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Brand Loyalty's Impact on Customer Engagement in Virtual Brand Communities – by the case of Turkish Market

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ABSTRACT

Customer engagement, in recent years, has received substantial attention by marketing practitioners and scholars in accordance with the rise in awareness that customers are the value co-creators rather than value recipients. With the recognition that customer experiences add significant value to the firm, companies seek ways to interact with their customers reciprocally so that the value that both the firm and the customer receive can be maximized. Accordingly, scholars argue that marketing view has shifted from marketing-to to marketing-with approach; therefore, customer engagement has become an essential constituent of a sound marketing strategy. The Marketing Science Institute (MSI) affirms the prominence of the customer engagement concept and announces customer engagement as one of the top research priorities for the period 2010-2012 (Marketing Science Institute [MSI] 2010).

Despite this interest, there are few scholars inquiring the main antecedents which are directly linked to customer engagement. The main focus of this master thesis is to investigate brand loyalty as one of the main antecedents of customer engagement. More specifically, this paper examines brand loyalty's impact on customer engagement. Moreover, with the rise in popularity of online brand communities where firms are able to interact with their consumers for co-creation marketing activities, virtual brand communities have been chosen as the context of the current study.

For the purpose of analyzing brand loyalty as an antecedent of customer engagement in online brand communities, a quantitative study is undertaken and a survey is conducted to Turkish consumers. The study reports the findings analyzing data from 193 respondents who are members of various Facebook brand pages. The study results reveal direct paths from brand loyalty dimensions to customer engagement dimensions. Overall, the current study finds the brand loyalty as the direct trigger which leads to various intensity levels of customer engagement on online brand communities. Consequently, the implications for literature and business practice are discussed based on study results.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Customer engagement in the marketing literature is a rather new phenomenon which has recently received considerable attention. The underlying rationale of this increased attention is the discovery of the indirect impact that engaged customers have on firm performance (Bijmolt et al., 2010). Brodie et al. (2011) proposes that engaged customers have a key role in enhanced corporate performance by providing word-of-mouth about the products, services, and/or brands to others, involving in new product/service development, and co-creating experience and value.

Van Doorn et al. (2011) emphasize that customer engagement explains the behaviors that go beyond transactions and purchase. Traditionally, the firms' main focus was the transactional relationships which create immediate cash flows. Moreover, in the classical view, the customer was seen as a passive recipient of value created by companies (Deshpande, 1983). The focus of marketing shifted from the product-centric to a customer-centric view more than a decade ago (Day 1999; Webster 1992) with the relationship marketing approach. However, the transaction-centered view which sees customers as the value recipients has not changed until recently. In recent years, the domain of relationship marketing has been broadened (Vivek, 2009), with the perspective shifting from 'marketing-to' to 'marketing-with' approach. The latter is symbolized by the service-dominant logic (S-D logic) which claims that the value is always co-created with the collaboration of the consumers, in contrast with the goods-dominant logic (G-D logic) of traditional view where consumers are provided with the value created by the firms (Lusch, 2007). Schau et al. (2009) also emphasizes this revolution in marketing thought and agrees with the argument by Lusch and Vargo (2006) that "cocreation will ultimately induce firms to collaborate with customers to cocreate the entire marketing program". Correspondingly, Verhoef et al. (2010) reveal the increasing trend in companies trying to encourage their customers to involve in this kind of non-transactional behaviors that go beyond the purchase intentions; e.g. the example of Lays' who made a contest asking consumers to create the best chips flavor, or LEGO who created the robotic kit Mindstorms harnessing the consumer innovation (Koerner, 2006).

Therefore, the prominence of the non-transactional customer behaviors and thus the need for customer engagement has increased importance. Accordingly, the concept of customer engagement

is still emerging in the marketing literature, and has become a very important research stream. The Marketing Science Institute affirms the importance of this stream by considering the research on customer engagement as one of the top priorities for the period 2010-2012 (Marketing Science Institute [MSI] 2010).

One of the most popular contexts of customer engagement is that of virtual brand communities. With the rise of the Internet and the sophisticated information and communication technologies (ICTs), the platforms that facilitate the consumer interactions have been developed which, in turn, initiated the formation of virtual brand communities (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). The social networking sites (SNS), e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Google+, attract companies along with the individuals, as they provide them the opportunity to meet and communicate with their consumers. Companies, which have long before started concentrating their efforts on relationship marketing by adopting a consumer-centric approach, consider SNS as a new media where they can build and/or improve these relationships; and yet more where they can involve their customers in co-creation activities. Accordingly, more and more firms, with an intention to engage with their consumers, build their brand pages and create virtual brand communities on SNS.

Accompanied by the above-mentioned opportunity comes the challenges for the companies by means of the communication with the consumers through virtual brand communities. Social media has introduced a new concept to the practice of relationship marketing: the network communication. Traditionally, the communication flow was dyadic either from-company-to-consumer (product-centric approach) or from-consumer-to-company (consumer centric approach). Social media advanced the communication model and enabled a network communication by gathering the stakeholders of the brand (Merz et al., 2009) to the same location which brings the challenge of managing this complex communication flow.

Facebook, which stands as the leading SNS by covering 55% of the online audience worldwide with a 43% increase within 5 years, accounts for the most popular virtual brand community site (comScore, 2012). Companies having brand pages on Facebook express that page 'likes' is not sufficient to explain the customer-brand interactions through this complex network of communications. Congruently, iProspect, the UK performance marketing agency, developed a

Facebook Engagement Index which includes not only page ‘likes’ but also the responses of the fans on the page including comments and posts (iProspect, 2012). A recent study by iProspect who analyzed engagement rate of 250 ‘super-brands’ on Facebook with the aforementioned index concludes that “brands with the most fans actually recorded some of the lowest engagement scores” (Promomarketing, 2012), which proves the point that page ‘likes’ do not imply a high brand page performance. The group director for paid social media of iProspect, Angus Wood, also declares that;

“Brands are coming to recognize that fan engagement is every bit as important as fan acquisition. It’s easy to go out and buy ‘fans’ with short term competitions and other fan-bait, but if those users never return, and never interact with the brand’s content, it’s not an efficient investment.”(Promomarketing, 2012).

As a consequence, as companies are seeking ways to increase the customer engagement in their brand pages, the marketing and social media agencies (e.g. socialbakers, iProspect) develop methods to measure brand page engagement rates based on customers’ active participation on the page.

Furthermore, customer engagement in the marketing literature extends the topic from behaviors to the psychological aspects of the construct. While, the studies on virtual brand communities and the industrial customer engagement measurement methods primarily focus on behaviors, such as calculating the members’ participation rates on the brand page, the academic marketing literature emphasizes the richness of the construct that goes beyond behaviors. However, there is very limited research which analyzes customer engagement integrating both psychological and behavioral aspects of the concept in the context of virtual brand communities (Brodie et al., 2011b). Therefore, one of the purposes of this study is to fill this gap by applying the knowledge developed in the customer engagement literature to virtual brand communities.

Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) define brand community as a “specialized, non-geographically bound community that is based on a structured set of social relations among admirers of a brand”. This definition is largely recognized by other researches (e.g. McAlexander et al., 2002, 2003; Andersen, 2005; Algesheimer et al., 2005; Bagozzi&Dholakia, 2006), and gives the indication that

a brand community is composed of the admirers of a specific brand. Based on the definition of brand communities by Muniz and O'Guinn (2001), therefore, we assume that consumers become a member of virtual brand communities if they admire the brand which requires the existence of positive attitudes towards the brand. That signifies the role of attitudinal aspects in brand community membership.

Moreover, these positive attitudes towards the brand can be in various forms. According to Oliver (1999), attitudes towards the brand which leads to brand loyalty occurs initially in a cognitive way, later in an emotional manner, and still later in conative manner. Thus, at each state the positive attitudes toward the brand get stronger. These attitudinal stages of brand loyalty consequently lead to the behaviors, such as re-purchasing the product, which is called as behavioral loyalty. The proposition that the attitudinal loyalty leads to behavioral loyalty has its basis on the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen&Fishbein, 1980) which posits that people's attitudes affect their choice of action. By the same token, it can be inferred that the positive attitudes toward a brand influence the people's choices to become a member of the brand's virtual community, which also confirms the definition of brand community as the "admirers of a brand" by Muniz and O'Guinn (2001). On the other hand, as these attitudes take various forms through the brand loyalty process, and assuming that attitudes impact behaviors (Ajzen&Fishbein, 1980), then it is possible that these different attitudes result in different behaviors in virtual brand communities.

It is explicitly proposed by Brodie et al. (2011a) that customer engagement (CE) "occurs within a specific set of situational conditions generating differing CE levels".Furthermore, Brodie et al. (2011b) conducted a study in an online brand community and the results supported this proposition that customer engagement occurs at different intensity levels. However, thus far, the reasons resulting in variations in customer engagement levels in virtual brand communities have not been studied. It is also suggested by Brodie et al. (2011a) for future research to focus on the key triggers of particular customer engagement intensity within specific contexts, and the key drivers of cognitive, emotional, behavioral customer engagement dimensions. Accordingly, this study aims examining the brand loyalty's role in customer engagement intensity in the context of virtual brand communities. More specifically, given the significant role of attitudes in behaviors based on theory of reasoned action (Ajzen&Fishbein, 1980), we are interested in investigating how attitudes

developed through brand loyalty process towards brands can explain the differences in customer engagement in virtual brand communities. If the impact of brand loyalty on customer engagement is known, it is possible to provide a more targeted communication in online brand communities, and perhaps, eventually increase the consumers' engagement. Correspondingly, Van Doorn et al. (2010) suggest that customer engagement behaviors are likely to be functions of several antecedents, and loyalty is likely to be the attitudinal antecedent of these engagement behaviors. Likewise, Brodie et al. (2011a) assert that even though the customer engagement is a superior predictor of customer loyalty in interactive environments, validation of these connections is still to be carried out through empirical research. Accordingly, it is in the interest of this research to investigate the impact of the brand loyalty states on the consumers' engagement with the brand in virtual brand communities.

Furthermore, this research will take place in Turkey which has 92.2% of its population in social networking sites: the highest rate in Europe. Facebook is the leading social networking site in Turkey with a penetration of 90.4% (comScore, 2011a). Moreover, Turkey has the highest online page consumption rate in Europe with 3,706 pages per month, and the third most engaged users spending an average of 32.7 hours online per visitor in a month (comScore, 2011b). Furthermore, social networking is the most popular online activity for Turkish market as Facebook is the most engaging site with 13.1 billion minutes spent, accounting for the 28.8% of all time spent online during the month (comScore, 2011b). According to the average hours spent on social networking sites, Turkey is ranked as the 5th country amongst all countries in the world with 7.8 hours spent per visitor per month (comScore, 2011c).

Considering the high popularity of social networking, more specifically Facebook, in Turkey, many companies have jumped into Facebook building their fan pages. The value of the opportunity that Facebook offers to the companies to reach their customers is indisputable. However, Facebook being a brand new media for companies, very little known about right marketing and communication strategies in this new media that will attract customers and increase engagement. Hence, it is in interest of this research to provide insights to the companies in Turkey by conducting the study in Turkish market.

Accordingly, the research question of the study is;

Research Question: What is the impact of brand loyalty states on customer engagement in virtual brand communities?

The significance of this study is threefold. First, it will add value to the customer engagement literature in response to emerging importance of the concept as emphasized by Marketing Science Institute (MSI, 2010). Second, it will develop the understanding of engagement in the context of virtual brand communities which have, so far, only focused on members' behaviors. And third, by analyzing the impact of brand loyalty on customer engagement in virtual brand communities, it will provide insights to the companies in Turkey about how various customer types based on their loyalty levels engage differently and therefore they can adapt their communication with them consistently.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The primary interest of this research is to find out how consumers' brand loyalty states impact their engagement intensity with the brand on virtual brand communities. With the purpose of analyzing this research question, initially the main concepts should be defined and their dimensions should be identified which will subsequently lead us to the next chapter where we build the research hypotheses and the conceptual model. Accordingly in the present chapter, we will review the literature related to the two main concepts of this research, namely customer engagement and brand loyalty.

2.1. Customer Engagement

2.1.1. Theoretical Foundations of Customer Engagement

The concept of customer engagement is a newly evolving phenomenon in the field of marketing. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the emerging point and theoretical basis of the concept. The

exploratory studies which develop the conceptual domain of customer engagement predominantly draw on recently evolving perspective of relationship marketing (e.g. Brodie et al., 2011a; Brodie et al., 2011b; Vivek, 2009; Bijmolt et al., 2010; van Doorn et al., 2010). The new logic in relationship marketing, which will be further explained in the following section, involves consumers as endogenous instruments in the value creation process of the firm, and therefore, requires consumers to be actively engaged in the process. The context of customer engagement emerges subsequently and attracts substantial attention by the scholars and the firms.

On the other hand, engagement term is relatively older concept which has received attention for the last two decades in management discipline and for even longer time in psychology and sociology disciplines. The marketing scholars, extensively, build the theoretical basis of the customer engagement concept on these fields.

Therefore, in the following section we will explain the expanded domain of relationship marketing which involves the recent developments in the marketing field and where the customer engagement concept lies. Afterwards, we will explain the engagement term which is analyzed in other disciplines and where the conceptualization of the customer engagement is derived from.

i. Expanded Domain of Relationship Marketing

The traditional relationship marketing perspective is exchange-centric with a primary focus on products and services. Moreover, in the traditional view, the communication flow is from organizations to consumers so that the consumers are persuaded and the value is exchanged between the firm and the consumer (Prahalad&Ramaswamy, 2004). In other words, consumers are the passive recipients of the value (Deshpande, 1983) and customer engagement is exogenous to the traditional marketing perspective (Bijmolt et al., 2010). On the other hand, the broadened domain of relationship marketing is distinguished from the traditional view with its experience-centric approach (Vivek, 2009). According to this view, the basis of value is the customer experiences in the process of co-creation which refers to including consumers in the course of firm's value creation. Therefore, the concept of customer engagement emerges with the expansion of relationship marketing domain and becomes the central notion of the marketing system (Vivek, 2009).

The expanded domain of relationship marketing is termed by Vivek (2009). This concept covers the recent developments in marketing which can be found in the literature under various titles; such as service dominant logic (Vargo, 2009; Vargo&Lusch, 2004, 2008; Lusch&Vargo, 2006, 2010), value co-creation (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004), relationship marketing engagement (Ashley et al., 2010), and social CRM (Baird &Parasnis, 2011). Prahalad&Ramaswamy (2004) state that the companies are rapidly replacing the product and firm centric approach with personalized consumer experiences where “informed, networked, empowered, and active” consumers are co-creating value with the firm. Likewise, Vargo (2009) explains the shift from goods dominant logic (G-D logic) to service-dominant logic (S-D logic) which considers products as vehicles rather than primary to the creation of exchange and value. They explicitly posit that the value is always created with collaboration of the consumers which is called “co-creation”. Ashley et al. (2010), with a similar point of view, emphasize the role of customer engagement in relationship marketing practices. They state that one reason that traditional relationship marketing programs fail is the failure of the companies to engage customers in co-operative and collaborative marketing activities. Consistently, Baird &Parasnis (2011), the IBM consultants, introduce a new paradigm called “Social CRM”. The authors state that Social CRM, differently from the traditional CRM, encompasses the role of businesses in facilitating collaborative social experiences and dialog that customers value.

From practical perspective, successful companies realize the importance of creating unique consumer experiences instead of applying mass marketing practices (Prahalad, 2004). Accordingly they make significant amount of investments for experience-centric co-creation campaigns. For instance, the SCA Libresse launched a Web 2.0 campaign in 2007 in its Nordic market, and asked people to design a pair of underpants on a drawing program. The winner received a cash prize and the designed underpants were distributed to 180 fashion stores in Nordic regions (Fagerstrom&Ghinea, 2010). Another similar example is the online co-creation campaign by Nescafe in 2009 for Chinese market with a slogan which says “Nescafe helps you put your design in the hands of everybody”. Consumers designed cups, mobile phone lanyards, postcards, etc., and the best designer won Nescafe gifts along with the copyright of his work (Douban, 2009). These examples are consistent with the literature enlightening the expanded relationship marketing view in which customers co-create the value and the main focus is the experiences of consumers rather than

the product itself. Contrarily, traditional product-centric paradigm of relationship marketing falls short to explain such marketing activities.

Central to the new relationship marketing logic with increased importance and attention for co-creation and consumer experiences, is the context of customer engagement. Brodie et al. (2011b) states that the concept of customer engagement centers on the interactive consumer experiences. Likewise, Vivek (2009) posits that consumer engagement is the principal construct of the marketing system within the perspective of expanded domain of relationship marketing. Moreover, Prahalad & Ramaswamy (2004) mentions 'dialog' as one of the 'building blocks of interaction for co-creation of value'. The authors define 'dialog' as "interactivity, deep engagement, and the ability and willingness to act on both sides" which clearly emphasizes the necessity of consumer engagement in the context. Lusch & Vargo (2010) also places customer engagement as the central concept of S-D logic by stating that "interactive, cocreative customer experiences may be interpreted as the act of engaging.". Furthermore, Brodie et al. (2011a) discusses that S-D logic is the conceptual root of customer engagement by drawing on over 50 articles that used the term engagement addressing the S-D logic.

ii. Engagement

The term engagement has been used in various disciplines comprising psychology (social engagement), sociology (civic engagement), management (employee engagement), and political science (state engagement), with an emphasis on the different aspects of the concept (Hollebeek 2011; Brodie et al., 2011a). Consequently, the literature embraces a variety of conceptualizations of engagement.

In business, the concept of engagement is initially used in the field of organizational behavior by Kahn (1990). The author defined the concept of personal engagement in work environment drawing on the theories of psychology. The employee engagement concept is further developed for the last two decades primarily based on psychology and sociology, from which the engagement dimensions are adopted, namely cognitive, emotional and physical (e.g. Frank, Richard, & Taylor, 2004; Luthans & Peterson, 2002; Saks, 2006; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Crawford, LePine, & Rich, 2010).

For instance, Crawford, LePine, and Rich (2010) defines employee engagement as “the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles by which they employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances”. Likewise, Saks (2006) defines engagement as “the amount of cognitive, emotional, and physical resources an individual is prepared to devote in the performance of his or her work roles”. Moreover, Schaufeli et al. (2002) define engagement as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption”. The dimensions vigor, dedication, and absorption refer to physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement respectively (Brodie et al., 2011a) and further explained by the authors;

“Vigor is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working and by the willingness and ability to invest effort in one’s work. Dedication is characterized by a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge. The final dimension of engagement, absorption, is characterized by being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one’s work, whereby time passes quickly and one feels carried away by one’s job.” Schaufeli et al. (2002).

The cognitive (absorption), emotional (dedication) and physical (vigor) dimensions of engagement, later on, constructed the base of the conceptualization of the customer engagement in the marketing field, which will be further explained in the following sections.

2.1.2. Definition of Customer Engagement

In contrast to the other disciplines, the engagement concept in the marketing literature has just emerged lately, in response to the aforementioned developments in the relationship marketing approach both in business practices and in academic marketing literature. Indeed, the terms “consumer engagement” and “customer engagement” have been used in the academic marketing and service literature only in the last few years (Brodie et al., 2011a). Hence there is not one common view of customer engagement, but there are various definitions and applications.

The first attempt to define and develop a systematic conceptualization of customer engagement can be tracked to the study of Patterson et al. (2006). They draw on organizational behavior literature and define customer engagement as “the level of a customer’s physical, cognitive, and

emotional presence in their relationship with a service organization”. Later, Vivek (2009) examines various disciplines including psychology, sociology and management and defines consumer engagement as “the intensity of consumer’s participation and connection with the organization’s offerings, and/ or organized activities.” The author further differentiates customer engagement from consumer engagement. While the former indicates the engagement of existing customers of a specific firm, the latter encompasses engagement of prospects and potentials as well as the customers. In the expanded domain of relationship marketing, in contrast to the traditional view, the main focus is not only the retention of existing customers but also the acquisition of the prospects. Therefore the author claims that the consumer engagement term better represent the concept.

Moreover, van Doorn et al. (2010) focus on the behavioral aspects of the customer-firm relationships and therefore use the term “customer engagement behaviors”. The authors define it as “customer’s behavioral manifestations that have a brand or firm focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers.” Additionally, they emphasize the difference of customer engagement from the term “brand engagement”. Brand engagement is defined as “an individual difference representing consumers’ propensity to include important brands as part of how they view themselves” (Sprott, Czellar, &Spangenberg, 2009). Van Doorn et al. (2010) discuss that brand engagement is more similar to consumer psychology approaches, such as self-brand connection and customer-brand relationships, whereas customer engagement has a behavioral focus.

Furthermore, Brodie et al. (2011a) makes an extensive analysis of definitions and conceptualizations of the term engagement in social sciences and management disciplines, and the term customer engagement in the marketing and service literature. They, accordingly, suggest five fundamental propositions based on which they provide a general definition of customer engagement:

“Customer engagement (CE) is a psychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive, cocreative customer experiences with a focal agent/object (e.g., a brand) in focal service relationships. It occurs under a specific set of context dependent conditions generating differing CE levels; and exists as a dynamic, iterative process within service relationships that cocreate value. CE plays a central role in a nomological network governing service relationships in which other

relational concepts (e.g., involvement, loyalty) are antecedents and/or consequences in iterative CE processes. It is a multidimensional concept subject to a context- and/or stakeholder-specific expression of relevant cognitive, emotional and/or behavioral dimensions” (Brodie et al., 2011a).

The definition stated by Brodie et al. (2011a) can be considered to be the most comprehensive customer engagement definition in the literature: First, they adopt the organizational behavior literature by depicting the dimensions – cognitive, emotional and/or behavioral – in generic terms so that it fits in the use of customer engagement in any context (Brodie et al., 2011a). Second, instead of focusing only on behavioral aspects, they employ multiple dimensions comprising the psychological aspects as well so that it reflects the complexity of the concept. And third, they incorporate various customer engagement definitions in their propositions; hence the resulting definition reconciles different perspectives of customer engagement in the literature.

2.1.3. Dimensions of Customer Engagement

As the customer engagement concept is still emerging in the marketing literature, there is a lack of consensus regarding its dimensionality and operationalization (Cheung et al., 2011). The conceptualizations of engagement in the management literature, which is discussed earlier in this chapter, embrace three dimensions- cognitive, emotional, and physical. On the other hand, customer engagement in the marketing literature can be separated into two classifications: unidimensional conceptualizations which are predominantly focusing on only behavioral aspect of customer engagement (Kumar et al., 2010; Doorn et al., 2010; Bijmolt et al., 2010), and multidimensional conceptualizations which comprise several dimensions including cognitive, emotional, physical, and/or behavioral (Patterson, 2006; Vivek et al., 2010; Hollebeek, 2011; Mollen & Wilson 2010; Brodie et al., 2011; Cheung et al., 2011).

According to the study of Brodie et al. (2011), 40% of the engagement definitions in the academic literature and business practices are unidimensional and dominantly focusing on the behavioral aspect of the engagement. Similarly, Cheung et al. (2011) also express that the marketing practitioners have a tendency to concentrate on behavioral measures of customer engagement. Van Doorn et al. (2010) who practice unidimensional approach and define customer engagement as a “behavioral manifestation” declares that the dominant stance of customer engagement as a behavior

in the literature reflects that “...the behavioral component is often considered the main distinguishing element of customer engagement because taking action differentiates engaged customers from others.” By taking a behavioral view of customer engagement, they dimensionalize it with five variables; namely valence, form or modality, scope, nature of its impact, and customer goals. Correspondingly, Bijmolt et al. (2010) base their study on the definition of van Doorn et al. (2010) with a view of customer engagement as a behavioral manifestation and include word of mouth, co-creation, and complaining behaviors to the operationalization of the concept.

In contrast to the uni-dimensional behavioral view of customer engagement, the multidimensional view defines it as a “psychological state” comprising cognitive, emotional, physical and/or behavioral dimensions (Brodie et al., 2011a,b; Patterson et al., 2006; Hollebeek, 2011; Vivek, 2009; Cheung et al., 2011). Brodie et al. (2011) indicate that unidimensional approaches do not reflect the rich conceptual scope of customer engagement. Hollebeek (2011), in consistence, applies a multi-dimensional approach and incorporates cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspects in the conceptualization of customer brand engagement. The author defines customer brand engagement as “the level of a customer’s motivational, brand-related, and context-dependent state of mind characterized by specific levels of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral activity in brand interactions”. Likewise, Patterson et al. (2006) draw on organizational behavior literature and define customer engagement dimensions by absorption, dedication, vigor and interaction. Brodie et al. (2011) argue that absorption and dedication corresponds to cognitive and emotional engagement dimensions respectively, whereas vigor and interaction, together, reflect the behavioral engagement.

“Absorption is the level of customer concentration on a focal engagement object, such as a brand/organization, thus reflecting the cognitive dimension of engagement; Dedication is a customer’s sense of belonging to the organization/brand, which corresponds to the emotional dimension of engagement; Vigor is a customer’s level of energy and mental resilience in interacting with a focal engagement object; and Interaction is the two-way communications between a focal engagement subject and object. The latter two dimensions (i.e., “vigor” and “interaction”) reflect the behavioral dimension of engagement” (Brodie et al., 2011a).

Futhermore, Brodie et al. (2011b), analyzes customer engagement in an exploratory study by initially observing the communications in a virtual brand community and subsequently applying qualitative in-depth interviews with the community members. The study concludes that in the online brand community context members demonstrate cognitive, emotional and behavioral engagement states at fluctuating intensity levels. Therefore, it provides an exploratory support for the complex multidimensional nature of customer engagement.

Though the literature is in disagreement about the dimensionality of customer engagement, as van Doorn (2011) states "...these views do not need to be exclusive and might be reconcilable". Van Doorn (2011) further suggests that a distinction between psychological state and behavioral customer engagement can be made with an inspiration of Oliver (1999)'s loyalty model which distinguishes attitudinal and behavioral loyalty states. Respectively, Cheung et al. (2011), develop a conceptual model of customer engagement for an online social platform which integrates both views and makes a distinction between psychological and behavioral engagement (Table 1).

Table 1.

Psychological State Customer Engagement	
Cognitive (Absorption)	"being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in an online social platform."
Emotional (Dedication)	"a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge towards an online social platform."
Physical (Vigor)	"the level of energy and mental resilience while using an online social platform, willingness to invest time and effort in one's role as a customer."
Behavioral Customer Engagement	
Online social platform participation	
WOM of the online social platform	

Table 1 Dimensions of Customer Engagement in an Online Social Platform (Cheung et al., 2011)

According to the model of Cheung et al. (2011), while "behavioral customer engagement" comprises "online social platform participation" and "word of mouth"; "psychological state customer engagement" consists of cognitive (absorption), emotional (dedication), and physical

(vigor) engagement states. The authors, unlike many other scholars who apply multidimensional customer engagement models (e.g. Brodie et al., 2011a,b; Hollebeek, 2011), make a distinction between physical and behavioral engagement dimensions. More specifically, although Patterson et al. (2006) explains vigor and interaction elements of customer engagement separately, Brodie et al. (2011a,b) state that both elements are related to the behavioral aspect of the concept. On the other hand, Cheung et al. (2011) operationalize the “vigor” element referring to physical engagement in psychological customer engagement dimension, and the “interaction” element referring to behavioral customer engagement dimension. Consistently, Patterson et al. (2006) define vigor as “a customer’s level of energy and mental resilience in interacting with a focal engagement object” which implies a psychological state, and interaction as “the two-way communications between a focal engagement subject and object”, thus indicating the behavioral engagement.

2.1.4. Differentiation from the similar constructs: Involvement and Participation

Even though some studies, specifically in the literature of virtual brand communities, use the term engagement as a substitute word for involvement and/or participation (e.g. Schau, Muniz, & Arnould, 2009), scholars developing the customer engagement concept emphasize its difference from these relational terms.

Involvement is defined as “perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values, and interests” (Zaichowsky, 1985). Vivek (2009) argues that involvement differentiates from customer engagement in the sense that involvement is a psychological construct which does not study behaviors. The author states that involvement can be an antecedent of the behavioral conceptualization of engagement. Likewise, Mollen & Wilson (2010) distinguish the involvement term from customer engagement by stating that customer engagement “unlike involvement, requires the satisfying of experiential value, as well as instrumental value.” Furthermore, Cheung et al. (2011) place involvement as an antecedent of psychological customer engagement, defining it in the context of online communities as “the level of a customer’s interest and/or personal relevance with respect to an online social platform”. Consistently, Brodie et al. (2011b) proposes that involvement

concept is distinctive from customer engagement and acts as an antecedent and/or consequence in the engagement process.

Another term that needs to be differentiated from customer engagement is the “participation”. Participation is defined as the “degree to which the customer is involved in producing and delivering the service.” (Dabholkar, 1990). The overview of several customer engagement conceptualizations reveals the difference of these two constructs in the sense that participation only reflects one facet of the behavioral engagement. Besides, participation does not reflect the psychological aspect of customer engagement. For instance, in the multidimensional conceptualizations of customer engagement which comprise both psychological and behavioral dimensions, participation only explains part of behavioral engagement (Cheung et al., 2011; Brodie et al., 2011b). Furthermore, Vivek (2009) discusses that the concept of customer participation grasps customer’s connection with the organizations only in the exchange situations, whereas customer engagement is a broader term that goes beyond exchange-centric approaches.

2.2. Brand Loyalty

2.2.1. Behavioral and Attitudinal Approaches to Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty literature, until Day (1969) and Jacoby (1971) who introduced two-dimensional loyalty approach, can be categorized into two contrary research streams, namely behavioral and attitudinal. On the one side researchers adopting purely stochastic approach and measuring brand loyalty with behaviors such as repeat purchasing; and on the other side researchers adopting deterministic approach and defining brand loyalty with consumer attitudes not necessarily taking actual behaviors into account (Odin, et al. 2001). Wernelfelt (1991) classifies these two research streams as (1) behavioral and static, and (2) cognitive and dynamic, respectively. While the former looks at brand loyalty in terms of outcomes (repeat purchase behavior), the latter is more focused on reasons.

From a stochastic (or behavioral) approach, the brand choice behavior is considered to be inexplicable or so complex that it cannot be comprehended (Odin et al., 2001). According to this view, it is impossible to explain repeat purchases with any antecedents (Jensen & Hansen, 2006), as

the frequency of their appearance makes it impossible to correlate to the behavior (Bass, 1974). Therefore, researchers who define brand loyalty as a stochastic process take behavioral approach and measure solely the outcomes instead of reasons; primarily using the purchasing patterns (Tucker, 1964; Sheth, 1968; Harary&Lipstein; 1962). For instance, Tucker (1964) defines brand loyalty as “biased choice behavior with respect to branded merchandise”, and further suggests that brand loyalty is a function of frequency and regularity of the brand purchase in the past. Likewise, Sheth (1968) proposes a brand loyalty measurement model based on frequency and pattern of purchases. The author defines brand loyalty as “a function of a brand’s relative frequency of purchase in time-independent situations, and it is a function of relative frequency and purchase pattern for a brand in time-dependent situations.”

From a deterministic (or cognitive) approach, on the other hand, it is believed that there are a limited number of explanatory factors which are explicable and can be detected and manipulated by the researcher (Odin et al., 2001). Brand loyalty, in this research stream is conceptualized more like attitudes or purchase intentions (Jensen & Hansen, 2006). Jacoby & Chestnut (1978) define attitudinal loyalty as “the customer’s disposition towards a brand as a function of psychological process. This includes attitudinal preference and commitment towards the brand”. Cognitive researchers give more emphasis to the mental processing of brand loyalty and claim that consumers involve in various problem-solving behaviors and make brand and attribute comparisons which leads to brand choice (Bennett & Thiele, 2002).

Yet, both research streams have been subject to various criticisms. Jacoby (1971) argues that behavioral approach is rather operational and lacks conceptual or theoretical definition. Examination of brand loyalty in terms of proportion or percentage of purchases does not answer “why?” question, thus not provide the explanation of the phenomenon. Moreover, Day (1969) criticizes loyalty measures which are based on purchases, stating that they do not differentiate the “intentional” and “spurious” loyalty. The author argues that spuriously loyal consumers can easily switch to other brands with better offers as they are not attached to the brand attributes; because spurious loyalty is “associated with consistent purchasing of one brand because there are no others readily available or because a brand offers a long series of deals, had a better shelf or display location, etc.” Furthermore, Odin et al. (2001) state that this approach analyzes loyalty in a

dichotomous way: loyalty vs. disloyalty. Therefore, the allocation of consumers to one group requires rather subjective judgment. Alternatively, determinist (cognitive) approach explains the intensity of loyalty by using an interval scale, and thus solves the problem associated with the necessity of categorizing consumers into two groups that is either loyal or disloyal. However, pure cognitive approach is also criticized because of, first, its dependence solely on consumer declarations and not taking observed behaviors into account, and second, its focus on antecedents or consequences but not loyalty in itself (Odin et al., 2001).

2.2.2. Multi-domain Approaches to Brand Loyalty: Composite Definitions

Two-dimensional approach is first proposed by Day (1969) who suggests that brand loyalty should be measured based on both attitudinal and behavioral criteria. He declares that "... a buyer has a brand loyalty score for each brand purchased in a given period based on share of total purchases and attitude toward the brand." Subsequently, two contradictory approaches, attitudinal and behavioral loyalty, are reconciled by Jacoby (1971) who posits that brand loyalty is associated with at least two primary aspects: "brand loyal behavior" and "brand loyal attitudes". While the former is defined as "...the overt act of selective repeat purchasing based on evaluative psychological decision processes", the latter is "the underlying predispositions to behave in such a selective fashion" (Jacoby, 1971). The author further proposes the first composite conceptual definition of brand loyalty as "the biased (non-random) behavioral response (purchase) expressed over time by some decision-making unit with respect to one or more alternative brands out of a set of brands and is a function of psychological processes". Later, Jacoby & Kyner (1973) propose six loyalty conditions, integrating both attitudinal and behavioral dimensions, and based on which they define the brand loyalty. According to them, "brand loyalty is (1) the biased (i.e. nonrandom), (2) behavioral response (i.e. purchase), (3) expressed over time, (4) by some decision making unit, (5) which respect to one or more alternative brands, and (6) is a function of psychological (decision-making, evaluative) processes".

Thereafter, the multidimensional approach which combines attitudinal and behavioral measures has been widely accepted and further developed by various scholars in brand loyalty literature (e.g. Bonfield, 1974; Traylor, 1981, 1993; Baldinger & Robinson, 1996, 1997; Rundle-Thiele et

al.,1998; Dick & Basu, 1998; Oliver, 1999). Furthermore, it has brought some level of agreement to the stochastic and deterministic theoretical orientations of brand loyalty. Bass (1974) who has a stochastic view of loyalty states that “the fact that the choice behavior of individual consumers is substantially stochastic does not mean that it is fruitless to study this behavior. It is useful to attempt to determine the major influences which determine the structure of stochastic preference.” Therefore, brand loyalty scholars with stochastic view have also analyzed attitudes as an antecedent and have found major attitudinal influences on behavioral loyalty (e.g. Bonfield, 1974).

Brand loyalty is further studied in order to explain the attitudes’ effect on brand choice behavior. For instance, Bonfield (1974) has found that that attitude, social influence, personal norm, and intention as well as situational influences have an impact on individual brand choice processes. Baldinger & Robinson (1996, 1997) segmented loyal customers according to their attitudinal and behavioral loyalty levels into 3 categories: (1) “Real loyals” those who have both behaviorally and attitudinally strong loyalty levels, (2) “vulnerables” those who have strong behavioral loyalty but weak attitudes, and (3) “prospects” those who have strong attitudes but weak behavioral loyalty.

In addition, Dick & Basu (1994) has advanced the attitude-behavior relationship argument by analyzing the antecedents and consequences of this relationship. According to them repeat patronage (i.e. behavioral loyalty) is derived from relative attitudes which is moderated by social norms and situational influence. They analyze the antecedents of “relative attitude” based on the traditional attitudinal categories: “cognitive - those associated with informational determinants (e.g. brand beliefs), affective – those associated with feeling states involving the brand, and conative – those related to behavioral dispositions toward the brand”. They argue that each determinant has different learning processes, therefore play different roles in defining the attitudes in the brand loyalty concept. According to their model, “cognitive antecedents” involve accessibility, confidence, centrality, clarity; “affective antecedents” include emotion, feeling states/mood, primary affect, satisfaction; and “conative antecedents” comprise switching cost, sunk cost, expectation. Moreover, they argue that the consequences of the repeat patronage are “search motivation”, “resistance to counter persuasion”, and “word of mouth”.

The cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions of attitudinal brand loyalty have been adapted by various scholars and been used in multi-dimensional brand loyalty conceptualizations (e.g. Oliver, 1997, 1999; Härtel et al, 2008; Worthington, 2009). Oliver (1999) argues that brand loyalty is a chain model composed of four distinctive states including cognitive, affective, conative, and behavioral loyalty, which will be explained more in detail in the following section. Härtel et al. (2008), furthermore, studies the cognitive and emotional dimensions of brand loyalty in order to advance the understating of these notions based on Katz's (1960) utilitarian, knowledge, value-expression, and ego-defense functions of the attitudes. Furthermore, Worthington (2009) states that all human behavior is a blend of these three dimensions: "cognitive responses (I think), emotive responses (I feel), and behavioral responses (I do)". Hence, the author adopts a tri-dimensional approach arguing that "brand loyalty is therefore the combination of a consumer's thought and feelings about a brand that are then expressed as an action". The author draws on the Oliver's (1999) conceptual model, but excluding conative (i.e. behavioral intentions) dimension of loyalty declaring that intentions have little predictive power for behavioral loyalty.

2.2.3. Oliver's 4-state brand loyalty chain model

Brand loyalty as a sequential process is proposed by Oliver (1997, 1999). The author suggests that repeat purchasing behavior (action) is based on favorable performance (cognition), favorable attitude (affect), and favorable intention (conation) in a cognitive-to-action loyalty sequential framework (Oliver, 1997). This framework differs from the other cognition, affect, and conation operationalizations of attitudinal brand loyalty such that according to Oliver (1999) a person becomes loyal at each attitudinal stage associating to different phase of the attitude development process (Table 2). Indeed, a person initially becomes loyal in cognitive manner which leads to emotional, conative and action loyalty sequentially. This framework is extensively used by numerous brand loyalty studies, such that Oliver's (1999) article is cited by 3062 academic articles. The following section explains these loyalty phases, cognitive, affective, conative, and action, respectively.

Table 2.

Loyalty Phase	Characteristics
Cognitive	"Loyalty to information such as price features and so forth."
↓	
Affective	"Loyalty to a liking: "I buy it because I like it"."
↓	
Conative	"Loyalty to an intention: "I am committed to buying it"."
↓	
Action	"Loyalty to action inertia, coupled with the overcoming of obstacles."

Table 2 Loyalty Phases (Adapted from Oliver, 1999)

Cognitive Loyalty: At cognitive loyalty stage which is the first phase of loyalty process, a person prefers one brand over its alternatives based on the beliefs about brand's attributes. Therefore, this stage is called "cognitive loyalty" or "loyalty based on brand belief only" (Oliver, 1999). The beliefs about the brand attributes are derived from the past knowledge, knowledge from other people and/or the information from one's recent previous personal experiences. Therefore the loyalty towards the brand at this stage is based on the information about the brand's "attribute performance levels". On the other hand, Oliver (1999) argues that this phase of loyalty is not deep since it depends on the mere performance of routine transactions and the satisfaction is not processed at this stage. Therefore, consumers are likely to switch to the alternatives with better performance or offerings in terms of cost-benefit ratio (Kalyanaram & Little 1994; Sivakumar & Raj 1997; Blut et al., 2007). On the other hand it is when the satisfaction about the brand is processed that the person starts being affectively loyal and gets to the second loyalty phase (Oliver, 1999).

Several brand loyalty scholars used cognitive loyalty in their framework. For instance, Härtel et al. (2008) define cognitive loyalty as the "psychological preference for a brand consisting of positive beliefs and thoughts about purchasing a brand on the next purchase occasion". Worthington (2009) states that the cognitive loyalty refers "the decision to stay with a brand based on the consideration of switching costs and the evaluation of the brand's attributes." Though the definitions slightly differ, they refer to the beliefs about the product or brand's attributes.

Affective loyalty: The second stage of Oliver's (1999) brand loyalty framework is the affective loyalty. At this phase, Oliver (1999) states that "a liking or attitude toward the brand has developed on the basis of cumulative satisfying usage occasions". Blut et al. (2007) explains this loyalty level stating that "expectancy confirmation leads to satisfaction, which in turn effectuates affective loyalty". This phase is linked to the pleasures. At this stage a person experiences "pleasurable fulfillment" which is one of the satisfaction dimensions (Oliver, 1999). Moreover, the author argues that affective loyalty is set in the consumers' minds as a combination of cognitive and affective responses. However, this loyalty level is still subject to brand switching behaviors as the consumers' satisfaction about the brand can change over time (Oliver, 1999). Sambandam & Lord (1995) posits that the affective loyalty can be deteriorated with the attractive competitive offerings.

Worthington (2009) uses the term "emotional loyalty" and defines it as "the positive feelings evoked by buying a brand and the sense of emotional connection to a brand". In other words the author associates it with positive feelings towards the brand derived from repurchasing. Härtel et al. (2008) calls this loyalty level as "affective commitment" and defines it as "positive feelings about and attachment to purchasing a brand on the next purchase occasion". The affective loyalty definitions indicate that this stage is closely related to the positive feelings and emotions towards the brand derived from the satisfaction (Oliver, 1999), and from the repurchasing the brand (Worthington, 2009; Härtel et al. 2008).

Conative loyalty: The third stage of Oliver's (1999) four-state brand loyalty model is related to the behavioral intentions. Conative loyalty arises as a consequence of repeated occurrences of positive feelings towards the brand and therefore represents a stronger loyalty level than affective loyalty. This phase implies a desire to the action intentions resulting from the attitudinal loyalty. The person at conative loyalty phase has a commitment to repurchase the brand; hence this loyalty state indicates "good intentions" of consumers to repurchase. On the other hand, Oliver (1999) notes that these intentions can remain as unrealized actions. Moreover, conative loyalty can be diminished if one person experiences frequent service and delivery failures (Blut et al., 2007).

Action loyalty: According to the loyalty framework of Oliver (1999), the deepest loyalty level that one can achieve is the action loyalty. It is a stronger loyalty level than conative loyalty in the

sense that first, the purchasing intentions are largely realized in action, and second, at this phase one is prepared to overcome possible obstacles to continue purchasing the brand. Action loyalty stage is based on the theory of Ajzen&Fishbein's (1980) that attitudes link to the behavior. The attitudes toward the brand developed in the cognitive and affective loyalty phases are linked to behavioral intentions (conative loyalty) which, in turn, is positively related to the behaviors (action loyalty).

Oliver's (1999) cognitive-to-action brand loyalty framework is a chain model which is progressively evolving into a stronger loyalty level. This model which is based on attitude-behavior theory (Ajzen&Fishbein, 1980) has been used in various studies which has tested the model in many contexts; such as books and online flight purchasing (Harris & Goode, 2004); do-it-yourself (DIY) retailer (Blut et al., 2007); lodging industry (Back & Parks, 2003); online shopping (Roy et al, 2009) etc.

2.2.4. Evolving Branding Logic

The previous sections have introduced the literature related to the two main concepts of this study, specifically customer engagement and brand loyalty. Before continuing on with the next chapter where we will propose the relationships between these two variables, it is necessary to understand the new branding logic which signifies the importance of analyzing brand loyalty in relation with customer engagement.

Brand loyalty literature reveals that it has been dominantly linked to the repeat purchasing patterns as an outcome. As previously mentioned in the literature review, the stochastic view brand loyalty scholars measured brand loyalty based on purchases, while the deterministic view scholars focused on reasons to explain these purchasing or brand choice behaviors by measuring the attitudes. However both research streams has dominantly considered the purchasing behaviors as the primary outcome of brand loyalty. This inclination to link loyalty to re-purchasing behavior is based on the implied assumption of the exchange theory which is; "the seller and the buyer (marketing actors) have well defined roles, that they independently create values, and that there is a place and time of transaction that can be easily articulated for exchange" (Sheth&Parvatiyar, 1995). Therefore, the transactional outcome, that is the purchasing behavior occurring at a specific place and time, is considered to be the key outcome of loyalty with the perspective of exchange theory.

On the other hand, customer engagement, referring to “interactive co-creative customer experiences” (Brodie et al., 2011a), adopts an experience-centric view of the expanded domain of relationship marketing, which was previously discussed in this chapter. The new perspective in relationship marketing is differentiated from traditional exchange-centric view in the sense that in the recent view the value is not created at the point of exchange, but through consumers’ experiences with the product/brand.

Moreover, the shift in the brand logic, in parallel with the shift in relationship marketing logic, indicates an increased importance of customer experiences in the overall brand value. In other words, the branding perspective has also evolved with the new marketing logic so that it does not focus on the value on exchange situations but the value that is created through consumer’s experiences with the brand. Merz et al. (2009) calls this new brand perspective as “evolving brand logic”. They state that “this new brand logic acknowledges that brand value is cocreated between the firm and its stakeholders. As such, it is process-oriented and views all stakeholders as endogenous to the brand value-creation process.” Therefore, a virtual brand community where the brands’ stakeholders meet and interact is one of the environments that the brand value co-creation process takes place.

Merz et al. (2009) categorizes the developments in the branding perspective in four brand eras: (1) 1900s-1930s: individual goods-focus brand era, (2) 1930s-1990s: value-focus brand era, (3) 1990s-2000: relationship-focus brand era, and (4) 2000 and forward: stakeholder-focus brand era which represents the recent brand logic. In this section, we will analyze these four brand eras and the corresponding developments in the brand loyalty literature so that the significance of investigating brand loyalty in a non-exchange environment will be exposed in the fourth brand era.

The authors state that in the first and second brand era, the consumers are exogenous to the brand value creation process and the value is created when they buy the product. The first brand era sees brands as the “identifiers” (Merz et al., 2009). Moreover, the branding in this era is a method of assuring the product quality so that the buyer can be persuaded to repurchase the product (Crone, 1989; Sheth&Parvatiyar, 1995). Later in the second brand era, Merz et al. (2009) explains that the brands are considered in terms of their images; therefore the symbolic image of the brands received

attention first in this period. Given the increased competitive environment, the utilitarian attributes of the market offerings become increasingly similar, thus, the branding is not anymore seen as the method of quality assurance but as a method of creating a positive symbolic image. Correspondingly, the brand loyalty literature in this era also reveals the shift of focus to the consumers' attitudes towards the brand (Day, 1964; Jacoby, 1971; Jacoby & Kyner, 1973) from measuring loyalty solely by behaviors. The attitudinal approaches to the brand loyalty tried to explain the role of consumers' emotional responses to the brands in their product choice and repurchasing behaviors.

In the third and the last era, consumers become co-creators of brand value, through the development of relationship marketing. Moreover, in this period, scholars start questioning the ability of exchange paradigm in explaining the relationship focus of firms (Grönroos 1990; Sheth et al., 1988; Webster, 1992; Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995). Hence the value-in-exchange view is criticized which later leads to the evolution of the value-in-use concept. Merz et al. (2009) further declare that in the third era "brand scholars acknowledged that the brand value co-creation process is relational and thus requires a process orientation". The authors, furthermore, differentiate the fourth era, which represents the current brand logic, from the third era in the sense that the brands become a dynamic and social process. The focus of the brands is not only the individual customers but also brand communities which involve other stakeholders. Moreover, they state that "the value co-creation process is a continuous, social, and highly dynamic and interactive process between the firm, the brand, and all stakeholders" as opposed to the value creation process which is based on firm-customer dyadic relationships in the third era (Merz et al., 2009).

The brand loyalty literature in this period shows the development of the concept from the perspective of behaviors and/or attitudes to the attitude-to-behavior sequential process. Indeed, the sequential brand loyalty model of Oliver (1999) indicates a process orientation in which a person goes through the distinct phases of brand loyalty through the consumption process. However, the recent brand logic which incorporates the consumer experiences among the brand's stakeholders has not been reflected in brand loyalty. As noted before, brand loyalty has been measured in order to explain the customer's product choice and re-purchasing behaviors. Though transactional outcomes of brand loyalty are important at the exchange situations such as purchasing of the

product; the experience-related outcomes are central to the non-exchange situations such as consumer interactions in a virtual brand community environment. Therefore, given the expanded domain of relationship marketing and evolving brand logic, this study embraces process-oriented and experience-centric view. Accordingly, it investigates the brand loyalty in relation with customer engagement as an outcome in virtual brand communities which is a non-exchange environment where stakeholder relationships and consumer experiences are revealed.

3. HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Figure 1 demonstrates the conceptual model of this research with the main variables and hypothesized relationships among them. Accordingly, this section will discuss the relationships between brand loyalty states (cognitive, affective, conative and behavioral loyalty) as independent variables, the psychological customer engagement (cognitive, emotional and physical engagement) and behavioral customer engagement (participation and word of mouth behaviors) as dependent variables in the context of virtual brand communities.

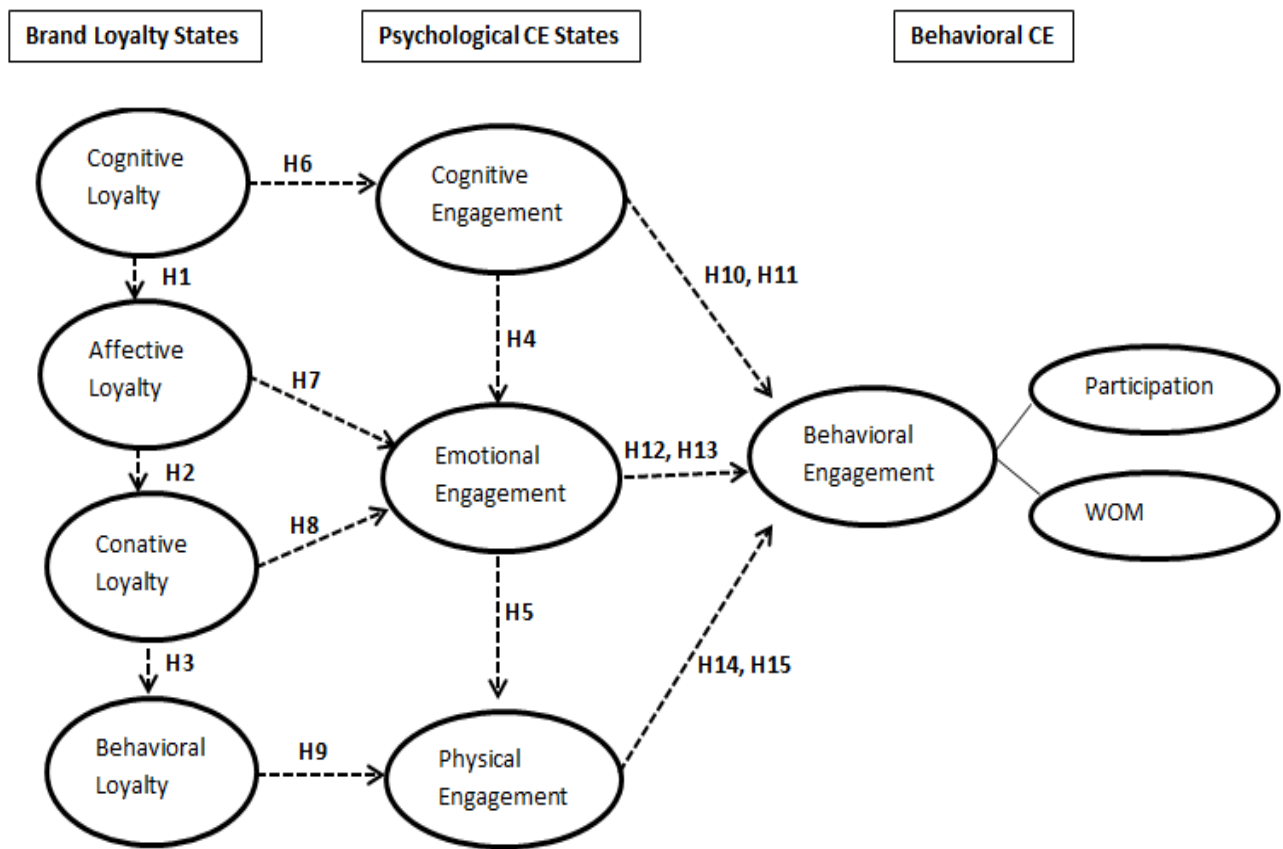


Figure 1 Conceptual model and research hypothesis

i. Brand loyalty as a sequential process

According to Oliver's (1997, 1999) sequential brand loyalty model, attitudinal brand loyalty which comprises cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions leads to action loyalty. The proposition that the attitudinal loyalty leads to behavioral (action) loyalty is based on the Ajzen & Fishbein's (1980) theory of reasoned action. According to this theory, customers go through decision-making processes where they evaluate the possible consequences of the alternative actions. Their attitudes toward these alternative actions lead them to choose the most desirable one among them and eventually reveal the behavioral intentions toward the selected action.

Furthermore, cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions of attitudinal brand loyalty are based on the assumption in social science that is "responses that express evaluation and therefore reveal people's attitudes should be divided into three classes—cognition, affect, and conation (or

behavioral intention)” (Back & Parks, 2003). Accordingly, drawing on general components of attitudes, attitudinal brand loyalty involves cognitive, affective and conative dimensions in a sequential process where customers become “loyal first in a cognitive sense, then later in an affective sense, and still later in a conative manner” which eventually leads to action loyalty (Oliver, 1997).

As the primary focus of this research is to investigate the impact of different attitude forms developed through the states of brand loyalty on customer engagement, Oliver’s (1999) sequential loyalty framework is used in the research model. Given that the Oliver’s (1999) brand loyalty framework as a sequential process is evident based on various studies tested in many different industries (e.g. Harris & Goode, 2004; Blut et al., 2007; Back & Parks, 2003; Roy et al, 2009), this study adapts cognitive-to-action brand loyalty framework, therefore hypothesizes that;

H1:Cognitive brand loyalty has a direct and positive effect on affective brand loyalty.

H2:Affective brand loyalty has a direct and positive effect on conative brand loyalty.

H3:Conative brand loyalty has a direct and positive effect on behavioral brand loyalty.

ii. Psychological state customer engagement as a sequential process

Psychological state customer engagement dimensions, cognitive, emotional, and physical, are adopted from Cheung et al.’s (2011) customer engagement framework. These dimensions are considered to be applicable for this study for two reasons.

First, the present study intends to reflect the complexity of the concept by using multidimensional approach of customer engagement. As noted previously, customer engagement is dominantly measured by behaviors. However, the engagement concept in other disciplines is based on psychological theories and involves cognitive, emotional and physical dimensions in the engagement framework. Based on the engagement conceptualization in other disciplines, the recent studies of customer engagement (e.g. Brodie et al., 2011a,b; Patterson et al., 2006; Hollebeek et al., 2011) discuss that the concept has a psychological aspect, therefore integrate cognitive, emotional, physical and/or behavioral dimensions in the conceptualization. These studies further argue that

unidimensional conceptualizations which predominantly focus on behaviors do not cover the whole aspects of the customer engagement concept which is a more complex phenomenon than mere behaviors. Moreover, the multidimensionality of the concept is further supported by the exploratory study of Brodie et al. (2011b) in an online brand community.

Second, the customer engagement literature reveals that both psychological and behavioral engagement dimensions are equally significant, yet different from each other. Accordingly, in our conceptual model, these dimensions are separated with an intention to analyze their variances in the research context separately. By adapting Cheung et al.'s (2011) model in this study, the psychological engagement comprises cognitive, emotional and physical dimensions and represent the psychological customer experiences of virtual brand community members, but not the actual observable behaviors which will be analyzed in behavioral dimension. Correspondingly, Patterson et al. (2006), reflecting on the psychological aspect of customer engagement, posit that customer engagement is "the level of a customer's physical, cognitive and emotional presence in their relationship with a service organization."

Moreover, this study proposes that psychological customer engagement is likely to be a sequential process where one goes from cognitive to emotional and finally to physical engagement phases, which is reflected by hypothesized relationships H4 and H5 on the conceptual model (Figure 1). This hypothesis is motivated by Oliver's (1999) sequential brand loyalty framework where cognitions bring about affect which in turn results in behavioral intentions and finally the behaviors. This framework is based on the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) which relates consumer's beliefs and attitudes to their behavioral intentions which in turn links to actual behaviors. Similar sequence might be observed in the cognitive, emotional, and physical psychological states of customer engagement.

Cognitive engagement is defined by Cheung et al. (2011) as "being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in an online social platform". Cognitive engagement in a virtual brand community in our study, therefore, refers to being immersed in the information and the content of the brand page. At the first stage of customer engagement, where the person is a new member of the brand's

community page, the emotions toward the community are not developed yet. Hence, it is expected that the members' engagement in the initial phase will be extensively in a cognitive manner.

Consistently, Brodie et al.'s (2011b) study in an online brand community reveals that the engagement process is initiated mainly by consumer' information needs which indicates that the engagement process might be originated by cognitions. More specifically, the new members of a brand community look for the information in the page which leads them to be cognitively engaged with a concentration and immersion in the information and the content of the page. Furthermore, the study of Bowden (2009b), who defines customer engagement as a "psychological process", finds that the new and the existing customers show differences in terms of their engagement with a service organization. The new customers demonstrate calculative commitment which is primarily based on cognitive responses, whereas repeat customers exhibit affective commitment which is based on emotional responses. It can be concluded that the engagement of new customers with a service organization is predominantly derived from cognition, while the repeat customers' engagement primarily has emotional basis. Hence, the engagement with a service organization starts in a cognitive manner, and then continues in an emotional manner.

Furthermore, emotional engagement in an online social platform is defined as "a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge towards an online social platform" (Cheung et al., 2011). These emotional responses are expected to be developed only after certain time of satisfying cognitive immersion in the brand's community page. Oliver (1999) posits that when the satisfaction about a brand is processed, a person goes from cognitive loyalty to affective loyalty stage. Based on the same reasoning, it can be proposed that when one's satisfaction on the brand's virtual community is processed, the person becomes emotionally engaged. In other words, people spend time on the brand page for reasons such as information gathering which initially leads them to be cognitively engaged. After certain period of time spent with the brand's community members, if they are satisfied with their experiences, then they become emotionally engaged. In consistence, Back & Parks (2003), assert that "people who evaluate an attitude object favorably are likely to experience positive affective reactions in conjunction with it and are unlikely to experience negative affective reactions". As cognition refers to people's thoughts about the attitude object (Back & Parks, 2003), the evaluation of the brand community will be based on one's thoughts, more

specifically on one's cognition. High cognitive engagement levels indicate people's interest and concentration, and therefore, their favorable cognitive evaluation of the engagement object. Therefore, we can expect that a person who evaluates the virtual brand community favorably, which is demonstrated by their high intensity of cognitive engagement, would develop positive affective reactions toward the brand community which leads them to be emotionally engaged.

In accordance with this argument, the following hypothesis is proposed;

H4: Cognitive engagement has a direct and positive effect on emotional engagement.

Moreover, physical engagement is "the level of energy and mental resilience while using an online social platform, willingness to invest time and effort in one's role as a customer" (Cheung et al., 2011). At this stage a person is willing to spend long periods of time on the brand community page trying hard to perform well as a member and "always preserve, even when things do not go well" (Cheung et al., 2011). Therefore, this engagement phase can be considered to be the strongest psychological engagement level.

Johnson et al. (2006) posits that "as the customers' experience with a particular offering grows over time, attitudes toward brands and relationships should become stronger, more "top of mind" or accessible, persistent, resistant to change, and likely to guide intentions and subsequent behavior". Correspondingly, it is expected that after certain time of experiencing repeated affective occurrences through emotional engagement in the virtual brand community, a community member's attitudes toward the brand and the other community members will be stronger. Thus, they will be willing to spend more time and energy and to overcome the obstacles to continue being engaged in the community page.

The effect of emotional engagement on physical engagement is also evident in the statement of an online brand community member in Brodie et al.'s (2011b) study. The interviewee states that "the blog eventually meant so much to me that I would do anything to assist anyone connected to it in any way I can." This statement clearly demonstrates that the community member's affective attitudes toward the brand community resulted in willingness to devote personal time and energy for the community.

Therefore, based on the discussion above, we expect that emotional engagement will have a direct impact on physical engagement in the context of virtual brand communities, and accordingly propose the following hypothesis;

H5: Emotional engagement has a direct and positive effect on physical engagement.

iii. The relationship between the brand loyalty states and the psychological customer engagement states

The investigation of customer engagement as an outcome of brand loyalty is consistent with the “voice” and “exit” model of Hirschman (1970). According to Hirschman (1970), consumers either take voice or exit decisions with respect to perceived company performance and based on their loyalty levels. Consumers’ voice choice refers to the “communication behaviors designed to express their experience” and exit choice refers to “behaviors designed to curtail or expand their relationship with the brand” (van Doorn et al., 2010). Hirschman (1970) argues that a brand loyal consumer will search for ways to be influential for the organization, therefore will try to communicate his experiences using “voice”. Even when the loyal consumer evaluates the company performance to be deteriorating, he will believe that he can get it “back on track” by using the voice option, and avoiding the exit alternative. Therefore, the author posits that brand loyalty increases one’s willingness to be influential for the organization which in turn increases the willingness to communicate with the organization. As a result, brand loyalty makes an accelerating effect on voice behaviors. By the same token, it is likely that the stronger the brand loyalty is, the more influential a person will feel towards the brand, therefore, the more he will be willing to use his voice option which will create increased levels of engagement.

On the other hand, as demonstrated in the conceptual model (Figure 1), we do not expect a direct relationship between brand loyalty states and customer engagement behaviors, but rather indirect relationship. Ajzen & Fishbein (2000) state that “...people’s evaluations of, or attitudes toward, an object are determined by their accessible beliefs about the object where a belief is defined as the subjective probability that the object has a certain attribute”. As the attitude object, in our research model, is the behavioral engagement in virtual brand community, the beliefs toward the attitude object will be only accessible through the process of psychological engagement where

members cognitively, emotionally and physically engaged. Therefore, we rather expect that brand loyalty states will affect the psychological engagement phases where the attitudes toward the brand community arise which in turn will impact the behavioral engagement.

Accordingly, the following sections will discuss the relationships between the brand loyalty and psychological customer engagement states which is reflected in the conceptual model by hypothesis H6, H7, H8, and H9.

- Cognitive Loyalty - Cognitive Engagement

Cognitive engagement is defined by Patterson et al. (2006) as the “level of concentration on a focal engagement object” and by Cheung et al (2011) as being “fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in an online social platform”. In our model, cognitive engagement, which refers the concentration of people on the information and content of the virtual brand community page, is the first phase of psychological customer engagement. The primary state of the engagement process is linked to the cognitive responses, as it is highly unexpected in the initial phase that the emotions towards to the brand community page are evoked (emotional engagement), or the person will demonstrate high willingness to invest time and effort on the brand page (physical engagement).

On the other hand it is expected that cognitive engagement is derived from one’s cognitive loyalty. Cognitive loyalty, which is the first loyalty phase, refers to the loyalty level based on beliefs about brand’s attribute performances levels (Oliver, 1999; Dick & Basu, 1994). Ouwersloot & Odekerken-Schröder (2008) propose that one of the benefits to join a brand community is the “re-assurance of quality of products”. Cognitively loyal people who evaluate the brand favorably based on their beliefs about brand attributes are likely to be motivated by quality reassurance benefit of the brand community. Assuming that the customers go through decision-making processes in order to evaluate the consequences of the alternative actions and select the most desirable action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), customers are expected to search for ways to assure that their choices are reasonable. For this reason, cognitively loyal people having their focus on the quality of the brand will join the brand community primarily for quality-assurance reasons. This represents a cognitive process of decision-making and will result in a cognitive engagement, the stage where the brand community member is concentrated on the content and the information about

the brand on the community page. Hence we expect to find that the higher the cognitive loyalty, the higher the one's interest and concentration on the brand's attributes, and therefore, the higher the cognitive engagement intensity level on a virtual brand community. Based on this argument, the proposed hypothesis in the case of virtual brand communities is;

H6: Cognitive loyalty has a positive and direct impact on cognitive engagement.

- Affective and Conative Loyalty – Emotional Engagement

As noted before, emotional engagement responses such as “sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge” (Cheung et al. 2011) are expected to arouse after certain period of experiencing the brand community page through cognitive engagement where favorable cognitive responses are developed. Subsequently, it is proposed in H4 that high cognitive engagement will result in high emotional engagement; thus, emotional engagement phase will be followed by the cognitive engagement stage.

Moreover, it is also likely that the emotional engagement phase is directly related to affective and conative loyalty states where consumers develop emotional ties with the brand. Affective loyalty stage refers to the high level of favorable attitudes and liking towards the brand, hence involves emotional responses that one displays in relation with the brand. Conative loyalty which is characterized by a deeper level of commitment is based on the repeated favorable affective experiences, therefore indicates an increased emotional connection between the consumer and the brand. It is highly possible that the emotional engagement which represents the psychological customer engagement phase where favorable emotions are evoked toward the brand and the others in the community is positively affected by the consumers' affective and conative loyalty where consumers have a high degree of affect toward the brand. In other words, affective and conative loyalty will increase the likelihood for the consumers to be emotionally engaged in the brand's community page. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed;

H7: Affective loyalty has a positive and direct impact on emotional engagement.

H8: Conative loyalty has a positive and direct impact on emotional engagement.

- Behavioral Loyalty – Physical Engagement

It is proposed in H5 that the emotional engagement has a direct and positive impact on the physical engagement; in the sense that the consumers who developed emotional responses toward the brand and the brand community will want to devote more energy and time during their experiences on the brand's community page. Therefore, physical engagement which refers to "the willingness to invest time and effort in one's role as a customer" (Cheung et al., 2011) signifies the highest psychological engagement level in a virtual brand community.

It is, furthermore, expected that the consumers' physical engagement will be directly affected by their behavioral loyalty. The physical engagement requires a high "level of energy and mental resilience" (Patterson et al., 2006; Cheung et al., 2011) and willingness to devote personal time and energy for the brand's community page (Cheung et al., 2011). Therefore, physically engaged community members are expected to demonstrate a high loyalty level to the brand.

According to Oliver's (1999) sequential loyalty model, behavioral or action loyalty is the highest loyalty level. Behaviorally loyal customers are characterized by high commitment to the brand in terms of both cognitive and emotional manner, and their pledge to remain loyal even when they have to overcome obstacles related to the brand. The willingness of customers to overcome obstacles in order to continue with the brand that they are loyal to, indicates that they are ready to make personal sacrifices; such as spending more money as well as devoting more personal energy for the brand. In the exchange situations, these personal sacrifices might be related to the willingness to spend more money and time in order to find and purchase the brand. In a virtual brand community, on the other hand, which is a non-exchange brand-related environment, this willingness to make personal sacrifice is expected to convert into willingness to devote more time and energy in one's role as a community member, such as by actively participating and "trying hard to perform better" (Cheung et al., 2011) as a brand-loyal consumer on the brand's community page.

In conclusion, it is expected that the behavioral loyalty will increase the likelihood of physical engagement in an online brand community. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed;

H9: Behavioral loyalty has a positive and direct impact on physical engagement.

iv. The relationship between psychological state customer engagement and the behavioral engagement

“Customer engagement behaviors” is defined as “customer’s behavioral manifestations that have a brand or firm focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers” (van Doorn et al., 2010). Cheung et al. (2011) includes two dimensions in the operationalization of the behavioral customer engagement: “participation” in an online social platform, and “word of mouth” communication about the social platform. Accordingly, participation and the word of mouth behaviors constitute the behavioral customer engagement dimension in the current study.

Moreover, Cheung et al. (2011) propose that the psychological state customer engagement is positively related to engagement behaviors in the context of online social platform. They state that “particularly, if a customer is willing to invest personal energy (physically, emotionally, and cognitively) into an online social platform, he/she will have a higher propensity to participate in activities on the online social platform as well as to spread word-of-mouth communication about the platform”. In addition, this proposition is also consistent with the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen&Fishbein, 1980) which posits that attitudes toward the behavior affect behavioral intentions which in turn determine the behaviors. By the same token, the attitudes developed through community members’ psychological engagement in the online brand community, cognitively, emotionally, and physically, will affect their behavioral engagement. More specifically, the more a member is engaged in the brand community page in cognitive, emotional and physical manner, the more favorable thoughts (cognition), feelings (emotion) and willingness to spend time and energy (physical) will be transpired. This will contribute to positive attitudes toward the brand community page and will increase the likelihood for the members to involve in positive word of mouth about and active participation in the page.

The cognitive engagement refers to the brand community members’ deep immersion and concentration on the virtual brand community page. This indicates that people who demonstrate high intensity of cognitive engagement are strongly interested, therefore deeply concentrated on the content of the online community page. As noted before, community members attend to online brand communities primarily due to information needs (Brodie et al., 2011b), and for the quality assurance

reasons (Ouwersloot&Odekerken-Schröder, 2008) which lead them to be initially cognitively engaged in the page. Therefore, engagement behaviors of cognitively engaged members may be derived from their information or quality assurance needs, thus will be reflected as questions they ask, or the information from personal experiences they share on the page. Thus, it is expected that the cognitive engagement will increase the likelihood of participation in the online brand community page. Moreover, as high intensity of cognitive engagement shows one's deep interest on the page, it expected that cognitively engaged members will recommend the community page to the others who they think will be interested in it too. Hence, cognitive engagement will also increase the propensity of word of mouth of the online brand community page.

Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed;

H10: Cognitive engagement has a direct and positive impact on the participation behaviors.

H11: Cognitive engagement has a direct and positive impact on the word of mouth behaviors.

Likewise, emotional and physical engagement states are also expected to be positively related to the behavioral engagement. At emotional engagement phase, members consider the brand community page with full of meaning and feel attached to and inspired by the community members. As well, at physical engagement phase, members demonstrate high willingness to spend time and energy as a result of deep cognitive and emotional engagement in the virtual brand community page. It can be inferred that favorable emotional attitudes one feel toward the brand's community and the willingness to devote personal time and energy will increase the propensity of active participation in the virtual brand community page. Additionally, these favorable feelings developed through emotional engagement phase and high enthusiasm and willingness to spend more time and energy for the brand community at the state of physical engagement will increase the likelihood of word of mouth about the brand's community page.

This is also supported by the statement of one of the interviewees from the online brand community members in Bordie et al.'s (2011b) exploratory study. The community member explains his thoughts about the other community members, his responding behaviors and feelings stating that;

“I am indebted and grateful for their help [...] They are altruistic and selfless people giving freely their time and effort. They wholeheartedly broadcast their passion all over the ‘community’, to everybody in need. This is why I want to contribute — with whatever I’m able to. This blog indeed meant a lot to me after I’ve spent some time involved in it. Now I passionately fight to improve the industry... And this is but one of the results of my active membership in the blog.”

This statement demonstrates that the emotional engagement specified by the feelings of “indebted and grateful” and the declaration that “the blog indeed meant a lot to me”; and physical engagement stated by “want to contribute”, and “time involved in it” resulted in the behavioral engagement for the interviewee such as “passionately fight to improve the industry” and “active membership”.

Based on this argument, the following hypotheses are proposed;

H12: Emotional engagement has a direct and positive impact on the participation behaviors.

H13: Emotional engagement has a direct and positive impact on the word of mouth behaviors.

H14: Physical engagement has a direct and positive impact on the participation behaviors.

H15: Physical engagement has a direct and positive impact on the word of mouth behaviors.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Research Philosophy and Research Design

As we defined the research hypotheses and build the conceptual model based on the knowledge we gathered from the literature, our intention now is to select the most appropriate research design and accordingly the data collection method so as to test our hypotheses. However, first it is necessary to discuss the main research philosophy that our study is based on, since the choice of method to conduct the study is rooted in the broader philosophy of science that a researcher follows (Blumberg et al, 2005). Moreover, it is important to understand the basic assumptions made in this research depending on the research philosophy. Additionally, as suggested by Hair et al (2002),

some other considerations such as data availability, data quality, costs, and time constraints are taken into account in determining the research design and data sources.

The current study embraces the positivist philosophy out of two most distinguished research philosophies, namely positivism and interpretivism (Blumberg et al, 2005). Positivists, in contrast to interpretivists, believe that the social world can be observed objectively. The researcher is seen as an independent individual who acts as an objective analyst. Two main assumptions that a positivist researcher makes, so do we in our study, are; (1) “the social world is observed by collecting objective facts”, and (2) “the social world consists of simple elements to which it can be reduced” (Blumberg et al, 2005). These assumptions have important implications for the researcher about how the research is conducted. Positivists start with hypothesizing some theoretical predictions and then deduce what kind of observations will support/reject them. Subsequently the researcher conducts the study to test whether and to what extent these predicted causalities forming the fundamental propositions can be observed and generalized in the social world (Blumberg et al, 2005). Moreover, in positivist studies, the concepts are operationalized so that the facts can be measured quantitatively where the researcher has a role of an objective analyst. Therefore, the research method related to this perspective is typically quantitative with the use of surveys, questionnaires, or quasi-experiments (Stoneham, 2005).

On the other hand, interpretivists claim that the social world cannot be observed objectively as it is the people who give it a meaning subjectively. Therefore they argue that the researcher is inclusive in what is observed by interpreting and making sense of what is happening (Blumberg et al, 2005). The appropriate research method for interpretivists is more qualitative and narrative approach where the researcher tends to be more subjective. Moreover, according to this view, social phenomena are complex and often unique, thereby the generalizability of the findings are of little importance.

Furthermore, another important point to mention related to the research philosophy is the reasoning approach. We opted for deductive reasoning approach as the conclusiveness is central to our research. Deduction requires researchers to derive a hypothesis from a theory by following truly logical rules where premises lead necessarily to the conclusion (Blumberg et al, 2005). The

premises of the current research are discussed in the hypothesis development chapter, which are based on the theoretical foundations that are presented in the literature review chapter. Induction, on the other hand, does not have the same strength of relationships between reasons and conclusions as it is in deductive approach. In inductive studies, the conclusions are drawn from one or more specific pieces of information and evidence.

Following a positivist philosophy and applying deductive reasoning, we operationalized the main concepts, namely brand loyalty and customer engagement, proposed the hypothesized relationships among them demonstrated in the conceptual model. Moreover, as a positivist researcher we assume that social world is observed objectively collecting objective facts, therefore, we now intend to test the hypothesis in an objective manner. To this regard, we chose the quantitative research design with the conduction of an online questionnaire.

As suggested by Hair et al (2002), conducting a quantitative study we have three main goals: “(1) make accurate predictions about relationships between market factors and behaviors, (2) gain meaningful insights into those relationships, and (3) verify or validate the existing relationships”. Moreover Hair et al. (2002) emphasizes the importance of the construct and scale measurement, questionnaire design, sampling, and the statistical data analysis as well as data reliability and validity issues in quantitative analysis. Therefore, these considerations related to our research design will be answered next in the following parts of this chapter.

4.2. Construct Measures

The questionnaire (see Appendix A) is composed of three sections that form the main constructs of our conceptual model: namely brand loyalty, psychological customer engagement, and behavioral customer engagement. Each construct is determined to be multidimensional with an intention to measure more than one attributes of the concepts that are found to be relevant based on the literature. Moreover, it is the focus of our research to investigate the relationships between the different attributes of each construct. Accordingly, the “brand loyalty” dimensions comprise cognitive, affective, conative, and behavioral; “psychological customer engagement” construct involves cognitive, emotional and physical, and finally the “behavioral customer engagement” includes participation and word of mouth dimensions.

All constructs in our conceptual model are latent or unobservable variables that cannot be directly observed, thereby requires for the identification of the observable items from which the values of our constructs will be inferred. For this purpose the related items are identified for each construct to be asked in the questionnaire which will measure the constructs in question. Moreover, it is emphasized for the latent variables that multi-item scales should be used including two or more items so that reasonable accurate measures of these constructs can be obtained (Jensen & Hansen, 2006). Therefore, we used three to six items for each dimension of the main constructs, all adapted from previous studies. Each construct and its corresponding items are demonstrated in Table 3. In the questionnaire all items are measured on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 “strongly disagree”, to 7 “strongly agree”.

Along with the sections related to the main constructs of the conceptual model, another section in the questionnaire is devoted to the demographical questions which collected data including age, gender, education, frequency and duration of Facebook usage, duration of brand community membership and the frequency of visit to the related virtual brand community page. All constructs in this section were measured using single-item scales.

Table 3.

1- Brand Loyalty		
Cognitive Loyalty		<i>Adapted from Back&Parks (2003)</i>
cogLY1	This brand provides me superior product/service quality as compared to any other brand in the same category	
cogLY2	No other brand in the same category performs better than this brand	
cogLY3	I believe that this brand provides more benefits than any other brands in the same category	
Affective Loyalty		<i>Adapted from Back&Parks (2003)</i>
affLY1	I love using this brand	
affLY2	I feel better when I use this brand	
affLY3	I like this brand more than any other comparable brand	
Conative Loyalty		<i>Adapted from Back&Parks (2003)</i>
conLY1	Even if other comparable brands have lower prices, I still prefer this brand	
conLY2	I intend to continue using this brand	
conLY3	I consider this brand to be my first choice among other brands in the same category	
Behavioral Loyalty		<i>Adapted from Roy et al. (2009)</i>
behLY1	I spend more money for this brand than any other comparable brands.	
behLY2	I purchase this brand more frequently than any other comparable brands	
behLY3	I use the brand more often than any other comparable brands.	

Table 3 (continued)

2- Psychological Customer Engagement	
Cognitive Engagement	<i>Adapted from Cheung et al. (2011)</i>
cogCE1	Time flies when I am visiting this brand page.
cogCE2	This brand page is so absorbing that I forgot about everything else.
cogCE3	I am rarely distracted when I visit this brand page.
cogCE4	I am immersed in the content of this brand page.
cogCE5	My mind is focused when I read through the content of this brand page.
cogCE6	I pay a lot of attention to this brand page.
Emotional Engagement	<i>Adapted from Cheung et al. (2011)</i>
emoCE1	I am enthusiastic in this brand page.
emoCE2	This brand page inspires me.
emoCE3	I find this brand page full of meaning and purpose
emoCE4	I am excited when I use this brand page.
emoCE5	I am interested in this brand page.
emoCE6	I am proud of being member of the brand page.
Physical Engagement	<i>Adapted from Cheung et al. (2011)</i>
phyCE1	I can visit this brand page for very long periods at a time.
phyCE2	I feel strong and vigorous when I visit this brand page.
phyCE3	I feel very resilient, mentally, as far as brand page is concerned.
phyCE4	In this brand page, I always persevere, even when things do not go well.
phyCE5	I devote a lot of energy to this brand page.
phyCE6	I try my hardest to perform well on this brand page.
3- Behavioral Customer Engagement	
Participation Behavior	<i>Adapted from Lee et al. (2011)</i>
partCE1	Provide new information about the brand to other people in this brand page.
partCE2	Actively participate in the activities on this brand page
partCE3	Supporting other members of the brand page.
Word of mouth	<i>Adapted from Lee et al. (2011)</i>
womCE1	I tell positive things about this brand page to other people.
womCE2	I recommend this brand page to anyone who seek my advice about the brand
womCE3	I encourage people to use this brand page
womCE4	I won't hesitate to refer other people to this brand page

Table 3Scale items used for each construct in this study

4.3. Target Population

The unit of analysis of this study is the individual members of virtual brand communities in Turkey. The virtual brand communities are majorly emerged on Facebook which, as noted before, stands for the dominant social media site in Turkey where 90.4% of the online population is the member of. Therefore Facebook in Turkey is determined as the study setting. Moreover, we are interested in analyzing the engaged customers, in other words existing members, on these brand communities so that we can study the different engagement levels that we proposed to depend on

loyalty states. Hence, the target population of the study is the virtual brand community members on Facebook in Turkey. Accordingly, two qualifying factors are determined for the respondents to answer the questionnaire: being a member of Facebook and a member of virtual brand communities on Facebook.

4.4. The method of data collection and sampling

We collected primary data through a self-administered online survey technique which posed the respondents sets of standardized, structured questions. After the questionnaire is translated into Turkish language, a public event page is created, with an explanation and the web link to the questionnaire, on Facebook where the target population is present. Even though the event is kept public with an intention to ensure that each individual on Facebook has equal chances to reach the survey, as required for the simple random sampling (Hair et al., 2002), the participants are mainly composed of people who are invited by their Facebook friends to the related Facebook page. Therefore, the sampling method used to collect the data is “convenience sampling” which is one of the non-probability sampling methods.

We chose convenience sampling; because first, we assume that the target population is homogeneous and the respondents are similar to the overall target population in terms of the characteristics being studied (Hair et al., 2002). On the other hand, as explained by Hair et al. (2002), in non-probabilistic sampling methods the accuracy and the reliability are un-known and the sample representativeness is undeterminable. Therefore for a good representation of the population, it is recommended to use probabilistic sampling such as random sampling methods. However, these methods are time-consuming and costly. Consequently, as a second reason, convenience sampling is chosen due to the time and budget limitations of the current research.

After the questionnaire is distributed via Facebook event page, we waited for two weeks to reach the desired sample size. In non-probability samples, the sample sizes are determined mainly through intuitive judgment based on past experiences or industry standards (Hair et al., 2002). This way, we targeted to reach the sample size of 200 qualified respondents. However, as the qualifying factor, that is being a member of at least one Facebook virtual brand community, decreases the incidence rate, we invited 613 Facebook users to respond the questionnaire. From 613 people who

received the questionnaire, 553 people started the survey out of which 435 completed. Therefore the response rate is 71%. Furthermore, out of 453 respondents 193 people declared that they are a member of at least one Facebook virtual brand community page. Therefore, we have 193 qualified respondents.

4.5. Sample Demographics

The sample demographics are important in deciding how representative is the sample in the study to the whole target population. In order for the results to be generalizable, the sample demographics should carry common characteristics with the population. Therefore, here we will analyze the sample demographics in comparison with the target population.

The age interval represented in the sample is between 20 and 41. In total, the average age is 28. According to comScore (2011b) statistics, the largest age group on Facebook in Turkey is between 18 - 24 (34%), and 25 – 34 (29%), followed by the users in the age group 33 – 44 (13%). This indicates that the majority of Facebook users in Turkey are aged between 18 and 44 with 76%. Therefore, our sample, composed of Facebook users aged between 20 and 41 with an average age of 28, can be considered to be representative of the population in terms of age.

Gender demographics indicate that both genders are well represented in our sample, yet there is a slight female dominance: Females characterize 57.5% of the sample with 111 female respondents in total, and males represent 42.5% with 82 male respondents. Moreover, 53.9% (104 respondents) of the sample is university, 45.1% (87 respondents) is master degree and only 1% (2 respondents) is high school graduates. Thus, the variability of the sample in terms of education is low, as people with low education profile is not well represented in our sample.

Besides, 96% of the respondents declared that they visit Facebook daily and 85% spend at least one hour a day on Facebook. Turkey, being “the third most engaged online audience in Europe” with 32.7 hours spent online per person per month, and Facebook being “the most engaging site in Turkey” (comScore, 2011b), the sample demonstrating high Facebook usage is also considered to be representative of the population.

Respondents are also asked the frequency of visit to the virtual brand community page in question, and the duration of the membership. There is almost an even distribution in terms of frequency of brand community page visit. 25% of the respondents, the highest rate, stated that they visit the page once a week. It is followed by 2-3 times a month (20.7%), and less than once a month (18.7%). Moreover, the majority of the respondents are the member of brand community page for at least 6 months (68%). As the target population is defined as the existing virtual brand community members, so as to investigate their varying engagement intensity in the community page, thus the sample, in terms of maturity of the membership, is relevant with the target population.

4.6. Methodology Limitations

Restrictions in time and budget have hindered us from using probabilistic sampling methods. Therefore it is noteworthy to mention the sampling error limitation of the current methodology. Sampling error, from a theoretical perspective, is any type of bias that can occur either during the selection process of prospective sample units, or while determining the sample size (Hair et al., 2002). The probabilistic sampling methods, such as simple random sampling where every single sampling unit has equal chances of being selected, gives the researcher opportunity to estimate the sampling error related to the study. However, applying non-probability sampling method (i.e. convenience sampling) in this study eliminated the possibility of sampling error assessment which limited the generalizability of the sample to the whole population. Large sample sizes, on the other hand, increases data quality and generalizability. With an effort to include large amount of people in the questionnaire, we aimed eliminating the possible sampling errors and increase the quality and generalizability of the research.

Another limitation that is worth mentioning is related to data collection. Since the target population is present on Facebook virtual brand communities in Turkey, for data collection purposes we initially contacted with companies who have established brand communities on Facebook targeting Turkish market. However, strict rules related to the brands' Facebook pages prohibited us distributing the questionnaire to the consumers on the specific brand community pages. For this reason, the questionnaires are distributed to the Facebook users, who are reached in convenience sampling method through our own social networks, including a qualifying question of

being a virtual brand community member. Therefore, the sample represents members of various virtual brand communities belonging to numerous products, brands and industries. This is considered to be a limitation due to explicitly indicated context-dependent nature of our construct customer engagement (Brodie et al., 2011a). According to Brodie et al. (2011a), the customer engagement might demonstrate variations based on the context, which can be the related industry or the product. Therefore, they recommend analyzing customer engagement considering the relevant context and the situations. However, due to the lack of possibility of identifying specific industry, product or brand in our study, the results will not reflect the context-dependent nature of the customer engagement construct, but will represent a large variety of virtual brand communities.

5. STUDY RESULTS

5.1. Reliability of the Constructs

It is emphasized by Hair et al. (2002) for quantitative research methods that the data reliability is the serious concern of the researchers. One of the main biases in quantitative studies might occur from the construct development error which results from the inaccurate or incomplete identification of the important sub-dimensions of the constructs being included in the survey. It results in construct with low reliability which increases the likelihood of irrelevant and low quality data collection. Hence in order to obtain consistent results, it is important to ensure the data reliability (Hair et al., 2002).

To this regard, a reliability analysis is applied to assess the internal consistency among the items determined for each construct in this study. Sekaran (1992) suggests that the coefficient alpha, also referred to as Cronbach's alpha, is the most widely held measure to analyze reliability among multi-item scales. Accordingly, the reliability analysis is conducted in SPSS for the multi-item scales of this study and the corresponding Cronbach's alpha estimates are demonstrated in Table 4. The Cronbach's alpha values range from 0 to 1 and the values lower than 0.6, in most cases, are accepted to have marginal to low internal consistency (Hair et al., 2002). Moreover it is recommended by Nunnally (1978) that for the minimum standard reliability, the values should exceed 0.7. Therefore, the Cronbach's alpha values in our analysis indicate a high internal

consistency for our constructs which means that it is highly reliable to measure each construct with the determined multiple items.

Table 4.

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
Brand Loyalty	
Cognitive Loyalty	.831
Affective Loyalty	.902
Conative Loyalty	.828
Behavioral Loyalty	.862
Psychological Customer Engagement	
Cognitive Engagement	.930
Emotional Engagement	.937
Physical Engagement	.938
Behavioral Customer Engagement	
Participation Behavior	.876
Word of mouth	.899

Table 4 Reliability Analysis – Brand Loyalty, Psychological and Behavioral Customer Engagement constructs

5.2. Hypothesis Testing

We have identified 15 hypotheses as depicted in our conceptual model (Figure 1). In order to test the hypothesized relationships between the variables, linear regression analysis is conducted in SPSS statistics tool version 17. According to the results, as illustrated in Table 5, the hypothesis H7, H10, and H11 are rejected and the other hypothesis are accepted at the significance level $p < 0.001$.

Table 5.

Hypothesized Paths	Standardized Regression Coefficients (Beta)	Hypothesis
Cognitive Loyalty → Affective Loyalty	.709	H1: Accepted
Affective Loyalty → Conative Loyalty	.705	H2: Accepted
Conative Loyalty → Behavioral Loyalty	.655	H3: Accepted
Cognitive Engagement → Emotional Engagement	.663	H4: Accepted
Emotional Engagement → Physical Engagement	.589	H5: Accepted
Cognitive Loyalty → Cognitive Engagement	.487	H6: Accepted
Affective Loyalty → Emotional Engagement	.010	H7: Rejected

Table 5. (continued)

Hypothesized Paths	Standardized Regression Coefficients (Beta)	Hypothesis
Conative Loyalty → Emotional Engagement	.161*	H8: Accepted
Behavioral Loyalty → Physical Engagement	.221*	H9: Accepted
Cognitive Engagement → Participation	-.380*	H10: Rejected
Cognitive Engagement → Word of Mouth	.099	H11: Rejected
Emotional Engagement → Participation	.386*	H12: Accepted
Emotional Engagement → Word of Mouth	.596*	H13: Accepted
Physical Engagement → Participation	.377*	H14: Accepted
Physical Engagement → Word of Mouth	.291*	H15: Accepted

Table 5Results of Linear Regression Analysis*Significant at $p < 0.001$

i. Brand Loyalty as a Sequential Process

Initially, we have tested the brand loyalty sequential process which is suggested by Oliver (1999). According to Oliver (1999), a person become loyal first at cognitive level, and then in affective manner, followed by conative loyalty which finally leads to behavioral loyalty. Therefore, first the Hypothesis 1 is tested to investigate the impact of cognitive brand loyalty on affective brand loyalty.

H1: Cognitive brand loyalty has a direct and positive effect on affective brand loyalty.

The regression analysis is conducted and the regression path from cognitive loyalty to affective loyalty is found significant ($\beta=.709$, $p<0.001$). Thus, the H1 is supported.

H2: Affective brand loyalty has a direct and positive effect on conative brand loyalty.

Second, the Hypothesis 2 is tested to assess the impact of affective brand loyalty on conative brand loyalty. As indicated in Table 5, the regression path from affective brand loyalty to conative brand loyalty is found significant ($\beta=.705$, $p<0.001$), thereby the Hypothesis 2 is supported.

H3: Conative brand loyalty has a direct and positive effect on behavioral brand loyalty.

According to the brand loyalty sequential model proposed by Oliver (1999), the conative loyalty which refers to behavioral intentions results in behavioral loyalty. This is based on the reasoned action theory which posits that a specific behavior is evident by the intention to perform that

behavior (Fishbein&Ajzen, 1980), thereby the actual behaviors are determined by the behavioral intentions. Consistently, the regression path from conative loyalty to behavioral loyalty is found significant in our regression analysis ($\beta=.655$, $p<0.001$) and the Hypothesis 3 is supported.

The first three hypothesis supported in our analysis indicates that the brand loyalty as a sequential process is relevant in our study in consistence with Oliver's (1999) brand loyalty model and Fishbein&Ajzen's (1980) reasoned action theory. Thus we can conclude that brand loyalty is a process starting with attitudinal loyalty at cognitive level which leads to affective and conative loyalty states, and finally to behavioral loyalty.

ii. Psychological Customer Engagement as a Sequential Process

Psychological customer engagement states, namely cognitive, emotional, and physical engagement, are hypothesized to be a sequential process. More specifically, we posited that the psychological engagement in virtual brand communities is expected to start with cognitive engagement, which later would lead to emotional engagement, and finally would result in physical engagement.

H4: Cognitive engagement has a direct and positive effect on emotional engagement.

First, the regression analysis is performed to test the effect of cognitive engagement on emotional engagement. The regression path from cognitive engagement to emotional engagement is found significant ($\beta=.663$, $p<0.001$), thus the Hypothesis 4 is accepted. It supports our prediction that the favorable beliefs developed in cognitive engagement state are likely to result in favorable emotions. Moreover, this result is consistent with Back & Parks' (2003) suggestion that "people who evaluate an attitude object favorably are likely to experience positive affective reactions in conjunction with it and are unlikely to experience negative affective reactions".

H5: Emotional engagement has a direct and positive effect on physical engagement.

Second the impact of emotional engagement on physical engagement is tested on regression analysis. The results indicate a positive significant path from emotional engagement to physical engagement ($\beta=.589$, $p<0.001$) and support the Hypothesis 5. This result supports our prediction that

the favorable emotional responses, which are developed towards the online brand community over time through emotional engagement, will possibly increase the members' willingness to devote more time and energy on the brand page, thus positively affect physical engagement.

Overall, the results of regression analysis of Hypothesis 4 and 5, which are accepted at significance level $p < 0.001$, support that the psychological customer engagement in virtual brand communities are probably following a sequential process which starts with cognitive engagement, continues with emotional engagement, and finally leads to physical engagement.

iii. The relationship between the brand loyalty states and the psychological customer engagement states

H6: Cognitive loyalty has a positive and direct impact on cognitive engagement.

We have hypothesized that the cognitive engagement is positively affected by one's cognitive loyalty. As indicated in Table 5, the regression path from cognitive loyalty to cognitive engagement is found significant ($\beta = .487$, $p < 0.001$) and the hypothesis 6 is supported. Consumers at cognitive loyalty phase are characterized by their beliefs about brand attributes based on the information they have, thus, are expected to be interested in the information regarding the brand on the related brand page. Cognitive engagement, which measures the concentration of the members on the content and the information on the brand page, is expected to be positively affected by cognitive loyalty. This hypothesis is supported through regression analysis which indicated a positive and significant path from cognitive loyalty to cognitive engagement.

H7: Affective loyalty has a positive and direct impact on emotional engagement.

H8: Conative loyalty has a positive and direct impact on emotional engagement.

In Hypotheses 7 and 8, we posited that affective loyalty and conative loyalty have positive impacts on emotional engagement. The regression analysis is performed to test Hypothesis 7 and the regression path is found insignificant at the 0.01 level ($\beta = .010$). Therefore, the Hypothesis 7 is rejected. On the other hand, the regression path from conative loyalty to emotional engagement revealed a significant positive relationship ($\beta = .161$, $p < 0.001$) and supported Hypothesis 8. The

positive emotional responses toward a brand developed at affective and conative loyalty states were expected to positively affect emotional engagement with the brand in a virtual brand community. However, while the impact of conative loyalty on emotional engagement is supported, the impact of affective brand loyalty on emotional engagement is not accepted.

H9: Behavioral loyalty has a positive and direct impact on physical engagement.

The final brand loyalty phase, that is behavioral or action loyalty, is hypothesized to have positive impact on physical engagement. The regression analysis is conducted and the path from behavioral loyalty to physical engagement is found significant ($\beta=.221$, $p<0.001$). The physical engagement requires a dedication of personal time and energy to the virtual brand community and therefore represents the highest psychological engagement state. Consumers at behavioral loyalty phase, which also represents the strongest brand loyalty state, are willing to overcome obstacles and make personal sacrifices for the brand. Therefore, it is probable that behavioral loyalty will increase the propensity of consumers to devote personal time and energy for the brand's online community page, therefore increase the physical engagement. The results support this hypothesis with a significant relationship between behavioral loyalty and physical engagement at significance level $p<0.001$.

iv. The relationship between psychological state customer engagement and the behavioral engagement

H10: Cognitive engagement has a direct and positive impact on the participation behaviors.

H11: Cognitive engagement has a direct and positive impact on the word of mouth behaviors.

Hypothesis 10 and 11 are tested to assess the impact of cognitive engagement on behavioral engagement which is composed of participation and word of mouth behaviors. The regression analysis is conducted which revealed a significant but negative path from cognitive engagement to participation behaviors ($\beta= -.380$, $p<0.001$). Therefore, the Hypothesis 10 is rejected where we posited a positive impact. Moreover, direct and positive effect of cognitive engagement on word of mouth behaviors was not significant at the 0.01 significance level ($\beta=.099$), thus Hypothesis 11 is also rejected.

H12: Emotional engagement has a direct and positive impact on the participation behaviors.

H13: Emotional engagement has a direct and positive impact on the word of mouth behaviors.

Hypothesis 12 and 13 are tested through regression analysis to measure the impact of emotional engagement on participation and word of mouth behaviors. The analysis supported both hypothesis 12 and 13 and indicated a positive significant path from emotional engagement to participation behaviors ($\beta=.386$, $p<0.001$), and to word of mouth behaviors ($\beta=.596$, $p<0.001$).

H14: Physical engagement has a direct and positive impact on the participation behaviors.

H15: Physical engagement has a direct and positive impact on the word of mouth behaviors.

Finally, the impact of physical engagement on behavioral engagement is tested. The regression analysis supported the direct and positive impact of physical engagement on participation in online brand communities ($\beta=.377$, $p<0.001$) and word of mouth about online brand communities ($\beta=.291$, $p<0.001$). Hence, the Hypothesis 14 and 15 are accepted.

In sum, the impact of psychological customer engagement states on behavioral engagement is partly supported in our study results. Indeed, while emotional and physical engagement states positively and significantly affect behavioral engagement, cognitive engagement state has significant negative relationship with participation behaviors on virtual brand communities and has no significant impact on word of mouth behaviors.

5.3. Post-hoc Analysis

Further analysis is performed so as to investigate whether there are other significant relationships between brand loyalty states and the psychological customer engagement states which are not predicted in our hypothesis. Accordingly, regression analysis is conducted between each variable of brand loyalty and psychological engagement constructs. We found that affective loyalty, which was posited to be the antecedent of emotional engagement in Hypothesis 7 and rejected at the 0.01 significance level, is positively and significantly related to cognitive engagement state ($\beta=.245$, $p<0.001$).

Furthermore, as illustrated in our conceptual model (Figure 1), we posited that brand loyalty is not directly related to behavioral engagement in virtual brand communities, but rather they have indirect relationship and the psychological customer engagement has a mediating effect. Therefore, we performed regression analysis to investigate whether brand loyalty states have any direct impact on behavioral engagement dimensions. The results did not give any significant direct relationships between brand loyalty states and behavioral customer engagement at the 0.01 significance level, thereby proved the expected indirect relationship between these constructs.

Lastly, the psychological engagement, in our analysis, is suggested to be a sequential process starting with cognitive engagement, continuing with emotional engagement which finally leads to physical engagement. We found that H5 and H6 are significant at $p < 0.001$ level, which supported that cognitive engagement has positive significant impact on emotional engagement which in turn has positive significant impact on physical engagement. We further analyzed this sequential process by conducting one-way ANOVA test, having psychological engagement states as dependent variables and duration membership as independent variable. Therefore, we assessed whether there is significant differences in engagement intensity levels based on the duration of membership. As illustrated in Appendix C, the ANOVA test supported our prediction that, the engagement intensity levels is significantly different based on the duration of membership ($p < 0.05$). Indeed, cognitive engagement indicates the highest intensity level, compared to emotional and physical engagement, for the people who are members of an online brand community for less than a month. This is consistent with our expectation that the engagement in online brand communities starts at cognitive level, and also consistent with Brodie et al.'s (2011b) finding that the engagement is primarily initiated by information seeking motivation in online communities, which in fact is based on cognitions. On the other hand the analysis shows that while the cognitive engagement diminishes by time of the membership, emotional and physical engagement states increase intensity. As a result, ANOVA test also supports the probable sequential process of psychological customer engagement states, which are, respectively, cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, and physical engagement.

In conclusion, the results of the regression analysis which tested 15 hypotheses supported 12 hypothesis and rejected hypotheses H7, H10, and H11. Furthermore, we found two more significant

relationships within our variables through hypothesis testing and post-hoc analysis; one is the positive relationship between affective loyalty and cognitive engagement, and the other is negative relationship between cognitive engagement and behavioral engagement. The resulting research framework with the corresponding relationships that are found statistically significant is depicted in Figure 2.

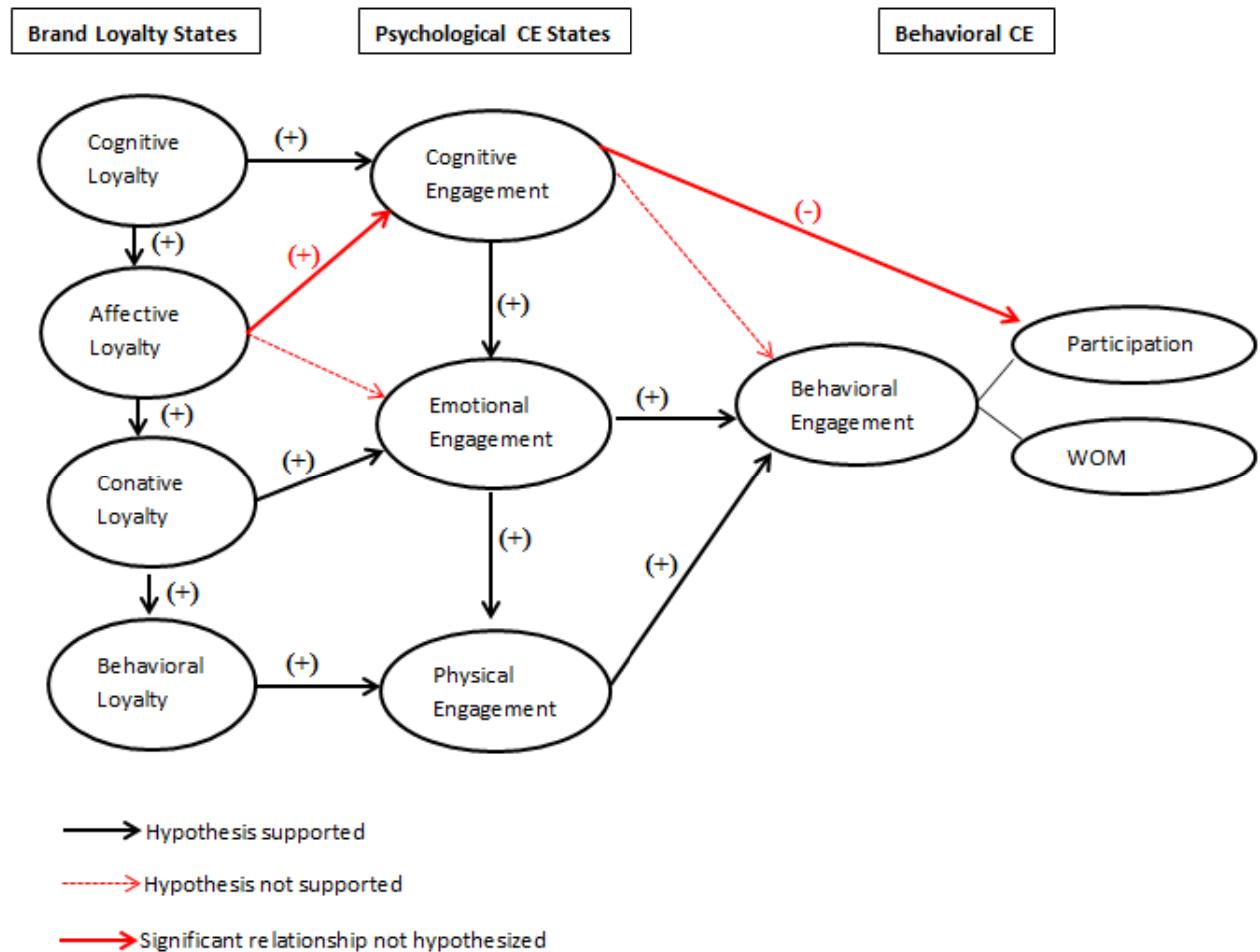


Figure 2 Conceptual model with the resulting relationships among the research constructs tested via linear regression analysis (significance $p < 0.001$)

6. DISCUSSION

The primary focus of this research was to investigate the impact of brand loyalty phases on customer engagement in virtual brand communities on Facebook in Turkey. Through the investigation of brand loyalty states' impact on customer engagement, the primary aim was to answer whether the brand loyalty phases can explain the varying engagement intensity levels on virtual brand communities. It was highlighted by Brodie et al. (2011a) that customer engagement occurs at different intensity levels, and further research is necessary to identify the derivers leading to these variances. The further suggestion by van Doorn et al. (2010) that the brand loyalty is the likely attitudinal antecedent of customer engagement directed us to the current research which analyzed the role of brand loyalty states on explaining the differences of consumers' engagement with the brand and the brand community.

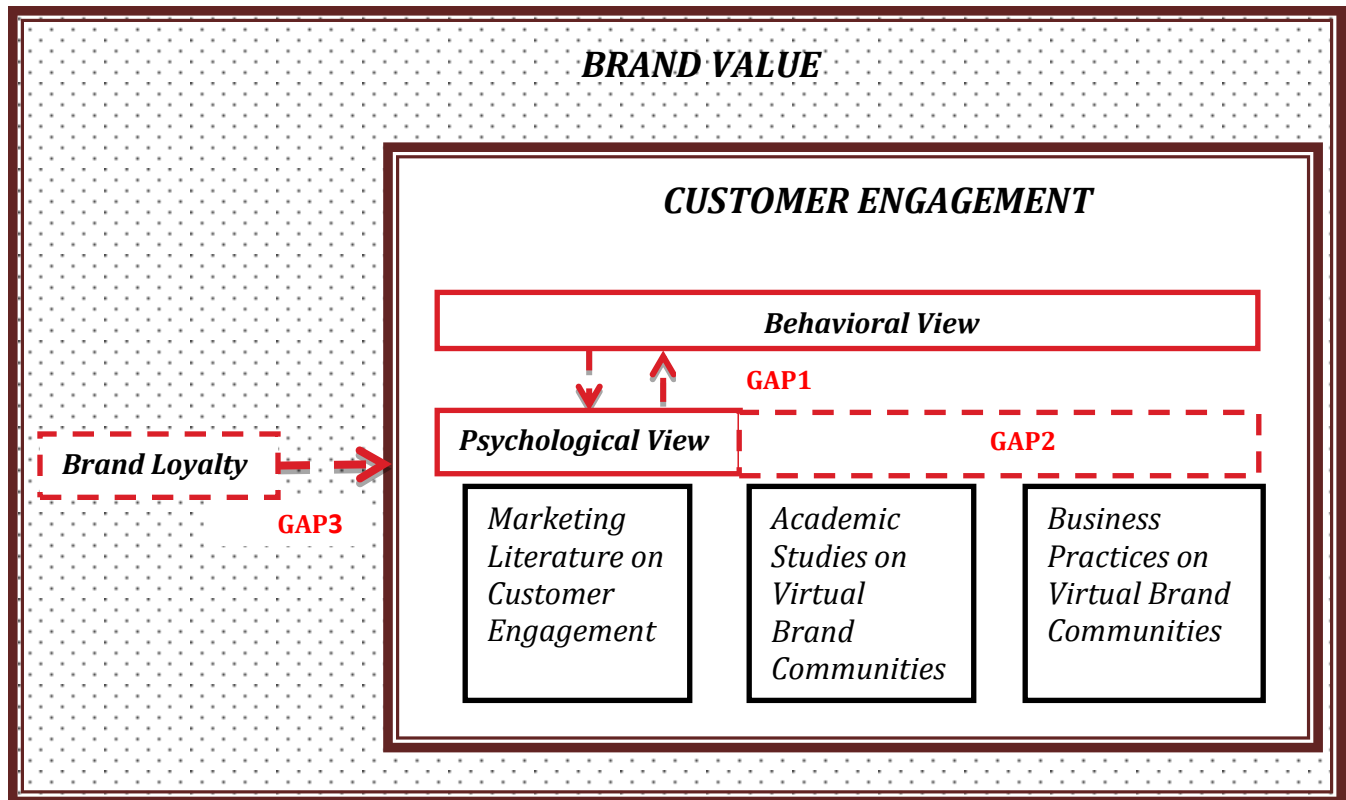
In this direction, the present study initially analyzed the customer engagement concept in the context of virtual brand communities and identified psychological and behavioral customer engagement dimensions in this context. Accordingly, the study revealed that psychological customer engagement behaves as the attitudinal antecedent of behavioral customer engagement in online brand communities. Furthermore, it is also found that psychological engagement states exhibit a sequential process starting at the cognitive engagement stage, then continuing with emotional engagement and finally leading to physical engagement phases. Further analysis is conducted to assess the brand loyalty's impact on customer engagement. It is found that while brand loyalty states have significant direct impacts on psychological customer engagement phases, they have indirect impacts on behavioral engagement. Furthermore, it is also revealed that each psychological customer engagement phase is derived from different loyalty states, and the strength of the brand loyalty phases accord with the strength of the corresponding psychological engagement phases, which indicates a possible interrelated loyalty and engagement development processes.

The interpretation of the study results, their contribution to the existing literature and the managerial implications for the companies in Turkey will be discussed in the current chapter.

The Gap in the Existing Literature and the Main Focus of the Current Research

New Marketng Logic:

Customer Engagement is a component of Brand Value Creation Process



GAP1: The Reconciliation of Psychological and Behavioral Customer Engagement Views

GAP2: Psychological View of Customer Engagement in Virtual Brand Communities

GAP3: Antecedents of Customer Engagement Leading to Variations in Intensity Levels in Engagement Forms - Brand Loyalty as the likely attitudinal antecedent of customer engagement (van Doorn et al., 2010)

Figure 3The Gap in the Existing Literature and the Main Focus of the Current Research

6.1. Theoretical Implications

i. Psychological Engagement States as Antecedents of Behavioral Engagement in Virtual Brand Communities

The Corresponding Gap in Literature:

GAP1: The Reconciliation of Psychological and Behavioral Customer Engagement Views

GAP2: Psychological View of Customer Engagement in Virtual Brand Communities

Initially the present study identified customer engagement dimensions relevant to virtual brand communities. One of the most contentious aspects of customer engagement in the marketing literature is whether it is a psychological or behavioral concept. It is proposed by various marketing scholars that customer engagement is a psychological phenomenon including cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions (e.g. Patterson, 2006; Vivek et al., 2010; Hollebeek, 2011; Mollen & Wilson 2010; Brodie et al., 2011). On the other hand, the behavioral aspect of customer engagement has been prominently the focus of many other scholars in marketing literature (e.g. Kumar et al., 2010; Doorn et al., 2010; Bijmolt et al., 2010) and in studies regarding brand communities (e.g. Schau, Muniz, & Arnould, 2009). While van Doorn et al. (2010) assert that customer engagement is dominantly defined through behaviors in the literature because it is the main distinguishing element and “...taking action differentiates engaged customers from others”, Brodie et al. (2011) argue that behaviors do not explain the complexity of customer engagement which is defined by the authors as “a psychological state”. Moreover, businesses having brand communities on social media are primarily focusing on participation behaviors of the community members, which explain only the behavioral facet of engagement. Likewise, social media marketing agencies (e.g. iprospect, and socialbakers) are developing customer engagement measurement methods based on observed participation behaviors such as member comments on the brand pages.

While there are very limited academic studies applied in different contexts to investigate customer engagement, and the relevancy and the expression of customer engagement dimensions are suggested to be context-dependent (Brodie et al., 2011a), this dispute is primarily derived from diverse theoretical perspectives in marketing literature. Moreover, the prominent inclination of

businesses and the studies related to virtual brand communities to measure customer engagement through behaviors indicates the gap in this context in terms of psychological aspects of the concept. Therefore, the first contribution of this study is the application of customer engagement dimensions in the context of virtual brand communities and the investigation of and finding support for the relevancy of both psychological and behavioral aspects in this context.

Our study employs both views in the customer engagement framework, integrating psychological and behavioral dimensions. Moreover, based on Cheung et al.'s (2011) customer engagement model, we identified psychological engagement as the antecedent of behavioral engagement. It was also suggested for future research by van Doorn (2010) to investigate the potentiality of the reconciliation of these two views, psychological and behavioral customer engagement. The theory of reasoned action, additionally, asserts the significant impact of attitudinal responses toward an object on the selected action with regard to this object (Ajzen&Fishbein, 2000). Hence, based on theory of reasoned action, it is postulated that attitudes toward the brand community would affect the behaviors regarding the brand community. Therefore, the psychological engagement state, where the attitudes toward the brand community become accessible, are determined to be the antecedent of behavioral engagement which refers to behaviors regarding the related brand community. Accordingly, the relationship between the psychological and behavioral customer engagement is assessed through the analysis of 193 Facebook brand community members' responses on regression analysis. Our study revealed the relevancy of psychological and behavioral dimensions of customer engagement with the statistically significant finding that psychological customer engagement dimensions are the attitudinal antecedent of behavioral engagement in virtual brand communities.

In order to assess the impact of psychological engagement on behavioral engagement, initially, the regression path from the first phase of psychological engagement, which is cognitive engagement, to participation behaviors is tested. The analysis revealed the significant and negative impact of cognitive engagement on participation behaviors which rejected our hypothesis positing a positive relationship. This result suggests that the cognitive engagement level of psychological engagement is negatively affecting the community members' participation on the page.

The above-mentioned result which rejected our hypothesis, indeed, provides interesting insights about engagement in virtual brand communities. Cognitive engagement is the first level of psychological engagement phase which does not comprise evoked emotions towards the brand community and willingness to spend time and energy on the brand page. It does, on the other hand, refer to the members' interest and concentration on the content and information of the brand page. The higher levels of psychological engagement, specifically emotional and physical engagement phases, would involve relatively higher level of affective commitment and fulfilling experience on the brand page, while cognitively engaged members' experience would be based on informational needs which refer to calculative commitment. It is suggested by Sashi (2012) that customer engagement requires the existence of both calculative and affective commitment and "customer engagement occurs when customers have strong emotional bonds in relational exchanges with sellers." Based on Sashi's (2012) study, therefore, in the situation of relational exchange, that is the participation in the online brand community in our case, the emotional bonds should be existent. As cognitive engagement phase does not include emotional responses toward the brand community, it rationalizes the finding that cognitive engagement does not have any significant positive impact on participation behaviors.

Moreover, the results further suggest a negative relationship which indicates that the increased cognitive engagement leads decreased participation behaviors. Even though this result is surprising as we expected that positive attitudes at cognitive engagement phase would have positive impact on behavioral engagement in terms of participation on virtual brand communities based on theory of reasoned action, this result can also be rationalized. Indeed, it reveals the context dependent nature of the engagement concept as suggested by Brodie et al. (2011a). In the context of virtual brand communities, the cognitive engagement refers to the concentration on the content of the brand page by the members who are interested in finding the relevant information that they are seeking for. The increased cognitive engagement on the brand page means that the members' information-related needs are fulfilled and the page is responding their needs with the relevant content. At cognitive phase, the positive attitudes toward the brand community negatively impact the participation behavior, because, first their need for further investigation of the information that they are seeking for are diminished with the satisfying content, and second the participation behaviors

are not triggered by emotions as they have not developed emotional bonding with the brand community yet. Therefore, it is relevant to find cognitive engagement's negative impact on participation behaviors on virtual brand communities.

Furthermore, another interesting insight regarding the negative impact of cognitive engagement on participation behaviors is that it provides support for the proposition by Madupu& Cooley (2010) who assert that stronger information motives would lead to passive participation behaviors. The authors suggest that in online brand communities, the participation is categorized into two: interactive or non-interactive participation (Burnett, 2000). The non-interactive behaviors are also called "lurking" and the members who are non-interactive in the brand community are called "lurkers" or passive participants. They describe lurking behaviors stating that "Lurkers merely browse the online brand community Web site and read messages posted in the discussion forums." They do not contribute or interact behaviorally, but participate through reading and observing the content of the online brand community. Accordingly, they suggest that informational motives of the members would lead to lurking behaviors which result in passive participants. In our study, it can be explicitly observed that informational motives of cognitive engagement phase result in passive participation. In other words, the members who exhibit high cognitive engagement reading through and observing the brand page can be categorized as lurkers who do not behaviorally interact with the brand community. This is also consistent with the proposition by Madupu& Cooley (2010) that active lurkers tend to have low social integration motive on online brand communities.

Additionally, the study assessed the cognitive engagement's impact on behavioral engagement in terms of word of mouth behaviors. The regression path from cognitive engagement to word of mouth behaviors was not found significant, which also rejected our hypothesis positing a positive direct relationship between cognitive engagement and word of mouth. This result suggests that the cognitive engagement level of psychological engagement is not potent enough in terms of prompting the community member to spread the positive word of mouth about the online brand community. This result can also be rationalized. It is suggested by Sashi (2012) that the advocacy stage of customer engagement, in which the customers make themselves the advocates for the product, brand, or company, involves the "delighted customers". Delighted customers refer to customers with affective commitment, and the author suggests that affective commitment is

positively related to word of mouth communication (Harrison-Walker, 2001). Correspondingly, the cognitive engagement does not comprise emotions and thus not involve affective commitment of the members; therefore it is also relevant to find that cognitive engagement does not have any significant impact on word of mouth behaviors.

The further analysis is made to test the impact of emotional and physical engagement levels of psychological engagement on behavioral engagement through regression analysis. The results supported our hypotheses regarding these engagement states and explored the significant positive impact of emotional and physical engagement on participation and word of mouth behaviors. It shows that the positive attitudes in emotional level developed through emotional engagement, and the willingness to devote personal time and energy at physical engagement phase have positive effects on participation on and the word of mouth about the brand page. This is consistent with the theory of reasoned action which postulates that positive attitudes toward an object have direct effect on the behaviors regarding this object.

In sum, the present study reveals the significance and relevancy of psychological engagement as well as behavioral engagement in the context of virtual brand communities. Indeed, according to our results, the psychological engagement states do behave as attitudinal antecedents of behavioral engagement. More specifically, while the cognitive engagement has negative impact on behavioral engagement in terms of active participation behaviors, the emotional and physical engagement states have positive impact on behavioral engagement in terms of both participation and word of mouth behaviors. On the other hand, this study also suggests that cognitive engagement phase of psychological engagement does not prompt community members to spread the word of mouth and to suggest the brand page to others.

Psychological Engagement as a Sequential Process

The Corresponding Gap in Literature:

GAP2: Psychological View of Customer Engagement in Virtual Brand Communities

The potentiality of psychological customer engagement phases (i.e. cognitive, emotional and physical) to be a sequential process is derived from suggestion by van Doorn et al. (2010) who assert that customer engagement may exhibit similar structure with the Oliver's (1999) brand loyalty model. Accordingly, the sequential customer engagement process is investigated through psychological customer engagement states in the present study with an inspiration from Oliver's (1999) sequential brand loyalty model where cognitions bring about emotional responses which in turn results in behavioral intentions which finally leads to the behaviors. This framework is also based on the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen&Fishbein, 1980) which relates consumer's attitudes to their behavioral intentions which in turn links to actual behaviors. Through application of regression analysis and ANOVA test, the similar structure is observed in our study for psychological customer engagement states; indicating a sequence starting with cognitive engagement, continuing with emotional engagement, and finally leading to physical engagement.

Initially, the significant and positive regression path from cognitive engagement to emotional engagement and from emotional engagement to physical engagement supported our hypotheses and indicated the potential sequential psychological engagement process in virtual brand communities. According to the regression analysis results, cognitive engagement has a direct positive impact on emotional engagement which in turn has a direct positive impact on physical engagement.

Further analysis is conducted to assess the psychological engagement sequential process through ANOVA test analyzing the differences between these engagement states based on the duration of membership. The test results explore the significant differences in cognitive, emotional, and physical engagement intensity levels based on the duration of membership in consistence with the study hypotheses (see Appendix C). More specifically, it shows that the new members exhibit significantly higher cognitive engagement intensity than relatively older members of the online brand community. Furthermore, the new members show significantly lower emotional and physical

engagement intensity than older members. In other words, over the time of membership while cognitive engagement decreases, emotional and physical engagement intensity increases. Consequently, taken together both regression analysis showing the significant path from cognitive to emotional and from emotional to physical engagement, and the ANOVA test showing the significant differences between new and old members in terms of cognitive, emotional, and physical engagement intensity, the psychological customer engagement in virtual brand communities in the current study demonstrated a sequential process.

This finding is in line with various studies examining virtual brand communities and identifying the chief reason of joining virtual brand communities as obtaining information (e.g. Dholakia et al. 2004; Wang & Fesenmaier 2004; Madupu & Cooley, 2010; Brodie et al., 2011b). Correspondingly, as the members' initial motivation is to gather information, the new members exhibit high cognitive engagement in the brand page which, in our study, resulted in the cognitive engagement phase to be the initial phase which is primarily characterized by new members.

Furthermore, the results suggest that while cognitive engagement intensity decreases, emotional engagement intensity increases by time of membership. Moreover, considering that cognitive engagement has significant positive effect on emotional engagement, this can be interpreted as cognitively engaged members convert to emotional engagement phase after certain time of fulfilling experiences on the brand page. This finding is also consistent with the proposition by Back & Parks (2003) who assert that "people who evaluate an attitude object favorably are likely to experience positive affective reactions in conjunction with it and are unlikely to experience negative affective reactions".

The positive impact of cognitive engagement on emotional engagement has important implications considering that, the current study also revealed cognitive engagement leads to lurking behaviors, in other words passive participation on virtual brand communities. As the passive participation, which refers to behaviors such as observing and reading but not commenting, is the dominant form of participation behaviors in online communities (Takahashi et al., 2007), the scrutiny of necessary actions to convert passive participants into active participants are emphasized by Madupu & Cooley (2010) so that active participation could be generated which is necessary for

the survival of the virtual brand communities (Madupu& Cooley, 2010). The results of the present study provide some insights about the necessary actions in question regarding lurking behaviors in virtual brand communities. First, it reveals that cognitive engagement is the psychological customer engagement phase which leads to passive participation. Second, this study finds that cognitive engagement has positive impact on emotional engagement which in turn leads to active participation. Therefore, one possible path to convert lurkers to active participants is to develop emotional bonding with them which will generate emotional engagement which is a stronger customer engagement phase that leads to active participation behaviors.

Overall, the present research suggests that psychological customer engagement states demonstrate a sequential process in virtual brand communities. It starts with cognitive engagement where the members are concentrated on the information and content of the brand page, and then cognitive engagement leads to emotional engagement where members have affective commitment and emotional bonding towards the brand community, and finally emotional engagement leads to physical engagement where members are willing to devote more personal energy and time on the brand page and effort in their role as brand community members.

Brand Loyalty as Antecedent of Psychological Customer Engagement

<p style="text-align: center;">The Corresponding Gap in Literature:</p> <hr style="width: 50%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">GAP3: Antecedents of Customer Engagement Leading to Variations in Intensity Levels in Engagement Forms -</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“Brand Loyalty as the likely attitudinal antecedent of customer engagement” (van Doorn et al., 2010)</p>

The previous sections explained the findings related to psychological and behavioral engagement which demonstrated the different customer engagement forms that can be observed in virtual brand communities and how these different forms interact with each other. In this section we will discuss the findings of the further analysis conducted to investigate the role of brand loyalty in explaining the variations in these different customer engagement forms.

As illustrated in the conceptual model of the study (Figure 1), the brand loyalty is proposed to have direct impact on psychological engagement states and indirect impact on behavioral

engagement with the psychological engagement having a moderating effect. The study findings supported this hypothesis indicating direct significant impacts that brand loyalty states have on psychological engagement states, and direct significant impacts that psychological engagement has on behavioral engagement. Furthermore, through post-hoc analysis we also investigated the brand loyalty's direct impact on behavioral engagement, and did not find any significant direct relationships. Therefore, the findings support that brand loyalty is indirectly linked to behavioral engagement while psychological engagement states have moderating effects.

Furthermore, according to the present research, each psychological engagement state is derived from different brand loyalty states. Specifically, while cognitive engagement is the outcome of cognitive and affective loyalty, emotional engagement is derived from conative loyalty and physical engagement is derived from behavioral loyalty. This supports our previous suggestion that as the attitudes take various forms through the brand loyalty process, and assuming that attitudes impact behavioral intentions and behaviors (Ajzen&Fishbein, 1980), then it is relevant that these different attitudes result in different engagement forms in virtual brand communities.

Moreover, it is also important to mention that the study originally suggested that affective loyalty would be linked to emotional engagement while cognitive engagement would only be derived from cognitive loyalty. According to the study results after conducting regression analysis, it is found that affective loyalty is not significantly leading to emotional engagement, but it is significantly related to cognitive engagement phase. Therefore, cognitive engagement is found to be the function of cognitive loyalty and affective loyalty. This result can be rationalized based on Sashi's (2012) suggestion that for the customer engagement to occur both calculative and affective commitment should exist, as merely calculative commitment is not strong enough to lead customer engagement. While calculative commitment is based on one's cognitions, affective commitment involves emotional responses towards the brand. Likewise, our study revealed that the loyalty level based on both cognitions and emotions explains cognitive engagement phase better than loyalty level merely based on cognitions. Moreover, this finding also suggests that the emotional responses developed at affective loyalty phase are not strong enough to have significant impact on one's emotional engagement on the related brand's online community page. The emotional engagement,

on the other hand, is derived from conative loyalty which is a higher attitudinal loyalty phase involving stronger emotions towards the brand.

The finding that brand loyalty states have significant direct impacts on psychological customer engagement contributes to the knowledge in customer engagement literature in the sense that it provides insights to the explanation of customer engagement intensity variations. As suggested by Brodie et al. (2011a), customer engagement occurs at different intensity levels, and the antecedents of customer engagement should be identified to explain these variations. The present research identifies the brand loyalty phases as the antecedents of psychological customer engagement states in the context of virtual brand communities: cognitive and affective loyalty as antecedents of cognitive engagement, conative loyalty as antecedent of emotional engagement and behavioral loyalty as antecedent of physical engagement. This result also provides empirical support to van Doorn et al.'s (2010) proposition that loyalty is the likely attitudinal antecedent of customer engagement.

The results, furthermore, indicate that the strength of brand loyalty possibly also determines the strength of the psychological customer engagement level. The cognitively and affectively loyal customers are likely to have higher level of cognitive engagement on the brand page. These two loyalty levels are the first two phases of loyalty process, and they result in the lowest level of customer engagement. Conative loyalty, on the other hand, is a stronger brand loyalty phase which occurs after the consumer has repeated occurrences of emotional experiences related to the brand. This loyalty level has significant impact on emotional engagement level which is also a stronger engagement phase which involves emotional bonding with the brand and brand community on the brand page. Furthermore, the strongest loyalty level which is called behavioral engagement leads to the strongest psychological engagement phase that is physical engagement. At behavioral loyalty phase customers are willing to make personal sacrifices to overcome the obstacles to find and purchase the brand. We suggested that this willingness to make personal sacrifice will possibly turn into willingness to devote personal time and energy on the brand page. The findings support this hypothesis and indicate the direct path from behavioral loyalty to physical engagement. Consequently, through this study, it is observed that brand loyalty and psychological customer engagement exhibit interrelated development processes. Indeed, the higher (lower) the loyalty phase

that customers exhibit, the higher (lower) the customer engagement phase that they would be likely to demonstrate on virtual brand communities.

The further contribution of the finding that brand loyalty has significant positive impact on psychological customer engagement is the exploration that brand loyalty is not only important in the exchange situations, such as purchasing the brand, but also in non-exchange environments like virtual brand communities where the brand-related consumer experiences take place. The attitudes towards the brand developed through the brand loyalty process have been traditionally linked to re-purchasing behaviors based on the exchange theory. According to the exchange theory, the company and the consumers have well-defined roles; they independently create values and transactions occur at the point of exchange (Sheth&Parvatiyar, 1995). However, the new brand logic which is introduced in the literature review chapter has shown the shift in the branding focus from exchange centric view to experience centric view. More specifically, in the current marketing and branding view, firms and customers are not seen as independent value creators, but instead they are seen as co-creators of the brand value and consumers are endogenous to value creation process.

Hence, customer engagement which refers to customer experiences in the process of value co-creation, is an important element of the overall branding strategy. Accordingly, the current study has investigated the customer engagement as an outcome of brand loyalty in virtual brand communities. We suggested that as re-purchasing behaviors as an outcome of brand loyalty is relevant in exchange situations, customer engagement as an outcome of brand loyalty should be relevant in non-exchange environments with the experience-centric view. The study findings supported the brand loyalty states' direct impact on psychological customer engagement states and displayed the significant role of brand loyalty on consumers' experiences with the brand in virtual brand communities which is a non-exchange environment where the value co-creation process takes place.

6.2. Managerial Implications

As well as theoretical contributions to the existing literature, the current study also provides important practical insights for the companies in Turkey which have established online brand communities. As mentioned previously, substantial amount of big companies in Turkey, having one

of the highest rates of online population on Facebook in the world, has built their brand pages on this social networking site. However, the ongoing challenge for them has been to attract consumers to their brand pages and encourage them to participate in online conversations.

As noted before, the companies have so far focused on the fan acquisition to their brand pages on Facebook and the customer engagement only in terms of participation behaviors. This inclination of the companies to give emphasis on fan acquisition and participation behaviors relies on the fact that the behavioral facet of engagement is observable and measurable through the page likes and comments, and it makes benchmarking among various brand pages possible. Additionally, the existence of the fans and their participation on the brand page is necessary for the online brand communities to survive.

On the other hand, as emphasized by social media marketing agency iProspect (2012) after a recent research about Facebook brand communities, the fan acquisition, which is reflected through page likes on Facebook brand communities, does not necessarily indicate a good performance of the brand page. According to their customer engagement measurement model, most of the companies having the highest amount of page likes have the least rate of customer engagement. Customer engagement rate, in their measurement model refers to active participation from the fan base of the brand page. More specifically, the measurement is based on two core indicators that can be seen in each virtual brand community on Facebook: “Fans” in other words people who like the page, and the “PTA (People Talking About This)” metric which is the amount of responses and comments, thus the active participation, to the brand page. The customer engagement rate is calculated by iProspect by dividing PTA by the amount of fans, so that the rate indicates the percentage of fans actively interacting with the brand on the brand page.

By applying the same formula as iProspect did, and through collecting the data from Socialbakers(2012) online brand communities database which provides the recent Facebook brand page statistics, we calculated the customer engagement rate of virtual brand communities of three big industries in Turkey: Telecom, Automobile, and Banking (see Appendix D). The figures support iProspect’s findings that the companies having the highest engagement rates actually have the least amount of fan rates in comparison with other brands in these three industries in Turkey. For

instance, in Telecom industry, the first two companies (Fenercell, and Vodafone Türkiye) in terms of the highest engagement rate, are 14th and 17th in the ranking in terms of total amount of fans among the 22 companies in the same industry. In Automobile industry, the first two highest engagement rates belong to Isuzu and Audi Turkey brand pages which are 26th and 9th in the ranking in terms of fan base among 32 brands in the automobile industry. And in Banking, ING Pratica, ING Bank Tukiye, and Asya Card have the highest engagement rates which are 21st, 16th and 35th respectively in terms of the amount of fans among 36 brands in the same industry. These figures illustrate that the amount of fans is not directly linked to the member participation in virtual brand communities. Therefore, for the companies the challenge of how to increase active participation on the brands' virtual brand communities arises. The question is that; if the fan acquisition does not guarantee an interactive fan base, then what are the drivers that lead to active participation?

The intention of the present research is to give insights to the companies about the different engagement forms of different member profiles so that the companies would have better understanding of why some community members are actively interacting, while the others are passive on the brand page. Moreover, the study also identifies the ways that lead to active interaction on the brand page. In order to develop strategies to increase interaction in online brand communities on Facebook, it is necessary to identify the pioneers leading to active participation. Therefore, the current study provides this knowledge by identifying the key drivers of behavioral engagement. The study findings will be explained further in this section with an intention to provide companies managerial insights for developing sound strategies on their established virtual brand communities on Facebook.

Our study suggests that the behavioral engagement is directly linked to psychological engagement. Indeed, the pioneers of active participation and word of mouth behaviors are the three phases of psychological engagement; namely cognitive, emotional, and physical engagement states. Moreover, the findings reveal that psychological engagement states follow a sequential process. Accordingly, we will examine the customer engagement on online brand communities by categorizing it into psychological engagement sequences. Therefore, the customer engagement on online brand communities is classified into three phases; cognitive engagement, emotional

engagement, and physical engagement, respectively. These three customer engagement phases and their respective characteristics are demonstrated in Table 6. Each phase will be explained in the following.

Table 6.

Phase#	Psychological Engagement State	Members' Loyalty level with the brand	Members' Participation Type	Members' WOM to others	The phase is triggered by
Phase1 ↓	Cognitive Engagement	Brand Loyalty Phase 1 and 2 Cognitive and Affective Loyalty	Passive participation – no active interaction, but reading and observing the brand page	No	Cognitive and Affective loyalty – information and quality assurance needs
Phase2 ↓	Emotional Engagement	Brand Loyalty Phase 3 Conative Loyalty	Active Participation – active interaction with the brand community through comments and likes to the posts	Yes	Cognitive engagement and conative loyalty – higher levels of emotional responses towards the brand
Phase3	Physical Engagement	Brand Loyalty Phase 4 Behavioral Loyalty	Active Participation – active interaction with the brand community through comments and likes to the posts	Yes	Emotional engagement and behavioral loyalty – the highest level of loyalty and emotional bonding with the brand and the brand community

Table 6 Customer Engagement Phases and their Respective Characteristics on Online Brand Communities

The first phase of customer engagement: Cognitive engagement

Characterized by consumers with relatively lower attitudinal loyalty level towards the brand
and higher informational needs

Behavioral customer engagement: Passive participation on the brand community

It is illustrated in Appendix D that while many companies in Turkey attracted a high rate of fans to their brand community pages on Facebook as calculated through page likes, the behavioral engagement rate which involves participation behaviors is relatively low. Moreover, it is also observed that the companies who managed to have the highest engagement rates on the brand pages have relatively lower fan base compared to other brands in the same industry. This indicates that the amount of page likes does not explain the interactive fan base. Therefore, the question here to be answered for the companies is that: what are the key drivers leading to active and passive participation behaviors?

The first customer engagement phase, namely cognitive engagement (Phase1 in Table 6) represents the passive participants on online brand communities. According to the analysis of data from 193 members of various brand pages, the passive participation results from solely cognitively engaged members. Therefore, in order to understand the reasons leading to passive participation behaviors, more specifically low rate of member comments and posts on online brand communities, it is necessary to understand cognitively engaged member profile.

Cognitive engagement stands for the first and the lowest psychological customer engagement phase. Customer engagement in virtual brand communities initiates at cognitive level. The term “cognitive engagement” refers to the community members’ concentration on the information and the content of the brand page. This phase involves community members with low social integration motivation. Indeed, the primary motivation of cognitively engaged members is the informational and/or quality assurance needs. This type of members, as noted before, is characterized as lurkers. Lurkers refer to the members of the brand community who follow the brand page through reading and observing, but not behaviorally participating in the conversations. They are interested in the information about the brand on the brand page, they follow the posts, but they are not tempted to involve in behavioral interactions with the brand and the brand community. Consequently, one of

the reasons of passive participation, as found by this study, is the members' high emphasis on informational and/or quality assurance needs, and low social integration motivation.

Furthermore, the current study suggests that while the behavioral engagement is directly linked to the psychological engagement phase, it is also indirectly linked to the member's brand loyalty phase. More specifically, the brand loyalty is the attitudinal antecedent of psychological engagement, and psychological engagement is the attitudinal antecedent of behavioral engagement. Therefore, in order to fully understand the first phase, which is characterized with passive participation behaviors, it is also necessary to analyze members' profile in terms of brand loyalty.

The brand community members at the first phase of customer engagement have the lowest loyalty level. They are loyal to the brands in cognitive and affective manner. Their loyalty is based on their beliefs about the product attributes such as good quality or price (cognitive loyalty), and/or the first phase of emotional responses developed towards the brand (affective loyalty). The attitudinal responses, thus the emotional attachment, towards the brand have not well developed for this member profile. Therefore, their major motivation of joining the brand page has primarily cognitive basis, such as following the information regarding the brand attributes and the reassurance of the quality of the brand. Consequently, another reason that leads to passive participation, as suggested by the current study, is the high cognitive loyalty with low attitudinal responses.

Furthermore, it is worthwhile to note that the cognitive engagement phase does not only lead to passive participant member profile; but also results in low desire for the positive word of mouth behaviors. Indeed, it is the only phase that does not prompt members to spread the positive word of mouth to the others about the brand page.

In sum, the first phase of customer engagement, that is cognitive engagement, signifies important insights for the companies about the member profiles resulting in low engagement rates on the brand pages. This member profile is characterized with high cognitive loyalty, low attitudinal loyalty, and high cognitive engagement. In other words, their motivation to join brand community has mainly cognitive basis; e.g. information gathering about product/brand attributes. Therefore, they are mostly observing the brand page, but not actively interacting and developing emotional bonds with the brand and the other community members. Therefore, considering that the low level of attitudinal

loyalty as well as the low level of psychological customer engagement are the two main reasons leading to passive participation, it is wise to recommend companies to identify the passive participants on their brand pages and develop strategies for them to increase their attitudinal brand loyalty and/or psychological engagement levels. This way, the members at the initial phase can be promoted to the higher customer engagement phases and consequently active participation and positive word of mouth behaviors can be initiated. Accordingly, the path from cognitive engagement to increased psychological engagement phases will be explained in the following engagement phases.

The second phase of customer engagement: Emotional Engagement

Characterized by consumers with higher attitudinal loyalty level, and increased affective responses towards the brand and brand community.

Behavioral engagement: active participation on the brand community, and positive word of mouth about the brand page.

While the main concern of the companies is to increase the interactive fan base of their online brand pages on Facebook, the question to be answered was identified as the key drivers leading to active and passive participation. As explained in the first phase of customer engagement, cognitive engagement explains the passive participation behaviors. In other words, even though the consumers become fans of the brands that they are loyal to, based on their beliefs and initial affective attitudes, and with the motivation of information gathering and quality assurance, this phase leads to passive participation. The cognitively engaged members merely read and observe, but not interact by responding to the posts on the brand page. Likewise, they do not involve in positive word of mouth behaviors.

On the other hand active participation is triggered by the second and third phase of the customer engagement. At the second phase, the favorable emotional responses towards the brand community are developed and therefore this phase is called emotional engagement. At this phase, the members start feeling inspired by the brand community and proud of being one of the members. Furthermore,

the community members who are emotionally engaged on the brand page are actively participating on the online conversations. Therefore, one part of the interactive fan base of the virtual brand communities are the emotionally engaged members. Moreover, this type of members also involves in positive word of mouth behaviors by recommending others to visit the brand page.

According to the present research, emotional engagement is derived from cognitive engagement and conative loyalty. The knowledge about the drivers of the emotional engagement is critical for virtual brand communities, as this provides the way to increase emotionally engaged fan base which in turn increases the active participation rate on the page. These two drivers, specifically cognitive engagement and conative loyalty, therefore, represent the paths to improve active interactions of the members through developing emotional engagement.

Accordingly, one of the paths to improve active interactions on the brand page is to convert cognitively engaged members to emotional engagement phase. The direct and significant path that is found in the present study from cognitive engagement to emotional engagement indicates that through delivering fulfilling experiences to the members at cognitive engagement phase, it is possible to create emotional bonding with the consumers. This, in turn, results in cognitively engaged members to be promoted to the next level of engagement phase that is emotional engagement. Therefore, the cognitively engaged passive participants will be converted into emotionally engaged active participants of the brand page.

Furthermore, the second path to improve emotional engagement, thus the active interactions on the brand page, is to attract conatively loyal consumers. According to the study findings, the conative loyalty directly and positively impacts emotional engagement which, in turn, results in active participation and positive word of mouth behaviors. Therefore, another way for the companies to increase emotionally engaged participants on the brand page is to identify and attract consumers who are loyal to the brand/product at conative level. Conative loyalty refers to the brand loyalty level which occurs after customer's repeated occurrences of affective experiences with the brand. Therefore, this loyalty phase involves deeper emotional bonding with the brand than the affective loyalty phase does, and these affective feelings are reflected on the brand page as emotional engagement.

In sum, considering that the active participants are mainly composed of brand loyal consumers at high attitudinal levels, with high emotional bonding and interaction with the brand and the brand community, it is recommended for the companies that the fan acquisition strategies should be developed in accordance with this member profile. For instance, the fan acquisition strategies which are solely targeting to create new customers and overemphasizing the advertising focused information on the brand page will be unattractive to the customers at higher loyalty phase. This will result in more cognitively engaged customers who comprise the passive fan base of the brand page. Moreover, through information-focused content of the brand page the emotional bonding with them would not be possible. Therefore, the sound strategy for an active brand page will include content targeted to consumers with higher attitudinal loyalty levels so that this customer profile can use the brand page to express their emotions and to strengthen their emotional bonds with the brand.

The third phase of customer engagement: Physical Engagement

Characterized by consumers with the highest loyalty level towards the brand and willingness to devote personal time and energy for the online brand community

Behavioral engagement: active participation on the brand community, and positive word of mouth about the brand page

As indicated before, the active participation is triggered by emotional and physical engagement phases of psychological engagement in online brand communities. Thus, besides emotionally engaged members, another part of the interactive fan base of the virtual brand communities is the physically engaged members.

The physical engagement is the highest level of customer engagement phase and refers to the willingness to devote more personal time and energy on the brand page. The physically engaged members try doing their best to perform well as a member of the brand community. Therefore, the members at this phase can be considered as the most committed brand community members. They actively participate on the online conversations, and spread the word of mouth to others about the brand page.

Physical engagement phase is triggered by emotional engagement and behavioral loyalty drivers. This has two indications for the companies. First, the increased emotional engagement will lead to more committed fan base on the brand page. Therefore, through delivering fulfilling experiences to the members at emotional engagement phase, it is possible to generate physically engaged fans that are willing to devote more time and energy on the brand page to increase active participation. Second, it indicates that the consumers with highest loyalty level to the brand, that is behavioral loyalty, become physically engaged on the brand's community pages. Therefore, another path to improve active participation on the online brand communities is to identify and attract behaviorally loyal consumers and target them on the messages and the content of the brand page. The behaviorally loyal customers represent the most loyal customers of the brand. They are willing to repurchase the brand even if they have to overcome obstacles to find it. They are also willing to stay as the members of the brand community and make personal sacrifices for the performance of the brand page. Therefore, this group of the brand community does not require much effort from the company to be acquired or sustained on the brand page. However, as they still represent the most important part of the fan base which ensures the sustainability of the active interactions on the online brand community with high level of commitment, they should also be provided with satisfying brand page content which is relevant to them.

In conclusion, the study findings provide significant practical insights for the managers to understand the triggers that lead to passive and active member participation on the online brand communities. In order to present our findings for managerial implications, the customer engagement is explained in three sequential phases. These phases are, as illustrated in Table 6, cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, and physical engagement, respectively. It is explained that cognitive engagement is the initial membership stage which leads to passive participation. This member profile focuses on informational content and they are not tempted for social integration with the brand and the brand community. Therefore, in this study the companies are recommended to develop strategies to promote cognitively engaged members into emotional and physical engagement phases. Emotional and physical engagement states are the second and the third phases of the customer engagement, respectively. The community members at these stages are participating in online conversations actively and spreading the positive word of mouth to others. Accordingly,

the aforementioned paths directing to the emotional and physical engagement should be known by the companies so that they can base their strategies on them to increase the active fan base on their virtual brand communities.

7. CONCLUSION

Customer engagement is one of the most important research streams in the recent marketing literature and the Marketing Science Institute (MSI) confirms this by declaring the research on customer engagement as one of the top priorities for the period of 2010-2012 (Marketing Science Institute [MSI] 2010). Accordingly, the primary focus of this research was to contribute to customer engagement research stream through investigating the relationship between two relational constructs, namely brand loyalty and customer engagement. It was suggested by van Doorn et al. (2010) that loyalty is the likely attitudinal antecedent of customer engagement; therefore the relationship between these two concepts should be further examined. Through this investigation we also aimed explaining the different customer engagement intensity levels through loyalty states, as it is also suggested by Brodie et al. (2011a) that the drivers leading to different intensity levels should be investigated. Moreover, the review of customer engagement literature has revealed another gap that the concept of customer engagement is either considered to be a behavioral manifestation (e.g. van Doorn et al., 2010), or a psychological phenomenon (e.g. Brodie et al., 2011). The present research also reconciles these two views by applying both psychological dimensions and behavioral dimensions of the concept in the research framework.

Furthermore, virtual brand communities, being the most popular context of customer engagement where brand stakeholders are intermingled and non-exchange related interactions transpire, the context of the study has been chosen to be virtual brand communities. Moreover, the review of studies on virtual brand communities revealed that the customer engagement term is considered only in terms of behaviors whereas psychological customer engagement which is developed in marketing literature is not reflected on the research regarding online brand communities. Hence, the present study also contributed to the research on virtual brand communities by applying psychological customer engagement knowledge in this context.

Moreover, the study is conducted in Turkish market which has one of the most engaged populations on Facebook in Europe, according to comScore (2011b) statistics. The challenges of companies in Turkey to increase the participation rate on online brand communities on Facebook are defined and through the research findings the relevant insights for the companies are provided to overcome these challenges and develop sound strategies.

Accordingly, a quantitative research is undertaken and primary data is collected from 193 qualified respondents from Turkish consumers who are members of virtual brand communities on Facebook through an online survey. With the application of SPSS 17 statistical tool, the identified hypotheses regarding the relationships between brand loyalty states and customer engagement forms and the relationships within the customer engagement forms are tested.

According to the study results, the significant paths from brand loyalty states to psychological engagement states are found. More specifically, this study suggests that each psychological engagement state is derived from different brand loyalty states, and the strength of the brand loyalty corresponds with the strength of the psychological engagement state on online brand communities. Indeed, the cognitive and affective loyalty has direct impact on cognitive engagement, the affective loyalty has direct impact on emotional engagement, and the behavioral loyalty is directly effecting physical engagement.

Furthermore, according to the study results, psychological engagement follows a sequential process. The customer engagement starts at cognitive level. At the first engagement phase, the members are concentrated on the information and content of the brand page, and their major motivation is information gathering and quality reassurance. This engagement phase is significantly linked to the emotional engagement phase which indicates that fulfilling experiences on cognitive engagement phase results in emotional responses towards the brand community. At emotional engagement phase, members feel inspired from the brand community and they feel proud of being a part of it. The emotional engagement phase is also linked to physical engagement phase which stands as the highest level of customer engagement. The high level of emotional engagement results in physical engagement which is the phase where members are willing to devote more personal time and energy for the brand community. They are the most committed brand community members.

Another finding of this research is the direct link between psychological engagement and behavioral engagement. According to the study results, the psychological engagement states behave as the attitudinal antecedents of behavioral engagement. More specifically, cognitive engagement has a negative impact on participation behaviors. Therefore, cognitively engaged members are called as passive participants who follow the brand page through reading and observing, but not actively interacting in the online conversations. On the other hand, the study has found significant positive path from emotional and physical engagement to the participation and word of mouth behaviors. Emotionally and physically engaged members are actively participating on the conversations on the online brand community, and they spread the word of mouth to others about the brand page.

Furthermore, the insights for companies who have established brand communities on Facebook in Turkey from the research findings are discussed. Accordingly, it is suggested that high informational content which targets new and potential customers attract cognitively engaged members to the brand page which will result in passive fan base. If the target is to create an interactive brand page, then it is necessary to generate emotional bonding with the customers on the brand page. Therefore, the members will be emotionally engaged which will lead to active participants. Moreover, cognitive and behavioral loyalty states are also directly linked to psychological engagement phases, emotional and physical engagement respectively, that lead to active participation. Therefore, another way to improve active participant base is to attract customers having higher loyalty levels towards to the brand through providing targeted messages and content on the brand page.

8. LIMITATIONS and FUTURE RESEARCH

This study examined the brand loyalty as the antecedent of the customer engagement. Through regression analysis, the paths from the brand loyalty phases to customer engagement phases are tested. The results revealed the significant relationships between these two dimensions and supported our hypothesis. On the other hand, Brodie et al. (2011a) propose that the customer engagement is an iterative process. In other words, they suggest that the customer engagement phases are interacting with each other in a recurring manner. Based on this proposition, this means

that an antecedent, which is brand loyalty in this study, could also be the consequence of customer engagement in an iterative process. Therefore, it is worthwhile for future research to examine whether customer engagement is an iterative process and whether the brand loyalty is the consequence, as well as the antecedent, of customer engagement.

Moreover, Brodie et al. (2011a) suggest that the customer engagement is context-dependent. This means that the customer engagement intensity levels might show variances based on different contexts. Even though the context of this study is the online brand communities, the collected data represents members of brand communities from various industries, products, and/or brands. Therefore, it is also recommended for future research to apply this study on the members of one specific brand page, or on the brand pages of the same industry in order to overcome the context-related errors of the findings.

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Appendix

Appendix A. Questionnaire (English)

Are you a Facebook user?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

How often do you use Facebook?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ 2-3 Times a Week
- ☐ Once a Week
- ☐ 2-3 Times a Month
- ☐ Once a Month
- ☐ Less than Once a Month

How much time do you spend on Facebook on average per day?

- ☐ Less than half an hour
- ☐ 1 hour
- ☐ Between 1-2 hours
- ☐ Between 2-4 hours
- ☐ More than 4 hours

What is your age?

What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

What is your education level?

- ☐ Primary school
- ☐ Middle school
- ☐ High school
- ☐ University
- ☐ Master's and above

Are you a member of any Facebook page of a brand that you like?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Can you please state the name of one brand that you are a member of on Facebook?

Can you please answer the following questions considering the brand you mentioned above?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
This brand provides me superior product/service quality as compared to any other brand in the same category	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No other brand in the same category performs better than this brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe that this brand provides more benefits than any other brands in the same category	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I love using this brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel better when I use this brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like this brand more than any other comparable brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Even if other comparable brands have lower prices, I still prefer this brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I intend to continue using this brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I consider this brand to be my first choice among the whole other brands in the same category	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I spend more money for this brand than any other comparable brands.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I purchase this brand more frequently than any other comparable brands.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use the brand more often than any other comparable brands.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Can you please answer the following questions considering the Facebook page of the brand you mentioned above?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Time flies when I am visiting this brand page.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This brand page is so absorbing that I forgot about everything else.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am rarely distracted when I visit this brand page.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am immersed in the content of this brand page.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My mind is focused when I read through the content of this brand page.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I pay a lot of attention to this brand page.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am enthusiastic in this brand page.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This brand page inspires me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I found this brand page full of meaning and purpose.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am excited when I use this brand page.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am interested in this brand page.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am proud of being member of the brand page.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can visit this brand page for very long periods at a time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel strong and vigorous when I visit this brand page.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I feel very resilient, mentally, as far as brand page is concerned.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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In this brand page, I always persevere, even when things do not go well.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I devote a lot of energy to this brand page.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I try my hardest to perform well on this brand page.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Can you please specify how often do you do the following in the page of the brand you mentioned above?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Always
I provide new information about the brand to other people in this brand page.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I actively participate in the activities on this brand page	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I support other members of the brand page.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Can you please specify how strongly do you agree/disagree to the following?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I tell positive things about this brand page to other people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I recommend this brand page to anyone who seek my advice about the brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I encourage people to use this brand page	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I won't hesitate to refer other people to this brand page.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How often do you visit the brand page?

- ☐ Less than Once a Month
- ☐ Once a Month
- ☐ 2-3 Times a Month
- ☐ Once a Week
- ☐ 2-3 Times a Week
- ☐ Daily

How long has it been since you are a member of the page?

- ☐ Less than a month
- ☐ 1 to 3 months
- ☐ 3 to 6 months
- ☐ 6 months to a year
- ☐ More than a year

Appendix B. Questionnaire (Turkish)

Facebook hesabınız var mı?

- ☐ Evet
- ☐ Hayır

Facebook'u ne kadar sıklıkta ziyaret ediyorsunuz?

- ☐ Hergün
- ☐ Haftada 2-3 kez
- ☐ Haftada 1 kez
- ☐ Ayda 2-3 kez
- ☐ Ayda 1 kez
- ☐ Ayda 1 kezden daha az sıklıkta

Bir gün içinde Facebook'ta ortalama ne kadar zaman geçiriyorsunuz?

- ☐ Yarım saatten daha az
- ☐ 1 saat
- ☐ 1-2 saat arası
- ☐ 2-4 saat arası
- ☐ 4 saatten daha fazla

Yaşınız:

Cinsiyetiniz:

- ☐ Bay
☐ Bayan

Eğitim durumunuz:

- ☐ İlkokul
☐ Ortaokul
☐ Lise
☐ Üniversite
☐ Yüksek lisans veya üzeri

Facebook'taki profilinizde beğendiğiniz sayfalar (likes) arasında herhangi bir markanın sayfası bulunuyor mu?

- ☐ Evet
☐ Hayır

Lütfen Facebook sayfasını beğendiğiniz bu markalardan birini seçerek, burada ismini belirtiniz:

Lütfen aşağıdaki cümlelere ne kadar katıldığınızı, yukarıda belirttiğiniz markayı düşünerek cevap veriniz.

	Tamamen katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Kısmen katılıyorum	Ne katılıyorum ne katılmıyorum	Kısmen katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Hiç katılmıyorum
Bu marka, emsallerine kıyasla çok daha iyi ürün/servis kalitesi sunuyor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aynı kategorideki hiçbir markanın ürünü, bu markaninki kadar iyi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

değil.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bu markanın emsallerinden çok daha fazla fayda sunduğuna inanıyorum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bu markayı seviyorum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bu markayı kullanmak beni daha iyi hissettiriyor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bu markayı emsallerine oranla daha fazla seviyorum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emsal markalar daha düşük fiyatlar sunsa da, bu markayı tercih ederim.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bu markayı kullanmaya devam etmeyi düşünüyorum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bu marka aynı kategorideki markalar arasında ilk tercihimdir.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emsallerine oranla bu marka için daha fazla para harcıyorum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emsallerine oranla bu markayı çok daha sıklıkla satın alıyorum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emsallerine oranla bu markayı çok daha sıklıkla kullanıyorum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Lütfen aşağıdaki cümlelere ne kadar katıldığınızı, yukarıda belirttiğiniz markanın Facebook sayfasını ve içeriğini düşünerek cevap veriniz.

	Tamamen katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Kısmen Katılıyorum	Ne katılıyorum ne katılmıyorum	Kısmen katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Hiç katılmıyorum
Bu sayfayı ziyaret ettiğimde zaman hızla akıp geçiyor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bu sayfanın içeriği o kadar sürükleyici ki, diğer herseyi unutabiliyorum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bu sayfayı ziyaret ettiğimde tüm dikkatimi sayfanın içeriğine veriyorum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bu sayfanın içeriğine kendimi kaptırıyorum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bu sayfadayken zihnim tamamiyle sayfanın içeriğiyle meşgul oluyor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bu sayfada bulunduğum sürece tamamen sayfaya odaklanıyorum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bu sayfayı büyük bir hevesle ziyaret ediyorum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bu sayfanın ilham verici olduğunu düşünüyorum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bu sayfanın benim için anlam ve öneminin olduğunu düşünüyorum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Bu sayfanın heyecan verici olduğunu düşünüyorum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bu sayfayı ilgi çekici buluyorum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bu sayfada bulunmaktan büyük memnuniyet duyuyorum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Uzun bir zamanımı bu sayfada geçirebilirim.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bu sayfaya katkı sağlamak amacıyla çaba ve gayret gösterebileceğimi düşünüyorum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bu sayfada bulunduğumda kendimi zihinsel olarak dinç hissediyorum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sayfa ile ilgili birşeyler yolunda gitmese bile bu sayfadan ayrılmayı düşünmüyorum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bu sayfaya katkı sağlamak için büyük bir enerji sarfedebileceğimi düşünüyorum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bu sayfada iyi bir performans sergilemek için elimden geleni yaparım.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Lütfen belirttiğiniz markanın Facebook sayfasında aşağıdakileri ne sıklıkta yaptığınızı belirtiniz.

	Hiçbir zaman	Ender olarak	Bazen	Genellikle	Her zaman
Bu sayfada marka ile ilgili bilgi ve tecrübelerimi paylaşıyorum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bu sayfadaki aktivitelere aktif olarak katılıyorum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bu sayfada bulunan diğer insanların paylaşıtlarına destek veriyorum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Markanın sayfada paylaştığı içeriğe destek veriyorum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Lütfen aşağıdaki cümlelere ne kadar katıldığınızı belirtiniz.

	Tamamen katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Kısmen katılıyorum	Ne katılıyorum ne katılmıyorum	Kısmen katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Hiç katılmıyorum
Etrafımdaki insanlara bu sayfa ile ilgili olumlu şeyler söylüyorum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bana marka ile ilgili fikrimi soranlara bu sayfayı tavsiye ederim	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bu sayfayı kullanmaları için insanları teşvik ediyorum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bu sayfayı diğer insanlara tereddüt etmeden tavsiye ederim.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Belirttiğiniz sayfanın içeriğini ortalama ne sıklıkta okuyorsunuz?

- ☐ Ayda 1 kezden daha az
- ☐ Ayda 1 kez
- ☐ Ayda 2-3 kez
- ☐ Haftada 1 kez
- ☐ Haftada 2-3 kez
- ☐ Hergün























Belirttiğiniz markayı beğendiğiniz sayfalar arasına ne kadar zaman önce eklediniz?
































- ☐ Bir aydan daha az
- ☐ 1-3 ay arası
- ☐ 3-6 ay arası
- ☐ 6 ay-1 yıl arası
- ☐ 1 yıldan daha fazla





Appendix C.ANOVA Test – Psychological Engagement States based on Duration of Membership

Psychological Engagement State	Duration of Membership	N	Mean	Sig.
Cognitive engagement	Less than a month	15	4.7867	0.011
	1-3 months	25	4.3565	
	3-6 months	24	4.0433	
	6 months to a year	60	3.7920	
	more than a year	69	3.4333	
Emotional engagement	Less than a month	15	4.0417	0.033
	1-3 months	25	4.3833	
	3-6 months	24	4.6200	
	6 months to a year	60	4.7042	
	more than a year	69	4.4638	
Physical engagement	Less than a month	15	2.2000	0.002
	1-3 months	25	3.2500	
	3-6 months	24	3.3958	
	6 months to a year	60	3.7000	
	more than a year	69	3.9312	




























Appendix D. Customer engagement rate of top ranked virtual brand communities of three big industries in Turkey: Telecom, Automobile, and Banking (data retrieved from Socialbakers, 2012)










Industry: Telecom						
Ranking in terms of Engagement Rate	Ranking in terms of Fans		Facebook page name	Fans	PTA	Engagement Rate
1	14		Fenercell	49,249	8,335	16.92
2	17		Vodafone Türkiye	25,932	3,128	12.06
3	9		TurkcellSuperonline	80,447	7,013	8.72
4	16		D-Smart	34,009	2,812	8.27
5	20		FenerNET	20,216	569	2.81
6	5		Vodafone FreeZone	624,767	12,589	2.01
7	18		KARTALCELL	22,891	283	1.24
8	4		TTNET	972,708	11,749	1.21
9	1		Avea	1,837,117	20,408	1.11
10	11		Vitamin Egitim	78,447	825	1.05
11	7		SüperCan	202,464	1,960	0.97
12	3		gncTcll	1,037,345	6,273	0.60
13	2		Turkcell	1,365,220	8,044	0.59
14	8		Türk Telekom	124,876	729	0.58
15	22		TT Arena	2,596	13	0.50
16	10		GncTeklif	79,565	356	0.45
17	21		GSMobile	7,644	34	0.44
18	13		TT Çocuk	74,316	293	0.39
19	15		AveaMüzik	47,075	167	0.35
20	19		TrabzonCell	20,789	54	0.26
21	6		Tivibu	340,838	826	0.24
22	12		FiesTTa	74,953	18	0.02

Industry: Automobile						
Ranking in terms of Engagement Rate	Ranking in terms of Fans		Facebook page name	Fans	PTA	Engagement Rate
1	26		Isuzu Türkiye	19,394	3,451	17.79
2	9		Audi Türkiye	120,435	15,317	12.72
3	29		Formula 1 Türkiye	7,548	605	8.02
4	7		Ford Türkiye	134,309	10,418	7.76
5	14		Hyundai Türkiye	78,274	4,826	6.17
6	2		Renault Türkiye	716,007	42,405	5.92
7	1		Volkswagen Türkiye	1,042,521	56,867	5.45
8	35		MINI KuzeyKibris	186	10	5.38
9	31		Ford Fiesta	4,682	236	5.04
10	19		Alfa Romeo Türkiye	43,533	1,951	4.48
11	11		Dacia Türkiye	108,127	4,739	4.38
12	4		Mercedes-Benz Türkiye	318,551	11,993	3.76
13	27		Citroën Türkiye	15,365	490	3.19
14	13		Mercedes-Benz HafifTicariAraçlar	95,196	2,932	3.08
15	15		BMW Türkiye	75,218	2,218	2.95
16	30		Mitsubishi Türkiye	6,801	178	2.62
17	33		VWTURK	2,704	51	1.89
18	22		Honda Türkiye	34,717	650	1.87
19	24		Subaru Türkiye	21,733	388	1.79
20	6		Opel Türkiye	172,867	2,933	1.70
21	28		Isuzu D-Max Türkiye	10,686	177	1.66
22	25		SEAT Türkiye	21,732	342	1.57
23	5		Volkswagen TicariAraç	186,128	2,201	1.18
24	17		Peugeot Türkiye	55,541	523	0.94
25	34		KORLAS	2,108	18	0.85
26	10		Nissan Türkiye	109,609	867	0.79
27	20		MINI Türkiye	39,450	310	0.79
28	12		Chevrolet Türkiye	103,376	779	0.75
29	21		Mazda Türkiye	36,583	273	0.75
30	8		Kia Türkiye	124,801	908	0.73
31	16		Toyota Türkiye	73,402	499	0.68

32	23		WRX STI Türkiye	31,069	162	0.52
33	18		Volvo Car Türkiye	52,643	273	0.52
34	3		FIAT Türkiye	695,907	3,258	0.47
35	32		Travego	4,090	4	0.10

Industry: Banking

Ranking in terms of Engagement Rate	Ranking in terms of Fans		Facebook page name	Fans	PTA	Engagement Rate
1	21		ING Practica	16,757	1,139	6.80
2	16		ING Bank Türkiye	67,056	4,164	6.21
3	35		AsyaCard	1,046	63	6.02
4	33		Aksigorta	3,325	189	5.68
5	6		YapıKredi	188,829	9,944	5.27
6	13		BankAsya	81,744	3,662	4.48
7	23		CardFinans	12,494	456	3.65
8	20		Wings Card	31,487	1,067	3.39
9	4		TEB	243,858	7,306	3.00
10	31		AkbankYatırımcı	3,660	102	2.79
11	11		Allianz Türkiye	106,036	2,738	2.58
12	25		exi26	8,567	194	2.26
13	19		MyTEB	37,203	693	1.86
14	15		PayPal - Türkiye	68,137	1,135	1.67
15	2		Akbank	991,922	16,024	1.62
16	34		AtaOnline	1,718	27	1.57
17	1		GarantiBankası	1,038,478	15,788	1.52
18	26		Citibank Türkiye	6,653	92	1.38
19	5		DenizBank	225,106	2,707	1.20
20	32		KobiNerede TEB Orada	3,525	42	1.19
21	3		Bonus Card	364,267	4,298	1.18
22	22		Liberty Sigorta	13,266	146	1.10
23	24		Miles&SmilesKrediKartı	10,576	84	0.79
24	17		YapıKredi Play	61,074	416	0.68
25	14		Axess	79,217	499	0.63
26	29		Fix Card	4,607	24	0.52
27	30		Money Card	4,468	21	0.47

28	27		Flexi	6,572	30	0.46
29	28		Aynalı Bonus	4,705	21	0.45
30	18		GoGoGoTutkunları	44,404	188	0.42
31	9		BayBayNakit	160,297	626	0.39
32	36		HSBC	286	1	0.35
33	8		Finansbank	174,328	479	0.27
34	12		Bankamatik	102,497	278	0.27
35	10		İnternet Şubesi	110,890	133	0.12
36	7		Aklınla Bin Kazan	174,608	131	0.08