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Postmodern Impacts on the Consumption Patterns, Activities and Theories

Özet

Bu çalışma, postmodern olarak adlandırılan tüketim biçimini araştırıp, postmodernizm sürecinde yaşanan bazı konuları aydınlatmayı amaçlamaktadır. Makale kapsamında yürütülen araştırma, tüketim etkinlikleri üzerindeki postmodern dönemde oluşan etkileri ortaya çıkarmak, bu tip bir tüketimin anlamını araştırmak ve yapısını ortaya koymak amacıyla, bütünce olarak belirlenen reklamları ve tüketim biçimlerini örnek olarak ortaya koymaktadır. Çalışma kapsamında, postmodern olarak adlandırılan tüketim biçiminin temel karakterlerinin üst-gerçeklik, parçalanma, öznenin merkezleştirilmemesi, nostaljinin metalaştırılması ve marka topluluğu biçimi olduğu belirtilmiştir. Bunun yanında, konunun oldukça ayrıntılı olduğu vurgulanmış ve bu nedenle konu hakkında daha ayrıntılı bir çalışma gerçekleştirmenin zorunluluğu ifade edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Postmodernizm, tüketim, üst-gerçeklik, parçalanma, marka topluluğu, nostalji

Abstract

This paper investigated the postmodernist notion of consumption and attempts to identify some of the concerns raised by postmodern. The study proposes a methodology based on showing sample case advertisements and consumption forms for the revealing postmodern impacts on consumption and for interpreting the meaning and understanding the structure of such consumption forms. In the research, it's stated that from the postmodern perspective on consumption, hyperreality, fragmentation, decentring of the subject, commodification of nostalgia and brand community forms are essential characteristics. However, it's reveal that this subject is highly comprehensive and the evaluation of the conclusions would be a subject for a wider and more comprehensive study.

Key Words

Postmodernism, consumption, hyperreality, fragmentation, brand community, nostalgia

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Introduction

It's a fact that postmodernism is hard to define, because it is a concept that seems in a wide sort of disciplines or areas of study, including literature, music, art, communications, architecture, film, fashion, technology and sociology. It's difficult to build it contextually and historically, or because it's not certain exactly when postmodernism commences. Postmodernism is such an intricate notion, or set of ideas, that is highly controversial even among postmodernists themselves. The term has come into sight as a field of academic study since the mid-1980s. At this point, from a literary perspective the main features of postmodernism is only apprehensible by thinking about the movement from which postmodernism appears to come into being. This means that postmodernism is essentially an analytic notion which emphasis the differences and diversity of former movements. All the premises like ambiguity, simulation, collage, pastiche, parody, bricolage, irony, playfulness de-differentiation, anti-foundationalism, desire, hyperreality and deja vu can be considered as the qualifiers of the situation called 'postmodern condition' that in an constant way, compose the daily practice of the contemporary life.

In addition to these features, many scholars argue that that consumption is the most crucial representation of postmodernism in contemporary life. Theoreticians who have formed a notion of postmodern society (e.g. Firat and Venkatesh, 1995; Van Raaij, 1993; Elliott, 1994; Baudrillard, 2004) or a late modern society (e.g. Jameson, 1994; Featherstone, 1996; Giddens, 1991), which is distinct in quality from former structure of society which is identified as modern, set consumption as a main aspects of such a society. These discussions state that consumption and culture based on consumption are the basic characters of postmodernism rather than production. In relation to this, social theory is nowadays concentrating on consumption as playing a key role in the way the daily life is constructed, and it can be discussed that consumption practices have the central role in giving meaning to life through consumption (Van Raaij, 1993). Furthermore, when we look at the social theories about everyday life practices including consumption, in recent years, many thinkers like Barthes, 1990, 1999; Bocock, 1997; Debord, 1967; Kellner, 1988; Jhally, 1988; Best, 1991; Harvey, 1999; Firat, 1991; Jameson, 1994; Venkatesh, 1995; Baudrillard, 2003 have examined the relationship between consumption and culture.

It is suggested in these studies that in postmodernity the consumption of symbolic meaning, especially through the use of advertising, style of architecture, form of entertainment, choices of consumption, etc., figure as a cultural commodity, allows the potential consumer with the chance to assemble, perpetuate and communicate identity and social meanings. These studies confirm that social 'reality' is constructed for human beings through structurations that are crucially determined by the economic that, in turn, has

to be mediated by the symbolic (Harvey, 1999; 74). The signification of the consumption, classification of the consumption and identification of cultural meanings and images that are intended for the product constitute the postmodern aspects of consumption and naturally promotion activities. In postmodern phase of consumption, the process of consumption is liberatory, paradoxically combining both the 'real' and the imaginary. In relation to this, in this type of consumption model called as postmodern, one can consume objects, symbols, and images.

In the light of above-mentioned fact, in this paper, we aim to provide a comprehensive framework for the postmodern consumption style which is cultural process and symbolic processes in consumption. This paper presents the some aspects of postmodern marketing and advertising which is the signifier of postmodern marketing, too. In relation to this, we aim to go on to show how in various domains of consumption activities become highly symbolic acts that are invested with meanings derived from cultural frameworks. For this aim, we try to identify the cultural meanings and images that are intended for the product. Moreover, this paper presents what sort of gender, status, age, lifestyle, time, and place meanings are sought for the product, what values and orientations in postmodern promotion practices and especially advertising are applied?

In the theoretical part of the study, we deal with the theoretical issues concerning the postmodern consumption and its foremost characteristics in which symbolism and spectacle are dominant. Moreover, the article discusses the postmodern approach to consumption in the frame of hyperreality, retro style, brand community, customization, fragmentation and decentring of the subject. The article also argues that imagery consumption styles of postmodernism which may further confuse an already confused postmodern consumer. Based on these theoretical part, the article provides indicators of the nature of postmodern consumption and proposes a methodology based on texture analysis for interpreting the meaning and understanding the structure of such consumption styles called as postmodern. This second part analyzes we aim to undertakes the ambitious task of diagnosing the postmodern condition and its implications for consumption style by the help of selected sample case analysis as a corpus. While making this, key features of postmodern marketing and symbolic consumption and brands in postmodern marketing are in the key role of this subject. This part discusses the material condition of postmodern ads focusing on changes in the advertisements' messages and consumer market especially in terms of key features of new type of marketing styles that is postmodern marketing. It is assumed that this thesis broadly intends to underline the conclusions of the intersections of postmodern condition and postmodern impacts on consumption.

Consumption and 'Postmodern' Consumer Society

In the past one hundred years however, the notion of *mass* consumption has revealed; enormous numbers of people now consume a variety of relatively cut-price, industrially-mass produced products. A suggestive change in the social and economic structure has emerged, where consumption activities has become "the idiom of daily life" (Ewen, 1976: 187). Radically, mass consumption has altered the understandings, views and expectations of our society. Some important questions come to mind; How did this happen? Where did this prominent shift in society come from? Well, the move to a culture of consumption was basically caused by the needs and demands of production, the social turmoil and unrest resulting from a new industrial lifestyle, and the proliferation of promotional activities.

Today's society which is identified its mechanism about consumption is purely highly consumptive. People now consume mass produced commodities in abundance continuously. They are encouraged to consume, consume, and consume: we buy, use, and discard to live. They wear *Ray Ban* sun glasses, drive *Honda* cars, use *Nokia* mobile phones, listen to CDs, eat packaged foods, live in apart houses, watch *Philips* TVs, and so on. They are bombarded by powerful advertising and promotional messages that tell them how they should look, how they should act, what they should buy etc., etc. The dominant message found in all the brand ads and promotional acts are the same; buy, buy, buy. There is an important point about this. Through the mediation of consumption practices, we firstly buy to accomplish our needs: basic ones and not-so basic ones and not-needs. This last sentence intends the crucial characteristic of contemporary consumption practices. Relevant to this, concerned to consumption is nowadays the identification that the consumer does not make consumption decision merely from products' features but from also from their symbolic meanings (Douglas, 1982; McCracken, 1988; Giddens, 1991; Dittmar, 1992; Gabriel and Lang, 1995). As consumption constitutes a key role in providing values and meanings for the creation of the consumer's personal and social world, so all the promotional activities are identified as one of the prominent sources of these symbolic values and meanings (Elliott, 1997). These cultural values and meanings are transferred to brands and brands often used as symbolic resources for the construction of consumer's social worlds (Mick and Buhl, 1992). This is the process, so broadly and from this point of view, consumption has become a cultural ideal. There are many indications of this tendency which recognized 'postmodern' in essence that have an impact on social theories and everyday life practices[1].

Social theory is now focusing on consumption is the major premises of postmodern culture (Firat, 1993). As mentioned above, the postmodernism

perspective on consumption has recently acquired the attention of many scholars (Brown, 1993; Van Raaij, 1993; Firat and Venkatesh, 1993, 1995; Venkatesh, 1990; Baudrillard, 2003). Truly, these scholars have claimed that postmodernism may considerably affect the way that consumption practices are realized in consumer's daily life. Besides, Sociologist Ritzer (1998: 1) comments that "postmodern society is seen as being more or less synonymous with consumer society". Ritzer remarks also Jameson (1994) and Featherstone (1996) as exemplars related to this comments. Importantly, Cova who is one of the most crucial researchers about postmodernism has interesting insights in that subject:

> "...Recent aspects of our life in general and of consumption in particular have reflected the existence of a major current, the postmodern, that has lately run strong as we stumble toward the dawn of the new millennium. Today our culture is postmodern, our manufacturers are post-Fordist, our economies post-industrial, our gender relations post-feminist, our literature post-narrative, our politics post-Marxist, and our physics post-Big Bang" (Cova, 1996: 494-99).

In the essence of these cites, theoreticians imply the importance of a "central role in giving meaning to life through the symbolic consumption." For instance, French theoreticians Baudrillard affirms that for the consumers commodity-form is the dominant to one where the sign-form prevails. Therefore, consumption should not be valued in relation to its use-values -products' functionality or consumer's functional needs-, but essentially in relation to sign-values, as signification. Thus, postmodern consumption experiences lay stress on the dominancy of spectacle and hyperreality forms rather than 'real experience' (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995: 251). In the light of above-mentioned view, the purpose of this paper has been to provide an objective overview of the emergence of a social phenomenon, called as postmodern consumer culture, and to debate the influences this phenomenon may have on the consumption practices, particularly in the perspective of its core characteristics.

Methodology in the Search of An Answer: "What are the Postmodern Impacts on Consumption and Promotion Style"

In this work, we aim to interpret the epistemology of consumption, a specific part of social theory called as postmodern cultural theory, by conducting an analysis of the consumption literature as it has developed so far. The analysis performed in the following pages will focus on how the highlights of consumption have partly diverted the researchers' interest from the theory and focused it broadly on the method.

It's clear that few concepts have enjoyed more popularity both inside and

outside academia in recent years than postmodern impacts on consumption. According to this view, postmodernism has an increasing impact on the consumption practices including people's preferences about their entertainment style, accommodation styles, travel practices and promotion of these activities, marketing practice, and especially advertising. Postmodernism consumption practices which have held in common state the fundamental role of consumption to construct the social world (Featherstone, 1991). In addition to this, consumption activities are symbolic and not exactly functional, or price-based essentially. In postmodernity the distinction of products from their basic function is determined by the signifier from the sign. (Firat et al., 1995; Brown, 1995). The second crucial implication for postmodern consumption of this perspective is that postmodern consumers create their identity through consumption which has dynamics of self, the symbolic meaning of goods and the role played by brands. In this connection, other aims of study are determined as follows:

- What is the general ambience of the postmodern consumer culture? What mood does it create? How does it do this?
- To study how consumer culture operates in postmodernism, we'll examine the phenomena that it structures, people's everyday consumption practices in the view of postmodern cultural theory.
- What about aesthetic decisions of postmodern consumption, especially related with the reality concept?

Central to above prominent premises, postmodern consumption practices possess in a ground a number of distinctive characteristics are discussed by important theoreticians. Firat et al. (1995), best known researchers about postmodern consumption, argue that postmodern conditions tend to be hyperreality, fragmentation, decentring of the subject, juxtapositions and reversals of production and consumption (Firat, Dholakia, and Venkatesh, 1995: 40-56.) Second crucial view about postmodern consumption which is discussed by Stephen Brown states that hyperreality, fragmentation, dedifferentiation, chronology, pastiche, antifoundationalism, pluralism are the core features of postmodern consumption (Brown, 1995: 106-107). In addition to these well-defined features, consumption in the postmodern culture is also characterized by the commodification of nostalgia, usage of collage style, postmodern intertextuality of consumption text and brand community style (Hirschman, 2000; Kozinets, 2001; Cova, 1997; Cova ve Cova 2002; Goldman ve Papson, 1994; Goulding, 2002; Holbrook, 1993; O'Donohoe, 1994; Mick and Buhl, 1992; Stern, 1992).

However, these mentioned characteristics of postmodern consumption penetrate each other. Therefore in these researches, characteristics of such a consumption style are collected into five headlines. According to these approaches, within the analysis of research, areas of this research focus to show the essential characteristics of postmodern consumption will be as follows:

1. Hyperreality;
2. Fragmentation;
3. Decentring of subjectivity;
4. Commodification of nostalgia;
5. Brand community form of consumption.

This research's attention will be given to these major concerns in the postmodern consumption styles with the help of sample advertisements and consumption forms selected as corpus. Selected corpus consists of *Absolut Vodka Berlin*; *Energizer Bunny*; *Levi's*; *Harley-Davidson* advertisements, and the promotion of *Harley Owners Group* which is the brand community of *Harley-Davidson* brand.

Products as Image in the Hyperreality Forms with the case of Absolut Vodka

It can be said that hyperreality is the most prevalent representation of postmodernism on the postmodern consumption scene. In the postmodernist perspective, it's accepted that people look for the "simulated reality" rather than an extant reality (Baudrillard, 2003). It is stated in fat-free fat, beefless beef, decaffeinated coffee, alcohol-less alcohol, and sugar-free butter (Brown, 1999). Postmodern consumption images, in which reality is represented as a hyperreality, are constructed through the deprivation of authenticity and purity essentially (Baudrillard, 2003) As a postmodern form, hyperreality notion is directly related with Guy Debord's notion of the society of the spectacle. According to this view, in a society of the spectacle "everything that was lived directly has moved away into a representation (Debord, 1996). Baudrillard who is the theoretician of hyperreality form states this phenomenon as a representation of the thing replacing the thing and 'hyperreal,' where signs refer only to signs in a society of the spectacle (Baudrillard, 2003: 31).

Absolut Vodka, Swedish Vodka, is totally type of postmodern text with its many characteristics. It has abandoned the basic principle of modern marketing, which motivates firms to promote their advertising only those elements of public culture that is consistent with the various meanings of the brand like trust and price. As an example of postmodern text or hyperreality forms, *Absolut Vodka* campaign put into agendas the pleasure of the ads, with little or no value including the "meaning" of its images. *Absolut*, depicted in Figure 1 is special point for the style of iconic campaign. In this elite advertisement that ran in select publications, *Absolut* advertisement has focused on the iconic bottle shape as the representation of Berlin Wall's downfall. This advertisement of brand has showed the representation of Absolut's bottle design in a unique way. *Absolut* is bent upon attaching the "bottle" icon to any person, pop art, famous personalities, architectural feats, place, or thing that achieves recognition in the popular cultural world of societies. For example, one advertisement of the brand features Hollywood icon James Dean as the bottle icon. Another shows Neil Arm-

strong stepping out on the moonscape-in fact on the bottle- In the campaigns brand easily try to create identification with the customers. Brand its world famous advertising campaign use metaphor and humour.

Decentring of the Subject with the case of *Energizer Bunny*

The self and identity discussion is vital subject for postmodern cultural theory. The self is discussed in postmodernity in terms of its place and dominancy for social system but also its relation with consumption as something the person creates, partially through consumption (Giddens, 1993; Gabriel and Lang, 1995; Thomas, 1997; Solomon, 2002; Goulding, 2003). The postmodern consumer practices are realized primarily turning self into *symbolic project*, which the individual must essentially construct with symbolic materials. Consumer lives in a symbol-rich environment and the meaning connected to any event, person or object is clinched by the clarification of these symbols. This is also part of socialization process. And, in this socialization process the position of subject is crucial. When we think of modernism period while subject was in the centre, with the postmodernist movement a notion called as decentring of the subject has been argued nowadays.

A decentred subject is the opposite of centredness where individuals are imperceptibly identified by their segmentation class like social class, age, occupation, demographics, etc. But, this is the expression of classical segmentation criteria of classical marketing period of past. Today's contemporary consumer is extremely different from modern cultural theory which emphasizes the centredness of individual (Firat and Shultz, 1997: 183-207). The consumer which exists in the centre of the modernist movement is an individual with a mind that can be free from the natural, much centred, self-conscious, emotional limitations of the body and has unity of goal or aim. (Rorty, 1979). But in postmodern project condition has changed. With postmodernist movement, the consumer is not conceptualized to be the centre of the postmodern cultural project. Therefore, an acceptance of customer and consumer decentredness intends that segmentation, targeting and positioning have moved, changed. Moreover, in this new formation subject is inconstant not authentic and is no longer centred (Gergen, 1991). Thus, subject in the formation of postmodern consumption has ability to be represented by different images, objects and person. Postmodern subject may be represented different selves by switching products that represent the images (Blattberg and Deighton, 1991: 5-14). Here, example of Energizer advertisement as a case analysis shown in Figure 2 indicates that postmodern consumption style which is playing personalities of postmodern consumers through "look-alike" images of advertisements to provide energy, excitement and fun. In the postmodern cultural project which lays stress on decentredness of the subject, stabilization of identity for individual is now arguable. The cinematic-play heroes of postmodernism like Bat-

man and Superman, dream-heroes of Zorro, cyber-punk heroes of Matrix are examples of subject-less notion of post-modern project. *Energizer Bunny* which is the most important icon of the century for pop culture is the replacement of human with non-human object which is animal. In the ads bunny-figure is used in the context of western films. *Bunny* and its mallet struggle with its enemy in the funny environment. This is the type of post-modern individuality which implies decentredness.

Fragmentation Rethinking the Invention of Collage with the case of *Harley-Davidson*

In terms of the postmodern approach to consumption, fragmentation of segments into smaller parts, and the positioning these products for different segments are the basic characteristics. In accordance with this, its own complement of carefully positioned products is commonplace (Brown, 1995). Initially, in the fragmented environment the mass market is replaced by niche markets, by smaller market, by micro markets, segments increasingly homogeneous in character. Increased global competition, combined with rapid technological change, flexible manufacturing systems and real-time data analysis and communication makes possible the customizing of individual products, with the consequent increase in product offerings and product categories (Thomas, 1997: 54). The notion of fragmentation defines the rarely resembles of media formats like advertisements, programs, media, music videos, situation comedies. It's claimed that these media products have no situated unified or defines themes in postmodern epistemology. Especially, disconnected and multi-form life styles of postmodern consumer are in important place for the discussion. Postmodern cultural theory characterizes the fragmentation of identity and fragmentation of individual into a multitude of personalities. This is a way for a chance or preference towards different ways of constructing identity, being, and life styles by realizing different consumption activities in different times. In related with this, a notion called as 'bricolage market' is discussed for a long time within marketer's environment (Firat ve Shultz, 1997: 183).

The consumer is further fragmented in terms of the different images one represents in different situations and at different times. The same image, same clothing, same manner of speaking and acting, same personality will not make the person likeable and/or presentable in all situations since the cultural expectations from the different roles one plays (parent, lover, friend, employee, manager, teacher, shopper, etc.) are quite different. (Brown, 1994: 27-53). And then, the fragmentations around consumption practices in our everyday life experiences, we see that they dominate the advertising forms especially. Consider our examples shown in the Figure 3. Our sample advertisement is "Build your *Harley*" *Harley-Davidson* advertise-

ment. This is the typical view of 'collage advertisement' form. The purpose of this *Harley* collage is to cause the consumer not with a centred idea or cognition in a fragmented way. It's the representation of fragmented moments of consumption experience and an expansion of fragmentation. The notion of customization and collage related with fragmentation are the tool here. Within the concept of collage, 'the death of the wholeness' is under consideration. To lay stress on the concept of mass-customization, *Harley-Davidson* motorcycle is constructed by smaller parts of it- like wheels, tire, handle bars, bag, keys, etc. - by realizing collage. As a matter of fact, these parts of motorcycle have formed not only a whole *Harley* motorcycle, but also a *Harley* user. In fact, this is the stressing of individual's choices to create unique identity. This advertising of *Harley-Davidson* motorcycles is a metaphor for individuality clearly. This ads meta-communicates indifference to instant look or the style. Differing from the modern tradition of this advertisement, it portrays goods with signs of individuality. The blankness in the *Harley-Davidson* ad is itself turned into a signifier for the customization.

Retro Marketing and the Commodification of Nostalgia with the case of Levi's Jeans

Nostalgia and retro style are today popular subjects for postmodern consumption practices. Nostalgia and retro styles mean recycling earlier genres and styles in new contexts broadly (advertising, film/TV genres, and fashion, architecture, images, typography, and hair styles). Nostalgia commonly refers to a psychological characteristic of individuals who occur to have a desire or interest for the past (Davis, 1979). Nostalgia is not only memory; it's an idealized past which belongs a social or personal experience. It's popular with postmodern cultural theory with the area of cinema (Lee, 1993), advertising (Stern, 1992; Brown, 1999), and consumption (Davis, 1979; Goulding, 2002). This common conception emphasis on 'packaging history' for the promotional aims. This style is called as 'packaged past' or 'retro style' which implies the presentation of social, cultural and popular icon of the past (Ooi, 2001).

The dynamics of nostalgia are related with postmodern epistemology that encapsulates the tangible and intangible aspects of the events, people, and objects for the consumption effectiveness. The agendas behind history, we see that many examples are seen for brands which use these concepts. Jeep Wrangle- automotive firm- celebrates its fiftieth year with a net on the market which is the retro jeep model taken from fifty years ago. *Harley-Davidson* is an 'authentic' American motorcycle firm has celebrated its 100th anniversary year with big events about brand's heritage. *Absolut*, the Swedish vodka, has put on the market in the world with a big advertisement campaign, forming with an imaginary history of the

brands. Moreover, *Porsche* firm put on market *S-Type* model again looks like immortal Mark II model), *Lee Jeans* (firm put on market 101 S model which is used by legend Marilyn Monroe), *Arzum*, *Eti Wanted*, *Ford Transit*, *BMC*, etc, are other examples from Turkey and around the world. In our sample depicted in Figure 4, *Levi's*, jean firm, is promoting itself by means of 1960's old type-motor-guy. He's looks like the clone of James Dean who represents the crazy-guy image of 1960's and the brand image of *Levi's*. Its slogan refers to past models and image of the brand which is 'Our models can beat up their models'. This case is the style of the last generation, the excitement of the next, and, this is the brand image of *Levi's* in the past, and the image of the today.

Brand Community as a Part of Postmodern Consumption Aesthetics with the case of *Harley Owners Group*

It is claimed that the pressure of consumer society and the fragmentation of society, in fact, individualism is accepted as one of the most important characteristics of postmodern society by many researchers (Firat and Shultz, 1997; Firat and Venkatesh, 1993; Elliot, 1997). Although it's assented that the importance of one's own difference and one's own individuality is the essence for postmodern theory, another view claim that our era can not be understood as a period of individualism totally (Cova and Cova, 2002, 595-621). According to this view, people are choosing to join in different social, proximate and temporary groupings which are appropriate for creating the social link or interactivity among people. Thus, apart from individualism the second view of postmodernism state that social dynamics and characteristics of postmodern society consist of various experiences, emotions, and sharings within various groups. Community and 'tribes' metaphors are used to explain these dynamics.

Brand community which is the subjects of this part as a postmodern consumption form is related with this second view. A brand community is a specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand (Muniz ve O'Guinn, 2001: 412-432). According to this, as a specialized form, the core of brand community consists of branded good or service. The model of 'brand communities' is constructed by the research of McAlexander and Schouten (2002, 38-54) about brand loyalty of *Harley-Davidson* motorcycles. But, *Harley-Davidson* is not the single example about this model. Whether their product is a computer, an automobile, a sport's equipment or a jean, an increasing number of companies try to construct a brand community around their brands to provide long-lasting brand loyalty. Therefore, a growing number of brands, from *Volkswagen Beetle* to *Citroen 2CV*, from Snap-on which is repairmen service to *Grateful Dead* which is rock music group and also a powerful

brand can deepen brand loyalty by creating or supporting 'brand communities'. Within above-mentioned groupings, postmodern consumer can find values, interactivities and relationships constructed by means of brand identities. At this point, ''consumer find that there can be real value, for example, in bringing consumers together with each other and the company in situations where they can share experiences, opinions, and ideas...Companies try to provide giving their customers something they really care about. It's all about reciprocity," notes McAlexander who is one of the theoreticians of brand community model.

When we look at our case depicted its advertisement in Figure 5, we can see special promotional style called as 'pure postmodern.' It's the calling of *Harley-Davidson* brand to its enthusiasts to join a *Harley*-adventure. It's the calling of Harley enthusiasts to their son. Relative to this, slogan of the advertisement is 'Son, You'll Go far in This Organization'. It's the promotion of brand community which is *Harley Owners Group* constructed around *Harley-Davidson* brand. Maybe, *Harley-Davidson* is not the single one which puts into practice brand community model, but the unique. Apart from brand management perspective, *HOG*-types communities which are ephemeral usually, consist of members who are searching for identity. Brand promoters or brand users admit that Harley-owners don't want only performance, price, innovation or high technologies which are functional things. So why are the reasons that consumers buy a *Harley*? What do Apple, Citroen, *Harley Davidson*, and *LEGO* have in common? Brand's expertise and *Harley* users utter that they buy this vehicle thanks to its spirit. Spirit, here, is marked by brand's identities. Brand's identity is signified by a shared values, rituals, consciousness, and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibility. All these components are provided by brand's various events and facilities. During their organizations and facilities, *Harley* users went to numerous rallies on their *Harley*s. In a basic principle, they discovered the "*Harley* experience"-including interacting and sharing with their fellow motorcycle enthusiasts. Moreover, *Harley* educator who is selected from *Harley* owners teach new Harley owners such skills as basic and advanced driving skills and driving off-road, the company went all-out to form a social atmosphere built on an understanding of the concerns, values, and lifestyles of their owners. "This says to the owner is clearly, 'this brand cares about consumers." In a conclusion, in this festivals and organizations it's created a special relationship among the enthusiasts, the brand, and other customers.

Suggestions For Future Research

Although postmodernism provides important and valuable perspectives on and insights into contemporary consumption understanding, we have to state that this subject is highly comprehensive and the

evaluation of the conclusions would be a subject for a wider and more comprehensive study. For this reason, every essential characteristics of postmodern consumption might be subject for different articles at a distant each other. Papers which exemplify the aesthetic and philosophical side of postmodern consumption using content and semiological analysis will be valuable to understand subject. Particularly an ethnographic study that is carried out about brand community will be beneficial to postmodern consumption activities. Finally, we advice that a better understanding of the underlying postmodern consumption practices and postmodern consumers can be used by marketers to obtain competitive advantages in an unstable, changeable and complex and unstable marketplace.

Conclusion

This paper explored the notion of consumption in postmodernity as it affects postmodern cultural theory. First, it investigated the general views to postmodern cultural theory at the level of consumption. Second, it explained an general glance to comprehend the current 'postmodern' consumer society. Third, it related this framework to postmodern consumption conceptualizations and particularly the essential characteristics of postmodern consumption.

In the light of above-mentioned theoretical context, postmodern impacts to consumption practices approach to consumption are shown as follows:

- Consumption has to be studied for its functional and symbolic features relative to aesthetic aspects.
- Relative to its symbolic aspects, it's stressed that postmodern version of reality is different and the reception of images in which reality is represented as a hyperreality. In this framework, it's stated that the differentiation between the real and the represented disappears in postmodern approaches.
- It's explicated that fragmentation is one of the visible characteristics of postmodernism. In this fragmented structure, consumers are required to create meaning from consumption activities and all the consumption activities include socially situated codes, concepts and myths.
- It's claimed that postmodern consumers are required to create their identity through a collage of fragmentary images and authentic images created by nostalgic accents.
- It's considered that by the continuously changing consumption practices and places, the consumer is not conceptualized to be the centre of the postmodern cultural project.
- It's believed that brand communities to be real, interactive, significant structure that allow people to identify themselves in terms of brand's values, rituals, consciousness, and traditions in consumer culture.

Notes

[1] The subject of this article is taken from the writer's thesis named as "Harley-Davidson Case in the Development Process of Consumer Culture: "The Semiological Analysis of Harley-Davidson Printed Ads in 100 Years and Harley Owners Group (H.O.G.)" which was presented in Marmara University, Institute Of Social Sciences in the year of 2005.

[2] In fact consumption has also macro socio-economic contents, clearly. For example, our country's economic well being is largely measured by how much we are consuming. If our spending slows too much, the economics become alarmed.

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Appendix 1: Research Figures

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

Fig. 5