The Relationships among Influencer Credibility, Brand Trust, and Purchase Intention: The Case of Instagram

◇◇

Umut KEMEÇ[1]
Hale Fulya YÜKSEL[2]

Abstract

Instagram is a social media platform which includes many influencer accounts that can affect the purchasing decisions of others. This study investigated the effect of influencer credibility on brand trust and purchase intention and the mediating role of brand trust between influencer credibility and purchase intention. Also, the difference in purchase intention according to the product category promoted by the influencer was examined. A structural equation model was tested using data from 408 participants. The results revealed a significant and positive effect of influencers' credibility on brand trust and purchase intention. Moreover, the mediation role of brand trust was confirmed. Lastly, it was determined that purchase intention changed according to product categories.

[1] **Sorumlu Yazar/ Corresponding Author:** Doktora Öğrencisi, Afyon Kocatepe Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, u.kemec@hotmail.com, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8826-5921

[2] Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, Afyon Kocatepe Üniversitesi, İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi, halefulyayuksel@aku.edu.tr, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2953-5212

Etkileyici Kişi Güvenilirliği, Marka Güveni ve Satın Alma Niyeti Arasındaki İlişki: Instagram Örneği

Öz

Instagram, başkalarının satın alma kararlarını etkileyebilen birçok etkileyici kişi (influencer) hesabını barındıran bir sosyal medya platformudur. Bu çalışma, etkileyici kişilerin güvenilirliğinin marka güveni ve satın alma niyeti üzerindeki etkisi ile marka güveninin etkileyici kişi güvenilirliğiyle satın alma niyeti arasındaki aracılık rolünü araştırmıştır. Ayrıca, etkileyici kişi tarafından tanıtımı yapılan ürün kategorisine göre satın alma niyetindeki farklılık incelenmiştir. 408 katılımcının verisi ile yapısal eşitlik modeli test edilmiştir. Sonuçlar etkileyici kişi güvenilirliğinin marka güveni ve satın alma niyeti üzerinde anlamlı ve pozitif bir etkisi olduğunu göstermiştir. Ayrıca, marka güveninin aracılık etkisi de doğrulanmıştır. Son olarak, ürün kategorisine göre satın alma niyetinin değiştiği tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal medya pazarlaması, Instagram, etkileyici kişi (influencer) güvenilirliği, satın alma niyeti, marka güveni.

Introduction

According to Kemp (2020), 49% of the world's population is social media user and in Turkey 64% of the country's population is social media user. Among social media platforms, Instagram is the second mostly used social media platform in Turkey with more than 44 million users (Kemp, 2020).

Social media is an indispensable part of a large section of the society, and it has the potential to change the world's or Turkey's agenda at a time (Kırık, 2017). Social media platforms have been the focus of businesses determining their marketing strategies with the increasing number of

social media users (Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi, 2012) because any content created through social media platforms is rapidly spreading and reaching potential buyers.

One of the brands' marketing strategies is to cooperate with popular users who actively use social media platforms (Benson, 2020). These popular users, who are also called as influencers, have a large number of followers (Lou & Yuan, 2019) and have the ability to influence people's views (Enge, 2012), attitudes, decisions, and behaviors (Watts & Dodds, 2007). Instagram has many influencers which are specialists in fields such as fashion, sports, health, cosmetics, and so on. Today, many consumers care about influencers' ideas and benefit from their opinions before purchasing.

According to the data of Social Blade (2020), in 2019, C. Ronaldo, a footballer, was the Instagram user with the most followers on the platform, with nearly 216 million followers. Businesses pay one million dollars for each post shared by C. Ronaldo's Instagram account, and his annual revenue from his collaborations through Instagram was 47 million dollars (Lane, 2019). The famous football player gained 65 million dollars annually as a footballer, and he had an income almost close to his occupation from his collaborations on Instagram (Badenhausen, 2019). According to data of Guttmann (2019), while the global budget of influencer marketing was 800 million dollars in 2017, it was more than doubled in 2019, reaching 1.7 billion dollars. All these figures show the importance of influencer marketing for brands and businesses.

There are studies in the literature that examined influencers on social media from different aspects. Eru, Karapınar-Çelik, Çelik, and Cop (2018) examined the effect of YouTubers' credibility and brand trust on young consumers' purchase intention, and they stated that sub-dimensions of YouTubers' credibility (attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise) affect brand trust and purchase intention of the young consumers. Shamli (2019) found that sponsored product/brand promotions made by influencers on Instagram have a positive effect on consumer purchase intention and brand trust. Sokolova and Kefi (2020) stated that the cred-

ibility of influencers sharing in the beauty category on YouTube and Instagram affects consumers' purchase intention. In the light of the previous literature, in this study, the effect of Instagram influencers' credibility on purchase intention and brand trust was investigated using a structural equation model. Moreover, the mediation effect of brand trust in the relationship between influencers' credibility and purchase intention was examined. Lastly, the effect of product category that is promoted by the influencer on purchase intention was analyzed which was thought to be an important contribution to literature. Besides its contribution to academic literature, it is believed that the results will also assist marketers in planning influencer marketing strategies on social media platforms such as Instagram.

Conceptual Framework

In this section, three factors investigated in this study (influencer credibility, brand trust, and purchase intention) and Instagram which was the platform used to investigate these factors were explained.

Instagram and Marketing

Rapidly advancing technological developments quickly changed individuals' lifestyles, relationships with each other, communication, socialization processes, and interactions with the environment; and these developments have enabled the sharing of information between people via social networks through the combination of mobile communication and internet (Karagülle & Çaycı, 2014).

Social media can be defined as a broad-based interactive platform that allows users to share their thoughts without limitations such as location and time (Bulunmaz, 2011) and to build their online communities (Akar, 2018). Having one billion users, Instagram is one of the commonly used social media platforms in the world (Ediz, 2019). Instagram is an effective marketing channel for businesses and it is a low-cost advertising platform compared to other advertising platforms (Özeltürkay et al, 2017). Through Instagram, new customers can be reached and

relationships with existing customers can be strengthened (Instagram, 2020a). Moreover, businesses can create and increase their popularity by sharing posts with a community that has high interaction rates (Instagram, 2020b). Businesses can easily reach audiences that are difficult to be reached by collaborating with influencers on Instagram and a well-known influencer can promote a business's products by reaching millions of people with a simple post (Benson, 2020).

The Concepts of Social Media Influencer and Influencer Credibility

A new type of celebrity created by social media is micro-celebrities (Khamis et al, 2017). Micro-celebrities are generally defined as people who have gained popularity through viral internet (Marwick & Boyd, 2011). There are micro-celebrities on various social media platforms such as YouTube and Twitter, but they are mostly prominent on Instagram (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019). Influencers are a form of micro-celebrities who share their daily lives with textual and visual expressions and advertise products/services through social media and blogs (Abidin, 2016).

Influencers on social media are people who

- are ordinary people that have become online celebrities by obtaining a large number of followers on one or more social media platforms (Lou & Yuan, 2019);

- can reach many people and have the ability to influence people's views (Enge, 2012);

- are in constant contact with their followers (Weiner, 2018);

- are experts in the products or services they promote (Weiner, 2018) such as wellness, travel, food, lifestyle, beauty, or fashion (Lou & Yuan, 2019);

- have a critical role in growing global marketing because of their capacity to shape consumers' purchasing decisions (De Veirman et al, 2017).

Influencers are started to be used by companies as a tool for promotional and advertising activities (Aslan & Ünlü, 2016). Brands love influencers on social media because influencers can create trends and encourage followers to purchase the products/services which they promote (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2020). The success of influencers can be defined as the return of their influence (Khamis et al, 2017); and influencers can affect the attitudes, decisions, and behaviors of the audience that follow them (Watts & Dodds, 2007). The number of followers reflects the popularity of influencers, and more followers mean a large audience to convey commercial messages which is an important issue for brands (De Veirman et al, 2017). Brands usually look for an image of trustworthiness and sincerity in influencers that they want to work with (De Veirman et al, 2017) because consumers trust the influencers in social media almost as much as they trust their friends (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Therefore, credibility becomes an important feature in influencer selection.

Credibility can be defined as believability meaning a highly credible information or person is perceived as a highly believable information or person (Tseng & Fogg, 1999). According to Goldsmith et al. (2000), credibility refers to "the extent to which the source is perceived as possessing expertise relevant to the communication topic and can be trusted to give an objective opinion on the subject". Credibility can be considered as a tool that is used by the receiver of the information to rate the source or transmitter of the communication regarding the information (Eisend, 2004).

"Source Credibility" is a concept that refers to the positive features of the sender of a message that affects the recipient's acceptance of the message (Ohanian, 1990). The effectiveness of a transmitted message depends on the level of expertise perceived by the recipient and the credibility of the endorser (Ohanian, 1991). Endorsers or spokespersons are frequently used in advertisements as credible sources and endorser credibility has a significant effect on consumers' purchase intention (Goldsmith et al, 2000).

Ohanian (1990) determined the sub-dimensions of source credibility scale as expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. Expertise is the most significant dimension for endorsed products to be effective (Daneshvary & Schwer, 2000), and it can be defined as "having experience and knowledge about a product or product category" (Zha Yang et al, 2018). Trustworthiness is the degree to which the recipient accepts the transmitted message (Ohanian, 1990). The honesty, believability, and integrity of the celebrity endorsement can be interpreted as trustworthiness (Erdogan, 1999). Attractiveness is often considered as an essential aspect of the first impression (Ohanian, 1990). Attractiveness is interpreted as physical attractiveness in some sectors such as fashion, cosmetics, and so on (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019). In social media, attractiveness is followed by social attractiveness rather than physical attractiveness and some studies showed that influencers are considered attractive even though they do not have any physical images of their own in their social media accounts (Edwards et al, 2013).

Many studies in the literature have considered celebrities as a source in transmitting marketing messages (Ohanian, 1990; Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995; Şimşek & Uğur, 2003; Choi et al, 2005; Seno & Lukas, 2007; Amos, Holmes & Strutton, 2008; Mikuláš & Svetlik, 2016; Eru et al, 2018; Yolaçan & Özeltürkay, 2018; Breves Liebers et al, 2019). Influencers can be described as a new type of celebrity (Khamis et al, 2017), and some studies have indicated that the credibility of influencers has a positive effect on consumer purchase intention, brand trust, or both (Ishani, 2015; Eru et al, 2018; Shamli, 2019; Nascimento, 2019; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

Brand Trust

Trust is an important factor for social relationships and at least a basic level of trust is needed in any interaction between people (Gopichandran & Chetlapalli, 2013). Trust is also essential for companies in creating a strong relationship between the consumer and the brand (Elliott & Yannopoulou, 2007; Power et al, 2008). When consumers feel

vulnerable in an uncertain situation, trust gains more importance and reduces uncertainty because consumers know that they can rely on a trustworthy brand (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

According to Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán (2001), brand trust consists of two dimensions: brand reliability and brand intention. Brand reliability is about meeting consumer expectations and satisfying needs whereas brand intention is about the goodwill of the brand in solving problems that consumers encounter (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005). Brand reputation, company trust, company perceived motives, brand liking, and brand satisfaction are among the factors that affect brand trust and help in developing brand loyalty (Lau & Lee, 1999). Satisfaction of consumers increases when their trust on the brand increases (Erciş et al, 2012). If consumers trust a brand for their previous experience, it is highly likely that they will be satisfied with another purchase (Lee et al, 2007).

The internet and especially social media are important channels to gain customers' trust against the brand (Reichheld & Schefter, 2000), and creating trust towards brands on social media can provide a significant competitive advantage (Hacıefendioğlu & Fırat, 2014). Transparent and honest interactions between the brand and the consumer through social media will increase the sense of trust against the brand and will also mediate the formation of a loyal customer community (Brown, 2010).

Purchase Intention

Intention refers to the emergence of the will to achieve a behavior (Mutlu et al, 2011). Accordingly, purchase intention can be defined as the tendency or desire of consumers to purchase a product at any time (Mirabi et al, 2015) or the form of planning that is consciously made to purchase a product (Spears & Singh, 2004; Arifani & Haryanto, 2018). According to the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), intention is a strong predictor of actual behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977). Therefore, determining purchase intention is important in understanding purchase behavior.

Traditional media tools (such as TV) which are used to create or increase the purchasing intentions of consumers are losing their popularity to social media which have been integrated into consumers lives through technological tools (O'Reilly & Marx, 2011). Unlike traditional marketing, marketing in online platforms is based on sharing knowledge, experience, and thoughts (Turgut, Akyol & Giray, 2016). Consumers are looking for advice on social media before making a purchase decision (Hsu et al, 2013). Therefore, advertisements on social media can catch consumer attention and encourage them to check the product or service which may in turn create a purchase intention (Alnsour et al, 2018).

In some studies, the following factors are mentioned as the factors that affect consumer purchase intention: Product type (Morwitz, 2012; Morwitz, Steckel & Gupta, 2007), product popularity (Park et al, 2007), quality and reliability (Hoyer et al, 2013), brand awareness and brand loyalty (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015), thoughts of family and friends (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015; O'Reilly & Marx, 2011; Price & Feick, 1984; Burnkrant & Cousineau, 1975), and timing (Morwitz, 2012). While consumers state that they approach the information created by brands with suspicion, they state that information obtained from trustworthy and credible sources reduces the risk of suspicion and increases purchase (Bambauer-Sachse & Mangold, 2013). Therefore, in order to affect purchase decisions, it may be a good way for brands to use credible influencers as an information source in conveying marketing messages.

Methodology

Hypotheses Development and Research Model

This research investigated the effect of the Instagram influencers' credibility on brand trust and purchase intention as well as the mediation effect of brand trust on the relationship between influencer credibility and purchase intention. Regarding previous literature, it is seen that the credibility and attractiveness of celebrities (as a source) affect consumers' behavior and celebrities/influencers are used by businesses in their marketing strategies (Ohanian, 1990; Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995;

Şimşek & Uğur, 2003; Choi et al, 2005; Seno & Lukas, 2007; Amos et al, 2008; Korkut & Arslan, 2015; Mikuláš & Svetlik, 2016; Eru et al, 2018; Yolaçan & Özeltürkay, 2018; Breves et al, 2019).

In the studies conducted by Ohanian (1991) and Pornpitakpan (2004), it was revealed that celebrity credibility had positive effects on purchase intention. In the study conducted by Eru et al. (2018), it was shown that source attractiveness had effects on the purchase intention of youth; and source attractiveness and trustworthiness had effects on brand trust. Shamli (2019) stated that brand trust had a positive effect on purchase intention. According to the studies in the literature, the main hypotheses of this study were established as the following:

H1: Influencer credibility positively affects purchase intention.

H2: Influencer credibility positively affects brand trust.

H3: Brand trust positively affects purchase intention.

H4: Brand trust has a mediation effect on the relationship between influencer credibility and purchase intention.
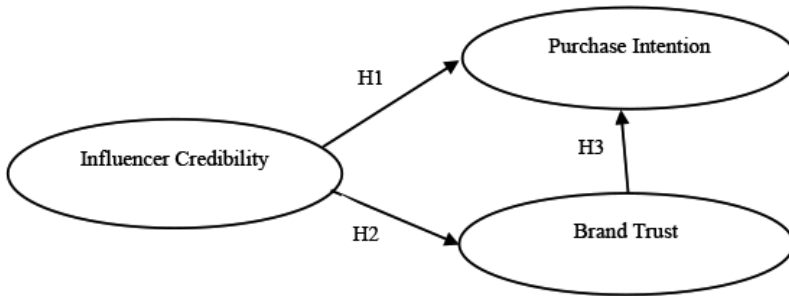
Figure 1: Research Model

The research model is also tested for differences in the relationships due to different product categories promoted by the influencers to see if product category affects the relationships in the model. In the research carried out by Pornpitakpan (2004), she argues that the attractiveness of celebrities has an effect on purchase intention, but it should not be

the main factor in products belonging to categories such as cosmetics and perfumes. In this study, the following hypotheses were created by taking into consideration the product categories that are promoted by the influencers which are followed by participants. Most frequently mentioned categories were cosmetics/personal care and clothing/accessories; therefore, the following hypotheses were tested using data from these responses.

H5: There is a significant difference between the groups separated according to the product categories promoted by influencers.

$H5_a$: The effect of influencer credibility on purchase intention differs between groups that are separated according to the product categories promoted by influencers.

$H5_b$: The effect of influencer credibility on brand trust differs between the groups that are separated according to the product categories promoted by influencers.

$H5_c$: The effect of brand trust on purchase intention differs among the groups that are separated according to the product categories promoted by influencers.

Research Setting and Sample

An online questionnaire was applied to the participants who lived in Turkey via Google Forms between 01.01.2020 and 31.05.2020. The participants who admitted that they used Instagram and followed influencers on Instagram were included in the research. As a result, 408 valid questionnaires were obtained and used in the analyses. Of the 408 participants, 69,9% of them were female, 80,1% of them were single, and 69,4% of them had at least a bachelor's degree.

The participants mainly followed influencers that promoted products in two categories. Cosmetics and personal care category ranked first with 30,1% (n=123) and it was followed by clothing and accessories category with 25% (n=102).

Questionnaire Design

The source credibility scale of Ohanian (1990) was used for the influencer credibility variable. The questions for the purchase intention variable were adapted from the scales of Hsu & Tsou (2011), Mir & Rehman (2013), and Saxena (2011). The questions for the brand trust variable were adapted from the scale of Chaudhuri & Holbrook (2001). A 5-point Likert scale was used for the items in the questionnaire as 1-Strongly Disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Undecided, 4- Agree, and 5-Strongly Agree. The items in the questionnaire were included in the Appendix.

Results

AMOS 21.0 and SPSS 25.0 program were used for the analyses.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

To test the pre-defined scales for the research variables, a confirmatory factor analysis was applied in AMOS. According to the existing thresholds (Meydan & Şeşen, 2015), the model exhibited adequate fit to the data as stated by the results in Table 1.

Table 1: The Goodness of Fit Statistics of Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Fit Indices	$\chi 2 / df$	RMSEA	RMR	CFI	NFI	GFI	AGFI
Model	2,855	0,068	0,074	0,969	0,954	0,882	0,854

Composite Reliability (CR) values were checked for reliability of the CFA model (Gaskin, 2020) and CR value for each factor was found to be greater than 0,7 as suggested by Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2014) which provided the reliability of the model (Table 2). Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values must be greater than 0,5 for each factor to ensure convergent validity (Hair et al, 2014), and as seen in Table 2 the AVE values are higher than 0,5. Therefore, convergent validity was

provided. To ensure discriminant validity, the square root of AVE values should be higher than the correlations between the factors (Hair et al, 2014) which is also provided as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: CR, AVE, and Factor Correlation Values of the
Measurement Model

	CR	AVE	IC	BT	PI
IC	0,908	0,770	**0,87**		
BT	0,967	0,879	0,72	**0,93**	
PI	0,965	0,875	0,66	0,69	**0,93**

The square root of the AVE value for each factor showed with bold font in the table.

Analysis of Structural Equation Model and Hypothesis Testing

Structural equation model was analyzed using the AMOS program. The goodness of fit statistics of this structural model shows acceptable fit as shown in Table 3. All the paths in the model are statistically significant (p<0,001), and standardized regression coefficients are shown in Figure 2.

Table 3: The Goodness of Fit Statistics for Structural Equation Model

Fit Indices	χ^2/df	RMSEA	RMR	CFI	NFI	GFI	AGFI
Structural Model	2,855	0,068	0,074	0,969	0,954	0,882	0,854
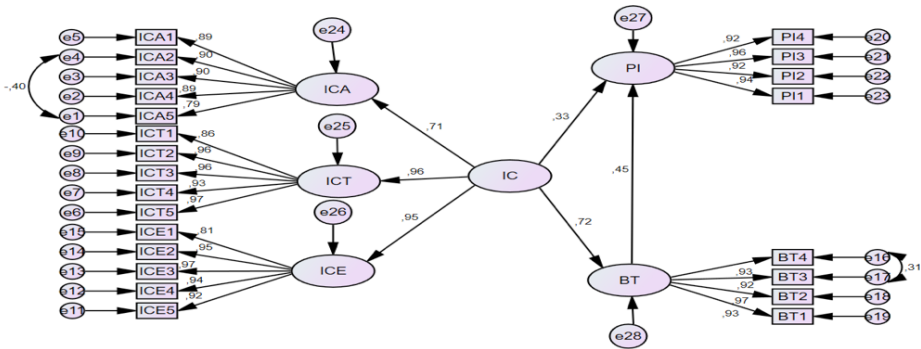
Figure 2. Standardized Regression Coefficients of the
Structural Model

According to the results, influencer credibility (IC) had significantly and positively affected purchase intention (PI) (ß1 = 0,33) and brand trust (BT) (ß2 = 0,72). Moreover, brand trust had significantly and positively affected purchase intention (ß3 = 0,45). Therefore, hypothesis H1, H2 and H3 were supported.

In addition to the direct relationships between variables, it was found that brand trust had a mediation effect between influencer credibility and purchase intention (indirect effect of IC on PI was 0,32 and total effect of IC on PI was 0,65). Therefore, hypothesis H4 was supported.

Multiple group analysis was performed in AMOS for two product categories (cosmetic/personal care n=123 and clothing/accessory n=102) which were the two prominent categories that were promoted by the most closely followed influencers. As seen in Table 4, when the model is evaluated, there is a significant difference between group 1 (cosmetic/personal care) and group 2 (clothing/accessory) (p <0,001). Each path of the model is controlled via a chi-square difference test and all the paths are found to be statistically significant (p<0,001) as shown in Table 5. Therefore, H5 and all the sub-hypotheses were supported, and it can be said that the product category which is promoted by influencer had a moderator effect. It can be concluded that the effects of influencers on the relationships in the structural model are stronger for consumers who

follow influencers that promote products in the cosmetic/personal care category.

Table 4: General Model Differences between Cosmetics/Personal Care and Clothing/Accessory Groups

Model	*df*	CMIN	p	NFI Delta-1	IFI Delta-2	RFI rho-1	TLI rho-2
Structural Weights	444	961,983	0,000	0,884	0,934	0,868	0,925

Table 5: General Model Differences between Cosmetics/Personal Care and Clothing/Accessory Groups for Each Path

	Standardized Regression Coefficient		Result of chi-square difference test
	Cosmetic/Personal Care (Group 1)	Clothing/Accessory (Group 2)	
IC →BT	0,800	0,744	0,000
IC →PI	0,562	0,523	0,000
BT →PI	0,285	0,266	0,000

Discussion and Conclusions

Findings of the structural equation model showed that influencer credibility had a significant and positive effect on purchase intention and brand trust; and it was also seen that brand trust had a significant and positive effect on purchase intention. Moreover, brand trust was found to have a mediation effect on the relationship between influencer credibility and purchase intention. The results of this study support similar findings in the literature. Some related studies from literature are as follows: Sokolova and Kefi (2020) stated that the credibility of influencers who are sharing in the beauty category on YouTube and Instagram affected the purchase intention of consumers. Shamli (2019) found that sponsored product/brand promotions made by influencers on Instagram had a

positive effect on consumer purchase intention and brand trust. According to Eru et al. (2018), YouTubers' attractiveness affected consumers' purchase intention, and this attractiveness was effective in building trust against the promoted brand. At the same time, brand trust had a mediation effect on the relationship between YouTuber's attractiveness and purchase intention (Eru et al, 2018). It can be concluded that influencers on Instagram and other social media platforms have an important effect on both building brand trust and on increasing purchase intention; and credibility of these influencers is an important factor to be considered.

Considering the results of group comparison chi-square test, the effect of influencer credibility on purchase intention and brand trust, and the effect of brand trust on purchase intention were significantly higher for cosmetics/personal care product category than clothing/accessories product category. This result is noteworthy because no study was encountered in literature that investigated this difference of product categories on Instagram. Nascimento (2019) stated that the credibility of influencer positively affected the consumers' intention to purchase for cosmetics and beauty products. The result of Ishani's study showed that influencers' credibility had a positive effect on consumer purchase intention and enjoyable shares of influencers increased this effect even more. Besides, Ishani asked the participants to take a screenshot from the current posts of the influencer they most followed, and the product categories in the screenshots were categorized. According to the results obtained from 300 participants, beauty / cosmetics (26.3%) and clothing / fashion (16%) product categories were in the first two places (Ishani, 2015). The prominent product categories in Ishani's study were similar to the prominent categories in this study.

The results of the current study contribute to literature in two ways. Firstly, this is one of the few studies investigating the credibility of influencers on Instagram which is a platform that is highly used for marketing purposes. Secondly, it reveals that the effect of influencer credibility on brand trust and purchase intention is significantly higher in cosmetics and personal care product category.

Implications for Marketers

Building brand trust is more difficult, especially in social media platforms due to the rapid spread of information and the diversity of information sources. However, influencers who are regarded as credible by their followers can play an important role in creating brand trust and increasing the tendency of potential consumers to purchase. This will help companies' marketing activities in the long term.

In order to gain this success through influencers, companies should collaborate with influencers whose credibility is accepted by consumers. The brand should avoid partnerships with non-credible influencers that could break the trust of the consumer. Also, according to the results of the current study, influencers who share in cosmetics and personal care product categories have more influence than clothing and accessory product categories on brand trust and purchase intention. Therefore, businesses that sell products in cosmetics and personal care product categories can benefit more by working with Instagram influencers.

Limitations and Future Research Possibilities

This study uses a sample of Instagram users who follow influencers on the platform. There are also many influencers on other social media platforms that use sponsorships for product promotion with brands. Therefore, the results of this study may not be generalized to other social media platforms. Future research may focus on influencers on other social media platforms to test if the results of this study also apply to those platforms. Additionally, two product categories (cosmetic/personal care - clothing/accessory) were the most frequently given responses by the participants in this study, and the multiple group analysis was performed including only these categories. Future research may include other product categories that are promoted by influencers. In this study, the sub-dimensions (expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness) of influencer credibility were not tested separately. Therefore, future studies may test the effect of each sub-dimension of influencer credibility on purchase intention and brand trust and determine which one/ones are more important.

Araştırma Yayın Etiği Beyanı

Bu araştırma bilimsel araştırma ve yayın etiği kurallarına uygun şekilde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmada kullanılan soru formu, Afyon Kocatepe Üniversitesi Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Kurulu tarafından onaylanmıştır.

Yazarların Makaleye Katkı Oranları

Bu çalışma Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Hale Fulya YÜKSEL'in danışmanlığını yaptığı Umut KEMEÇ'e ait 20/07/2020 tarihinde onaylanan yüksek lisans tezinden türetilmiş olup yazarların eşit katkısı ile yazılmıştır.

Destek Beyanı

Bu araştırma herhangi bir kurum veya kuruluş tarafından desteklenmemiştir.

Çıkar Beyanı

Bu araştırma herhangi çıkar çatışmasına konu değildir.

References

Abidin, C. (2016). Visibility labour: engaging with influencers' fashion brands and #ootd advertorial campaigns on instagram. *Media International Australia, 161*(1), 86-100.

Agrawal, J., & Kamakura, W. A. (1995). The economic worth of celebrity endorsers: an event study analysis. *The Journal of Marketing*, 56-62.

Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (1977). Attitude-behavior relations: a theoretical analysis and review of empirical research. *Psychological Bulletin, 84*(5), 888-918.

Akar, E. (2018). *Sosyal medya pazarlaması: sosyal web'de pazarlama stratejileri* (3 ed.). Ankara, Çankaya: Seçkin Yayınevi.

Alnsour, M., Ghannam, M., Al-Natour, R., & Alzeıdat, Y. (2018). Socıal media effect on purchase intention: Jordanian airline industry. *Journal of Internet Banking and Commerce, 23*(2).

Amos, C., Holmes, G., & Strutton, D. (2008). Exploring the relationship between celebrity endorser effects and advertising effectiveness: a quantitative synthesis of effect size. *International Journal of Advertising, 27*(2), 209-234.

Arifani, V. M., & Haryanto, H. (2018). Purchase intention: implementation theory of planned behavior (study on reusable shopping bags in solo city, Indonesia). *International Conference on Climate Change. 200.* IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science.

Aslan, A., & Ünlü, D. G. (2016). Instagram fenomenleri ve reklam ilişkisi: instagram fenomenlerinin gözünden bir değerlendirme. *Maltepe Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Dergisi, 3*(2), 41-65.

Badenhausen, K. (2019). *The world's highest-paid athletes*. Retrieved: May 11, 2020, from https://www.forbes.com/athletes/#3e-b6967655ae.

Bambauer-Sachse, S., & Mangold, S. (2013). Do consumers still believe what is said in online product reviews? a persuasion knowledge

approach. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 20*(4),
373-381.

Benson, Z. (2020, June 14). *10 Reasons to use instagram for your busi-
ness*. Retrieved June 14, 2020, from business.com: https://www.
business.com/articles/10-reasons-to-use-instagram-for-business/

Breves, P. L., Liebers, N., Abt, M., & Kunze, A. (2019). The Perceived fit
between instagram influencers and the endorsed brand: how influ-
encer–brand fit affects source credibility and persuasive effective-
ness. *Journal of Advertising Research, 59*(4), 440-454.

Brown, E. (2010). How implementing social media strategies (the right
way) attracts customer loyalty. *The Faculty of the Public Commu-
nication Graduate Program School of Communication American
University Washington*, 1-39.

Bulunmaz, B. (2011). Otomotiv sektöründe sosyal medyanın kullanımı
ve fiat örneği. *Global Media Journal Turkish Edition, 2*(3), 19-50.

Burnkrant, R. E., & Cousineau, A. (1975). Informational and normative
social influence in buyer behavior. *Journal of Consumer Research,
2*(3), 206.

Choi, S. M., Lee, W. N., & Kım, H. J. (2005). Lessons from the rich and
famous: a crosscultural comparison of celebrity endorsement in
advertising. *Journal of Advertising, 34*(2), 85-98.

Chaudhuri, A., & Holbrook, M. B. (2001). The chain of effects from
brand trust and brand affect to brand performance: the role of brand
loyalty. *Journal of Marketing, 65*, 81-93.

Daneshvary, R., & Schwer, K. R. (2000). The association endorsement
and consumers' intention to purchase. *Journal of Consumer Mar-
keting, 17*(3), 203-213.

De Veirman, M., Cauberghe, V., & Hudders, L. (2017). Marketing
through instagram influencers: the impact of number of followers
and product divergence on brand attitude. *International Journal of
Advertising, 36*(5), 798-828.

Delgado-Ballester, E., & Luis Munuera-Alemán, J. (2001). Brand trust in the context of consumer loyalty. *European Jounal of Marketing*, 1238-1258.

Delgado-Ballester, E., & Munuera-Alemán, J. L. (2005). Does brand trust matter to brand equity? *Journal of Product & Brand Management, 14*(3), 187-196.

Djafarova , E., & Trofimenko, O. (2019). 'Instafamous' – credibility and self-presentation of micro-celebrities on social media. *Information, Communication & Society, 22*(10), 1432-1446.

Ediz, M. S. (2019, June 29). *Sosyal medya kullanım istatistikleri*. Retrieved April 13, 2020, from Pazarlama Türkiye: https://pazarlamaturkiye.com/sosyal-medya-kullanim-istatistikleri/

Edwards C, C., Spence, P. R., Gentile, C. J., Edwards, A., & Edwards A, A. (2013). How much klout do you have...a test of system generated cues on source credibility. *Computers in Human Behavior, 29*(5), A12-A16.

Eisend, M. (2004). Is it still worth to be credible? a meta-analysis of temporal patterns of source credibility effects in marketing. *Advances in Consumer Research, 31*, 352-357.

Elliott, R., & Yannopoulou, N. (2007). The nature of trust in brands: a psychosocial model. *European Journal of Marketing, 41*(9/10), 988-998.

Enge, E. (2012, March 6). *Influencer marketing - what it is, and why you need to be doing it*. Retrieved April 22, 2020, from MOZ: https://moz.com/blog/influencer-marketing-what-it-is-and-why-you-need-to-be-doing-it

Erciş, A., Ünal, S., Candan, F. B., & Yıldırım, H. (2012). The effect of brand satisfaction, trust and brand commitment on loyalty and repurchase intentions. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 58*, 1395-1404.

Erdogan, Z. B. (1999). Celebrity endorsement: a literature review. *Journal of Marketing Management, 15*(4), 291-314.

Eru, O., Karapınar-Çelik, I., Çelik, S., & Cop, R. (2018). The effect of youtubers' as endorsers' credibility and the effect of the brand trust on young consumers' purchase intention. *The International Journal of Economic and Social Research, 14*(2), 219-238.

Gaskin, J. (2020). *Exploratory factor analysis*. http://statwiki.kolob-kreations.com/index.php?title=Exploratory_Factor_Analysis (Retrieved: 10.06.2020).

Goldsmith, R. E., Lafferty, B. A., & Newell, S. J. (2000). The impact of corporate credibility and celebrity credibility on consumer reaction to advertisements and brands. *Journal of Advertising, 29*(3), 43-54.

Gopichandran, V., & Chetlapalli, K. S. (2013). Dimensions and determinants of trust in health care in resource poor settings – a qualitative exploration. *PLoS ONE, 8*(7), e69170.

Guttmann, A. (2019). *Global instagram influencer market size from 2017 to 2020*. https://www.statista.com/statistics/748630/global-instagram-influencer-market-value/ (Retrieved: 01.05.2020).

Hacıefendioğlu, Ş., & Fırat, D. (2014). The effect of brand image on trust concerning brands in social media. *Kocaeli Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, 27*, 87 - 96.

Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2014). *Multivariate data analysis* (7 ed.). USA: Pearson Education Limited.

Haque, A., Anwar, N., Yasmin, F., Sarwar, A., Ibrahim, Z., & Momen, A. (2015). Purchase intention of foreign products: a study on bangladeshi consumer perspective. *Sage Open, 5*(2), 1-12.

Hoyer, W. D., MacInnis, D. J., & Pieters, R. (2013). *Consumer behavior.* (6, Ed.) United States of America: South Western Cengage Learning.

Hsu, C. L., Lin, J. C., & Chiang, H. C. (2013). The effects of blogger recommendations on customers' online shopping intentions. *Internet Research, 23*(1), 69-88.

Hsu, H. Y., & Tsou, H.-T. (2011). Understanding customer experiences in online blog environments. *International Journal of Information Management, 31*(6), 510-523.

Influencer Marketing Hub. (2020). *What is an Influencer?* . Retrieved May 01, 2020, from: https://influencermarketinghub.com/what-is-an-influencer/

Instagram. (2020a). *Instagram business*. https://business.instagram.com/ (Retrieved: 01.05.2020).

Instagram. (2020b). *Instagram business*. Retrieved April 16, 2020, from Instagram: https://business.instagram.com/advertising/

Ishani, F. (2015). *Instagram influencer's sponsored posts: measurıng users' attıtude towards sponsored posts and purchase intentıons in the Unıted States.* (Unpublished Master Thesis). University of Georgia.

Karagülle, A. E., & Çaycı, B. (2014). Ağ Toplumunda sosyalleşme ve yabancılaşma. *The Turkish Online Journal of Design, Art and Communication - TOJDAC, 4*(1), 1-9.

Kemp, S. (2020). *Digital 2020: Turkey*. https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2020-turkey (Retrieved: 01.05.2020).

Khamis, S., Ang, L., & Welling, R. (2017). Self-branding, 'micro-celebrity' and the rise of social media influencers. *Celebrıty Studies, 8*(2), 191-208.

Kırık, A. M. (2017, March). Yeni medya araciliğiyla değişen iletişim süreci: sosyal paylaşim ağlarinda gençlerin konumu. *Gumushane University E- Journal of Faculty of Communication, 5*(1), 230-261.

Korkut Altuna, O., & Arslan, F. (2015). Popüler Türk dizilerindeki başrol erkek oyuncuların marka denkliği boyutlarının karşılaştırılması ve tüketicinin satın alma niyetine etkileri: üniversite öğrencileri üzerine bir araştırma. *M.U Iktisadi ve Idari Bilimler Dergisi, 36*(1), 187-213.

Lane, B. (2019, Oct. 16), *Cristiano Ronaldo reportedly makes more money being an influencer on Instagram than he does playing soccer for Juventus.* Retrieved April 15, 2020, from businessinsider.com: https://www.businessinsider.com/cristiano-ronaldo-makes-more-money-from-instagram-than-juventus-2019-10

Lau, G. T., & Lee, S. H. (1999). Consumers' trust in a brand and the link
to brand loyalty. *Journal of Market Focused Management, 4*(4),
341-370.

Lee, K. Y., Huang, H. L., & Hsu, Y. C. (2007). Trust, satisfaction and
commitment-on loyalty to international retail service brands. *Asia
Pacific Management Review, 12*(3), 161-169.

Lou, C., & Yuan, S. (2019). Influencer marketing: how message value
and credibility affect consumer trust of branded content on social
media. *Journal of Interactıve Advertısıng, 19*(1), 58-73.

Marwick, A., & Boyd, D. (2011). To see and be seen: celebrity practice
on twitter. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research
into New Media Technologies, 17*(2), 139-158.

Meydan, C. H., & Şeşen, H. (2015). *Yapısal eşitlik modellemesi: amos
uygulamaları.* (2, Ed.) Ankara: Delta Yayıncılık.

Mikuláš, P., & Svetlik, J. (2016). Execution of advertising and celebrity
endorsement. *Communication Today, 7*(1), 92-102.

Mir , I. A., & Rehman, K. U. (2013). Factors affecting consumer at-
titudes and intentions toward user-generated product content on
youtube. *Management & Marketing, 8*(4), 637-654.

Mirabi, V., Akbariyeh, H., & Tahmasebifard, H. (2015). A Study of
factors affecting on customers purchase intention case study: the
agencies of bono brand tile in Tehran. *Journal of Multidisciplinary
Engineering Science and Technology (JMEST), 2*(1), 267-273.

Morwitz, V. (2012). Consumers' purchase intentions and their behavior.
Foundations and Trends® in Marketing, 7(3), 181-230.

Morwitz, V. G., Steckel, J. H., & Gupta, A. (2007). When do purchase in-
tentions predict sales? *International Journal of Forecasting, 23*(3),
347-364.

Mutlu, H. M., Çeviker, A., & Çirkin, Z. (2011). Tüketici etnosentrizmi ve
yabancı ürün satın alma niyeti: türkiye ve suriye üzerine karşılaştır-
malı analiz. *Sosyoekonomi, 14*(1), 52-73.

Nascimento, J. (2019). *Understanding the role of influencers' credibility in social media and its impact on consumers' purchase intentions.* (Unpublished PhD Thesis). Universidade Católica Portuguesa.

Nunnally, J. C., & Bernstein, I. H. (1994). *Psychometric theory.* (3, Ed.) New York: McGraw Hill.

Ohanian, R. (1990). Construction and validation of a scale to measure celebrity endorsers' perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. *Journal of Advertising, 19*(3), 39-52.

Ohanian, R. (1991). The impact of celebrity spokespersons' perceived image on consumers' intention to purchase. *Journal of Advertising Research, 31*(1), 46-54.

O'Reilly, K., & Marx, S. (2011). How young, technical consumers assess online wom credibility. *Qualitative Market Research, 14*(4), 330-359.

Park, D. H., Lee, J., & Han, I. (2007). The effect of on-line consumer reviews on consumer purchasing intention: the moderating role of involvement. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 125-148.

Pornpitakpan, C. (2004). The effect of celebrity endorsers' perceived credibility on product purchase intention. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 55-74.

Power , J., Whelan, S., & Davies, G. (2008). The attractiveness and connectedness of ruthless brands: the role of trust. *European Journal of Marketing, 42*(5/6), 586-602.

Price, L. L., & Feick, L. F. (1984). The role of interpersonal sources in external search: an informational perspectıve. *Advances in Consumer Research, 11*(1), 250-255.

Reichheld, F. F., & Schefter, P. (2000). E-loyalty: your secret weapon on the web. *Harvard business review, 78*(4), 105-113.

Saravanakumar, M., & SuganthaLakshmi, T. (2012). Social media marketing. *Life Science Journal, 9*(4), 4444-4451.

Saxena, A. (2011). Blogs and their impact on purchase intention : a structural equation modelling approach. *Paradigm, 15*(1-2), 102-110.

Schiffman, L. G., & Wisenblit, J. (2015). *Consumer behavior.* Boston: Pearson.

Seno, D., & Lukas, B. A. (2007). The equity effect of product endorsement by celebrities: a conceptual framework from a co-branding perspective. *European Journal of Marketing, 41*(1/2), 121-134.

Shamli, M. (2019). *The moderator role of sponsorship disclosure on the effect of source credibility of influencers on brand trust and purchase intention.* (Unpublished Master Thesis). Marmara University, İstanbul, Turkey.

Social Blade. (2020). *Top 100 most followed instagram business / creator accounts (sorted by followers count)*. https://socialblade.com/instagram/top/100/followers (Retrieved: 01.05.2020).

Sokolova, K., & Kefi, H. (2020). Instagram and youtube bloggers promote it, why should i buy? how credibility and parasocial interaction influence purchase intentions. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 53*.

Spears, N., & Singh, S. N. (2004). Measuring attitude toward the brand and purchase intentions. *Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising, 26*(2), 53-66.

Şimşek, S., & Uğur, I. (2003). Star stratejisi ve uygulamaları. *Selçuk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi, 10*, 349-358.

Turgut, E., Akyol, A., & Giray, S. (2016). Consumer perceptions with purchase intention and word of mouth relation in social media advertising. *Journal of Life Economics, 3*(2), 55-73.

Türkmen, M., Pirtini, S., Bayraktar, A., & Bilgen, İ. (2016). Kurumsal sosyal sorumluluğun tüketicilerin satın alma niyeti ile ilişkisi üzerine bir araştırma. *Öneri Dergisi, 12(45)*, 375-392.

Tseng, S., & Fogg, B. J. (1999). Credibility and computing technology. *Communications of the ACM, 42*(5), 39-44.

Watts, D. J., & Dodds, P. S. (2007). Influentials, networks, and public opinion formation. *Journal of Consumer Research, 34*(4), 441-458.

Weiner, Y. (2018, April 9). *75 prominent influencers share their top advice on how to become an influencer*. Retrieved April 26, 2020, from medium.com: https://medium.com/thrive-global/75-prominent-influencers-share-their-top-advice-on-how-to-become-an-influencer-1ebbe31abbb4

Özeltürkay, E. Y., Bozyiğit, S., & Gülmez, M. (2017). Determining the buying behaviours of the consumers shopping from the instagram: an exploratory study. *Marmara Üniversitesi Öneri Dergisi, 12*(48), 175-198.

Yolaçan, Z. B., & Özeltürkay, E. Y. (2018). Televizyon reklamlarında ünlü kullanımı: kaynağın çekiciliği, güvenilirliği ve uzmanlığının bireylerin davranışsal niyetleri (olumlu aap ve marka bağlılığı) üzerind etkisi. *Pazarlama Teorisi ve Uygulamaları Dergisi, 4*(2), 231-252.

Zha, X., Yang, H., Yan, Y., Liu, K., & Huang, C. (2018). Exploring the effect of social media information quality, source credibility and reputation on informational fit-to-task: moderating role of focused immersion. *Computers in Human Behavior, 79*, 227-237.

Appendix. Questionnaire Items

Influencer Credibility (IC): Sub-dimensions of influencer credibility scale are attractiveness (ICA), trustworthiness (ICT), and expertise (ICE).

ICA1. The influencer I follow is attractive.

ICA2. The influencer I follow is classy.

ICA3. The influencer I follow is beautiful.

ICA4. The influencer I follow is elegant.

ICA5. The influencer I follow is sexy.

ICT1. The influencer I follow is dependable.

ICT2. The influencer I follow is honest.

ICT3. The influencer I follow is reliable.

ICT4. The influencer I follow is sincere.

ICT5. The influencer I follow is trustworthy.

ICE1. The influencer I follow is expert.

ICE2. The influencer I follow is experienced.

ICE3. The influencer I follow is knowledgeable.

ICE4. The influencer I follow is qualified.

ICE5. The influencer I follow is skilled.

Brand Trust (BT)

BT1. I believe in brand(s) promoted by the influencer.

BT2. Brand(s) promoted by the influencer are safe.

BT3. Brand(s) promoted by the influencer are honest.

BT4. Brand(s) promoted by the influencer are reliable.

Purchase Intention (PI)

PI1. Given a chance in the future, I predict that I would consider purchasing brands/products that are promoted by the influencer on Instagram.

PI2. I will likely purchase brands/products that are promoted by the influencer on Instagram in the near future.

PI3. Given the opportunity, I intend to purchase brands/products that are promoted by the influencer on Instagram.

PI4. I intend to consider brands/products that are promoted by the influencer on Instagram in my future purchases.

Genişletilmiş Özet

Etkileyici Kişi Güvenilirliği, Marka Güveni ve Satın Alma Niyeti Arasındaki İlişki: Instagram Örneği

Giriş

Hızla ilerleyen teknolojik gelişmeler, bireylerin yaşam tarzlarını, birbirleriyle olan ilişkilerini, sosyalleşme süreçlerini ve çevre ile etkileşimlerini hızlı bir şekilde değiştirdi ve bu gelişmeler, mobil iletişim araçları ve internetin birleşimi ile birlikte insanlar arasında sosyal ağlar aracılığıyla birlikte bilgi paylaşımına olanak sağladı (Karagülle ve Çaycı, 2014).

Sosyal medya, kullanıcıların konum ve zaman gibi sınırlamalar olmaksızın düşüncelerini paylaşmalarına (Bulunmaz, 2011) ve çevrimiçi topluluklar oluşturmalarına (Akar, 2018) olanak tanıyan geniş tabanlı etkileşimli platformlar olarak tanımlanabilir (Bulunmaz, 2011). Kemp (2020) tarafından paylaşılan verilere göre dünya nüfusunun %49'u sosyal medya kullanıcısıyken, Türkiye'de bu oran %64'lara çıkmaktadır. Sosyal medya kullanıcı sayısının yüksek olması ve sosyal medya platformlarında üretilen herhangi bir içeriğin çok hızlı bir şekilde çok sayıda kullanıcıya ulaşabilmesi işletmelerin pazarlama stratejilerinde sosyal medyanın önemini artırmaktadır.

Bu çalışmada Türkiye'deki popüler sosyal medya platformlarından biri olan Instagram'daki etkileyici kişiler ele alınmaktadır. Bu etkileyici kişilerin güvenilirliğinin, marka güveni ve satın alma niyetine etkisi ile marka güveninin, etkileyici kişi güvenilirliği ve satın alma niyeti arasındaki aracılık etkisi yapısal eşitlik modellemesi ile araştırılmıştır. Ayrıca etkileyici kişilerin tanıtım yaptığı ürün kategorileri bazında yapısal modeldeki değişimler incelenmiştir.

Instagram ve Pazarlama

Instagram dünyada 1 milyarı aşkın (Ediz, 2019), Türkiye'de ise 44 milyonu aşkın kullanıcısı sayısıyla (Kemp, 2020) yaygın olarak kullanılan sosyal medya platformları arasında yer almaktadır. Instagram, işletmeler için hem etkili bir pazarlama kanalı hem de diğer reklam platformlarına göre daha düşük maliyetli bir reklam platformudur (Özeltürkay vd., 2017). Instagram aracılığıyla mevcut müşterilerle ilişkiler güçlendirilebilir ve yeni müşterilere ulaşılabilir (Instagram, 2020a). Dahası işletmeler, paylaşımlarını yüksek etkileşim oranlarına sa-

hip topluluklarla paylaşarak bilinirlik yaratabilir ya da mevcut bilinirliklerini artırabilirler (Instagram, 2020b).

Sosyal Medyada Etkileyici Kişi Kavramı ve Etkileyici Kişi Güvenilirliği

Markaların pazarlama stratejilerinden biri, sosyal medya platformlarını aktif olarak kullanan popüler kullanıcılarla iş birliği yapmaktır (Benson, 2020). Sosyal medyanın yarattığı yeni bir ünlü türü olan mikro ünlüler (Khamis vd., 2017), genellikle viral internet aracılığıyla popülerlik kazanan kişiler olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Marwick ve Boyd, 2011). Etkileyici kişi olarak da adlandırılan bu popüler kullanıcıların çok sayıda takipçisi vardır (Lou ve Yuan, 2019) ve insanların görüşlerini (Enge, 2012), tutumlarını, kararlarını ve davranışlarını etkileme yeteneğine sahiptirler (Watts ve Dodds, 2007). Youtube ve Twitter gibi çeşitli sosyal medya platformlarında da yer alan mikro ünlülerin genellikle öne çıktığı platform ise Instagram'dır (Djafarova ve Trofimenko, 2019). İşletmeler, Instagram'daki etkileyici kişilerle iş birliği yaparak ulaşılması zor kitlelere kolayca ulaşabilir ve ürünlerini tanıtabilirler (Benson, 2020).

Markalar, birlikte çalışmak istedikleri etkileyici kişilerde genellikle güvenilirlik ve samimiyet imajı ararlar (De Veirman vd., 2017) çünkü tüketiciler sosyal medyadaki etkileyici kişilere neredeyse arkadaşlarına güvendikleri kadar güvenmektedirler (Lou ve Yuan, 2019). Bu nedenle, firmaların iş birliği yapacakları etkileyici kişilerin seçiminde bu kişilerin güvenilirlikleri önemli bir unsur olarak görülmektedir.

Ohanian (1990) kaynak güvenilirliği kavramını, bir mesajı gönderen kaynağın o mesajın alıcısının mesajı kabulünü etkileyen pozitif özellikleri olarak tanımlamıştır ve kaynak güvenilirliğinin alt boyutlarını uzmanlık (expertise), güvenilirlik (trustworthiness) ve çekicilik (attractiveness) olarak belirlemiştir. Uzmanlık "bir ürün ya da ürün kategorisi hakkında deneyim ve bilgi sahibi olmak" olarak tanımlanabilir (Zha vd., 2018). Alıcının iletilen mesajı kabul etme derecesi ise güvenilirlik olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Ohanian, 1990). Çekicilik ise ilk izlenimin önemli bir yönü olarak düşünülebilir (Ohanian, 1990). Moda, kozmetik vb. bazı sektörlerde çekicilik fiziksel çekicilik olarak yorumlanmaktadır (Djafarova ve Trofimenko, 2019). Sosyal medyada ise çekicilik, fiziksel çekicilikten ziyade sosyal çekicilik olarak yorumlanmaktadır ve etkileyici kişilere ait sosyal medya hesaplarında kendilerine ait bir fiziksel görsel paylaşımları bulunmasa bile bu kişilerin çekici olarak kabul edildiği tespit edilmiştir (Edwards vd., 2013).

Literatürdeki bazı çalışmalar, etkileyici kişilerin güvenilirliğinin tüketici satın alma niyeti, marka güveni veya her ikisi üzerinde de olumlu bir etkiye sahip olduğunu göstermiştir (Ishani, 2015; Eru vd., 2018; Shamli, 2019; Nascimento, 2019; Sokolova ve Kefi, 2020).

Marka Güveni

Güven, sosyal ilişkiler için önemli bir faktördür ve insanlar arasındaki herhangi bir etkileşimde en azından temel düzeyde güvene ihtiyaç vardır (Gopichandran ve Chetlapalli, 2013) ve güven, tüketici ile marka arasında güçlü bir ilişki kurmada şirketler için de gereklidir (Elliott ve Yannopoulou, 2007; Power vd., 2008). Tüketicilerin kararsız kaldıklarında ya da kendilerini savunmasız hissettiklerinde güven daha da önem kazanmakta ve belirsizliği azaltmaktadır (Chaudhuri ve Holbrook, 2001).

İnternet ve özellikle sosyal medya, müşterilerin markaya karşı güvenini kazanmak için önemli kanallar arasındadır (Reichheld ve Schefter, 2000) ve sosyal medyada güven oluşturmak markalar için önemli bir rekabet avantajı sağlayabilmektedir (Hacıefendioğlu ve Fırat, 2014). Marka ile tüketici arasında sosyal medya aracılığıyla gerçekleştirilen şeffaf ve dürüst etkileşimler, markaya karşı güven duygusunu artıracak ve aynı zamanda sadık bir müşteri topluluğunun oluşumuna aracılık edecektir (Brown, 2010).

Satın Alma Niyeti

Tüketicilerin satın alma niyetlerini oluşturmak veya arttırmak için kullanılan geleneksel medya araçları (TV gibi) popülerliklerini teknolojik araçlarla tüketicilerin yaşamlarına entegre olan sosyal medya araçlarına bırakmaktadır (O'Reilly ve Marx, 2011). Çevrimiçi platformlarda pazarlama; bilgi, deneyim ve düşüncelerin paylaşılmasına dayanmaktadır (Turgut vd., 2016). Tüketiciler bir satın alma kararı vermeden önce sosyal medyada tavsiye aramaktadırlar (Hsu vd., 2013). Bu nedenle, sosyal medyadaki reklamlar tüketicinin dikkatini çekebilir ve onları ürünü veya hizmeti kontrol etmeye teşvik edebilir; bu da bir satın alma niyeti oluşturabilir (Alnsour ve diğerleri, 2018).

Tüketiciler, markaların oluşturduğu bilgilere şüpheyle yaklaştıklarını belirtirken, güvenilir kaynaklardan elde edilen bilgilerin şüphe riskini azalttığını ve satın almayı artırdığını belirtmektedir (Bambauer-Sachse ve Mangold, 2013). Bu nedenle, satın alma kararlarını etkilemek için, markaların pazarlama mesajlarını iletirken bilgi kaynağı olarak güvenilir etkileyicileri kullanmaları iyi bir tercihtir.

Metodoloji

Ohanian (1991) ve Pornpitakpan (2004) tarafından yapılan araştırmalarda ünlülerin güvenilirliğinin satın alma niyetine olumlu etkileri olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Eru vd. (2018) tarafından yürütülen çalışmada ise kaynağın çekiciliğinin gençlerin satın alma niyetini etkilediği ortaya konulmuştur, bunun yanı sıra kaynak çekiciliği ve güvenilirliğinin marka güvenini de etkilediği belirtilmiştir. Shamli (2019) ise marka güveninin satın alma niyetini olumlu yönde etkilediğini belirtmiştir. Literatürdeki çalışmalar göz önünde bulundurularak bu çalışmanın ana hipotezleri şu şekilde belirlenmiştir:

H1: Etkileyici kişinin güvenilirliği satın alma niyetini olumlu yönde etkiler.

H2: Etkileyici kişinin güvenilirliği marka güvenini olumlu yönde etkiler.

H3: Marka güveni, satın alma niyetini olumlu yönde etkiler.

H4: Marka güveni, etkileyici kişinin güvenilirliği ile satın alma niyeti arasındaki ilişkide aracılık etkisine sahiptir.

Belirtilen hipotezlere ek olarak, araştırma modelinin etkileyici kişiler tarafından tanıtımı yapılan ürün kategorilerine göre farklılık gösterip göstermediği de test edilmiştir. Modelde test edilecek olan ürün kategorileri belirlenirken katılımcılara yöneltilen "Instagram'da en yakından takip ettiğiniz etkileyici kişi (Influencer) en çok hangi ürün kategorisinde tanıtım yapıyor?" sorusuna verilen cevaplarda öne çıkan (Kozmetik/Kişisel Bakım, n=123 ve Giyim/Aksesuar, n=102) kategoriler dikkate alınmıştır ve şu hipotezler belirlenmiştir:

H5: Etkileyici kişiler tarafından tanıtımı yapılan ürün kategorilerine göre ayrılan gruplar arasında anlamlı bir farklılık vardır.

H5$_a$: Etkileyici kişi güvenilirliğinin satın alma niyeti üzerindeki etkisi etkileyici kişi tarafından tanıtımı yapılan ürün kategorilerine göre ayrılan gruplar arasında farklılık gösterir.

H5$_b$: Etkileyici kişi güvenilirliğinin marka güveni üzerindeki etkisi etkileyici kişi tarafından tanıtımı yapılan ürün kategorilerine göre ayrılan gruplar arasında farklılık gösterir.

H5$_c$: Marka güveninin satın alma niyeti üzerindeki etkisi etkileyici kişilerin tanıttığı ürün kategorilerine göre ayrılan gruplar arasında farklılık gösterir.

Araştırma verileri, 01.01.2020 ve 31.05.2020 tarihleri arasında Google Formlar aracılığıyla Instagram'da etkileyici kişi(ler) takip eden 408 katılımcıdan elde

edilmiştir. Katılımcılara yöneltilen soru formunda yer alan araştırma değişkenlerine ait sorular ekte belirtilmiştir.

Bulgular

Yapılan analizler sonucunda, etkileyici kişilerin güvenilirliğinin hem marka güveni hem de satın alma niyeti üzerinde anlamlı ve pozitif etkisi bulunmuştur ve H1 ve H2 desteklenmiştir. Marka güveninin de satın alma niyeti üzerinde anlamlı ve pozitif etkisi bulunmuştur ve H3 desteklenmiştir. Ayrıca, marka güveninin, etkileyici kişi güvenilirliği ve satın alma niyeti arasındaki ilişkide aracılık etkisi olduğu tespit edilmiştir ve H4 desteklenmiştir.

Etkileyici kişiler tarafından tanıtımı yapılan iki önemli ürün kategorisi için öncelikle AMOS'ta çoklu grup analizi yapılmış ve iki grup arasında anlamlı bir farklılık olduğu saptanmıştır; dolayısıyla ve H5 genel olarak desteklenmiştir. Araştırma modelinin gruplar arasında farklılık gösterip göstermediğinin tespiti için model ki-kare fark testine tâbi tutulmuş ve gruplar arasında anlamlı farklılıklar bulunmuştur. Buna göre, etkileyici kişi güvenilirliğinin satın alma niyeti ve marka güveni üzerindeki etkisi ve marka güvenin satın alma niyeti üzerindeki etkisi; kozmetik/kişisel bakım kategorisinde giyim/aksesuar kategorisine göre daha yüksek olarak gözlemlenmiştir. Dolayısıyla $H5_a$, $H5_b$ ve $H5_c$ desteklenmiştir.

Tartışma, Sonuç ve Öneriler

Yapısal eşitlik modeli ile elde edilen sonuçlar, literatürde yer alan bulguları desteklemekte ve benzerlik göstermektedir. İlgili literatürde yer alan araştırmalara ait bazı sonuçlar ise şu şekildedir: YouTube ve Instagram'da güzellik kategorisinde paylaşım yapan etkileyici kişilerin güvenilirliği tüketicilerin satın alma niyetini etkilemektedir (Sokolova ve Kefi, 2020). Instagram'da yer alan etkileyici kişiler tarafından yapılan sponsorlu ürün/marka tanıtımları, tüketicilerin satın alma niyeti ve marka güveni üzerinde olumlu bir etkiye sahiptir (Shamli, 2019). YouTuber'ların çekiciliği tüketicilerin satın alma niyetini etkilemektedir; ayrıca bu çekicilik, YouTuber'lar tarafından tanıtılan markaya karşı güven oluşturmada da pozitif yönde bir etki göstermektedir. Aynı zamanda, marka güveni, YouTuber'ın çekiciliği ile satın alma niyeti arasındaki ilişkide aracılık etkisine sahiptir (Eru vd., 2018). Araştırmanın sonuçları ve literatürde yer alan bulgular bir arada değerlendirildiğinde, Instagram ve diğer sosyal medya platformlarındaki etkileyici kişilerin hem marka güveni oluşturmada hem de satın alma niyetini artırmada önemli bir etkiye sahip olduğu sonucuna varılmaktadır.

Bu etkileyici kişilerin güvenilir olarak algılanması da önemli bir faktör olarak dikkate alınmalıdır.

Bu araştırmanın bir diğer önemli bulgusu, "kozmetik/kişisel bakım" kategorisinde tanıtım yapan etkileyici kişilerin güvenilirliğinin satın alma niyeti ve marka güveni üzerindeki etkisinin "giyim/aksesuar" kategorisine kıyasla daha yüksek olmasıdır. Elde edilen sonuçlar, Nascimento'nun (2019) etkileyici kişinin güvenilirliğinin kozmetik ve güzellik ürünlerinde tüketicilerin satın alma niyetlerini olumlu yönde etkilediği sonucunu destekler niteliktedir. Buradan hareketle, özellikle kozmetik/kişisel bakım kategorisinde faaliyet gösteren işletmelerin etkileyici kişi pazarlamasından daha fazla fayda sağlayabileceğini söylemek mümkündür.

Bu araştırma, pazarlama amacıyla oldukça sık kullanılan Instagram platformunda yer alan etkileyici kişilerin güvenilirliğini araştıran sınırlı sayıdaki araştırmalardan birisidir ve bu nedenle akademik literatüre katkı sağlayacağı öngörülmektedir. Elde edilen sonuçlar, işletmeler açısından da önem taşımaktadır. Markalar, tüketiciler tarafından güvenilir olarak algılanan etkileyici kişilerle iş birlikleri yaparak hem markaya duyulan güveni hem de tüketicilerin satın alma niyetini pozitif yönde etkileyebilirler. Ek olarak, elde edilen sonuçlar kozmetik/kişisel bakım kategorilerinde ürün satan markaların bu iş birliklerinden daha fazla fayda sağlayabileceklerini önermektedir.

Sadece Instagram özelinde gerçekleştirilmiş olması bu çalışmanın sonuçlarının sosyal medya platformları açısından genellenebilirliğini kısıtlamaktadır. Gelecekteki çalışmalar farklı sosyal medya platformlarını ele alarak bu çalışmanın bulgularını test edebilir. Ayrıca, bu çalışmada incelenen ürün kategorilerinin dışındaki ürün kategorileri de yeni çalışmalarda ele alınabilir.