THE EFFECTS OF INTERNALIZED HOMOPHOBIA UPON CONSUMPTION HABITS OF LGB INDIVIDUALS AND THEIR BRAND ATTITUDES

Hande Gabrali1, Hande Bilsel2 and Zeynep Set3

1PhD student, Bahçeşehir University, Institute of Social Sciences, Faculty of Communication, Department of Advertising
2Asst. Assoc. Dr., Bahçeşehir University, Institute of Social Sciences, Faculty of Communication, Department of Advertising
3Asst. Assoc. Dr., Namık Kemal University, Faculty of Science and Literature, Department of Psychology

ABSTRACT
The purpose of this study is to point out the relationship between the consumption habits of LGB individuals and their brand attitudes under the influence of internalized homophobia (IH). The sample group consists of 125 LGB individuals in the age range of 15-49 years. The demographic information form prepared by the researcher as data collection tool, namely Consumption Habits and Brand Preferences Scale (Memmedova, 2015) Internalized Homophobia Scale (Biological Woman and Biological Male Form) (Gençoğ ve Yüksel, 2006) was utilized.

As a result of the analyzes conducted, IH, Consumption as a Reluctance Problem, Consumption as a Self-Expression Factor, Consumption as Impression and Prestige as a Means of Relaxation, Consumption as a Means of Integration as a Group, Increase in the subscale as well as increase in IQ have been assessed as significant. Consumption as Imagination, Self-Expression, Consumption as Impression and Prestige as a Means of Consumption, Consumption as a Means of Integration as a Group and IH levels have been found to be significantly higher in gay men than in lesbians.

Keywords: LGB, Brand Attitude, Consumption Habits, Internalized Homophobia

INTRODUCTION
Homosexuality is still regarded as a substantially controversial issue both in Turkey as well as other countries of the world and is considered as an “abnormality” and/or “subversive” behavior and even as “disease”. The concept of homophobia, which began to be used during the 1970s to express homosexuality and hatred against homosexuality, unreal fear, and intolerance, is now being re-evaluated within socio-cultural contexts, mainly with much emphasis on individuality. Aside from personal fear and false belief issues forming the core semantics of homophobia, institutions interwoven with cultural and semantic sub-systems should also be examined regarding social traditions, daily exchanges and cultural interpretations. Internalized homophobia is defined as the internalization of negative judgments, attitudes, and assumptions towards lesbian, gay, and bisexual people towards homosexuality in society (Shidlo 1994, Maylon 1982) (Öztürk and Kindap 2011). In this respect, heterosexist pressures in society, sanctions, restrictions and sexual orientations cause homosexual individuals not to expose their sexual orientation or to live under psychological distress due to their sexual orientation (Öztürk and Kozanoğlu 1996).

Gender and sexual orientations are variables that have also been studied for many years in the field of marketing communications, advertising, media, and consumption. Numerous research in the general sense conducted on the much debated traditional gender roles, the effects of gender on the male-female consumption habits and brand attitudes in heterosexist ideology have been tracked in the field.

In this study, conceptualization of the consumption culture and the shaping of the concepts of consumption and consumer within the historical perspective (Bilsel Engin 2010), the recessive structure of the consumer society (Orçan 2014) and its historical roots and ramifications in both the Western world and Turkey within the framework of the contemporary consumerism concept, have been put forward initially to emphasize the functions of consumption on individuals (Baudrillard...
Niche marketing has been associated with identity-based movements since 1960. When marketers referred to women, Jewish immigrants in the 1950s, bright individuals in the 1980s, and eventually LGBT individuals in the 1990s at the beginning of the twentieth century, they only had rough data and no complex statistical market segments. Today’s target marketing, though, has an identity-based structure and works with more detailed and interdisciplinary paradigms. Consequently, when marketers became interested in “gay consumer segment”, although they had long been involved in niche market development processes, they needed to form more experienced, advanced, interdisciplinary and multi-level marketing departments in their organizations (Sender 2014).

Within the scope of the study, due to the fact that there is no academic or sectorial body of work on the existence of the homosexual market in Turkey, the general framework for this type of marketing communication in the traditional media has been associated with the examples of borrowed from external and secondary resources.

Brand Attitude Formation

Kâğıtbaşı (2006) notes that because attitude influences both our social perceptions and our behaviors, it has been examined as one of the key issues of social psychology (Pratkanis, Breckler & Greenwald, 1989). "Attitude is a tendency which is attributed to an individual and which regularly forms the thoughts, feelings, and behavior of a psychological object" (Smith, 1968). According to Baron and Byrne (1977), "attitudes are highly organized emotions, beliefs, and behavioral tendencies", and these tendencies pertain to other individuals, groups, ideas, a country’s other aspects or objects (Cüceloğlu 2015). Zanna and Rempel (1988), claim that attitudes are positive or negative evaluations of an object. Pratkanis and Greenwald (1989) put forward that attitudes refer to the evaluation of an object of which people are aware. According to Judd et al (1991) attitudes are body of evaluations of various objects stored in memory.

Within this perspective, brand attitude is a complexity of things. Yet for the consumer, it is based largely on what brand represents and in particular how the brand personality is communicated. Brand attitude is an end-product of brand communications, i.e. how the brand talks to the consumer. Creating strong, favorable and unique associations has always been a real challenge to marketers yet essential to building customer-based brand equity. Brand meaning is what helps produce brand responses, e.i. what customers think and/or feel about the brand. We can distinguish brand responses as either brand judgements or brand feelings.

Brand attitudes are consumers’ overall evaluations of an object of which they develop strong, favorable and unique associations. They are the end-product of brand communications, i.e. how the brand talks to the consumer. Creating strong, favorable and unique associations has always been a real challenge to marketers yet essential to building customer-based brand equity. Brand meaning is what helps produce brand responses, e.i. what customers think and/or feel about the brand. We can distinguish brand responses as either brand judgements or brand feelings.

Brand attitudes are consumers’ overall evaluations of a brand and often form the basis for brand choice (Wilkie, 1994). Brand attitudes generally depend on specific attributes and benefits of the brand. Consumers can hold a host of attitudes toward a brand, but the most important relate to its perceived quality and to customer value and satisfaction.

Gregory M. Herek, J.Roy Gillis, and Jeanine C. Cogan in their article "Internalized Stigmatization in Adults with Sexual Minorities: An Evaluation from a Social Psychological Perspective,” the earlier work on this area, Weinberg (1972), “The fear of being close to homosexuality - Homophobia, was defined as "self-hatred for homosexual individuals". On the other hand, Weinberg’s homophobia mentions asymmetry between the experiences of heterosexuals and homosexuals. Psychologists and other behavioral scientists have focused on the experiences of heterosexuals or individuals who have been approached as sexual minorities in the majority of their body of work. It is a rare situation that the two have paralleled. However, in these studies, homophobia was used not only as an individual reaction to homosexuality but also as an umbrella construct to define social institutions such as law and religion.

The most striking limitation of empirical studies of internalized homophobia is that they have all been focused on male homosexuals. Only two published studies investigating intrinsic homophobia in lesbians could be tracked. Bell and Weinberg (1978) found that lesbians in the San Francisco sample had lower levels of regrets regarding their homosexuality when compared with homosexual men, and were less likely to say “yes” to a magic wand which could possibly convert them to their straight existence again. Utilizing a particular scale focusing on the acknowledgement of social stereotypes about lesbians, Kahn (1991) found a link between holding more traditional attitudes about gender roles with higher levels of internalized homophobia, fewer independence motifs, higher levels of dependence upon parental control, and lower levels of comfort about explaining the lesbian identity. The need for empirical, experimental work is evident when the general awareness of the dominance of intrinsic homophobia in lesbians is apparent (Margolies-Becker-Jackson-Brewer, 1987, Sophie, 1987).

According to Herek, Cogan, Gillis, and Glunt (1997), the greatest challenge in researching internalized homophobia is to put forward an operational definition of the concept. Although mental health practitioners and researchers agree on the general definition – on the negative feelings held by the individual about their homosexuality - they differ in their subjective conceptualizations and meaning of this concept (Shidlo 1994). Accordingly, internalized homophobia is not only a negative attitude towards one’s homosexual feelings and behaviors, but a hostile and refusing attitude towards other

As Shidlo (1994) notes, these structures have been proposed to be regarded as connections rather than the appearance of internal homophobia. To exclude this problem, Martin (1988), who has made a more limited definition of the structure, has worked with the internalized homophobia scale. The items mainly concern the dissatisfaction with being homosexual and the desire to be heterosexual (Martin & Dean, 1988). Thus, contrary to multidimensional approaches (Ross-Rosser 1996, Shidlo 1994, Nungesser 1983), Martin’s scale does not hold internalized homophobia equal to the different phenomena such as the resistance to reveal the sexual orientation of the person. Hence, it is stated that considering the interpersonal context both as content and connection of internalized homophobia prevents from the possibility of complexity thereof.

Herek (2004) notes that using an exaggerated point of view for this concept may eventually reduce its usability for researchers and practitioners.

Also, Herek (2009a, 2008, 2007) proposed a unified conceptual framework removing the psychological discourse from the title of homophobia in order to reach at a unique understanding of several phenomena related to this structure. This framework sheds light on the experiences of sexual minorities and heterosexuals about stigmatization, while at the same time aiming to facilitate the analysis of the structural and individual appearance of sexual stigma. There may be at least two shared experiences of similarity in sexual orientation groups. First, many children internalize certain parts of sexual stigmatization to a certain extent, by the expectation that in the socialization process, they will be mostly heterosexual as they grow up. Secondly, because sexual orientation is often concealable, they may be perceived by others as heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual - independent of their actual sexual orientation.

In their article by Gregory M. Herek, J.Roy Gillis, and Jennifer C. Cogan, it is seen that the framework of research on heterosexual sexual prejudice has been developed in this context, thinking that sexual minorities can provide useful information on sexual stigmatization. In particular, it has been examined how socio-psychological structures of “attitudes” can be used to understand the internalization periods of sexual stigma by individuals belonging to the sexual minority, and an unpublished study of a broad social sampling made with adult sexual minority members was also included.

Internalized homophobia can be defined as the return of the LGB individual to homophobic attitudes of the community (Meyer 1995). IH is not only the experience of one’s negative attitude towards sexual orientation. Structuring involves negative global attitudes towards homosexuality, unease about explaining sexual orientation to others, feeling distant from other LGB individuals, and feeling uncomfortable with homosexual sexual activity. It is assumed that the internalization of negative attitudes leads to conflict, self-esteem, and modest views (Meyer-Dean, 1998). The current definition is similar to Allport’s (1954) concept of stigmatization and prejudice. Allport states that stigmatization leads to defensive reactions to “tendencies about being victimized” or “outward” (expressed externally) or “introductory” (shown internally). Extroverted responses may arise in the face of obsessive curiosity and stigmatization related to stigmatization, rebellion in introversion, self-deprecation, and self-identification with anger. The concept of the IH is seen in Allport’s theory, especially in the introverted reactions that the stigmatized LGB individual identifies beliefs of the heterosexual majority with his considerations.

Many researchers have explored IH by Brooks (1981) conceptualizing psychosocial stress as a minority stress resulting from being a member of a low-status minority group (DiPlacido 1998, Meyer 1995). Brooks explains minority stress in ethnic minorities as an experience of chronic stress factors (e.g., lower earnings, neighboring violence, prejudice, etc.) that can lead to unwanted health problems. When applied to LGB individuals, minority stress (homosexual men and women combined the experience of perceived stigmatization of sexual orientation and sexual orientation) is a negative experience for sexual orientation and dominates the whole experience of being a minority in society. The LGB person is incompatible with the values of society with his own culture, needs, and experience.

According to DiPlacido (1998), the issue of minority stress becomes harder for lesbians because of the stigma of being lesbian and woman. Some researchers, however, have questioned the validity of the IH for all LGB individuals (Russell-Bohan 2006). Most of the studies related to this structuring were chosen from males identified as white gays as samples. According to Russell and Bohan, much of the research on HR has neglected the minority sociocultural experiences of individuals within the LGB community, misrepresenting that there is a high level of HR about many people because their experience is different from white gay men.

The subject of criticism is the validity of the construction and measurement of the IH. Most of the IH measurements were developed using homogeneous samples of white homosexual men. Also, after the first scales were established, a small number of researchers worked on developing
new scales and testing their validity. Two notable exceptions were the SIHS-Short Internalized Homogeneity Scale (Currie-Cunningham-Findlay 2004) and the Internalized Homogeneity Inventory (IHI-Mayfield 2001), which were seldom used in empirical studies. One of the first developed scales for IH was the Nungesser Homosexual Attitudes Instrument (NHI-Nungesser 1983), which is the most commonly used measure-to-measure progress. As far as the visibility and acceptability of the LGB community are concerned, the question of its validity comes to mind when it comes to the significant change over time since the NHI was first created (Loftus 2001). However, one of the NHIs or versions is often used to measure HR in lesbians, but measurement has not been developed for women. A scale developed exclusively for use in the lesbian population is seldom used in research (Lesbian Intrinsic Homophobia Scale, Szymanski & Chung, 2001).

As noted by Alissa Sherry (2007) in her study entitled “Internalized Homophobia and Adult Attachment: Implications for Clinical Practice”, it has been observed that LGB individuals have attributed more importance to friendship, romantic relationships and social relations than heterosexual individuals (Dorfman-Walters-Burke-Hardin-Karanik 1995, Grossman-D’Augelli-Hershberger 2000) and as a consequence of living in a stigmatizing culture that devalues the LGB experience and orientation have defined IH as an outcome of negative thoughts and assumptions internalized by the LGB individual while attributing value on heterosexist beliefs. According to Sherry (2007), IH has become an important concept in research and clinical practice in the sense of the LGB experience, because it is thought that all LGB individuals experience a certain level of IH which leads to psychological distress in LGB people (Szymanski-Chung-Balsam 2001).

As in many other societies, heterosexual thought is dominant in American culture where every non-heterosexual behavior, identity, relationship, or community is denied or even condemned as pointed out in the article “Internalized homophobia associations of a lesbian and homosexual male society” (Herek-Cogan-Gillis-Glunt 1997, Herek 1992a, 1992b). Also, every child who has grown up in the United States becomes socially heterosexualized at an early age. As a result, lesbian or gay individuals experience negative self-esteem when they first discover their homosexuality in adolescence or adulthood. This experience, termed internalized homophobia, makes identity formation difficult and leads to lifelong psychological challenges for gay and lesbian people (Falco 1996, Stein-Cabaj 1996). In the process of discovering their homosexual orientation, building an identity on it, and explaining their orientations to others, most lesbians and gays can cope with the threat of a psychological well-being of internalized homophobia. It has been pointed out that they have developed a new identity that can integrate well with their sexual identity by improving their untouched and devalued parts (Maloy 1982).

Shidlo indicates that in 1994 there was a small number of published empirical studies investigating the prevalence of homophobia in spite of the widespread perception that homophobia is a significant threat to the mental health of gay and lesbians, and which define their link. Current data suggest that internalized homophobia is associated with high self-esteem and high psychological distress, such as depression (Shidlo 1994, Wolcott-Namir-Fawzy-Gottlieb-Mitsuyasu 1986). There is also a relation between internalized homophobia and individual’s open experience of his/her sexual orientation, disclosure, low self-esteem, and low social support (Shidlo 1994, Nicholson-Long 1990, Nungesser 1983, Ross-Rosser 1996).

Studies conducted in Turkey related to Internatized Homophobia

In Turkey, there is a limited body of work carried out on homophobia in the contexts of domestic consumption, marketing, media, and advertisement communication. Tuğlun Gencyüz and Murat Yüksel from Middle East Technical University Psychology Department, have studied internalized homophobia in Turkey in 2006. In the article “Psychometric Properties of the Turkish Version of the Internalized Homophobia Scale”, Likert-type internalized homophobia scale of biological female and biological male in two different ways has been used. In 2009, Umut Şah from Ankara University Social Sciences Institute, Psychology (Social Psychology) did his BA dissertation on “Social Representations and Homophobia about the Sexual Orientation of Young People in Turkey”. Pınar Öztürk (Hacettepe University) and Yeliz Kindap Cumhuriyet University conducted a collaborative study titled “The Psychometric Properties of the Internalized Homophobia Scale in Lesbian” in line with Szymanski and Chung (2001) and prepared the Turkish version of the Internalized Homophobia Scale in Lesbians. Personal Emotions About Being a Lesbian and Moral and Religious Attitudes Towards Lesbianism are combined in the work of Öztürk and Kindap. In 2014, Nilgül Yalçınoğlu, and Ayshe Emel Önal from Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Public Health published their research under the title of “Internalized Homophobia Levels and Effects on Health of Gay and Bisexual Men” and indicated that these individuals with homophobic family background who consider homosexuality as a sin and consume alcohol on a daily basis have been found as homophobic towards their own sexual orientation as well. Merve Baydar from Adnan Menderes University, Institute of Health Sciences Psychiatry Department gained her MA degree with her the-
sis entitled "Homophobia and Psychological Distress in Gays, Lesbians and Bisexual Individuals" where she concludes that high levels of anxiety, depression, psychological distress and suicidal tendencies were found in participants with high levels of internalized homophobia. Psychologist Zeynep Set’s (2015) doctoral work titled "Potential Tools Between Styles of Attachment and Mental Health in LGB Individuals: Inner Homophobia and Self-Compassion" examines the mediating effect of internalized homophobia and self-compassion in the relationship between styles of attachment and depression in lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals. The study’s research group consists of 886 LGB (lesbian, gay and bisexual) individuals aged between 18-30 years. In the collection of data, the Demographic Information Form prepared by the researcher and the Inventory of Near Relatives (WBS II), Self-Compassion Scale, Internal Homophobia Scale (Geyler and researcher and the Inventory of Near Relatives (WBS II), Self-Compassion Scale, Internal Homophobia Scale (Geyler and Beck Depression Scale were used. Structural Equation Modeling (YEM) and Maximum Likelihood method were applied to the models tested.

When consumption, brand attitude, and IH concepts are evaluated together, sexual orientations in the consumer sector, advertising, media and marketing communication are important variables that shape consumption behavior. Consumption becomes a form of the cultural formation surrounding the individual and the way in which consumers express themselves through the product hierarchy of their choice in the direction of action. The brands’ communication strategists or market researchers often examine the attitudes towards the brand and the trends in consumption habits by taking sex roles into consideration. As a result of being exposed to the advertising which is the primary exposure component of marketing communication, the consumer develop attitudes towards the brand with a certain level of advertising effectiveness triggered by the messages included in the advertisement. Gender is primarily taken as an important component in advertising effectiveness, yet sexual identities are not specified, and research is carried out within biological gender boundaries. For this reason, it is argued that within the framework of the conventional discourses including academic publications, men and women differ from one another in that they perceive messages differently as well as differing in terms of their attitudes towards brands and of their consumption tendencies.

As Yumurtacı and Offlac, (2013) mentioned in their works; the differences in the consumption habits of men and women arise from differing product choices and purchases and also from showing different attitudes towards product advertisements and positioning strategies (Fischer and Arnold 1994, Palmer and Bejou 1994). For this reason, there has been a tendency to prepare different type of advertisements by taking into account sex-related differences in the various advertising media (Fischer and Arnold 1994). Based on the work of Kolyesnikova et al. (2009), while certain characteristics of personality are associated with femininity or masculinity, masculinity is often linked to independence, rationality, and assertiveness whereas femininity is correlated with relationality and sensitivity, responsibility, care and courtesy (Palan, 2001).

**Purpose of the research**

This study aims at revealing the relationship between the IH of LGB individuals and their consumption habits as well as their brand attitudes. The ways IH influences the consumption patterns and brand attitudes of LGB individuals and definition of the relationship between these variables have been considered as an important contribution to the fields of advertising, marketing and brand communications. Consumption habits and brand attitudes of these individuals have been studied under five sub-dimensions as consumption as an escapist move from everyday problems, consumption as a means of display and prestige, consumption as creating a sense of belonging and finally as consumption as an indicator of compulsive shopping behavior.

Another dimension of the study is assessment of biological sex while considering the relationship between IH and consumption habits and brand attitudes. One of the main objectives of this study was to define how biological sex acted as a determining factor in between these variables.

**METHODOLOGY**

“Snowball Sampling” method was used in the research. Gençöz and Yüksel’s Likert-type internalized homophobia scale, which was translated into Turkish in 2006, has been used in two different ways as biological female and biological male. Consumer habits and brand attitudes were explored by Malak Mammadova in the "Consumption Habits and Brand Attitudes Scale” developed in 2015 to determine the impact of consumption on their social life and how they perceive current consumption relations in this context.

Due to limited body of work in Turkey within this scope and also to the limited number of IH content, this research is a descriptive study conducted about the relational screening model to show the relationship between IH and consumption habits and brand attitudes in LGB individuals. While the Istanbul scale contains weighted representation, the survey is not rural. The t-Test and the Mann-Whitney U Test were used for biologically independent samples for biologically independent
samples to determine intergroup differences. Also, Pearson Correlation Analysis and Simple Linear Regression Analysis methods were used for evaluating the relationship between variables. Within the scope of this research, the statistical significance level was determined as .05.

**FINDINGS**

The sample of the study consisted of LGB individuals, and 125 LGB people were in the age range of 15-49 years (= 25.84, Ss = 6.88). Of the study group, 39 (31.2%) describe women, 86 (68.8%) are male, 31 (24.8%) are lesbian, 74 (59.2%) are gay and 20 (16.0%) are bisexual individuals.

Following the evaluation of the descriptive findings, the differences between the groups and the relations between the variables were tested. When the Descriptive Statistics on Internalized Homophobia, Consumption Habits, and Brand Attitudes are examined, it is seen that the values of kurtosis and skewness related to variables are within acceptable limits.

Participants (40%) indicate that the effect of using a lesbian or gay media images and media in advertising is very limited or only a few when they attempt to make a purchase from a company. In addition, a firm has neutral influence on the purchase of heterosexual advertising campaigns in lesbian or gay media (44%), and the use of lesbian/gay images and topics in a company’s media (TV, newspapers, magazines, posters, radio) is found as 40.8%. 36% of the participants indicated they preferred the products that they thought were gay friendly. 42.4% of the participants are LGB individuals as a distinct consumer group, 48% of them are ignored as consumer groups of LGB individuals, and 27.2% of them think that LGB individuals do not differ in terms of apparent buyer behavior from heterosexual individuals. 34.4% of the participants pointed out they showed only a little interest in the proposal that "the marketing, advertising and media sectors have shown increasing interest in LGB people in recent years". 32% of them stated "LGB and Heterosexual individuals and couples are being treated ‘differently’ in stores during shopping and / or product returns meaning there was a certain level of discrimination.

Also, 50.4% of the respondents indicated that "issues of identity, subjectivity and representation are important in individual and mass behavior". 40% of them stated that they did not agree with the perspective "LGB Individuals are not a viable market due to impossibility of recognizability, accessibility, adequate size and stability". 46.4% of the respondents agreed that "heterosexual consumption phenomenon, the processes of economic and socio-cultural circulation determine and direct the individual’s daily life" where 32% of them distinguished the housing expenditure as the primary spending item. This is followed by food expenditures with 23.2%. The most frequent activity conducted by the participants in the survey, was indicated as the use of Internet with 44.8%. The great majority of participants (43.2%) visit the hairdresser once a month, and 21.6% appears to go shopping at least once a month. The most important aspect of product and service for them is pointed as "the brand" (61.6%). Especially 48.8% of them stated that cosmetic products could be used from time to time, 49.6% of them indicated that the brand signaled as a quality marker for them, and 56% preferred branded products for display and conspicuous consumption. 46.4% mentioned they followed fashion and popular products. 31.2% of the participants also stated that they were influenced by fads and fashion especially when it comes to information and technology and also wearing apparel with 26.4% . 68.8% of respondents indicated that a price is an important factor when making purchases. 35.2% of the participants stated that the purpose of advertising is to sell people more products. 32.8% of the respondents indicated they made food and drink purchases relying on advertisements. 48.8% of them prefer branded products in information and technology categories. 44.8% of them perform the biggest consumption on clothing and apparel except for the immediate necessities. 55.2% of them prefer huge shopping malls as a consumptionscape and cash as the payment method in 57.6% of their purchases. 40.8% stated that the biggest advantage of credit card is to offer installment facility.

When results are analyzed, it is observed that consumption as an escape from everyday problems and as a means of relaxation \[ t (123) = -2.41, p < .05 \] which are sub-dimensions of consumption habits and brand attitude and IH \[ t (123) = -2.83, p < .05 \] differ according to sex. LGB male individuals show higher levels of consumption as a means of escapism and relaxation and also a higher IH when compared with females. Other sub-dimensions of consumption habits and brand attitudes such as consumption as a means of identity formation and self-expression which are also \[ t (123) = -1.88, p > .05 \], consumption as a means of display and prestige \[ t (123) = -1.82, p > .05 \], consumption as a sense of belonging to a group \[ t (123) = -1.48, p > .05 \] and consumption as an compulsive component \[ t (123) = -2.3, p > .05 \] did not differ according to sex.

According to the results of the analysis, participants’ consumption habits and brand attitudes were related to sexual orientation \[ \chi^2 (2) = 8.58, p < .05 \] and internalized homophobia \[ \chi^2 (2) = 6.34, p < .05 \] differentiated according to; \[ \chi^2 (2) = 3.35, p > .05 \], consumption as a display and prestige tool \[ \chi^2 (2) = 3.49, p > .05 \], as a factor of escape and relief from problems of consumption habits and brand attitudes, \[ \chi^2 (2) \]
stream discourses as well as academic publications discuss the
out within biological gender boundaries. Therefore, main-
sexual identities are not specified with research being carried
in advertising effectiveness yet when doing this we see that
Usually issues of gender are treated as important components
sexual orientation. As a result of the analysis to determine the
source of the difference, it was found that the consumption
as a means of identity formation and self-expression is signifi-
cantly higher in those who define themselves as gay and bisex-
ual when compared to participants who define themselves as
lesbian. Furthermore, it has been shown that those who iden-
tify themselves as gay have a greater level of internalized ho-
phobia than those who define themselves as bisexual and
lesbian.

When the results of the correlation analysis were examined,
internalized homophobia was found to be an important fac-
tor in consumption as a means of identity formation (r = .26,
p < .05), as a means of escape from problems and relaxation
factor (r = .39, p < .05), as a means of display and prestige (r
= .25, p < .05), as a means of belonging to a group (r = .26, p
< .05); but consumption as a compulsive factor has not shown
a significant relationship with IH (r = .17, p > .05). As a re-
sult of the correlation analysis, it was also found that there was
a significant negative correlation between age of participants
and consumption as a means of escape and relaxation (r = -.22,
p < 0.05).

According to the results of the regression analysis given,
the model in which the estimation of the consumption as a
means of escape and relief from problems through internalized
homophobia explained about 7% of the observed variance [F
= 9.25, p < .05]. It was determined that internalized homo-
phobia had a significant contribution to the model (β = .26, p
< .05). As the level of internalized homophobia increases in
LGB individuals, it appears that consumption as an element of
escape-relaxation and identity formation and self-expression
increases.

It can be expressed that as the level of internalized homo-
phobia increases in LGB individuals, consumption as a means
of display and prestige increases.

It can be stated that as the internalized homophobia level
in LGB individuals’ increases, the consumption as a means of
belonging to a group increases.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Usually issues of gender are treated as important components
in advertising effectiveness yet when doing this we see that
sexual identities are not specified with research being carried
out within biological gender boundaries. Therefore, main-
stream discourses as well as academic publications discuss the
fact that men and women may differ in terms of brand atti-
tudes and consumption tendencies as well as varying in terms
of message reception. Differences between men and women
in their consumption habits arise from different product types
designated by the market and also from different product ad-
vertisements and positioning strategies (Fischer and Arnold
1994, Palmer and Bejou 1994). For this reason, there has been
a tendency to prepare various advertisements by taking into
account sex-related differences in the advertising media (Fis-
cher and Arnold 1994). Kolyesnikova et al. (2009) point to the
fact that while certain characteristics of personality are associ-
ated with femininity or masculinity where masculinity is often
linked to independence, rationality, and assertiveness whereas
femininity is correlated with relationality, sensitivity, respons-
bility, care and courtesy (Palan, 2001). In this respect, it can
be assumed that biological sex is an effective variable in brand
attitude as a result of advertising effect.

Gender is a crucial variable in consumer behavior models.
From this point of view, it should be understood that the poten-
tial moderate role of IH affecting sex and sexual orientation
should be better understood. As Robert Bocock points out, be-
ing a consumer is not just a mechanical and biological reaction
to the show, but a process that depends on cultural symbols.
In marketing communications in the homosexual subculture,
brands seem to attach importance to the use of homosexual im-
ages and content. As Baudrillard argues, it is a system of indi-
cations regulated by codes of consumption and rules. For this
reason, it can be interpreted that homosexual individuals in
consumption go through mainstream in buying behaviors like
heterosexual people. As Sender also mentioned, the sample
of ideologies about gender, class, and race in advertisements
confirms the profound effects of marketing in the political life
of all citizens. Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood stress that
it is the area consumption, where the cultural struggle takes
place and is also shaped. This may lead LGB consumers to
develop negative attitudes towards brands along with hetero-
sexist mainstreaming practices against LGB and also due to
heterosexist sales representatives providing assistance upfront
in the point of purchase area of brands in the dominant het-
 erosexist culture level, where shopping and product returns
of couples are treated differently.

Zygmunt Bauman points out that the focus is on the ad-
vertising industry and consumer construction, where product
solutions for different identities are being delivered on a day
to day basis. When this view is compared with the findings
obtained in the research, it is seen that LGB individuals are
not considered as a separate market segment. When we evalu-
ate it within the general framework, the “Acceptance War” is
at an inadequate level in Turkey. As Bourdieu’s habitus con-
cept shows, it is an essential building block of the lifestyle
that expresses the individual’s clothing, speech, appearance,
and cultural actions. The most assimilated styles of clothing, the choice of food, home decoration, and artistic activity shape their experiences in categories of enjoyment that fit into the individual’s group in social skills. Georg Simmel’s fashion analysis draws attention at this point. Because it is a reaction against the tensions of modern life. As a means of combating the hardships of life, for homosexual individuals in a heterosexual environment, fashion can be considered as an agent of struggle. As Simmel points out, the basic concepts of these tools are “imitation” and “differentiation” processes. Thus, the dominant heterosexual discourse of homosexual individuals can be thought of as imitation, societal adaptation or reconciliation to sustain their existence within the society, and individualization or differentiation of differentiation. Veblen’s concept of fictive consumption emphasizes the importance of consumer practices that form a kind of social separation or individualization on the one hand and a conventional source of social cohesion or community on the other.

Within the results, heterosexual consumption is thought to influence the daily lives of the individuals as they determine and direct the processes of economic and socio-cultural circulation. As Bourdieu has mentioned, we can refer to the concept of habitus that collects social harmony, hierarchies and forms of identity in the conditions that individual experiences through selection. Thus, all the interactions in consumer behavior, the value of citizenship, and the tasteful conditioning of the habitus concept can be evoked by the assumption that heterosexual consumption is at the level of homosexual habitus, which is thought to be influenced by LGB individuals.

As shown in the results of the study, bureaucratic, technological and ideological forces restrict the freedom of the person in the interest of Adorno and Horkheimer’s work, while a mass society of passive, single consumers is created. Consumption thus plays a significant role in ensuring the continuity of the “heterosexist ideology” in capitalism by taking a form of propaganda within the context of the massive dimension. In the same way, as Bourdieu argues, advertising, marketing, and the media also convey the hierarchies of pleasure and habitus. Larry Gross, it is not as if it were ad life, as it should be, it could be mentioned the value of life and imitation life.

Shopping centers, which are among the most outstanding places where the body-self-lifestyle is revealed, are also preferred by the LGB individuals. The shopping mall can be interpreted as the temple of consumption where people express themselves as monolithic consuming beings as a whole. It is not yet possible for the homosexual individual to talk about their identities open. Homosexual individuals in Turkey usually keep the matter for themselves living by their confidentiality in their microsites.

IH, consumption habits and brand attitudes did not differ according to sex. Another result obtained in this study is that consumer habits and brand attitudes are evaluated according to sexual orientation. Consumption as an expression of self, expression as an expression component differs according to sexual orientation in the levels of IH, but consumption as an element of avoidance and reliance from consumption habits and brand attitudes, consumption as an integral part, consumption as an addictive element did not differ with sexual orientation. Identification has been found to be significantly higher in individuals who define themselves as gay, bisexual, and consumption as compared to lesbian people. Participants who identified themselves as gays were found to have a higher IH level than members who described them as bisexual and lesbian. Men are more likely to internalize social anti-homosexual attitudes as they do in Balsam, Rothblum, and Beauchaine’s internalized homophobia studies, and the impact of IH on mental health is felt more intensely in non-heterosexual men than non-heterosexual women. Panchankis’ work on sexual orientation as “Confidential Stigma” showed that minority stress is equally associated with depression and anxiety. Consumption habits and brand attitudes; consumption as an element of self-expression and consumption as a means of escape from problems, consumption as a means of display and prestige, consumption as sense of belonging to a group showed a significant positive relationship with IH, but consumption as an compulsive component did not show a significant relationship. It is believed that LGB people live with a particular level of IH, which leads to psychological stress in LGB people. Mental stress, depression, anxiety, high IH concentrations in this context may support consumption as an escapism and relaxation for stressed-out LGB individuals. When consumption is focused on the lifestyle concept in the direction of David Chaney, consumption will embrace all sorts of social activities that rank people in features or position themselves, rather than what individuals can do to make and spend money. When research results are evaluated, preferences for branded products for display purposes can be taken as the way in which lifestyles are exhibited through certain goods and objects, emphasizing the stability of their social status and dignity. As Sender has also mentioned earlier;

a) Sexuality is produced, not given
b) Marketing constitutes a fundamental rhetoric on the construction of sexual and other identities
c) Characters and social formations are created through a complex relationship of media producers, marketing content
Homosexual individuals can develop new identities in a heterosexist cultural society, as Maylon noted, in that their disvalued and devalued parts can be healed with integrating their sexuality with brand new identities.

As IH levels increase in LGB individuals it can be indicated that consumption also increases as a means of
a) Escape from problems and relaxation
b) Identity formation and self-expression
c) Display and prestige tool
d) Sense of belonging to a group also increases.

But on the other hand consumption as a compulsive component has not been found to be a significant contribution to the IH model.

This research is based on the findings of a study conducted in the field of psychology, literature, philosophy, politics, law and so on, which are developed and observed in certain circles in the areas of perception, attitude and behavior towards homosexuality in Turkey, state politics, visibility of homosexual individuals, they will be able to be seen in marketing communications, advertising, and media areas where they are regularly exposed in ordinary everyday life. In order to be able to look at gay politics, politics must be purified from negative and restrictive sanctions on commerce, and evolving social denials in the struggle for separation in this process, religious false misrepresentations, consumer identity, political activism and media support, gay market, gay, transgender and bisexual divisions, media reactions, homosexual visibility and acceptance, the impact of subculture on purchasing power, reasons for wrong analysis on the market, advantages and disadvantages of being on the market in terms of brands and LGBT, repetition of representations of identity production and heterosexism, should be focused on. Also, code studies to be done in the field of communication ethnography and purchasing motivations and brand delight, which are examined through IH and Satisfaction Theory within consumption, advertisement, brand, and media, can provide different insights for the communication field. In addition to all these, new work carried out by associating transgender individuals with future work, and queer readings may lead to new research horizons.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS


REFERENCES


7 Kurtuluş K, Özdamar ZE. Consumers’ attitude to and choice of store brands in fashion apparel: Role of gender and shopping style. vol. 42; 2015.

8 Hediye Sarın Alma Davranışında Cinsiyet Kimliğinin Etkisi. Ege Akademik Baskı,;16(1):121–133.


16 H OE. Esçinselliğin Toplumsal Tarihi, Tekin Yayınevi; 2012.

17 H OE. Sultanlar Devrinde Oğlanlar, Agora Kitapçısı, Mesele Kitapçısı; 2014.


25 Bococok RT. İrem Kutluk (Çev). Ankara: Dost Kitapevi;.

27 Baudrillard. Tüketim Toplumu. Hazal Deliceçaylı-Funda Keskin (Çev.). İstanbul: Ayrintı Yayınları;.