 1999), the relationship between self-monitoring and romance can be explored. As romance may have different effects on individuals with different demographic characteristics, research can be conducted on adults only. The effects of romance

on women and men can also be compared. The consumer–brand relationship may vary from culture to culture (Hakala et al., 2012. p. 445; Liu et al., 2012. p. 933). Thus, research should explore different cultures to generalize the research results. To make a more detailed evaluation, relationships of brand romance with factors such as instinctive purchases and quest for variety can be investigated. The study may be investigated in terms of different antecedents and outputs of brand romance. One of the limitations of the present study is that it was conducted with only young over 18 ages in Istanbul. The construct needs to be validated with the other sample (x, y and z generations) and the model re-estimated. Various product lines or brands were taken in to account. The results of this study cannot be generalized to different regions, brand and product groups.

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