

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# The effect of culture on brand loyalty through brand performance and brand personality

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to identify the cultural characteristics of tourists who had the experience of accommodation in 5-star hotels in Istanbul and to determine the effects of these characteristics on personalizing of the hotel brand and the perception of its performance. According to the results of this research, culture directly affects brand personality and brand performance. However, the effect of culture on brand performance is relatively greater. In addition, brand personality and brand performance affect brand loyalty directly, whereas culture does not have a direct effect on brand loyalty.

**KEYWORDS**

brand loyalty, brand performance, brand personality, culture

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Because products and services are not differentiated regarding their most basic functions in this century, the importance of branding cannot be ignored. Branding is a strategic process that enables the consumers to choose a product in an easier way and provides various benefits to its consumers, manufacturers, and mediators, and it also includes elements such as symbols and slogans. While branding is quite common for merchandise, it is not quite common for the service sector. There are several difficulties of branding for services that include the tourism sector as well. First of all, services cannot be stocked and standardized and have heterogeneity in their structure, which results from the service provider. Hotels included in the accommodation enterprises that are an important element of touristic products are able to overcome this problem with branding, and they differentiate from their competitors in this way.

In today's marketing world where consumers prevail, an extremely significant problem for business managements is determining which motivations brands are chosen for. Learning about the motives of tourists for choosing a specific hotel enterprise will provide several benefits such as competition advantage between enterprises. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to reveal the cultural characteristics and attitudes related to the brand personality tourists are affected by and identify the effects of performance perceptions of the hotel enterprise on loyalty attitudes. For this purpose, the cultural characteristics of tourists, their brand personality attitudes, and perceptions regarding brand performance were researched and the

effect of these variables on brand loyalty was evaluated by analyzing the data obtained.

## 2 | CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 | Culture

The effect of culture in intercultural studies is discussed and researched extensively in marketing and management literatures (Elliott & Tam, 2014). Even though culture is a topic that is frequently researched by marketing experts, a commonly accepted definition is out of question. In addition to this, the most extensively accepted definition of culture includes studies regarding its being "behaviour patterns and common sets of values shared by community members."

Culture is also interpreted by primarily common forms of feelings, thoughts, and reactions as several behavioral patterns that are copied from the childhood period until one's death are either learned or written and are both directly and indirectly distinctive. These common forms of feelings, thoughts, and behaviors shaped by values are acquired and transferred through symbols. Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) define culture as traditional ideas and values from the past.

Kapferer suggests that brand itself is a culture. Powerful brands have a powerful vision. Brands are ideologies rather than the benefits and personalities of their products. The cultural aspect of it concretizes the brand. Culture is the most important element in brand personality. The cultural aspects of brands are the most important factors in

understanding the brand (Kapferer, 2013). The culture scale, developed by Hofstede and frequently used in intercultural studies, identifies cultures of communities more at a macro level. There are 5 qualities used in the identification of cultural characteristics and communities that exhibit different attitudes for these qualities. These 5 qualities are (i) collectivism, (ii) power distance, (iii) masculinity, (iv) uncertainty avoidance, and (v) long-term orientation/short term orientation.

It stands out that the effects of culture on not only the lifestyle of tourists but also leisure activities are measured in intercultural tourism studies. Research on this topic suggests that ethnical structure puts pressure on lifestyle (Correia, Kozak, & Ferradeira, 2011). For instance, Ahmed and Krohn reveal that Japanese tourists rarely express their dissatisfaction even though they are not satisfied with the touristic merchandise and services. It is tried to make an evaluation on the touristic perception of Hawaiian stores as opposed to Japanese stores and notes that Japanese tourists, being polite, avoid criticizing the Hawaiian stores. Japanese tourists find it devastating to express personal feelings (Reisinger & Turner, 1999). Some researchers expressed that French tourists are extremely demanding compared with English tourists (Correia et al, 2011). At the same time, it is claimed that Japanese tourists usually travel as groups, walk regularly, greet everybody that they encounter, constantly take photographs, and spend a substantial amount of money. While it is regarded Maltese people as distressed and miserable, French and Italian people is regarded utterly as demanding (Pizam & Mansfeld, 1999). Some academicians evaluates Americans as cautious, moderate, and meticulous about money (Pizam & Mansfeld, 1999). In short, the research studies point out that culture affects tourist preferences as it does in the other sectors, too. Tourists exhibit some attitudes with the effect of their own cultures. These attitudes affect the activities of enterprises in the tourism sector significantly.

## 2.2 | Brand personality

The concept of personality, which is based on the "persona" concept in Latin, has an important role on the behaviors of consumers because it reflects the psychological character of individuals (Jani & Han, 2014). Researchers and pragmatists state that brands have personalities just like people have. For this reason, the active perception concerning a brand affects the attitude and behaviors of the consumers toward that specific brand (Raustasekehravani & Hamid, 2014). In addition to this, Li, Yen, and Uysal (2014) express that it is not enough to focus only on the functional benefits for effective branding, and it is also necessary to blend the brand with the functional benefits and symbolic qualities such as brand personality.

The concept of brand personality was first addressed by Gardner and Levy (1955). Aaker's brand personality scale was presented in the literature in 1997. Suggested by Aaker and commonly accepted, the definition of brand personality is expressed as "all the humanistic personality characteristics identified with the brand" (Tayfur, 2012). Joseph Plummer (1984/1985) suggests the idea that brand personality is important for brand choices and states that brand personality is only one of the 3 dimensions of brand image (Rakocevic, 2011). One hundred fourteen characteristics were used for describing 37 different brands in developing Aaker's brand personality scale, which is frequently used in

research studies. After these characteristics were classified, it was found that brand personality could be measured with a 5-factor scale (Caprara, Barbaranelli, & Guido, 2001: 378). The 5 subdimensions of Aaker's (1997) brand personality scale and the variables under these dimensions are summarized in Table 1 (Özgüven & Karataş, 2010).

Resource: Özgüven and Karataş (2010), The Evaluation of Young Consumers' Brand Personality Perceptions: McDonald's and Burger King, Süleyman Demirel University Journal of Social Sciences Institute, Volume 1 (11): 139 to 159.

There are numerous studies carried out on brand personality, which is defined as all the humanistic personality characteristics that are identified with the brand. Brand personality is often used in destination branding and hotel branding (Naresh, 2012). Research studies on brand personality, which guarantees brand success and increases the market share of the brand, frequently focus on the brand personality of destinations and personalities of hotel brands. For example, Western Australia created the "Western Australia" brand in late 1990s and positioned this brand as the most important one among the nature-based touristic destinations. The personality characteristics of the Western Australia brand were emphasized to be essentially lively, natural, independent, and witty. Examinations on both native and international tourists were carried out in Singapore, and the brand personalities of New Asia and Singapore brands were positioned as universal (cosmopolitan), young, energetic, modern Asia, reliable, and comfortable. Some researchers evaluated Portugal with personality characteristics such as traditional, contemporary, modern, and sophisticated in a study he conducted for the travelling sections in American newspapers (Uşaklı & Baloglu, 2011). Lee and Back (2010) tested Aaker's brand personality scale in the upper class commercial hotel segment and, because of the research, arrived at the conclusion that the competence and sophistication dimensions of brand personality are valid in this hotel segment. Li et al. (2014) tested brand personality in economical hotel segments and concluded that the brand personality dimensions are applicable in the economical hotel segment.

## 2.3 | Brand performance

While no commonly accepted definition of brand performance is available in the marketing literature, brand performance is usually viewed as an important result of business activities and general business strategies. The concept of brand performance expresses the brand power of an enterprise in the market. According to several studies, it consists of market share, growth rate, profitability, and similar concepts (Çalkı, Altunışık, & Sütütemiz, 2013). Furthermore, because of the literature review, it is discovered that brand performance is evaluated on the basis of enterprises and consumers. While the evaluations based on consumers are often regarded as "the brand performance of the brand," the evaluations based on enterprises are regarded as "the financial or profitability performance of the brand."

Some academicians state states that brand performance generally has a strong effect on 3 contexts: (1) marketing environment, (2) competition, and (3) firm and previous studies evaluate brand performance mostly through these 3 scopes. Lai, Chiu, Yang, and Pai (2010) regard a brand's financial performance as the financial income of the brand that is attained by enterprises. According to some studies, if there is a

**TABLE 1** Basic dimensions of brand personality

Name of the Subdimension	Qualities Related to the Subdimension	Brand Examples
Sincerity	Modest: oriented at families, from a small town, convenient price, blue collar, and completely American Honest: sincere, real, ethical, thoughtful, and compassionate Dignified: original, unique, ageless, classical, and old-fashioned Joyful: emotional, friendly, warm-blooded, and happy	Campbell's, Hallmark, and Kodak
Excitement	Brave: trendy, exciting, extraordinary, flamboyant, and provocative Lively: stylish, young, vivacious, outgoing, and adventurous Imaginative: unique, witty, surprising, artistic, and enjoyable Contemporary: independent, modern, innovative, and aggressive	Porsche, Absolut, and Benetton
Competence	Reliable: hardworking, safe, efficient, trustworthy, and careful Clever: technical, institutional, and serious Successful: leader, self-confident, and influential	Amex, CNN, and IBM
Sophisticated	Super class: fascinating, handsome, assertive, and versatile Attractive: feminine, smooth, sexy, and kind	Lexus, Mercedes, and Revlon
Ruggedness	Convenient for outdoors: masculine, western, restless, and athletic Tough: durable, strong, and smart	Levi's, Malboro, and Nike

relative supremacy of one brand in the consumers' minds, the market share of this brand will increase or at least not decrease. Values such as price flexibility, price bonus, brand market share, cost structure, profitability, and category success are among the basic criteria used in evaluating brand performance (Çalık et al, 2013). Evaluating the financial performance of a brand includes financial criteria such as profitability, sales, and cash flow (Hacıoğlu & Ülengin, 2011). Some criteria such as the net financial income that the brand provides its investors, the economical profitability of the brand, and the economic value added of the brand should be taken into consideration while assessing the financial performance of the brand. Moreover, questions including the upper limit of payment for the consumers, the effects of price changes on the demand for brands, and the market share of the brand are extremely important in evaluating the market performance of the brand (Ural, 2009: 112).

Field studies on brand performance in the tourism sector mostly measure the marketing performance of the brand and evaluate the performance of the brand through the perspective of tourists. In addition to this, field studies on brand performance in tourism focus frequently on hotel enterprises and attempt to explain the relationship between the other variables affecting the performance of a hotel brand in the eye of tourists. Çalık et al. (2013) claims that economical criteria are not appropriate for evaluating brand performance in tourism. However, factors such as brand awareness, brand reputation, and brand loyalty are profoundly important in evaluating the marketing performance of a brand. Powerful hotel brands contribute to both the consumer and the hotel enterprise. So, King, Sparks, and Wang (2013) state that configuring a powerful brand increases performance indicators such as the market value of the enterprise, its financial performance, and occupancy rate. From the consumers' perspective, powerful hotel brands lower the risk taken on hotels and the research costs and are perceived as an indicator of quality, thus providing convenience to the consumers in evaluating the services before the purchase.

## 2.4 | Brand loyalty

Brand loyalty, which is one of the basic dimensions of brand value, is defined as "the degree to which consumers buy a brand of product." In

other words, it is the consumers' tendency to constantly choose a specific brand among opposing brands and rejecting the others. Numerous factors such as consumer attitudes, family, relations with the seller, and friends affect brand loyalty (İslamoğlu, 2011). Besides, brand loyalty is also defined as the power of consumers' belief in a brand and viewed as the repeated purchase of the same brand (Ural, 2009:124). Most of the studies that are focused on brand loyalty, which is an important element of brand equation, take some concepts into consideration such as the customer value of the brand, the eagerness of consumers to purchase the brand, the price, and the attractiveness of the brand in the eyes of consumers (Kautish, 2010: 81). Brand loyalty is not only regarded as consumers purchasing the same product in the future but also states that consumers form a psychological connection and behavioral tendency regarding the brand. Ballester and Aleman (2001) claim that the position between loyalty and disloyalty can be determined when there is an emotional and psychological connection or commitment or after the intent to purchase the same brand again is identified (Tayfur, 2012).

Researchers first focus on the repeated purchase process considering brand loyalty. After that, this concept is evaluated as an expression of personal preferences with prejudice. Researchers who focus on behavioral brand loyalty base it on the frequency of purchase that signals the importance of brand preference (Fournier & Yao, 1997: 452). The behavioral approach is expressed as "the loyalty degree of consumers which results in the behaviour of purchase" (Dekimpe, Steenkamp, Mellens, & Abeele, 1997). Behavioral measurements define brand loyalty as actual sales observed in a specific time period (Taşkın & Akat, 2012). According to this approach, loyalty is sufficient for the purchase frequency of consumers. The real reasons of purchase are not examined here. While the definitions of brand loyalty based on the behavioral approach emphasize the actual addiction resulting from the purchase preferences of consumers, the definitions based on the attitudinal perspective focus on the loyalty of consumer demands to the brand (Taşkın & Akat, 2012). Another approach commonly accepted for measuring brand loyalty is the attitudinal brand loyalty. Attitudinal brand loyalty focuses on the cognitive process that takes place when the decision of purchase is made as the evidence of brand loyalty and the evaluation of this cognitive process (Dekimpe et al, 1997). With an attitudinal perspective, brand loyalty is evaluated as the tendency of

consumers to be devoted to the brand. This approach is expressed as the desire of consumers to purchase the brand in question as their first preference (Taşkın & Akat, 2012: 136). This method of measurement based on consumers' purchase intent is frequently preferred in field research. In addition to this, attitudinal and behavioral loyalty should be related to and consistent with each other (Taşkın & Akat, 2012).

To conclude, the variables of culture, brand personality, brand performance, and brand loyalty have been addressed; the literature has been scanned accordingly; and research studies concerning these variables in tourism industry have been evaluated in this part of the study. After this phase, the research model consisting these variables will be addressed, hypotheses will be explained, and the research model will be tested.

### 3 | RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESIS

In accordance with the information obtained during the literature review, the conceptual model, which is suggested in the context of this research, is demonstrated in Figure 1. According to this conceptual model, it is considered that the cognitive tendencies of tourists regarding the brand create brand personality, and this attitude of tourists considering the brand contributes to the marketing performance of the brand. Besides, it is discovered that tourists' cultural characteristics, brand personality tendencies that express their attitudes toward the brand, and perceptions related to brand performance affect brand loyalty positively. It is also considered that culture and its subdimensions have a significant effect on brand personality and brand performance, and this significant effect indirectly influences brand loyalty. The conceptual model and hypotheses regarding these effects are demonstrated in Figure 1.

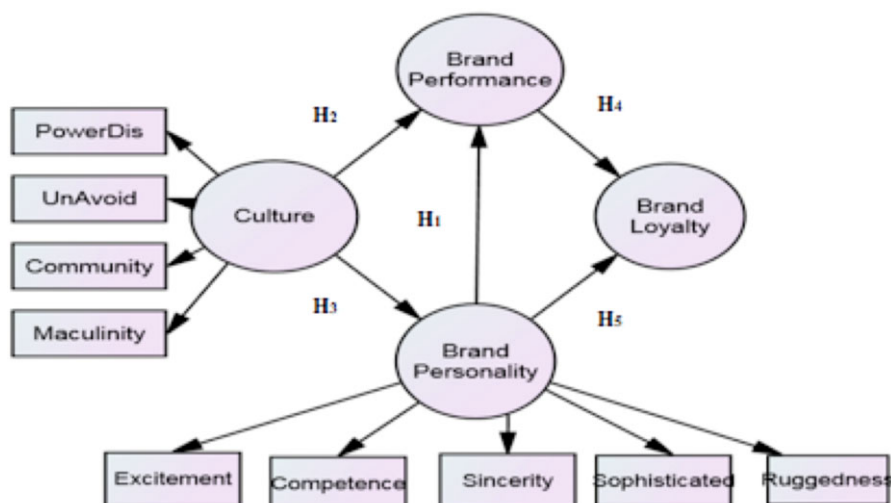
An important part of the research suggests that there is a significant relationship between brand personality and brand preferability (Park & John, 2012; Das, 2014a, 2014b). Brand personality guarantees the success of the brand in the market, increases the market share of the brand, and contributes to the competition skill of the brand (Naresh, 2012; Kim & Kim, 2005; Rojas-Méndez, Murphy, & Papadopoulos, 2013). Moreover, brand equity, which includes brand

personality, is also given utmost importance in sustaining the long-term performance of the enterprise (Çal & Adams, 2014). In addition, consumers tend to prefer brands that reflect their own personal characteristics more (Pereira, Correia, & Schutz, 2015). Keller and Richey (2014) conducted a study on brand personality and, as a result, concluded that brand personality is effective on the maximization of the institution's performance. Geuens, Weijters, and Wulf (2009) expressed that brands that can effectively and strongly differentiate from others increase the performance of an enterprise. Furthermore, increasing the personal value of a brand affects the preferences and purchases of the consumers (Li et al, 2014; Florence, Guizani, & Merunka, 2011). These explanations point out that there could be a significant relationship between brand personality (which is regarded as the emotional connection between consumer and brand) and preferability of the brand.

**H1** Brand personality has a statistically significant effect on brand performance.

Budhathoki (2014) studied the effect of culture on brand performance in retail businesses and, because of the research, came to the conclusion that that individualism and long-term orientation are effective on brand performance. In addition to this, the conclusion that power distance, individualism, and uncertainty avoidance are crucial in the development of branded retail businesses was found (Budhathoki, 2014). De Mooij and Hofstede (2002) established that it is an indicator of status to obtain branded products for communities with extensive power distance. Taras, Kirkman, and Steel (2010) stated that cultural values have important effects on the perception of organizational performance. The meta-analysis that Leung and Bond (2004) carried out on 40 studies from business management and psychology journals mentions that the individualism factor specifically has an important effect on the perception of communities. All of these explanations point out to the fact that culture has a statistically significant effect on brand personality.

**H2** Culture has a direct and statistically significant effect on brand performance.



**FIGURE 1** The conceptual model of the research [Colour figure can be viewed at [wileyonlinelibrary.com](http://wileyonlinelibrary.com)]

It is thought that the attitudes of consumers regarding brand personality are shaped on the basis of their cultural characteristics (Boudreaux & Palmer, 2007; Chua & Sung, 2011). Besides, it is found that culture affects consumers' attitudes toward the brand when the global branding strategies used in the marketing of consumption goods are examined (Chua & Sung, 2011; Loannou & Rusu, 2012). Schultz and Tannenbaum (1991) put forward that factors such as personality, lifestyle, social environment, and culture are effective in choosing brands. In this respect, it is thought that culture has a statistically positive and significant effect on brand personality.

**H3** *Culture has a direct and statistically significant effect on brand personality.*

Brand performance affects brand loyalty in different aspects such as attitudinal loyalty and purchase loyalty (Yang et al, 2015; Çalik et al, 2013; Keller & Lehman, 2003). What is more, brands are intangible assets that have a significant effect on company performance (Park, Eisingerich, Pol, & Park, 2013). Because of their study, Tsai, Cheung, and Lo (2010) attained the conclusion that there is a significant relationship between brand loyalty and financial performance of the enterprise. Furthermore, some studies reveal that there is a significant relationship between brand performance and factors such as brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand association, and brand awareness (Seggie, Kim, & Cavuşgil, 2006; Kim & Kim, 2005; Johansson, Dimofte, & Mazvancheryl, 2012). In the light of these findings, it is thought that there is a positive and significant relationship between brand performance and brand loyalty.

**H4** *Brand performance has a direct and statistically significant effect on brand loyalty.*

The most important characteristic of brand personality is that it naturally leads consumers to purchase when the brand personality and the character of consumers match (Li & Zhang, 2011; Lada, Sıdın, & Cheng, 2014; Lee & Back, 2010; Das, 2014a, 2014b). Studies reveal that the competence and sophisticated dimensions of brand personality affect brand loyalty to a crucial extent (Helgeson & Suphellen, 2004). Merrilees and Miller (2001) stated that, specifically, the sincerity dimension of brand personality has a significant effect on brand loyalty (Wong & Merrilees, 2008; Morschett et al, 2007). So et al. (2013) found, because of their study on hotels, that consumer brand identity is effective on the formation of brand loyalty. Jani and Han (2014) created a theoretical model consisting of personality, satisfaction, loyalty, ambiance, and image and concluded that personality is effective on loyalty. These explanations demonstrate the fact that there might be a significant relationship between brand loyalty and the excitement, competence, ruggedness, sophisticated, and sincerity dimensions of brand personality.

**H5** *Brand personality has a direct and statistically significant effect on brand loyalty.*

## 4 | METHOD

To create the model that is the basis of this research, first, literature scan was conducted and applied research about brands in hotel enterprises were evaluated. Also, it was taken into consideration how often

were the variables addressed in these applied research investigated. In this direction, it is especially observed that an applied study about a culture's possible meaningful effect on brand loyalty has not been carried out yet. For this reason, the primary motivation of the model created in this study is testing this possible relationship on hotels.

Following the review of literature, it is observed that there were some gaps. Therefore, the model used in this research was built to fulfill these gaps. Within the scope of a questionnaire, the participants were requested to answer 78 items. A 5-point likert scale was used for the evaluation of the hypothesis.

The population of the study consisted of "all the tourists who had an accommodation experience in five-star hotels during November 2014 in Istanbul." Data obtained from the Republic Ministry of Culture and Tourism were used to identify the size of the population.

The likert scale that was used for the evaluation of the proposition is rated as "1: Strongly Disagree" to "5: Strongly Agree." Six hundred questionnaires prepared in both Turkish and English languages were distributed to the tourists who had an accommodation experience in 5-star hotels in Istanbul. However, only 505 questionnaires were analyzed. The obtained data were analyzed via PASW 20 and SEM 23.

Primarily, exploratory factor analysis was conducted for each scale to analyze data. Then, to evaluate the convergent and discriminant validity, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted for the variables. However, second-level confirmatory factor analysis was carried out for the culture and brand personality scales. The analysis was continued with the remaining observed variables and the model was tested with structural equation modeling (SEM). According to the results of SEM, the variables describing the variance in culture were found to be community, uncertainty avoidance, and power distance, respectively. The variables that describe the variance in brand personality were found to be excitement, sincerity, and competence, respectively.

As demonstrated in Table 2, the standardized loading of constructs was found to be greater than 0.60 and statistically significant ( $P < 0.000$ ). Thus, it can be acceptable that the convergent validity was confirmed (Heo & Lee, 2016). As the average variance extracted (AVE) of all endogenous variables attained or exceeded the minimum criterion of 0.5 suggested by Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2014), the convergent validity was confirmed. The AVE for all constructs was greater than the corresponding squared standardized correlation, establishing the discriminant validity of the factors (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). On the other hand, the internal consistency reliability of the data obtained by the measuring instrument was tested via both structural reliability and Cronbach alpha coefficient.

Std Coeff, CR, AVE, and Cronbach alpha values of the variables are presented in Table 2. According to the table, it is considered that the correlation coefficients demonstrating the variables' relationship with the concerning structures are satisfying. To add, Fornell and Larcker (1981) suggested that the critical value for composite reliability (which is the reliability indicator of the variables) is  $CR > 0.7$  and the critical value for AVE value (which is the convergent validity indicator) is  $AVE > 0.5$ . According to these critical values, it is discovered that all the variables, with the exception of one, are above the referenced value. When the AVE values of the variables are examined, it is discovered that all the variables are above the critical value. In this context, it is possible to state that internal consistency for the expressions in the

**TABLE 2** Reliability and validity of the model

Constructs and Variables	Std Coeff	CR	AVE	Cronbach Alpha
<b>Culture</b>				
1. Power distance				
People in higher positions should make most decisions without consulting people in lower positions.	0.890	0.982	0.696	0.885
People in higher positions should not ask people in lower positions too frequently.	0.668			
People in higher positions should avoid social interaction with people in lower positions.	0.891			
People in higher positions should not delegate important tasks to people in lower positions.	0.925			
2. Uncertainty avoidance				
It is important to have instructions spelled out in detail so that I always know what I'm expected to do.	0.842	0.976	0.696	0.915
It is important to closely follow instructions and procedures.	0.934			
Rules and regulations are important because they inform me of what is expected of me.	0.798			
3. Community				
Group welfare is more important than individual rewards.	0.821	0.945	0.696	0.882
Group success is more important than individual success.	0.758			
Group loyalty should be encouraged even if individual goals suffer.	0.819			
<b>Brand personality</b>				
1. Excitement				
Young	0.867	0.974	0.596	0.886
Trendy	0.717			
Daring	0.975			
2. Competence				
Confident	0.758	0.941	0.678	0.938
Successful	0.984			
Corporate	0.884			
Intelligent	0.930			
Reliable	0.816			
3. Sincerity				
Glamorous	0.829	0.804	0.647	0.872
Smooth	0.918			
Charming	0.769			
<b>Brand performance</b>				
I choose the hotel where I am currently staying to be trouble-free.	0.513	0.585	0.505	0.838
The hotel where I am currently staying provides a superior quality of experience than other hotels.	0.853			
From the hotel where I am currently staying, I expect superior performance.	0.776			
The hotel that I am currently staying performs very well.	0.869			
<b>Brand loyalty</b>				
I regularly visit this hotel.	0.834	0.939	0.640	0.903
I intend to visit this hotel again.	0.894			
I usually use this hotel as my first choice compared with other hotels.	0.801			
I would recommend this hotel to others.	0.880			

structures of the model is provided. Hair et al. (2014) proposed values according to the sizes of CR and AVE values for face validity. It is stated that AVE should be greater than 0.5 and CR should be greater than AVE (CR > AVE; AVE > 0.5) accordingly. Both of these conditions were met for all of the variables. Thus, it can be stated that the conditions for the structures in the model are in acceptable limits and affinity validity is provided. Cronbach alpha is the statistical method for testing construct reliability in research. Alpha value above 0.7 is the acceptable level in most of the studies. In the study, the tests revealed that all constructs have Cronbach alpha values above 0.8, which noticeably means that all constructs have good internal consistency (Table 3).

**TABLE 3** Fit indices of model

Chosen Criterion	Good Fit	Acceptable Fit	Value of Model
$\chi^2$ (CMIN)		-	256.856
$\chi^2/df$ (CMIN/df)	≤3	≤4-5	4.429
GFI	≥0.90	0.89-0.85	0.960
CFI	≥0.97	≥0.95	0.927
RMSEA	≤0.05	0.06-0.08	0.089
NFI	≥0.95	0.94-0.90	0.909
RMR	≤0.05	0.06-0.08	0.376
IFI	≥0.95	0.94-0.90	0.928



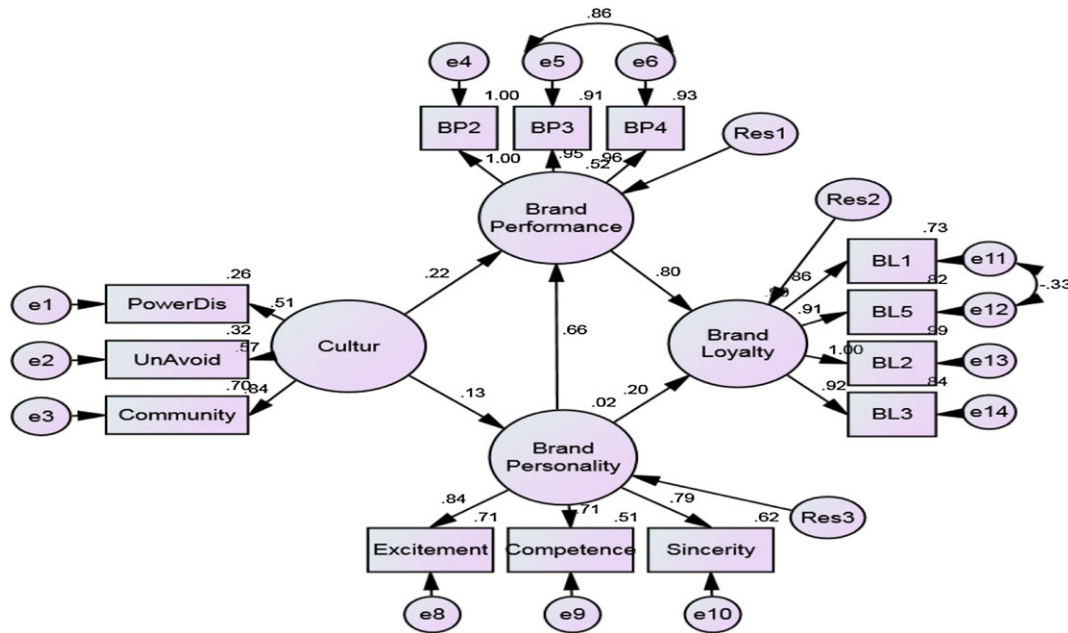


FIGURE 2 Model testing [Colour figure can be viewed at [wileyonlinelibrary.com](http://wileyonlinelibrary.com)]

TABLE 4 Structural equations

Structural Equations	Standardize Regression Weights	T Value	P
Brand personality ← culture	0.132	2.762	0.006
Brand performance ← culture	0.221	5.041	0.001
Brand performance ← brand personality	0.656	12.459	0.001
Brand loyalty ← brand performance	0.798	24.676	0.001
Brand loyalty ← brand personality	0.200	5.669	0.001

After testing the reliability and validity, the next stage included the testing of the structural model (research model). Because of the research model test, it can be seen that the results maintained the acceptable compatibility criteria. The model results are demonstrated in Figure 2.

Structural equations that were obtained because of the SEM test of the model and assumed to have relations among themselves are presented in Table 4. According to these results, it is specified that the independent variable of culture explains 13.2% of brand personality, culture explains 22.1% of brand performance, brand personality explains 65.6% of brand performance, and brand personality explains 20% of brand loyalty on a 0.05 significance level.

## 5 | CONCLUSION AND GUIDELINES

- Considering that culture consists of subdimensions such as collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and power distance, it can be stated that tourists' attitudes of these 3 subdimensions are effective on the perception of brand performance. In other words, it is observed that tourists who come from social cultures and have a high tendency of uncertainty avoidance and an extensive power distance portray more positive perceptions regarding the performance of branded hotel enterprises. The belief that tourists will feel safer and have a trouble-free accommodation experience by

preferring branded hotel enterprises is one of the reasons for this situation.

- It is found that primarily, collectivism, then successively, uncertainty avoidance and power distance, all have an effect on brand personality in the direct effect of culture on brand personality. These findings are consistent with the previously conducted research studies (Pizam & Mansfeld, 1999; Correia et al, 2011; Chua & Sung, 2011, Schuman et al, 2012).
- The effect of brand personality (0.656) on brand performance is direct and positive. First, it is found that brand personality includes the subdimensions of excitement (0.842), competence (0.712), and sincerity (0.787). For this reason, the effect of the brand personality scale is attempted to be explained in these 3 dimensions.
- In the direct and positive relationship between brand performance and brand loyalty, the quality and sufficiency of the services that tourists are provided by hotel enterprises shape their attitudes toward brand performance.
- Considering that brand personality consists of subdimensions such as excitement, competence, and sincerity, how tourists perceive the hotel enterprise regarding these 3 subdimensions affects their loyalty attitude toward the brand of the hotel enterprise.

Because of this study, which focuses on the relationship among brand performance, culture, brand personality, and brand loyalty, it is

found that brand performance, the subdimensions of brand personality (excitement, competence, and sincerity), and the subdimensions of culture (uncertainty avoidance, power distance, and collectivism) have significant effects on brand loyalty. These findings show consistency with the previous studies found in the literature (Geuens, Weijters, & Wulf, 2008; Lada et al, 2014; Uşaklı & Baloglu, 2011; Ekinci & Hosany, 2006; Hosany, Ekinci, & Uysal 2007; Kim & Kim, 2005; Correia et al, 2011; Schumann et al, 2012).

## 6 | MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

1. Because uncertainty avoidance has a significant effect on brand performance, it will make it easier for new hotel enterprises to integrate into the market to do so by franchising an existing national or international hotel brand. The uncertainty avoidance tendencies of tourists are thought to increase the preferability of branded hotel businesses.
2. Regarding the fact that collectivism has a powerful effect on brand performance, hotel brands that correspond to the value judgments of communities are evaluated better by tourists and the performance of these hotels is perceived more positively. In this respect, hotel enterprises should exist in the market with a national or international brand and should create a market mix in a way that would increase the recognition of their brands.
3. It is discovered that hotel brands that are familiar, recognized, and approved by communities are preferred more, and as a result, their financial performances are also affected positively. In this respect, it is thought that branded hotels should carry out promotional and informative marketing activities via publicity instruments and integrated marketing communication efforts.
4. In the powerful effect of collectivism, it is believed that it will be important for hotels to develop orientation strategies appropriate for the cultural characteristics for the target group. In this regard, it will be effective to use symbols, slogans, and colors appropriate for the customs and traditions of tourists from specific cultures.
5. It is considered that tourists coming from cultures with an extensive power distance prefer institutionalized, well-recognized, prestigious, and popular hotel brands that own personnel that can carry out their duties professionally and confidently. In respect to this, hotels developing their personnel by using several training methods will not only increase their professional satisfaction but also affect the service quality of the hotel positively.
6. Because of the study, in respect to the strong relationship between excitement and brand performance, activities that focus on the excitement theme in a hotel (e. g. scuba diving) will be quite effective on tourists' attitudes toward the performance of the mentioned hotel. For this purpose, organizing extraordinary events that tourists can participate in during the accommodation period will provide tourists an exciting experience.
7. Furthermore, it is considered that hotels having contemporary, innovative, flamboyant, and artistic equipments are regarded as more enthusiastic and exciting by tourists. In this respect, it is claimed that structuring the physical equipments in a modern,

innovative, and flamboyant way will be influential on tourists' excitement attitudes toward the hotel brand.

8. The significant relationship between the sincerity dimension of brand personality and brand performance leads to the conclusion that tourists usually prefer the hotels that they believe to be more sincere in their services. From this point of view, hotels should value their personnel, considering the fact that their personnel are the face of their business and act accordingly.
9. The strong relationship between brand performance and brand loyalty points out the importance that hotel enterprises attach to the service they provide. In this regard, hotel enterprises should constantly carry out improvement and reinforcement works on both their physical equipment and their personnel who are responsible for providing service.

## 7 | LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Suggestions for studies to be conducted in the future are presented below:

1. Future studies might consider evaluating the effects of qualities such as age, gender, education, income, and occupation in order for the collectivism effect of culture to be better understood.
2. In this study, the market performance of the brand assessed by tourists is used as a base in the evaluation of brand performance. The financial performance criteria of the hotel brand such as return of assets, return on equity, and return of investment can be used as basis in future studies.
3. It is thought that a comparison can be made by conducting this same research oriented at branded hotel enterprises on independent hotel enterprises without brands, too.
4. It is considered that the mediation and confirmation effects of the brand personality and culture variables in the model on the relationship between brand performance and brand loyalty can also be researched.
5. Carrying out this research that is momentary as a periodic research in the future will be effective in generalizing the results obtained.

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