**THE EFFECT OF INFLUENCER
CREDIBILITY ON BRAND TRUST AND
PURCHASE INTENTION: A STUDY ON
INSTAGRAM**

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Master Thesis
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July, 2020
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MASTER THESIS

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AFYONKARAHİSAR 2020

OATH TEXT

I hereby declare that this master's thesis titled "The Effect of Influencer Credibility on Brand Trust and Purchase Intention: A Study on Instagram" has been written by myself according to academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that all materials benefited in this thesis consist of the mentioned resources in the reference list. I verify all these with my honor.

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ABSTRACT

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July, 2020

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The number of social media users and users' access to different social media platforms are increasing day by day. For this reason, social media platforms have an increasing importance in the marketing strategies of businesses. In 2019, Instagram was one of the commonly used social media platforms in Turkey with more than 38 million users. Like other social media platforms, Instagram also has influencers that have a lot of followers and these influencers can affect their followers. Influencers cooperate with businesses and carry out brand/product promotion activities on their social media accounts. In this study, the effect of influencers' credibility on brand trust and purchase intention is investigated. In addition, differences in purchase intention according to participants' demographic characteristics, Instagram usage habits and the product category that is promoted by the influencer, are examined. The data is obtained from 408 participants using an online questionnaire, SPSS and AMOS programs are used in the analysis of the collected data. The results reveal that influencers' credibility has a significant and positive effect on both brand trust and purchase intention. In addition, it is determined that brand trust has a mediation effect on the relationship between influencers' credibility and purchase intention. Lastly, it is found that consumers' demographic profile, Instagram usage habits and product categories that influencers promote has effects on purchase intention of consumers.

Keywords: Social media marketing, Instagram, influencer credibility, purchase intention, brand trust.

ÖZET

ETKİLEYİCİ KİŞİ (INFLUENCER) GÜVENİLİRLİĞİNİN MARKA GÜVENİ VE SATIN ALMA NİYETİNE ETKISI: INSTAGRAM ÜZERİNE BİR ÇALIŞMA

Umut KEMEÇ

AFYON KOCATEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İŞLETME (İNGİLİZCE) ANABİLİM DALI

Temmuz, 2020

Danışman: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Hale Fulya YÜKSEL

Sosyal medya kullanıcılarının sayısı ve kullanıcıların farklı sosyal medya platformlarına erişimi her geçen gün artmaktadır. Bu nedenle, sosyal medya platformları işletmelerin pazarlama stratejilerinde artan bir öneme sahiptir. Instagram, 2019 yılında 38 milyondan fazla kullanıcısıyla Türkiye'de yaygın olarak kullanılan sosyal medya platformlarından birisidir. Diğer sosyal medya platformlarında olduğu gibi Instagram'da da çok sayıda takipçisi olan etkileyici kişiler (influencers) bulunmaktadır ve bu etkileyici kişiler takipçilerini etkileyebilmektedirler. Etkileyici kişiler işletmelerle iş birliği yaparak kendi sosyal medya hesapları üzerinden marka/ürün tanıtımı faaliyetleri gerçekleştirmektedirler. Bu çalışmada, etkileyici kişilerin güvenilirliğinin, satın alma niyeti ve marka güveni üzerindeki etkisi incelenmiştir. Ayrıca katılımcıların demografik özelliklerine, Instagram kullanım alışkanlıklarına ve etkileyici kişinin tanıtım yaptığı ürün kategorisine göre satın alma niyetlerinde anlamlı farklılıkların olup olmadığı da incelenmiştir. Veriler 408 katılımcıdan online anket yöntemi kullanılarak elde edilmiştir. Toplanan verilerin ve yapısal eşitlik modelinin analizinde SPSS ve AMOS programları kullanılmıştır. Yapılan analizler sonucunda, etkileyici kişilerin güvenilirliğinin hem marka güveni hem de satın alma niyeti üzerinde anlamlı ve pozitif etkisi bulunmuştur. Ayrıca, marka güveninin, etkileyici kişi güvenilirliği ve satın alma niyeti arasındaki ilişkide aracılık etkisi olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Son olarak, tüketicilerin demografik özelliklerinin, Instagram kullanım alışkanlarının ve etkileyici kişiler tarafından tanıtımı yapılan ürün kategorilerinin satın alma niyeti üzerinde etkilerinin olduğu bulunmuştur.

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

%: Percentage
AGFI: Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index
AMOS: Analysis of Moment Structures
AR: Augmented Reality
AVE: Average Variance Extracted
avg: Average
BI: Behavioral Intention
BT: Brand Trust
CFA: Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI: Comparative Fit Index
CR: Composite Reliability
EFA: Exploratory Factor Analysis
e-WOM: Electronic Word-Of-Mouth Marketing
GFI: Goodness of Fit Index
IC: Influencer Credibility
NFI: Normed Fit Index
PI: Purchase Intention
RMR: Root Mean Square Residuals
RMSEA: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SEM: Structural Equation Model
SMEs: Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
SMM: Social Media Marketing
SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TPB: Theory of Planned Behavior
TRA: Theory of Reasoned Action
UGC: User-Generated Content
VR: Virtual Reality
WWW: World Wide Web

INTRODUCTION

Social networks formed as a result of computer-based systems' development have caused the traditional media to lose its power over time. The resulting social media channels have been an indispensable part of a large section of society, and these channels have the potential to change the world and Turkey's agenda at a time (Kırık, 2017). 48% of the world's population was social media users in 2019 (Clement, 2019; 2020a; 2020c), and social media platforms have been the focus of businesses determining their marketing strategies with the increasing number of social media users; because any content produced through social media platforms is rapidly spreading and reaching potential buyers. According to data that was shared by Kemp (2020b), in 2019 Instagram was the top social media platform in Turkey with 38 million users.

Marketers want to reach social media users and interact with them. To achieve this, they use various marketing strategies. One of brands' marketing strategies is to cooperate with popular users who actively use social media platforms. These popular users, called influencers, have a large number of followers and have the ability to influence these followers behaviorally. The concept of influencer is not new, it has been used in traditional marketing campaigns for many years. Being a popular social media platform, Instagram has many influencers which are specialists in fields such as fashion, sports, health, cosmetics, etc. Today, many consumers care about influencers' ideas and benefit from their opinions before purchasing. According to the data of Social Blade (2020), C. Ronaldo is the Instagram user with the most followers on the platform, with nearly 216 million followers in 2019. Businesses pay one million dollars for each post shared by C.Ronaldo's Instagram account, and his annual revenue from his collaborations through Instagram is 47 million dollars. The famous football player gained 65 million dollars annually as a footballer, and he has income almost close to his occupation from his collaborations on Instagram. According to data of Guttmann, (2019), while the global budget of influencer marketing in 2017 was 800 million dollars, it has more than doubled in 2019, reaching 1.7 million dollars. This result shows the importance of influencer marketing for brands.

In the literature, the effects of the influencers' credibility on various variables were examined. Eru et al. (2018) examined the effect of YouTubers' credibility and brand trust on young consumers' purchase intention and they stated that sub-dimensions of YouTubers' credibility affects 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 credibility of influencers sharing in the beauty category on YouTube and Instagram affects consumers' purchase intention. In these studies, the effect of YouTubers or influencers on the purchase intention and brand trust has been examined. In light of the literature's studies, in this study, the effect of influencers' credibility on purchase intention and brand trust is investigated using a structural equation model. Moreover, the mediation effect of brand trust in the relationship between influencers' credibility and purchase intention is examined. Instagram accounts with a large number of followers on Instagram are considered as influencers and consumers who actively use Instagram and follow influencers on this platform are chosen for the study.

This thesis consists of three main sections. In the first part, the history of the Web, the concept of social media and types of social media platforms, social media marketing, Instagram and Instagram marketing are explained.

In the second part, the variables of the study are explained. These variables are as follows; influencer credibility, purchase intention, and brand trust. The part starts with describing the concept of the influencer, influencer marketing, and influencer credibility. Then, consumer behavior, purchase process, the concepts of purchase intention, and brand trust are examined. Factors affecting the purchase intention and brand trust are tried to be explained as well.

In the last section, the research model is examined to explain the effect of influencers' credibility on brand trust and purchase intention. Also, the mediation effect of brand trust is examined in the relationship between influencers' credibility and purchase intention. The model is retested according to the product categories promoted by the influencers to see if there are differences in the structural relationships. Afterwards, t-test and One-Way ANOVA are conducted to investigate the differences in purchase intentions according to the demographic and Instagram usage profiles of the participants. Finally, research findings are interpreted and discussed with relevant literature; and suggestions for businesses and marketers are presented as well as future research possibilities. It is believed that this study will contribute to the academic literature theoretically and also to the businesses in practice.

<center>**FIRST PART**</center>

<center>**SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING**</center>

1. HISTORY OF WEB

The foundations of the internet, whose ideas were put forward in the 1960s, are based on the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency. In 1969, ARPANET had been activated, which connected the main computers at only four different universities (Kahraman, 2014). There was no doubt that the internet was the most important invention in the 1980s. After that invention, the information era started, and the world began to change quickly, especially for communication (Aziz, 2008).

Internet and the Web, which are used as words with the same content by users, are different technologies. While the internet is a communication infrastructure formed by the combination of networks, the Web has its markup language (HTML) and protocol (HTTP), etc. Also, it is an information tool working with internal technologies (World Wide Web Foundation, 2020). Tim Berners-Lee put forward the idea of the "World Wide Web", and established the foundations of the internet system with text, images, and other multimedia content that users can access through a Web browser (Moens et al., 2014). The World Wide Web, or commonly known as the Web, was invented in 1989 by British computer scientist Tim Berners-Lee. Berners-Lee's dream was creating a common knowledge space where people can communicate by sharing information, and this dream played a significant role in the emergence of the internet (World Wide Web Foundation, 2020). In 1991, the www (World Wide Web) protocol was founded by CERN Institute in Switzerland, which people still use today (Kahraman, 2014). The Web was firstly used in a limited environment among scientists and then it opened to the outside world in time and reached the masses. The Web is a global information technology system and has become a platform where commercial transactions were realized by entrepreneurs gaining the status of an area to be invested in (World Wide Web Foundation, 2020).

Since 1993, the internet has begun to increase its penetration rapidly with the emergence of graphical browsers. With the introduction of many service providers in 1995, the information era began in people's lives (Kahraman, 2014)).

Only 16,81% of the world population was internet users in 2005; in 2010, 29,24% of the world population was internet users; this rate increased to 41,46% in 2015. By 2020, this rate reached 58,28%, that is, more than half of the world population is accessing

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and using the internet today (Plecher, 2019; Clement, 2020a). In January of 2020, the number of internet users was more than sixty-two million in Turkey, which was 74% of the population of Turkey (Kemp, 2020b). Given this information, it can be said that the percentage of internet users to the population in Turkey was a lot more than the worldwide average.

With the Internet, geographical and temporal boundaries have disappeared, and content has begun to be moved to the internet platform with Web 1.0 (Cıngı, 2015). The first generation of the Web (Web 1.0) was intended only to provide static pages of content. So, Web 1.0 only allowed users to search and read information. User interaction or content contribution was very little. Web 1.0, used between 1989 and 2005, was the Web's first implementation (Choudhury, 2014).

At a conference organized by MediaLive and O'Reilly companies, Web 2.0 concept was introduced to the life of people in 2004. Web 2.0 was named as the second-generation Web concept, and the gurus of internet platforms wanted to put a common name to new trends on the Web. The new term of the internet cared about content more than design. Internet users began to be more active and effective on the internet with forums, blogs, data sharing programs. Web 2.0 created its own famous people (Kaymak, 2006).

Social softwares, which came out with Web 2.0 and which are essential components of Web 2.0, are based on Licklider's thoughts in the 1960s (Alexander, 2006). Licklider has defined his thought, which is called the "Galactic Network", as a system consisting of computers that are interconnected globally and allowing people to access data and programs at any time. That concept is the same as today's internet concept (Moens, Li, & Chua, 2014).

Tim O'Reilly defined eight design patterns of Web 2.0 as follows (O'Reilly, 2005):

- Harnessing collective intelligence.
- Data as the next 'Intel Inside.'
- Innovation in assembly.
- Rich user experiences.
- Software above a single device level.
- Perpetual beta.

- Leveraging the long tail.
- Lightweight software and business models and cost-effective scalability.

While explaining the differences between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0, O'Reilly tried to make it through the companies and sites that exist in both concepts. Some of them adapted themselves to Web 2.0 and continued, and others could not be adapted to Web 2.0, so new Websites replaced them. The features and examples that differ in both concepts are given in Table 1 (O'Reilly, 2005).

Table 1. *Differentiating Features and Examples of Web 1.0 and Web 2.0*

Web 1.0	Web 2.0
Double Click	Google AdSense
Ofoto	Flickr
Akami	BitTorrent
Mp3.com	Napster
Britannica Online	Wikipedia
Personal Websites	Blogging
Evite	Upcoming.org and EVDB
Domain name speculation	Search Engine Optimization
Page views	Cost per click
Screen scraping	Web services
Publishing	Participation
Content Management Systems	Wikis
Directories (taxonomy)	Tagging (folksonomy)
Stickiness	Syndication

Source: O'Reilly, (2015).

If we briefly evaluate the examples in Table 1, while DoubleClick is a company that provides digital marketing service and technology to advertisers on the Internet, it was purchased by Google in 2007 and started to use Web 2.0 applications more effectively. The name of DoubleClick was changed to Google AdSense. Another example reflected the Web 1.0 feature is Ofoto, a site for storing and printing digital photos. Ofoto has been replaced by Web 2.0, which allows digital images such as Flickr to be published on the Internet, and allows people to access these photos by searching with keywords (Güney, 2010). While Akamai is a service provider working to make it easier for users to access content on the internet, BitTorrent has created a content sharing system where each user is also a service provider. While Mp3.com, Britannica Online, and other personal Websites are only available for one-way searching, reading, or downloading information,

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Napster, Wikipedia, and blogs are examples of Web 2.0 applications that are both accessible and enable interaction with users. Sites such as upcoming.org, which can serve as both an event calendar and a social networking site, have been replaced by sites such as Evite, which allows the sending of invitations by entering user e-mail addresses. In Web 1.0, the focus was on keeping the names of the site memorable and users knowing these names. On the other hand, in Web 2.0, the focus is on the keywords that users will use in search engines rather than knowing the site name. Costs per click have replaced pageviews. Integrated Web services have also replaced screen scraping. Instead of one-way broadcasting, which is one of the most prominent features of Web 1.0, the participation of users comes to the fore in Web 2.0. Therefore, the fact that a certain person or institution manages the content has been replaced by the Wiki created by the users. Finally, instead of creating a directory in Web 2.0, the features of gathering and transmitting (syndicating) information from many places via RSS come into prominence instead of tagging based on the information received from the users and the data being connected to one place (O'Reilly, 2005).

Traditional media has been remodeled with the introduction of Web 2.0 technologies into our lives. With Web 2.0, everyone can create their content, regardless of the groups that hold the broadcast monopoly (Kahraman, 2014). Web 2.0, also known as "YouWeb," invites bloggers, music uploaders, critics, posters, private traders, video sharers, and everyone else to interact with and contribute to the virtual universe with their platforms controlled by users (Van Dijck, 2007). Web 2.0 caused the emergence of social media (Berthon et al., 2012). Web 2.0 helped to create social software programs and provided social media programs; which are used by people today (Alexander, 2006). In the next sections of the study, the concept of "social media" which has emerged with Web 2.0 will be discussed in detail.

With the development of cloud technology, many electronic devices have now integrated into the Web, and the transition process to Web 3.0 has emerged. Web 3.0 has led to a more interactive internet by interacting between all devices and services connected to the internet (Cıngı, 2015). Web 3.0 is called as the "Semantic Web". The Semantic Web's purpose is to manage all the information that is collected on the Web automatically via computers. So, computers can offer the most appropriate answers to users by executing complex queries thanks to the contents marked with keywords (Yağcı, 2011).

The Web generation that comes after Web 3.0 is Web 4.0 (Akar, 2018). Web 4.0, also called the symbiotic Web, expresses common interactions between people and machines (Aghaei et al., 2012). The symbiotic relationship between humans and machines is the reason behind Web 4.0. There are still some unknowns due to the fact that this generation is new (Akar, 2018). With Web 4.0, machines will become even smarter, can read, make sense of the content on the Web, decide on the appropriate content, and offer them with higher quality and performance. In Web 4.0, which is also described as WebOS, the internet will operate as an operating system and will be able to easily perform any operation that the user wants to do without the need for computer programs (Aghaei et al., 2012). Applications using Web 4.0 technology have just begun to be released to the market and are expected to be widely used by people (Yüksel, 2016).

2. CONCEPT OF THE SOCIAL MEDIA

Web 2.0 concept is started using in 2004 by software developers and end-users. Web 2.0 is a platform where content and applications are momentarily changed continuously by all users in a participatory and collaborative manner. Personal Web pages, Encyclopedia Britannica Online, and the idea of publishing content belongs to the Web 1.0 era whereas blogs, wikis, etc. belong to Web 2.0. There are essential functions required for Web 2.0 to work. Some of these are Adobe Flash, RSS, and AJAX. Web 2.0 is considered as a platform for the development of social media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Although social media generally does not have any accepted definition, Web 2.0 and social media concepts are usually used interchangeably in the literature. A broader definition of social media is Websites that enable more social interaction, community building, and collaboration projects built on Web 2.0 technologies (Akar, 2018). With the new technological possibilities, it has become easier for people to communicate and express themselves on the Internet. The phrase participative Web is often used to describe this new situation. The Participative Web represents an internet environment that includes smart technologies based on new technologies and in which users contribute more both in terms of creating, rating and distributing internet content, and developing and customizing internet applications (Wunsch-Vincent & Vicker, 2007). Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis from Duke University, had created Usenet which allowed Internet users to post public messages. The meaning of the social media era's foundations was laid with Open

Diary, which was founded by Bruce and Susan Abelson. The site brought together writers of the diary into one community. At the same time, word of "Weblog" did entry to people's lives, one-year later Weblog transformed to blog because of one blogger facetiously transformed the "Weblog" into the sentence "we blog". Increasing availability has further increased the popularity of high-speed Internet access, and this has led to the creation of social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook. These created the term 'social media' (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). With social media, people had the opportunity to express their opinions on news, articles, posts, or developments, and this is one of the most critical aspects of social media that differs from traditional media (Bulunmaz, 2011).

Social media can be defined as a broad-based interactive platform that allows users to share their thoughts and viewpoints without limitations such as location and time (Bulunmaz, 2011). When trying to understand the social media concept, two related concepts "Web 2.0" and "User Generated Content" should be considered. User-Generated Content (UGC) is defined as follows: First, "content made public on the Internet"; second, "a certain amount of creative effort" and third, "created outside of professional routines and applications". Based on this information, social media is built on the ideological and technological foundations of the Web 2.0 and is an internet-based application that allows content creation and exchange by UGCs (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

The development of computer-based systems has caused traditional media to lose power gradually. Social networks have become an indispensable part of life for a large part of society. As a result of that, social media has the potential and power to change the agenda of the world and Turkey in a moment (Kırık, 2017). The number of Internet users has reached four billion five hundred and forty million people in 2019, and three billion eight hundred million of these people were active social media users. This number corresponds to 48% of world population in 2019 (Clement, 2019; 2020a; 2020c).

2.1. PLATFORMS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Rapidly advancing technological developments quickly changed individuals' lifestyles, relationships with each other, their communication, socialization processes, and their interactions with the environment. These developments enabled the sharing of information between people in different ways. The combination of mobile communication with the internet has led to the acquisition of information anywhere in the world, regardless of the location. Increasing the use of social networks in this process brought the transmission of communication through these channels (Karagülle & Çaycı, 2014). Social media mostly offers three types of events: directed interaction, information streaming, and content consumption (Yang & Lee, 2020).

Users are approaching different social media platforms for their various needs (Wang et al., 2015), and using different social media platforms has become increasingly common (Duggan et al., 2015). Whiting and Williams (2013) define the purpose and satisfaction of people using social media with ten factors. These are; social interaction, information seeking, passing time, entertainment, relaxation, communicatory utility, convenience utility, expression of opinion, information sharing, surveillance, and knowledge about others (Whiting & Williams, 2013). Because user-generated content is uploaded to the internet to share with others, it creates a platform that includes both participation and discussion functions. There are people who actively produce content in this platform, as well as those who passively view, comment, and sometimes respond by messaging (Waldron, 2013).

There are many social media platforms, each with different features, where consumers can share their own created content. According to the most general classification, these are; online social networks, wikis, social bookmarking sites, blogs, microblogs, forums, media sharing sites and virtual worlds (Yüksel, 2016). Also, social media continues its development with technologies such as virtual reality and augmented reality (Kane, 2017).

2.1.1. Online Social Networks

Social networking sites are Websites to create a connection and allow communication between two or more users (Junco & Cole-Avent, 2008). Social networks enable users to connect with people they know in their real life and people they do not know in their real life. While such interactions are difficult to take place in another

environment, social networking makes this possible (Haythornthwaite, 2005). These sites are used generally as sharing platforms about activities, interests, or characteristics by users. Users are named as a friend on social networking sites by other users. These online platforms allow users to share private messages or photos, and tag friends to photos on the profile or site (Junco & Cole-Avent, 2008). Online social networks are Web-based services where users can create public or semi-public profiles, share links with other users, and create a list of other users (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

The first online social networking site was founded in 1997 under the name SixDegrees.com (Onat & Aşman Alikılıç, 2008). SixDegrees.com was established to find friends. According to the historical ranking, in the following years, many social networks have been established that serve different purposes such as Ryze.com, LinkedIn, Friendster, and MySpace (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Today, Facebook is one of the most popular online social networks. Mark Zuckerberg, Dustin Moskovitz, Chris Hughes and Eduardo Saverin launched thefacebook.com on February 4, 2004, and Facebook reached 1 million users on December 1, 2014. On September 20, 2005, "the" is dropped from thefacebook.com, and it became Facebook. On February 9, 2009, the Like button was started to be used on Facebook. Five hundred million active users were reached on July 21, 2010. On August 24, 2015, the number of active users in one day reached one billion. According to the data of June 27, 2017, 2 billion people use Facebook every month. More than 100 billion messages are shared every day (Facebook, 2020b). As of the last quarter of 2019, the number of monthly active Facebook users worldwide was two billion, four hundred and ninety-eight million (Clement, 2020b). Facebook's mission is to empower people to form a community and bring the world together. People use Facebook to stay connected with their friends and families, discover what's going on in the world, and share and express what matters to them (Facebook, 2020a).

The main reasons why Facebook is the most popular social network in the world are; real identity feature, ease of use, continuous update, and privacy features offered to users. Users can completely block people they choose from their privacy settings from accessing their profile on Facebook. This is one of the factors that help maintain Facebook's member potential and increase the site's popularity. According to Zuckerberg, "While people want to access all the information around them, they want full control over

their own information. These two things don't match. However, Facebook solves this paradox problem with its control feature" (Durak & Özkul, 2015).

Facebook's ability to adapt and foresight is its main feature that makes it more strong than other social networks, allowing it to grow and become widespread in a short time. Facebook has been able to develop new applications and update itself according to the communication demands of the public, by closely monitoring user needs, developments in communication technology, and communication experiences created by the new media (Toprak et al., 2014).

2.1.2. Wikis

Wiki is a Hawaiian term meaning "fast". Using wikis, an online collaborative authoring tool, users can quickly create, edit, and collaborate using a simplified markup language (Abell, 2010). It can be said that Wikis are the least interesting in Turkey among all social media tools. Wikis are the pages that are created by the users, and a user can change the pages created by other users as desired. Offering encyclopedia services with its wiki structure, wikipedia.org is perhaps the most recognized and most widely used wiki in the world. With its 262 languages and more than 12 million titles, Wikipedia is considered as the largest source of information open to humanity in human history (Kahraman, 2014).

2.1.3. Social Bookmarking Sites

The term "social bookmarking" showed up with Delicious. Social bookmarking site can be considered as a good criterion for the measurement of the online effects of brands as well as providing a valuable service, especially for following the agenda and trends (Kahraman, 2014).

One of the purposes of social bookmarking is to facilitate access again to information for the benefit of users (Akar, 2018). Social bookmarking is a Web-based service where people can bookmark on the internet. Thanks to social bookmarking, users can share the internet resources they find useful on a Website that everyone can see, and can make classifications by tagging them with their own words (Bothma et al., 2008). Delicious is prominent social bookmarking site. Delicious has a million users and allows users to tag their content and find others' content. Users can share their bookmarks with everyone, as well as set them privately (Akar, 2018).

2.1.4. Blogs

The terms "Web log" or "Weblog" are used from time to time instead of blogs. John Barger first used the term Weblog in 1997 (Du & Wagner, 2006). Blogs are text-based platforms where users share details of their personal lives and feelings weekly or daily. Blogs have caused the "diary" phenomenon to reverse its meaning, and the confidentiality of diaries has been wholly removed from online networks. Friends can see and read each other's blogs. The blogger can add other blogs; these are blogger likes as a link to own blog (Prensky, 2004). Blogs are Websites that are changed continuously and are updated in reverse chronological order; meaning these are the Websites that are edited from the newly saved file to the old one and therefore it is always up to date (Akar, 2018).

2.1.5. Microblogs

Even when blogs were the most popular, it was difficult for many people to have a blog, write regularly, and read long articles as difficult as to write. Some daily developments for bloggers could be too short and insignificant to share on blogs. Therefore, Twitter emerged in 2006 to fill this gap in communication. Twitter originally allowed users to write what they were doing at the moment with 140 characters (Kahraman, 2014) and then the character limit was increased to 280 in November 2017 (Rosen, 2017). Also, a user can mention or respond to another user by typing the @ sign and any username after this sign. Conversations on Twitter are often not organized. A tag (#) is placed in front of a keyword to allow users to search for related topics or conversations that revolve around their interests (Taecharungroj, 2016).

Compared to blogs, microblogs meet the need to communicate faster. Microblogs encourage shorter posts, allowing users to spend less time and effort on content creation. Another difference between microblogs and blogs is the frequency of updating. On average, even a productive blogger updates own blog every few days; however, a microblogging user can do several updates in a day (Java et al., 2007).

2.1.6. Forums

Forums are places where different subject titles can be created, and information can be exchanged under these topics (Pitta & Fowler, 2005). The forums, which are platforms where users can exchange information about special topics and interests, are highly interactive and interesting areas (Odabaşı A. & Odabaşı, 2010). One of the members opens the topic of discussion on forums, and other members contribute with

their comments. However, only members can contribute to these discussions in the forum. Therefore, the participants must be registered to the system and become a member. Without registration, only the articles can be read, but the comments cannot be made (Safko & Brake, 2010). Also, forums have their own culture and rules. The posts in the forums are usually in the form of short text, but some forums allow uploading images. Users who share in the forums could have a score, and their shares are displayed along with their reputation points (Zarrella, 2009).

2.1.7. Media Sharing Sites

Media sharing sites are Web platforms that allow users to share content in various formats on the Internet, and these sites can be analyzed in four sections; photo, video, audio and document sharing sites, depending on the type of content shared (Yüksel, 2016; Akar, 2018). With the widespread use of digital cameras and the increase of content-sharing sites such as Flickr, users can publish their photos or videos online and share them with family, friends, colleagues, etc. While widely available as content-sharing sites, this widespread use raises privacy problems (Squicciarini et al., 2011). Flickr lost its long-time leadership to Instagram, which is a mobile sharing tool. Thanks to Instagram's special filters, it offered users the opportunity to share professional photos (Kahraman, 2014).

YouTube, the oldest and largest video sharing site, also allows users to upload, tag, identify, share, find, watch, and comment on videos (Akar, 2018). YouTube, which allows video sharing over the Internet, is perhaps the most famous Website of the Web 2.0. In addition, YouTube is one of the Websites that cause concepts such as User Generated Content (UGC) to be included in the spoken language. YouTube has succeeded in making frequent mention of itself as a search engine, as well as its success in video sharing and watching (Kahraman, 2014). Founded in February 2005 by three former PayPal employees, YouTube maintains its leadership and popularity in video sharing over the Web. YouTube, which was bought by Google in November 2006, has become the most popular sharing site where users can upload and watch videos. The platform also includes information on how many times videos are watched, the number of likes, comments, etc., to enable users to participate more actively in the process (Ata & Atik, 2016). According to 2019 statistics, YouTube has reached 2 billion users (Kemp, 2020a).

According to Akar (2018), podcasting is another type of media sharing which resembles audio and video blogs (Akar, 2018). The word podcast is derived by combining the words "iPod" and "broadcast", which originated in September 2004. It is a type of digital media where audio and video documents are shared by the membership method (Safko & Brake, 2010). Podcasts, which were first developed for the iPod product of Apple brand but can be used with different tools, are different from recording audio or video of a program or broadcast. It is used with atom feeds or RSS so that special software is tracked in each new tab and automatically transferred to databases (Sayımer, 2012).

2.1.8. Virtual Words, Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality

Virtual worlds allow multiple concurrent users to access virtual content, interact with virtual structures and tools, communicate with other participants and virtual characters, and participate in various forms of collaborative learning activities (Dede & Clarke, 2005). Virtual worlds have been created to gain lifelike experiences in a technological environment (Warburton, 2009). One of the applications that form the basis of virtual worlds is Maze War. This game, developed by Nasa in 1974, could be played with the connection between the two computers (Damer, 2008). Virtual worlds have features like three-dimensional graphics, animations, and communication methods including voice communication. These features let users create places and objects that other users can access (Partala, 2011). The virtual world has three basic components; the server infrastructure that host the virtual world, a program, or interface that will allow users to connect to the server, and virtual environment that users like to be in (Yıldırım, 2012).

Virtual Reality (VR), is a set of concepts and tools that try to provide the feeling of a virtual universe (Ürey & Akşit, 2018). VR is a potential and exciting area for social media. Facebook, who bought Oculus Rift technology, invested $ 2 billion to VR technology, which is showing the importance of VR. VR plays an important role in protecting and accessing users' interactions with the real world (Kane, 2017). VR technology, which contains content that is almost exactly like the real world or contains fantastic elements, transmits virtual information to the user through viewer helmets, glasses and accessory elements. VR equipment that transfers three-dimensional images to the user offers the user the opportunity to look around, walk and interact with the virtual elements in the artificial world (Brutzman, 2016).

Augmented Reality (AR) is a VR application where users interact via virtual objects with the real world without affecting the real world. In AR environments, virtual and real objects are combined and presented to users in harmony (Zhu et al., 2004). The effective, engaging and visual richness of AR made this technology applicable for different fields (İçten & Bal, 2017). AR, like Google Glass, Pokémon Go, or upcoming Microsoft HoloLens, offers a new technology by combining a perceived real world with a digital layer of information (Kane, 2017).

2.2. SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Social media marketing is a form of online advertising that uses the cultural context of social communities, such as social networks, virtual worlds, social news sites, and social idea-sharing sites, to achieve branding and communication goals (Tuten, 2008). Social media marketing is a concept that provides personal channels and tools for creating a user-based network and social interaction and provides meaning and relationship between brands and consumers (Chi, 2011).

According to Keller (2016), eight major marketing communication platforms are; advertising, sales promotion, events and experiences, public relations and publicity, online and social media marketing (SMM), mobile marketing, direct and database marketing, and personal selling. It is seen that social media marketing is considered as one of the marketing communication platforms (Chi, 2011). Social Media is a platform where the crowd's words are valid and companies have limited control over what they say. This may seem horrible, but an important market position can be created if it is learned how to influence this crowd (Evans, 2008).

Many organizations including businesses, non-profit organizations, and government agencies often use social media. Their goals in using social media are; marketing, public communication, or direct contact with customers and stakeholders (Evans & McKee, 2010). Although social media marketing is internet-based, it is similar to non-internet marketing methods such as word of mouth marketing. Social media marketing is a way of promoting a brand, business, or Website by attracting the attention of existing or potential customers/consumers through social media channels (Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi, 2012). Organizations also use social media to create engagement with consumers/customers (Evans & McKee, 2010).

Social media marketing offers purchase advice as well as increasing interaction and sharing of information among stakeholders about existing popular products and services. Also, it is the process of creating online marketing suggestions, providing communication and transportation through social media programs to create and maintain relations between stakeholders by generating word of mouth communication (Yadav & Rahman, 2017).

Since social media is an active and fast-moving platform, something that is current today may lose its timeliness tomorrow. Therefore, companies that will use social media should have a set of guidelines (Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi, 2012). Ten suggestions were made by Andreas M. Kaplan and Michael Haenlein for companies on how to use social media. They divided this series of tips into two sections, and these sections were prepared by taking into account the "social" and "media" component included in the concept of social media. It consists of five titles about being social and five titles about using the media. These suggestions are listed as below (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010);

Suggestions about "being social":

- *Be active*: When it is desired to establish a relationship with someone, it is recommended to take leadership and be active. Social media consists of sharing, and these posts lead to interaction. Therefore, it should always be ensured that the sharing is up to date and whether it interacts with customers.

- *Be interesting*: Nobody wants to communicate with anyone boring, and this should be accepted. Also, if businesses want to communicate with their customers, a reason should be given. To do this, a company should listen to its customers and learn what they want to hear and what they desire.

- *Being humble*: When joining any social media platform, the businesses shouldn't forget that it exists before they enter, and businesses should not think that they know how to use them better than those who use them and spend a lot of time. Also, time should be taken to explore these platforms, to learn their history and rules.

- *Don't be professional*: Another issue that applies to companies on social media is to avoid excessive professional content. Instead, it is necessary to try to catch harmony with users using those platforms and not to be afraid of making mistakes.

- *Be honest*: Finally, businesses should be honest and play according to the rules of the game.

Suggestions about "using media":

- *Choose carefully*: Companies should be actively involved wherever their customers are. Each social media app usually has and attracts groups of different characters.

- *Pick the application, or make your own*: Sometimes, joining an existing social media platform and taking advantage of its popularity and existing users may be the best way. Because there is no need to try to do something again, but sometimes the application needed may not exist. In this case, a new social network can be established, and collaboration with other companies can be done while these social networks are created.

- *Ensure activity alignment*: Sometimes, it may be decided to rely on various social media channels to reach or have enormous audiences. The important thing here is not to contradict the messages given in different channels.

- *Media plan integration*: The integration that is valid for the relationship between different social media channels is also crucial in the relationship between social media and traditional media. It can think of these two communication tools as separate channels, but in the eyes of customers, both are part of the corporate image.

- *Access for all*: Companies should check whether all their employees can access these applications when they decide to use social media applications. One of the options that can be applied to achieve this is to determine two groups in the organization: While the first group is social media managers, the second group should be limited as participants (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

In communication with the traditional media, the reaction is expected after the consumer's attention is drawn, and a message is transmitted. In social media marketing, unlike television advertising, it is aimed to establish relationships and create value by listening, understanding, and participating consumers without interruption (Gunelius, 2011).

"Advertising blindness" has become the biggest problem of marketers in today's world. Advertising blindness can be explained as follows: Consumer brains are directly

or indirectly exposed to the messages of many brands in everyday life and have developed a defense mechanism against it; as a result, consumers began to ignore these messages without noticing. As a solution to this, content marketing has entered our lives. This model, which is based on providing consumers with the content they consume instead of being overwhelmed with advertisements, is difficult to apply compared to classical ads, but thanks to its high effect, it continues to attract more and many brands. Producing content requires severe expertise and talent. While brands are dealing with the intensity of their other businesses, they face the danger of missing significant opportunities because they are not able to effectively carry out such a difficult, tiring, and time-consuming additional process. Therefore, brands can work with an expert agency in this regard (Kahraman, 2014).

The number of users of social media is increasing every passing day, which means more customers for businesses with social media marketing activities (Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi, 2012). 54% (4,54 billion) of the world population were internet users, and 49% (3,8 billion) were social media users in January 2020. Considering this information, 83% of the people who use the internet is also a social media user. According to data that was published by We Are Social and Hootsuite; in 2020, the percentage of people, aged between 16 and 64, who have discovered new brands and products through different channels are: 35% search engines, 34% ads on tv, 29% Word-of-Mouth recommendations, 27% advertisements in social media, 25% brand and products Websites, 25% ads on Websites, 25% tv shows or films, 24% retail Websites, 23% recommendations or comments on social media, 22% ads in mobile or tablet apps. According to the same data, the amount spent for advertising on these channels are (in U.S. dollars): Total digital ads 334 billion, on search ads 127.9 billion, social media ads 89.91 billion, digital banner ads 59.76 billion, digital video ads 35.24 billion, classified ads 21.23 billion (Kemp, 2020a).

In Turkey, these channels and rates are as follows: 43% search engines, 42% ads on tv, 40% advertisements in social media, 34% brand and products Websites, 33% ads in mobile or tablet apps, 33% Word-of-Mouth recommendations, 31% recommendations or comments on social media, 30% tv shows or films, 28% advertisements on Websites, 28% product brochures or catalogues. Information about the amounts spent for advertising on these channels are as follows (in U.S. dollars): Total digital ads 2,28

billion, on search ads 855 million, social media ads 424 million, digital banner ads 486 million, digital video ads 280 million, classified ads 230 million (Kemp, 2020b).

Considering the number of social media users and advertising spending, the importance of social media marketing is more clearly understood.

In 2019, 64% (54 million) of Turkey's population were social media users. The top three social media platforms according to the number of users in Turkey were as follows: Instagram (thirty-eight million users), Facebook (thirty-seven million users), and Twitter (eleven million eight hundred thousand users). In 2019, Instagram has become the second most downloaded mobile app after WhatsApp (Kemp, 2020b).

Since Instagram is the most popular social media platform in Turkey, and this research is carried out on this platform, Instagram and Instagram marketing have been evaluated in detail in the next title.

3. INSTAGRAM AND INSTAGRAM MARKETING

Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger launched Instagram on the app store at midnight on October 6, 2010. On April 9, 2012, Facebook announced that it bought Instagram for $ 1 billion (Clifford, 2019). Defined as "the most important social media platform" by young people, Instagram is a mobile sharing application that enables users to take photos or videos of the moment they live in, manipulate these images through a set of filters, add effects and play with their resolutions, and instantly share them with their followers (Sabuncuoğlu & Gülay, 2016). More than 300 million users add stories to their accounts every day (Ediz, 2019). Instagram is a mobile application that works via smartphones and tablets. Moreover, people can access to Instagram via computer and update their profile settings, see other users' posts, and make a comment on posts. Only Instagram's mobile app allows Instagram users to edit and share photos or short videos on Instagram. Also, Instagram makes it easy for users to share photos on other social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter at the same time by pressing just a few buttons (Neher, 2014). Important milestones in Instagram's development can be listed as in Table 2 (Ulukan, 2018).

Table 2. *Important Developments in The Historical Process of Instagram and In-App Innovations*

October 2010	Instagram was launched as an IOS application.
April 2012	Instagram was activated as an Android application.
November 2012	Instagram became active on computers (pc). User profiles could also be tracked and managed from the desktop (shares are still not done on the PC).
May 2013	Tagging feature was launched.
June 2013	15 seconds video sharing has been activated.
October 2013	Sharing of posts as "sponsored" was activated.
November 2013	Instagram Direct, namely interpersonal message feature was launched. Thanks to this feature, users started to send videos, photos or messages to each other.
June 2015	Explore and search features were activated.
October 2015	Boomerang (1-second video) application was activated.
February 2016	Managing multiple Instagram accounts from the same device has been launched.
August 2016	Story feature was introduced.
October 2016	Stories have been in the Explore section. (So, users started to see stories of people they didn't know and didn't follow.)
December 2016	Live broadcast feature was also activated.
May 2017	Face filters feature has been activated for stories.
August 2017	Two people can broadcast live simultaneously.
October 2017	Voting feature has been activated for the stories.
December 2017	Following hashtags like tracking accounts have been activated.
January 2018	The ability to add GIFs to stories has been introduced. (It is a file format created by combining the initials of the Graphics Interchange Format concept.)
June 2018	Video broadcasting feature has been introduced for up to an hour with Instagram TV (IGTV).
August 2018	"Verified badge" activated. IT is a confirmation icon that appears next to Instagram accounts in search and profile (Krieger, 2018).
April 2020	The Direct Message feature was active in the Web version (Sağlam, 2020).

Source: Ulukan, (2018).

Instagram is not only a photo/video sharing app but also an important marketing, advertising, and sales platform. Instagram is the most used social network that comes after Facebook and YouTube with one billion users (Ediz, 2019). Since Instagram is the fastest growing social media platform, businesses use it for marketing purposes of reaching wider audiences (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). There are 25 million business accounts on Instagram (Instagram, 2020b) and approximately 50% of business accounts regularly share on Instagram (Ediz, 2019). The purpose of people who come to Instagram is to get inspiration and to discover things that they care about which also include the contents of brands and businesses (Instagram, 2020c). While the expectation of followers on Instagram is the sharing of more than one post (photo/video) during the day, meeting the expectations on other social media tools are even more troublesome (Miles, 2014).

Instagram requires less labor intensity than other social media tools. Although conversations are rarely seen on Instagram, this is the opposite of other platforms (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube). The Instagram platform, which is one of the social media platforms that is lower cost compared to other advertising platforms, is an effective marketing channel for businesses (Yaşa et al., 2017). Unlike personal profiles, a business account is a different type of Instagram account that allows business owners to contact Instagram followers faster and follow statistics. Especially for businesses that want to sell on Instagram, it offers the feature of adding a "contact" button to their profile pages. It is one of the prominent features of business accounts (Yavaş, 2016). Businesses may obtain some statistical information through their Instagram Business accounts, which are such as the number of users visiting and following their Instagram account and demographic information of them (such as gender, age, and location), the number of people who have gone to Websites via their Instagram business account (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2018).

The use of Instagram by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is a recent phenomenon. If the company is unknown to the customer, Instagram can be one of many marketing tools to reach potential customers and increase awareness of the business (Virtanen et al., 2017). Through Instagram, businesses can create their fame, increase the number of customers and share posts with a community that has high interaction rates (Instagram, 2020d).With Instagram, new customers can be contacted, and existing customers' relationships can be strengthened (Instagram, 2020a). Liking your followers' shares on Instagram makes them happy while commenting on their shares makes them stand above the clouds (Miles, 2014).

Brand awareness can be increased with Instagram. Some of the businesses use Instagram to share new services and products; for example, a restaurant can use it to share photos of its menus daily. An interior designer can use it to share his/her works (Neher, 2014). Two-thirds of the daily visits to business accounts are done by users who are not followers of those accounts (Instagram, 2020b). Sharing on Instagram has long-term value, and the real-time sharing item is highlighted. Taking photos is much more popular than taking videos; when photos and videos on the mobile phone of people are compared, the photos will be more than the videos. Additionally, taking a photo of a product is easier than taking a video and editing it. Therefore, many marketers will be happy to shoot photos rather than shoot videos (Miles, 2014).

Instagram is a targeted social media tool (Miles, 2014). Instagram could help businesses with automatic targeting feature to quickly create an audience that can have an interest in businesses by using various signals such as location, demographic information, and interests. Thanks to the sensitive targeting options, it is possible to reach the target audience (Instagram, 2020d). An important feature used on Instagram is the hashtag. Hashtags enable users to categorize the content that they post. If the user clicks on any hashtag, Instagram lists popular and new posts about that hashtag. Hashtags not only allow users to access all posts on the hashtag but also allows users to find other like-minded users and create communities around hashtags (Zengin G. & Zengin, 2017). The word Hashtag represents the symbol (#) and precedes a phrase or word. Hashtags often refer to the theme of sharing. The hashtag is a powerful way to increase the interaction (views and likes) of sharing. Although the beginning of Hashtag is on Twitter, it is also used on Instagram. Though optimized sharing with hashtags and subtitles is the first step to exist on Instagram, more is needed to create a follow-up audience. To reach "relevant Instagram users" who will be interested in your photos, business, product or service, you first need to know the target audience you want to reach. The common feature of many successful accounts on Instagram is that they interact with Instagram users in their target audiences. For posts to be more visible, an audience must be created and owned (Neher, 2014).

In sharing, businesses can be different from other businesses by using their hashtags of themselves. Many large businesses reach large audiences with hashtags, such as Coca-Cola's #ShareaCoke, Charmin's #TweetFromTheSeat, and Calvin Klein's #MyCalvins. Interaction can be increased with these actions (Benson, 2020). Figure 1 shows Adidas and Prada use Instagram for the promotion of their collaboration. Also, it can be seen in Figure 2 how the hashtag component, a powerful interaction tool on Instagram, is used by these two brands for the promotion of products. Even if Adidas or Prada don't have 1000 posts on their official accounts, they have reached and exceeded this number thanks to the hashtag feature.

Figure 1. *Adidas &Prada Collaboration*

Source: Adidas Instagram Account, (2020).

Figure 2. *The Power of Hashtag Usage (#pradaforadidas)*
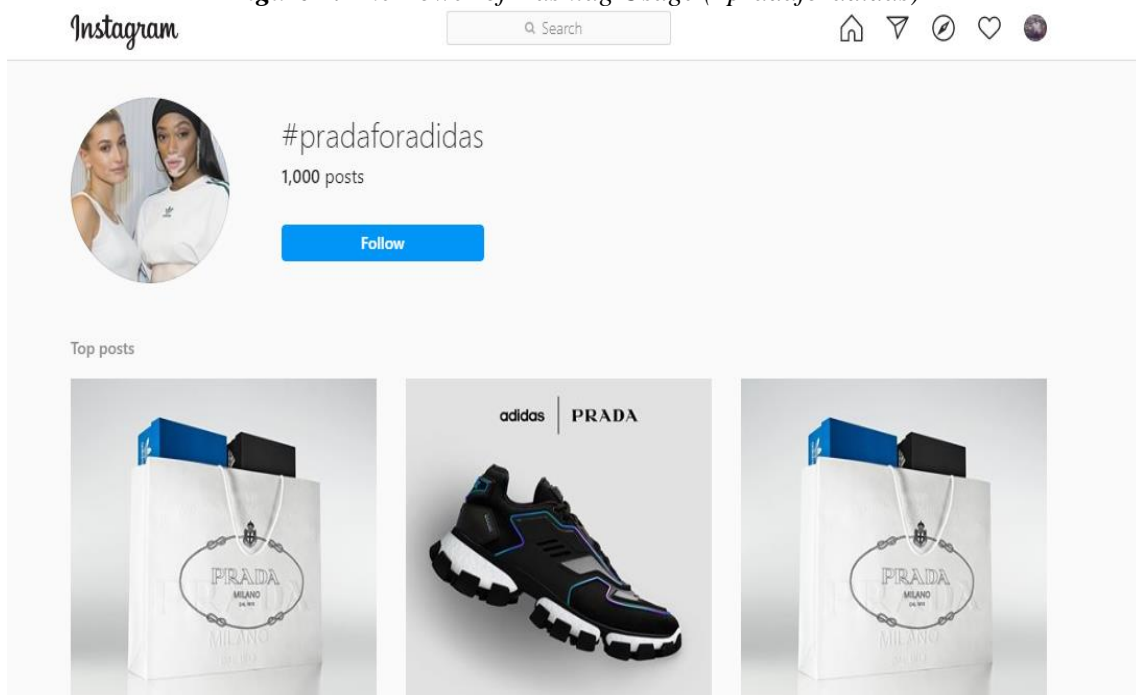
Source: Instagram, (2020e).

Instagram also plays a significant role in building brand equity (Neher, 2014). On average 90% of users follow at least one brand (Instagram, 2020a) and more than 200 million accounts look at a business profile every day on Instagram. Instagram uses an algorithmic flow ranking system to determine the order that users see photos and videos. The algorithm takes into account various signals to show the content that a person is interested in. One of the important information which is gained since Instagram started

using personalized streaming is that people respond to great content, regardless of who shared it (Instagram, 2020b).

People love to see Instagram stories from businesses. Here are four tips for businesses to share stories on Instagram, as follows (Instagram, 2020b):

- *Try new things:* Promote your new products, take viewers to your business kitchen, or experiment with creative tools like face filters, drawing tools, and survey stickers to get real-time feedback with your story.
- *Be creative:* Combine photos and videos to bring your story to life. Create engaging content inside the stories using features like Boomerang and Hyperlapse.
- *Time is with you:* Stories disappear after 24 hours; take advantage of this by offering short-term discounts or singles or by showing your products that have not been released yet.
- *Think about the sound:* Since 60% of the stories are watched out loud, pay attention to sound as much as images when creating your content.

Through Instagram, businesses can share their products visually, and they can also share the prices for their products. Businesses can direct users to their Websites via Instagram. Also, 72% of Instagram users accept to purchase the product when using the platform. This rate is too high to be overlooked by businesses. Therefore, businesses can try to be active by sharing at least one post or story and live broadcasts from their Instagram accounts. In stories and posts, businesses can promote their businesses by sharing posts about their products or services. Besides, it is possible for consumers to get to know the business by conducting question-answer conversations through live broadcasts. By making collaborations with influencers on Instagram, even the masses that are very difficult to reach under normal conditions, can be easily reached. A well-known influencer can promote businesses' products and reach millions in a few words (Benson, 2020). In the next section, the concept of the influencer is examined in detail with the variables of the study: "influencer credibility", "purchase intention", and "brand trust".

INFLUENCER CREDIBILITY, PURCHASE INTENTION AND BRAND TRUST

1. CONCEPT OF THE INFLUENCER

It is known that people have been influenced by others since the beginning of humanity. Whether for political, religious, or vital reasons, there have been leaders who direct and influence others with their thoughts and ideas (Zietek, 2016). Influencers are people who can influence a person's decisions. They can be athletes, community figures, friends, or fictional characters (like Marlboro Man). In medieval times, kings had divine rights because of Feudal Laws, and only God (or "Pope" who is representative of God in the world) was superior than kings. In the middle ages, Kings and Popes used their power to encouraged the use of medicine and became the first influencers in history. Mass production started with the Industrial Revolution, and the number of products to be marketed increased. Influencers emerged to sell these products. These influencers are started to be used in print ads and continued with tv and radio ads. Today, influencers are on social media (Bernstein, 2019).

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). One of the micro-celebrity forms is influencers, who share their daily lives with textual and visual expressions and advertise products/services through social media and blogs (Abidin, 2016). Some studies describe micro-celebrities as social media influencers (Khamis et al., 2017). Social media influencers, which have gained a reputation by creating and posting content on social media, are ordinary people who have become online celebrities (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

Influencers are people who have an impact on a large number of followers on one or more social media platforms (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Influencers are people who can reach many people and have the ability to influence people's views (Enge, 2012). Influencers are different from the old celebrities, as they are in constant contact with their followers, and they are experts in the products or services they promote (Weiner, 2018) such as wellness, travel, food, lifestyle, beauty, or fashion (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

Yitzi Weiner, the founder of Authority magazine, interviewed 75 well-known influencers and gathered their experiences and tips on how to become an influencer

(Weiner, 2018). 14 most notable tips from Weiner's interviews including who shared these tips are as follows (Miles, 2019):

- *Tip 1: Platform selection (Austin Iuliano, @austiniuliano)*: Creating followers on a new platform is easier than existing and old platforms. Austin Iuliano preferred Musical.ly and live.ly, which are fun and new platforms to create content for him.

- *Tip 2: Inbound content (Kean Graham, CEO of MonetizeMore.com)*: To be an influencer, the important point is sharing unique content through multiple channels such as video, blog, podcast and social media.

- *Tip 3: Don't strive to be an influencer (Kelly Hayes-Raitt, author and founder of House Sit Diva, https://housesitdiva.com)*: Just being an influencer is not a self-sufficient target. The clearer your message, the more genuine it is, and the more persistent and consistent you are when you convey this message, the higher the chance of influencing people change their lives.

- *Tip 4: Do more than one thing (Kimberly Gauthier, Dog Nutrition Blogger and Author, Keep the Tail Wagging®)*: Multiple channels that offer content marketing should be used. (Including facilities such as vlogging, podcasts, and e-books.)

- *Tip 5: Leverage events using hashtags (Torri Webster is a Toronto based-media personality and actor with 297,000 Instagram followers, @torriWebster)*: Being active during significant events like Oscar and Super Bowl is a fun way to increase followers. During these events, you can be trending using unique hashtags and, as a result of that, get more views on your page.

- *Tip 6: Deliver actionable advice (Rania Hoteit, CEO and Founder of ID4A Technologies. On Instagram @raniahoteit_officialpublicpage)*: In addition to being inspired by the images and motivational conversations of influencers, people want to learn the right ways and exact steps from influencers to achieve specific results. The value people get from the influencer keep them following and make them return, so influencers should give people advice they can apply in their lives.

- *Tip 7: Set a budget for promotion (Vanessa Gordon, Publisher, East End Taste Magazine. On Instagram @eastendtaste)*: Vanessa Gordon promotes at least

26

40% of her content, which increases her income when she promotes as an influencer. Influencers want to make sure they are discoverable due to the emergence of new Instagram users every day. That's why Vanessa Gordan changes places where she shares her content.

- *Tip 8: Quality (Mae Karwowski, Founder and CEO, Obvious.ly. On Instagram @obviously)*: Businesses should keep their aesthetics and quality in their shares, leaning horizontally or upward. Do they also shoot videos? How dominant are they using the camera? Do they have any information on how to choose and edit the best of the 100 photos they have taken? Businesses should know the answers to these questions, and it is crucial to learn how sharing gets the most interaction.

- *Tip 9: Walk it like you talk it (Cheryl Sutherland, Founder of PleaseNotes. On Instagram @please_notes)*: If something is desired from someone else, it should also be done by the person who wants it. When this is done, the other party will feel the reality of that. The brand owners want to be a part of his/her business, and also, they are the walking representatives of their brand.

- *Tip 10: Be expert (Jessica Wright, Founder of the travel blog, Bon Traveler. On Instagram @bontraveler)*: The first tip to being an influencer is to be an expert. You must be an expert in your field and add something to that field.

- *Tip 11: It truly is a labor of love; patience is the key in this game (Ronaldo Linares On Instagram @chef_ronaldo_ and @vibranthealth)*: You must be ready to lose before you win.

- *Tip 12: Provide edutainment (Amy Burton Matriarch of LuckyFortune8Family on YouTube ''with over 48 million views and 100,000 subscribers on YouTube alone'' On Instagram @luckyfortune8family)*: In this busy world with endless competition., entertainment and value is a fascinating combination to attract people's interest.

- *Tip 13: Know what you want (Jonathan Alpert, Manhattan and Washington, D.C., psychotherapist, Wall Street performance coach, and author of Be Fearless: Change Your Life in 28 Days. On Instagram @jonathanalpert)*: Having direction and clarity of mind will help you progress. If your ladder rests on the wrong wall, every step you take will take you in the wrong direction.

- *Tip 14: Only promote what you believe in (Heidi Wong is a social media influencer with over 130,000 followers. On Instagram @heidiwongofficial)*: Social media has many users and is an oversaturated area, and this may feel that some of the influencers' content may be unreal or copy. If you are promoting something, make sure your followers know why you are doing it.

Influencers generally prefer the word followers instead of fans when defining the people who follow them (Marwick & Boyd, 2011). The reason behind the word of the followers is not to create a sense of social distance between the influencer and followers (Abidin, 2015).

Although the influencers are usually prominent via Instagram, they are also on other social media platforms such as YouTube and Twitter (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019). Influencers have two main features (Weiner, 2018):

- To be an expert in a particular product or service type,
- To have an effect on certain groups.

When the concept of influencer is taken into consideration in social media, they are people who have created a reputation for a subject with their expertise and acquired knowledge. They regularly share on their social media channels, and there are large audiences who follow their views closely (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2020). The higher the number of followers, the upper the perceived social impact (Jin & Phua, 2014). Top 10 Instagram accounts with the most followers in the world are shown in Table 3 (Social Blade, 2020). Top 10 influencer accounts with the most followers on Instagram are shown in Table 4 (boomsocial.com, 2020b). Also, top 10 Turkish influencer accounts with the most followers on Instagram are shown in Table 5 (boomsocial.com, 2020a). Based on the world's top 10 Instagram influencers, there are 4 Turkish influencers on the list (boomsocial.com, 2020b). This information shows interest to Turkish influencers by Instagram users.

Table 3. *Top 10 Instagram Accounts with the Number of Followers in the World*

Instagram Accounts	Number of the followers
Instagram	346.713.496
Cristiano Ronaldo	215.718.656
Ariana Grande	183.147.176
Dwayne Johnson (The Rock)	181.471.717
Selena Gomez	175.146.124
Kylie Jenner	172.728.658
Kim Kardashian West	167.537.408
Leo Messi	149.225.435
Beyoncé	145.507.682
Neymar Jr.	138.441.511

Source: Social Blade, (2020).

Table 4. *Top 10 Influencers Instagram Accounts with the Number of Followers in the World*

Instagram Accounts	Number of the followers
Kendall	127.924.377
5-Munite Crafts	40.698.464
LISA	32.365.020
Burak Özdemir	15.740.397
Çağrı Taner	13.015.607
Greta Thunberg	10.277.087
Noha Nabil نهى نبيل	8.156.115
Cezmi Kalorifer	7.894.704
Eva Marisol Gutowski	7.440.684
Reynmen	7.057.136

Source: boomsocial.com, (2020).

Table 5. *Top 10 Influencer Instagram Accounts with the Number of Followers in Turkey*

Instagram Accounts	Number of the followers
Burak Özdemir	15.740.397
Çağrı Taner	13.015.607
Cezmi Kalorifer	7.894.704
Reynmen	7.057.136
Aykut Elmas	5.298.485
Danla Bilic	4.899.576
Şükran Kaymak	4.427.398
Enes Batur	3.978.396
Yasemin Sakallıoğlu	3.920.129
Regloloji	3.574.791

Source: boomsocial.com, (2020a).

The owners of the accounts in Table 3 are those who have a reputation and fan clubs apart from social media. But the accounts in Table 4 and Table 5 are phenomena that have earned their reputation through social media channels.

Prepared by making use of the data shared by Creatorden for 2019; the influence score of the Turkish influencers are listed in Table 6, and the Influence score of the celebrities are listed in Table 7. The influence score consists of metrics such as the interaction rate, number of followers, monthly interaction total, and interaction rate change (Creatorden, 2020). Given the number of influencers & celebrities and influence scores in Tables 6 and 7, the number of female influencers (7) appears to be more than male influencers (3), while in celebrities these numbers are almost identical; Number of male celebrities (6) female celebrities (4). Based on these data, female influencers have a higher success rate on Instagram than male influencers.

Table 6. Influence Score of Influencers on Instagram in 2019 (Turkey)

Users Name	Influence score
@danlabilic	9.90 /10
@eylulonline	9.85 /10
@aykutelmas	9.82 /10
@oguzhanugur_	9.80 /10
@yasemoz88	9.77 /10
@seydaerdogan	9.73 /10
@pelinakil	9.70 /10
@duyguozaslan	9.70 /10
@berkcan	9.68 /10
@damlaaltun	9.65 /10

Source: Creatorden, (2020).

Table 7. Influence Score of Celebrities on Instagram in 2019 (Turkey)

Users Name	Influence score
@nusr_et	9.92 /10
@burakozcivit	9.90 /10
@iynemliarasbulut	9.88 /10
@handemiyy	9.88 /10
@hadise	9.87 /10
@neslihanatagul	9.85 /10
@serenayss	9.85 /10
@acunilicali	9.84 /10
@cagatayulusoy	9.82 /10
@ezhel06	9.80 /10

Source: Creatorden, (2020).

The number of followers reflects the popularity of influencers and the size of their network. More followers are effective in reaching large audiences of commercial messages. Commercial potentials of influencers are important for brands (De Veirman et

al., 2017). One of the profitable marketing communication strategies is influencers (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019). In previous studies, it is seen that the credibility and attractiveness of celebrities affect consumers and are used by businesses as an important marketing strategy (Eru et al., 2018).

1.1. INFLUENCER MARKETING

The use of social media has become widespread, the number of members of social networks is increasing day by day, and the opportunity to access social media accounts anytime and anywhere through technological communication tools has made social networks very important for brands (Aslan & Ünlü, 2016). There are various inputs in the persuasive communication matrix such as source, message, channel, receiver, and destination (McGuire, 2001). So much so that today, many brands take place in different social networks and implement various digital advertising strategies to increase their awareness and sales. However, brands do not only reach their target audiences through their social network accounts but also try to take advantage of the effects of influencers on their followers, as a new "celebrity" emerging with the opportunities provided by the internet (Aslan & Ünlü, 2016).

Influencer marketing is a collaboration with influential people who can help build awareness and visibility for products and services (Enge, 2012). Influencers are critical in growing global marketing because of their capacity to shape consumers' purchasing decisions (De Veirman et al., 2017). Influencers in the digital world are online opinion leaders that businesses can use to spread messages in their digital marketing strategies (Ryan & Jones, 2009). With the increase of digital ads, consumers began to use technology such as adblockers to avoid seeing these ads, which reduced the interest and value of traditional brand-guided ads (Veirman & Hudders, 2020). Therefore, brands love influencers on social media, as influencers can create trends and encourage followers to purchase the products/services which they promote (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2020). It is seen that they are started to be used as a medium for promotional and advertising activities (Aslan & Ünlü, 2016). The interest areas of followers of Turkish Instagram influencers in 2019 are shared in Figure 3 (Creatorden, 2020).

Figure 3. *Areas of Interest of Followers Who Follow Influencers on Instagram in 2019 (Turkey)*
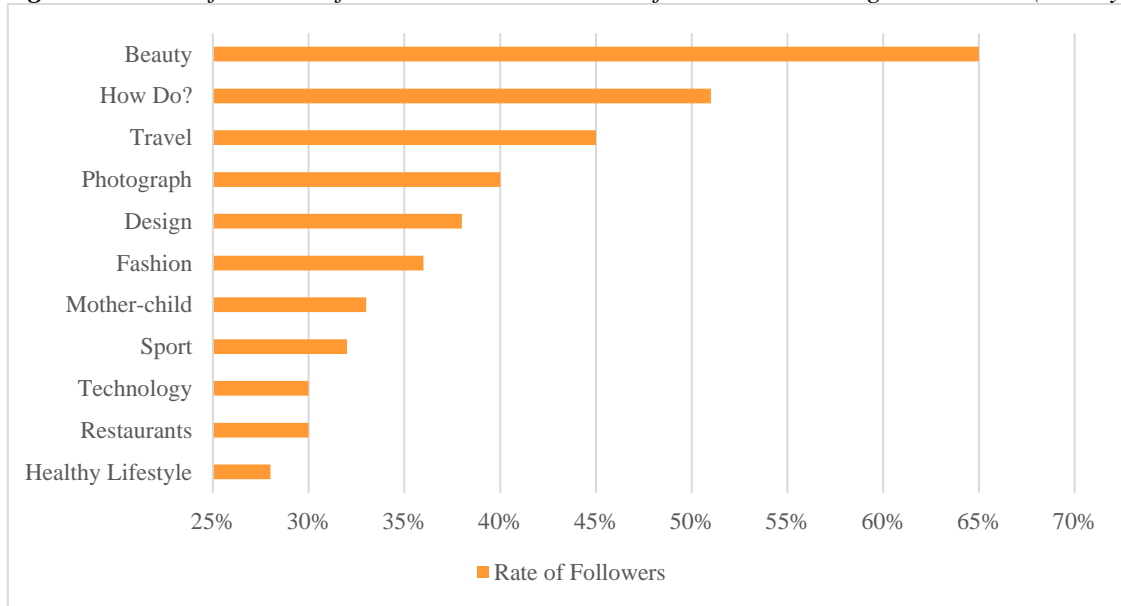
Source: Creatorden, (2020).

Information that consumers obtain from other consumers or information obtained through electronic word-of-mouth marketing (e-WOM) is much more useful than general traditional decision-making techniques in consumers' purchasing decisions. (Goldsmith & Clark, 2008). Therefore, marketers aim to maximize the speed and area of their messages, products, or information spreading through social networks by collaborating with influencers. Finding reliable and admired influencers that have a high impact on the target audience of the brand and promoting the brand's products and services through these influencers is one of the biggest challenges for brands. In the promotion of a unique product, the posts made by accounts with many followers are perceived as less realistic than the posts made by an account with few followers (De Veirman et al., 2017). The percentage distribution of the goals that brands want to achieve with influencer marketing is shown in Figure 4 (Creatorden, 2020). According to Figure 4, generating brand awareness (32,1%) and creating campaigns based on sales (30,1%) are the top two reasons why brands use influencer marketing.

Figure 4. Brand Goals in 2019 (Turkey)
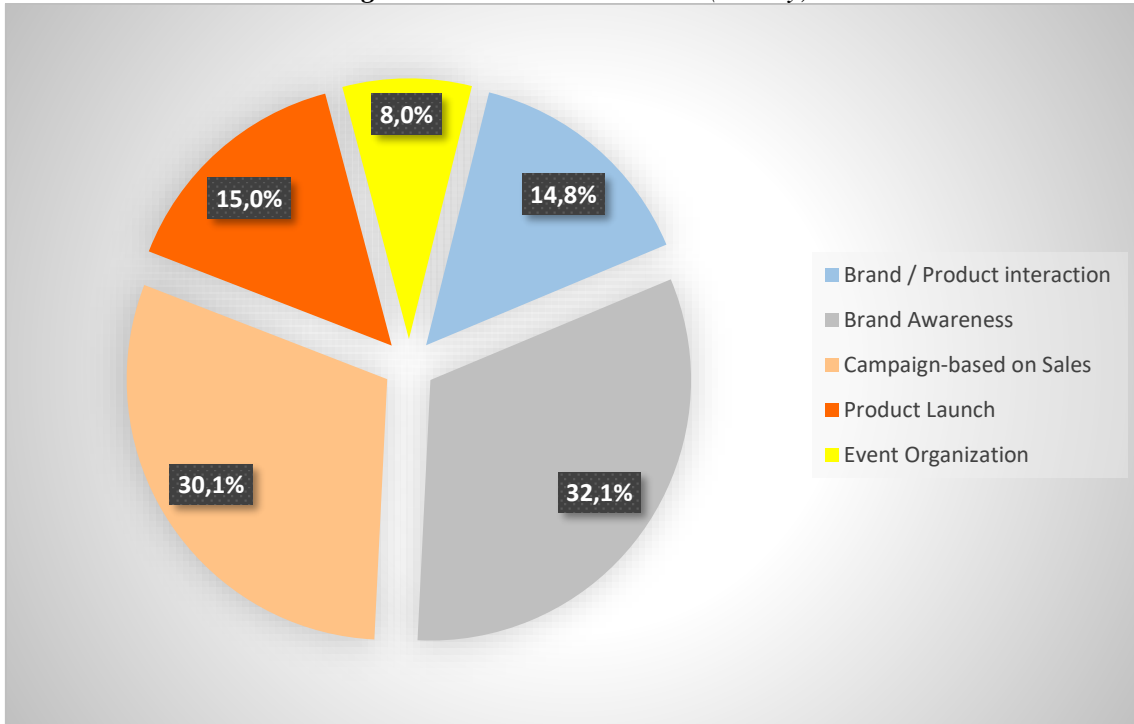
Source: Creatorden, (2020).

The success of influencers can be defined as the return of their influence (Khamis et al., 2017). Today, digital opinion leaders or influencers can influence the attitudes, decisions, and behaviors of the audience that follow them (Watts & Dodds, 2007). Marketers use the sincere that are created "trustworthy" relationships by influencers (Khamis et al., 2017). 92% of marketers who use influencer marketing find it effective. They use integrated strategies to be more effective in this sector, which is found to be effective and mature every day (Linqia, 2017). Influencer marketing size of Instagram between 2017 and 2019 is shown in Table 8 (Guttmann, 2019). Also, Figure 5 shows the global brands' expenses for influencer marketing in 2019 (Creatorden, 2020). Considering Table 8, the influencer market size has more than doubled in the past two years (Guttmann, 2019). Looking at Figure 5, more than 64% of global brands spend more than 250,000 TL per month for their marketing collaborations with influencers, and almost 35% of them spend more than 750,000 TL per month (Creatorden, 2020). These figures show that influencers are involved in the marketing strategies of brands, and serious budgets are spent on this strategy.

Table 8. *Global Instagram Influencer Market Size From 2017 to 2019*

Year	Market Size (billion U.S. dollars)
2017	0.8
2018	1.3
2019	1.7

Source: Gutmann, (2019).

Figure 5. *Annual Influencer Marketing Expenditures of Global Brands on Instagram in 2019 (Turkey)*
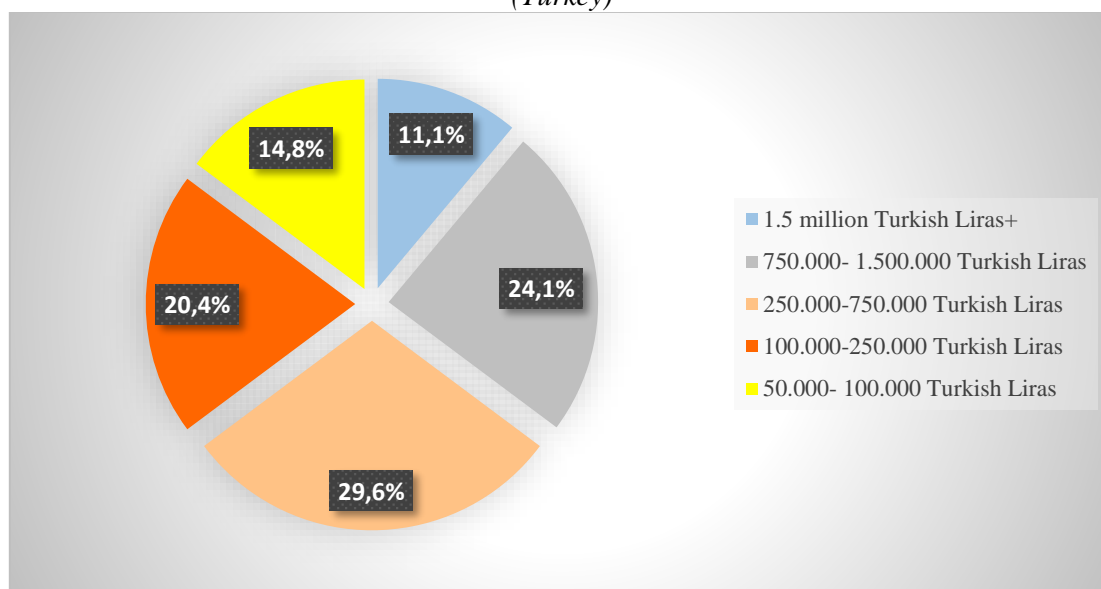
Source: Creatorden, (2020).

C. Ronaldo and Lionel Messi are the top two winning players in today's football world. While C. Ronaldo receives an annual fee of 65 million dollars from the Juventus club he plays, L. Messi receives an annual fee of 92 million dollars from the Barcelona club he plays (Badenhausen, 2019). As a result of their collaborations with brands on the Instagram platform in 2019 (Table 9), Messi earned $ 23,3 million, while C. Ronaldo made $ 47,8 million. Companies are paying up to $ 1 million for a post from Ronaldo's own Instagram account. For example; he earns $ 975.000 for each post from Clear Haircare and Nike Football, with which he has been collaborating for many years (McCarthy, 2019).

Table 9. The Highest Earners on Instagram

Instagram Accounts	Annual average income from Instagram (million U.S. dollars)
Cristiona Ronaldo - @cristiano	47,8
Lionel Messi - @leomessi	23,3
Kendall Jenner - @kendalljenner	15,9
David Beckham - @davidbeckham	10,7
Selena Gomez - @selenagomez	8,0
Neymar Jr - @neymarjr	7,2
Zlatan Ibrahimovic - @iamzlatanibrahimovic	4,0
Kylie Jenner- @kyliejenner	3,8
Ronaldinho - @ronaldinho	2,6
Khole Kardashian - @kholekardashian	1,2

Source: McCarthy, (2019).

Brands aim to reach their target audience by ensuring that their products are approved and spoken by accounts with a large number of followers on social media. When choosing an influencer, the important points for brands are; to have the image of the trustworthiness, sincerity, and undirect commercial purpose of the influencer (De Veirman et al., 2017). Consumers trust the influencers in social media almost as much as they trust their friends (Lou & Yuan, 2019). The study of Djafarova & Rushworth (2017) investigated influencers and traditional celebrities' effect on purchase decisions of young women who are Instagram users. The study findings show that influencers were more effective on the purchase decisions of young female Instagram users than traditional celebrities (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

In some studies, investigating the factors that are effective in influencer marketing, it was observed that influencers' credibility and trust in influencers are critical factors in the parasocial relationship between consumers and influencers (Colliander & Dahlen, 2011; Lu et al., 2014; Woods 2016; De Veirman et al., 2017; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Johansen & Guldvik, 2017).

The credibility and attractiveness of celebrities or influencers (as a source) affect consumers and are used by businesses as a marketing strategy (Ohanian, 1990; Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995; Şimşek & Uğur, 2003; Choi, Lee & Kım, 2005; Seno & Lukas, 2007; Amos, Holmes & Strutton, 2008; Korkut & Arslan, 2015; Mikuláš & Svetlik, 2016; Eru et al., 2018; Yolaçan & Özeltürkay, 2018; Breves et al., 2019). Some studies in the literature 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). In the next title of the study, influencer

credibility, which is an important factor in purchase intention, brand trust, and influencer marketing activities, is detailed.

1.2. INFLUENCER CREDIBILITY

The concept and effect of credibility come from ancient Greek (Eisend, 2004). There are four different forms of credibility. The first of these is the presumed credibility and explains how much a person believes in the product as a result of the evaluations about the product. In other words, stereotypical views and assumptions form the presumed credibility. The second is the reputed credibility. It is the credibility perception that occurs as a result of official reports issued by third parties. For example, the fact that a book has received a Nobel prize may increase the credibility of that book in the consumer's mind. Another credibility is surface credibility. Surface credibility is the credibility that the consumer perceived by simply checking or reviewing the product. Finally, the fourth is experienced credibility. Experienced credibility is the credibility resulting from the experience of the person about the product (Tseng & Fogg, 1999).

Credibility can be defined as believability. In other words, a highly credible information or a person is perceived as a highly believable information or a person (Tseng & Fogg, 1999). According to Goldsmith et al. (2000), credibility is defined as "having experience on the subject and providing trustworthy information about the subject". While the concept of experience means knowledge about the subject, trustworthy means honesty and believability of the source (Goldsmith et al., 2000). Credibility is an intuitive phenomenon that shows up between the source and the area that transmits the message in communication. Brand, brand representatives (salespeople, celebrities as endorsers) can be defined as the source, and consumers can be defined as the recipient of the message (Eisend, 2004). The character of the person providing the communication has a significant effect on the credibility of the transmitted message (Ohanian, 1990).

In many studies in the literature, celebrities have been considered as a source in marketing activities (Ohanian, 1990; Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995; Şimşek & Uğur, 2003; Choi, Lee & Kım, 2005; Seno & Lukas, 2007; Amos, Holmes & Strutton, 2008; Korkut & Arslan, 2015; Mikuláš & Svetlik, 2016; Eru et al., 2018; Yolaçan & Özeltürkay, 2018; Breves et al., 2019). According to Khamis et al. (2017), influencers are described as new types of celebrities. There are some studies evaluating social media influencers as a

source (Eru et al., 2018; Shamli, 2019). Therefore, while evaluating influencer credibility in the study, it has been considered source credibility.

The effect of source credibility first started with the idea of "prestige" in the 1930s (Eisend, 2004). "Source Credibility" is a concept used to express that the person sending the message in communication 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). Other concepts commonly used in defining source credibility are reputation, prestige, status, authority, and competence. Source credibility has become an important subject that is studied in areas such as psychology, communication, marketing, and advertising. (Ohanian, 1990).

Source Credibility, which is generally accepted as a categorical variable, helps to determine the degree of credibility of sources as high or low. The factors used to measure the source credibility scales in the literature are as follows: Authoritativeness and character (McCroskey, 1966); trustworthiness and competence (Bowers & Phillips, 1967); trustworthiness, competence, dynamism, and objectivity (Whitehead,1968); safety, qualification, and dynamism (Berlo et al., 1969); trustworthiness, expertness, dynamism, and objectivity (Applbaum & Anatol, 1972); believability, dynamism, expertness, and sociability (Simpson & Kahler, 1980-81); expertness, attractiveness, trustworthiness, and likability (DeSarbo & Harshman,1985); expertness, dynamism, believability, and sociability (Wynn, 1987).In this study, the scale from Roobina Ohanian (Table 10) is used and the factors of her scale are; expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness (Ohanian, 1990).

Ohanian's source credibility model is one of the two most widely used models in the literature for celebrity endorsement (Erdogan, 1999). Senecal & Nantel (2004) used the same scale of Ohanian source credibility while examining the effect of the sources that recommend the product in consumers' online product preferences. Spry et al. (2011) used the scale of Ohanian in their studies when examining the impact of celebrity credibility on consumer-based equity of the endorsed brand. Also, Na et al. (2020) examined the role of signaling and source credibility on athlete-related social media content by using the same scale.

Table 10. Source-Credibility Scale of Ohanian

Dimensions Measured	Items
Expertise	• Expert—Not an expert • Experienced—Inexperienced • Knowledgeable-Unknowledgeable • Qualified—Unqualified • Skilled-Unskilled
Trustworthiness	• Dependable—Undependable • Honest—Dishonest • Reliable—Unreliable • Sincere—Insincere • Trustworthy—Untrustworthy
Attractiveness	• Attractive—Unattractive • Classy—Not Classy • Beautiful—Ugly • Elegant—Plain • Sexy—Not sexy

Source: Ohanian, (1990).

Ohanian (1990) determined the sub-dimensions of source credibility scale as; expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. These sub-dimensions are explained below.

Expertise:

Expertise is the most significant dimension for endorsed products to be effective (Daneshvary & Schwer, 2000). Knowledge and experience are two sub-dimensions of expertise (Ohanian, 1990). Expertise is defined as "having experience and knowledge about a product or product category" (Zha et al., 2018). Expertise is an indicator of a source's proficiency regarding the product. It may be an example for athletes or doctors to approve a product related to their profession (Ohanian, 1991).

Trustworthiness:

The trust paradigm 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). Mark Zuckerberg, CEO of Facebook says that " People influence people. Nothing influences people more than a recommendation from a trusted friend. A trusted referral influences people more than the best broadcast message" (Dimov, 2018).

Attractiveness:

Despite many studies on attractiveness, its definition and classification are still uncertain. However, it is often considered as an essential aspect of the first impression (Ohanian, 1990). Attractiveness is interpreted as physical attractiveness in some sectors (fashion-cosmetics, etc.) (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019). In social media, attractiveness is followed by social attractiveness rather than physical attractiveness. In some studies, it is shown 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).

While consumers state that they approach the information created by brands with suspicion, they state that information obtained from trustworthy online sources reduces the risk of suspicion and purchase (Bambauer-Sachse & Mangold, 2013). Therefore, in order to affect purchase decisions, it is important for brands to use influencers that are perceived as credible by consumers.

2. CONSUMER BEHAVIOR AND CONSUMER PURCHASE PROCESS

Consumer behavior is an area that covers the processes of selecting, purchasing, using, and disposing products, services, experiences, or ideas to meet the needs of individuals, groups, or organizations and their impact on consumers and society (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh , 2010). People are the only living creature that deliberately performs the consumption function in nature (Türk, 2004). The consumer purchase process begins with the recognition of the need and ends with meeting that to need (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). People often purchase to meet their needs and get the benefits of goods or services. For example, if a yarn is obtained from a product such as cotton, the benefit of making quilts from the same cotton is eliminated. Elimination of the benefit is consumption. The way to start production is consumption. Every consumption brings production (Taşkın, 2003).

The primary purpose of production is consumption and production is an act of consumption (Türk, 2004). Businesses produce products and services for people, and businesses use some terms for these people like consumer, customer, and buyer. The most frequently used term is "consumer". The consumer is an individual who purchases goods and services for personal consumption (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). A consumer is a real person who purchases or can purchase these products or services for his/her wants, wishes, and needs (İslamoğlu & Altunışık, 2003). In terms of marketing, the consumer is

"people, institutions, and organizations that have money to spend, needs, and a desire to spend" (Mucuk, 2012). The customer can be defined as the consumer who regularly purchases products or services from a business. The phrase "buyer" is used for the person or institution making purchases on behalf of others (İslamoğlu & Altunışık, 2003).

The seven general characteristics of consumer behavior are as follows (Odabaşı & Barış, 2002):

- a motivated behavior (arises to satisfy wants and needs),
- a dynamic process (from before purchase to after purchase),
- consists of various activities (unplanned activity such as exposure to advertising or a planned activity such as information gathering),
- complicated and differs in terms of timing (if the purchase decision is difficult and complicated, the time spent will increase),
- roles can be changing (on each dimension of the purchase process),
- affected by environmental factors,
- may differ for each people (such as personal differences).

The concept of purchasing can be considered as a combination of some determining factors. The first one is referred to as the purchase intention. Another is environmental impacts or personal differences (Odabaşı & Barış, 2002). Consumers make more than one purchase decision during the day, and marketers focus on these decisions. Many companies examine consumers' behavior to answer questions such as what, where, how, how much, when, and why consumers get it. But the reason/reasons behind consumer purchase behavior is not easy to learn, because the answers are often hidden in the minds of consumers, and often even consumers do not know the reason that led them to purchase (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018).

One of the main question for marketers is "How do consumers respond to the marketing efforts that companies use?" According to the response model of the buyer behavior shown in Table 11,stimuli enter the "black box" and consumers respond to these stimuli in different ways. Characteristics of the consumer/buyer affect the way of perceiving and reacting to stimuli (in Table 11). These characteristics (in Table 12) include cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018).

Table 11. *Model of Buyer/Consumer Behavior*

The Environment		Buyer's Black Box	Buyer Responses
Marketing Stimuli →	• Product • Price • Place • Promotion	• Buyer's characteristics • Buyer's decision process	• Purchasing attitudes and preferences • Purchase behavior: what the buyer purchases, when, where, and how much • Brand engagements and relationships
Others →	• Economic • Technological • Social • Cultural		

Source: Kotler & Armstrong, (2018).

Table 12. *Factors Influencing Consumer Behavior*

Cultural	• Culture • Subculture • Social class
Social	• Groups and social networks • Family • Roles and status
Personal	• Age and lifecycle stage • Occupation • Economic situation • Lifestyle • Personality and self-concept
Psychological	• Motivation • Perception • Learning • Beliefs and attitudes

Source: Kotler & Armstrong, (2018).

Marketers should know their customers well and demonstrate approaches that will satisfy them to protect existing customers and acquire new customers. It is possible to list the reasons for using information regarding consumer behavior in marketing management as follows (Durmaz, 2011):

- determining market opportunities,
- choosing the target market,
- creating the marketing mix,
- demand analysis.

Consumer behavior is a process that starts with the need of the consumer, continues to purchase and use goods or services to meet this need, and evaluates the benefits provided by the consumer after use (Altunışık et al., 2014). Consumers first try to meet the most important need for them, and after meeting this need, they will try to reach the next important need. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs model explains the priority order of these needs with examples (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
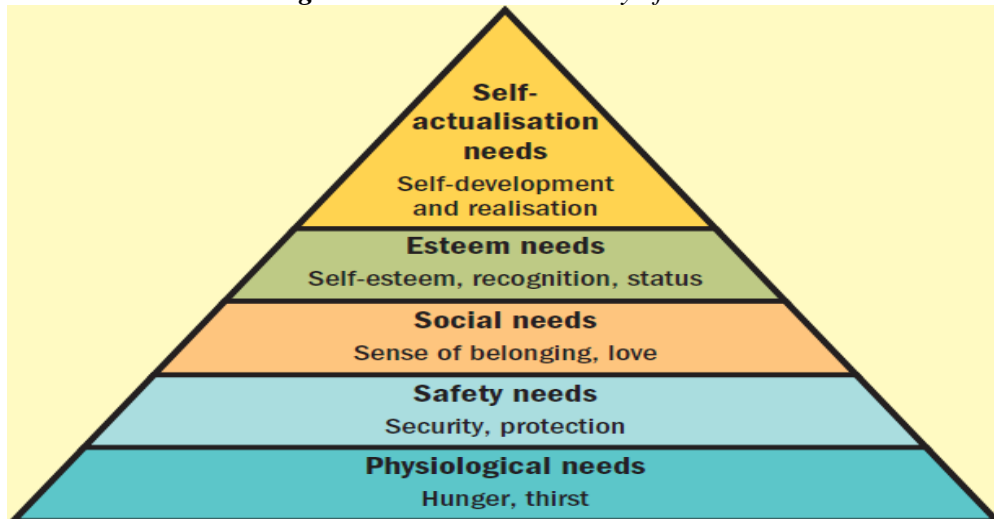
Source: Armstrong et al., (2018).

While consumers are in the decision-making process of meeting their needs, they tend to prefer brands that are permanently located in their minds. The reason for this tendency is that awareness provides convenience to the consumers in the purchase decision-making process as a result of acquaintance with the brand. When consumers purchase a product, they tend not to purchase a brand they have never seen or heard; they tend to purchase a brand they have heard or seen (Uslu, 2000).

Consumers may not always have a hierarchical attitude due to their complex motivation (Armstrong et al., 2018). In this process, consumers make a number of decisions and these decisions are called the consumer decision-making process (Altunışık et al., 2014). The steps in the consumer decision-making process start with need recognition and continue with information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior, as seen in Figure 7 (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018).

Figure 7. Consumer/Buyer Decision-Making Process

Source: Kotler & Armstrong, (2018).

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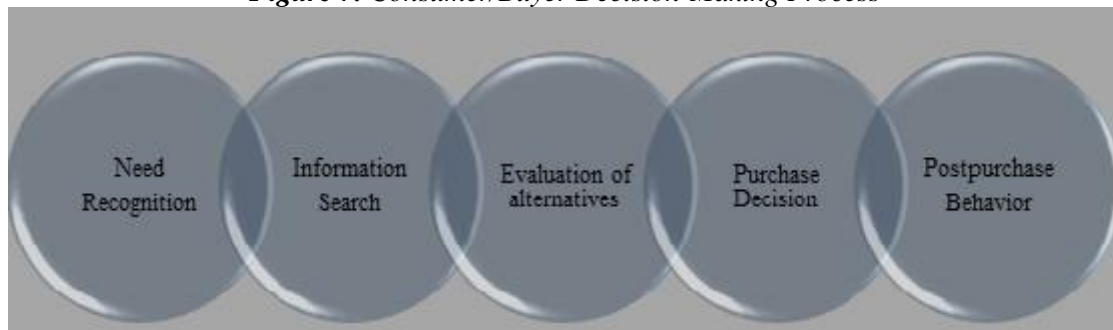
Modeling consumer behavior is one of the primary interests of marketing researchers. The most used model class in this field is behavioral intention (BI) models. Intention represents the person's conscious plan for the effort to perform a behavior (Malhotra & McCort, 2001). Two of the most commonly used models related to behavioral intention in the literature are (Yüksel, 2016);

- Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975),
- Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985).

2.1. THEORY OF REASONED ACTION

Intentions can estimate a person's behavior, and intentions can be determined by the combination of the person's attitude and subjective norms (Hsu & Lu, 2007). Theory of reasoned action (TRA) assumes that people often behave logically (Ajzen, 2005).

The theory of reasoned action proposed by Fishbein and Ajzen in 1967 is given in Figure 8 (Madden et al., 1992). The most important factor that determines human behavior is behavioral intent. Behavioral intention is generally defined as the subjective probability for a person to perform a behavior. Attitude, one of the factors affecting behavioral intent, refers to the degree of the individual's valuation effect towards the targeted behavior. There is a close link between beliefs and attitudes. If a person creates beliefs about an object, he/she automatically develops an attitude towards that object at the same time. The subjective norm is the perception of people who are important to the person's thoughts about whether or not the person performs the behavior in question. The subjective norm is the perception of thoughts about doing or not doing the behavior (Davis, 1985).

Figure 8. *Theory of Reasoned Action*
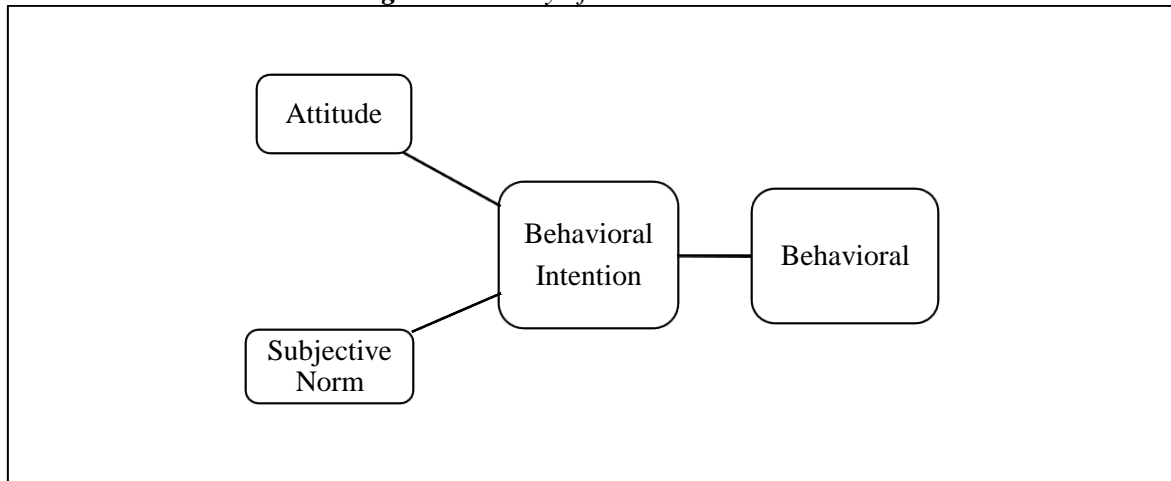
Source: Madden et al., (1992).

2.2. THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), like the theory of reasoned action, assumes that people often behave logically (Ajzen, 2005). According to theory planned behavior (Figure 9), the determinant of the behavior is the intention of individuals regarding certain types of actions. Behavioral intention refers to the tendency of the person to do a certain behavior or not. For example; people who do not intend to use internet banking can't be expected to show using action (Doğan et al., 2015).

A person's behavioral intention directly influences the behavior of a person. Behavioral intention can be explained by the combination of attitude towards behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. Behavioral intent, as in TRA, is a measure of the degree of the individual's effort in performing a behavior. Attitude includes an individual's positive or negative evaluations of behavior. The subjective norm refers to perceived organizational or social pressure towards the intention to realize a behavior. Perceived behavioral control reflects the individual's perception of ease or difficulty in performing the behavior and includes beliefs about the presence of control factors that may prevent the behavior (Wu & Chen, 2005).

Figure 9. Theory of Planned Behavior
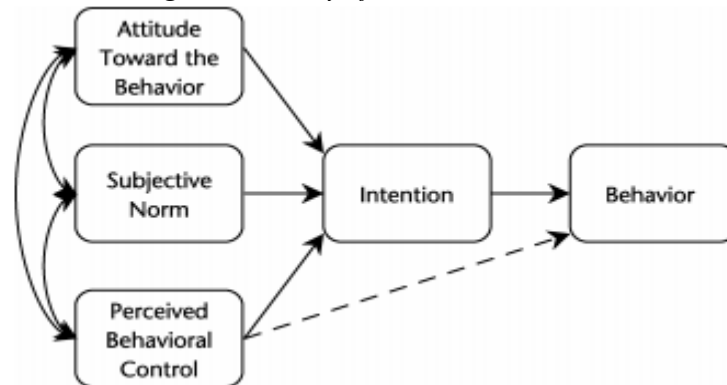
Source: Ajzen, (2005).

3. PURCHASE INTENTION

Traditionally, the term intention has been defined as prejudices (Haque et al., 2015). Intention is the result of attitude toward performing the action and subjective norm (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977). The behavior of consumers emerges as a result of the previously agreed intentions. Therefore, while attitudes determine intentions, intentions produce behaviors (Hsu et al., 2009). Intention occurs before behavior or attitude. Also, it refers to the emergence of the will to achieve this attitude or behavior (Mutlu et al., 2011).

Purchase intention is one of the cognitive consumer behaviors about the desire to purchase (Ling et al., 2010). Purchase intention is the tendency of consumers to purchase any product at any time (Mirabi et al., 2015). The desire or tendency of consumers to purchase a product is expressed as a purchase intention to it (Haque et al., 2015). The intention to purchase is the form of planning that is consciously made to purchase a product (Spears & Singh, 2004). The purchase intention is the determinant of the purchase decision process and indicates the probability of an individual purchasing a product (Isaksson & Xavier, 2009). Purchase intention is the intention that consumers plan to purchase a brand or product (Lin et al., 2013). It is the desire, tendency, and demand of consumers to purchase a particular product (Arifani & Haryanto, 2018). The indicators of purchase intention are; thinking to purchase, having cash to purchase, considering purchasing, and having a tendency to purchase (Diallo, 2012).

Purchase intention is the totality of the time and budget details spent on the selection of goods, services, and the purchasing process. Understanding of this intention in the consumer by the marketers is a way of foreseeing what the consumer will purchase. Also, considering the marketing process, the cost of protecting the acquired customer is

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much less than gaining a customer for the first time, and understanding the purchase intention in this context plays a vital role (Kozak & Doğan, 2014).

Purchase intention is explained as the possibility of consumers purchasing a product in the future, which is directly related to consumer attitude and preference. Since behavioral intention is based on attitude, while keeping in mind that customer relationship and customer retention are based on attitude, purchase intention is expected to be in a strong relationship with attitude, and the behavior of a person is affected by intention (Alnsour et al., 2018).

3.1. ONLINE PURCHASE

According to Klopping and McKinney (2004), online shopping is related to both purchase and product information search activities. Online shopping allows access to and comparison of product or service alternatives from different online stores in various parts of the world. The internet reduces the cost of information search for potential consumers, by increasing the availability of product information and feature comparison (Alba et al., 1997).

If customers wish to be involved in an online transaction, the intention of online purchase occurs. Information retrieval, information transfer, and product purchasing process activities are online transactions (Pavlou, 2003). Number of consumers that use the internet are increasing and these consumers use the internet as a shopping medium while performing their purchasing activities (Ling et al., 2010).

In terms of consumers, online consumer behavior consists of two main components: collecting information about the product and making purchases. Studies on electronic commerce mostly focus on purchasing; however, online consumer behavior is not just about this phase. Before making a purchase, consumers first try to get information about the product. Information acquisition involves the flow of information from the seller to the consumer, which happens through the Website. Online information search is critical to identify needs, collect data on product features and potential alternatives, and get enough ideas to make the right decisions (Pavlou & Fygenson, 2006).

Consumers are looking for advice on social media before making a purchase decision (Hsu et al., 2013). Platforms such as Websites, forums and social media sites, which are becoming more and more popular, allow consumers to share ideas about products and services and help purchase decisions. In online platforms, marketing is

based on sharing knowledge, experience and thoughts, unlike traditional, and businesses often use social media sites to promote their products and services (Turgut et al., 2016).

The trustworthiness of the information contained in the blogs will positively affect the experiences of consumers and these experiences have a strong relationship with the purchase intention. Consumer experience and purchase intention will increase with the increasing interest of consumers in blogs (Hsu & Tsou, 2011).The trustworthiness, usefulness, and ease of use of blogs positively affect the attitude towards blogs and therefore have a significant positive effect on purchase intention (Bouhlel et al., 2010).

Online shopping is the consumers' purchase of products or services over the internet. Interchangeable concepts such as Online-Shop, Internet-Shop, Web-Shop, and Online-Store are used. Online shopping is an electronic commerce system between business to consumer or business to business (Shim et al., 2013).

3.2.FACTORS AFFECTING PURCHASE INTENTION

The intention to purchase has an effect that encourages or directs the behavior of consumers. The intention for a behavior emerges as a factor that encourages the consumer. Consumers can be affected by internal and external factors before or during purchase. Also, awareness, knowledge, interest, choice, persuasion, and intention to purchase are effective in consumers purchasing the product (Haque et al., 2015).

Individual attitudes and unforeseen situations can affect the intention to purchase. Individual attitudes include a commitment to the personal preferences and expectations of others. Unpredictable situations indicate that consumers have changed their purchase intention. For example, such a situation may arise when the price is higher than the expected price (Kotler, 2003).

Consumers' purchase intention increases for products which they have experienced before. Therefore, selling products through experiential marketing not only enables consumers to "understand" the products on display but also provides effective sales performance by preserving the value of the products. Today, modern businesses are making profits mainly by increasing consumer purchase intention to ensure sustainable development (Chao-Chien & Chen, 2014).

Purchase intention and the desire to purchase are two components of the purchase decision process. Ads which are shared on social media can catch consumer attention and encourage them to check the product or service, that could create a purchase intention.

Consequently, social media can affect the pre-purchase stage and purchase intention of consumers (Alnsour et al., 2018).

In some studies the following factors are mentioned as the factors that affect consumer purchase intention: Product type, product popularity, quality and reliability, brand awareness and brand loyalty, thoughts of family and friends, timing, and emotions (such as envy) (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015; Hoyer et al., 2013; Morwitz, 2012; Khan, Ghauri, & Majeed, 2012; O'Reilly & Marx, 2011; Park et al., 2007; Morwitz et al., 2007; Price & Feick, 1984; Burnkrant & Cousineau, 1975).

If a consumer trusts a brand for their previous experience, it is highly likely that they will be satisfied with another purchase. In the theory of social change, this supports the past experience and has an impact on subsequent purchase satisfaction (Lee et al., 2007).

4. CONCEPT OF THE BRAND

The American Marketing Association described the brand in 1967 as "one or more of the concepts of name, term, symbol, and design" but the brand is mostly interpreted as a logo (De Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley, 1998). The brand is the name, concept, word, design, photo, and components of these elements, which are determined to identify and promote the seller's goods and both to distinguish and differentiate from competitors (Kotler & Armstrong, 2004). A brand is a private name and sign to promote a commercial good or object and distinguish it from another (TDK, 2020).

The social contribution of the concept of the brand is very high, and brands accompany strong economic growth. Without brands, mass customer loyalty cannot be created. If customer loyalty is not created, there is no income and if there is no income, there is no investment and employment. If there is no investment and employment, there is no wealth accumulation and in the absence of wealth accumulation, the state has less income (Frampton, 2014).

The brand is used to ensure that the goods and services owned by a business differentiates from other businesses in the same sector, introduces them, and that these goods and services are promoted, stand out and take place in the minds of the customers (Mimaroğlu, 1972).

Companies or institutions today attach importance to the brand and branding to gain a competitive advantage in the market. Nowadays, companies use their brand name

to differentiate it from competitors. Creating a high-quality image of the brand's name will provide benefit in terms of competitive advantage (Erdil & Uzun, 2010).

Branding is an important strategy to meet the needs of customers with different products and gain market share. Also, the brand gives meaning and identity to the product/service and indirectly establishes a connection between the business and the customer (Kapferer, 1992). Awareness of brands by consumers is important to increase sales and revenues of companies which are established for profit. Logo, advertisement music, slogan, emblem, and brand name are among the components that are in the mind of consumers about the brand, and these components are among the main factors in increasing the brand's awareness. Creating brand awareness is important to have a place in consumers' minds (Bilgili, 2016). If the brand's logo, packages, emblems, and name are physically taken into consideration by the consumer, it contributes to brand awareness and realization of the purchasing behavior (Keller, 2008).

The characteristics of the brands should be as follows (Lindstrom, 2005):

- Should not only focus on the brand name and logo.
- Even the message, sound, smell, and touch should remind the brand.
- Should use all the necessary channels to convey their messages.
- Should have their Website.
- Should be transparent.
- Should be away from behaviors and discourses that are not suitable for the structure of the brand.
- Consumers should claim the brand rather than the institution. Because when the brand is in trouble, the consumer will save the brand.
- If the brand has an exciting process that affects the brand positively, people should be able to use the brand's important moments and celebrations as a conversation topic.
- Loyal consumers should feel the brand's name, logo, or slogan enough to make tattooed on their bodies.

The most important strategy of a brand is to adopt to be the best in the world regardless of its market and field of activity, to state this situation, and to take necessary actions (Hobsbawm, 2014).

The brand is like a relationship ladder where trust can be established between the consumer and the service/ product provider (Berry, 2000). Therefore, understanding the concept of brand trust is important for marketers.

4.1. BRAND TRUST AND FACTORS AFFECTING BRAND TRUST

Trust is important and has to be more or less in all social relationships and even the smallest interaction between people (Gopichandran & Chetlapalli, 2013). Creating a link between the consumer and the brand is the primary purpose of marketing, and trust is an essential factor (Elliott & Yannopoulou, 2007). The subject of "trust" plays a leading role from the beginning to the end of customer relations (Power et al., 2008).

Trust is very important because it affects several factors that are necessary for online transactions, especially privacy and security; and businesses cannot reach e-commerce potential without trust (Ha, 2004). If trust exists between consumers and businesses, this has the potential to be beneficial for both parties (Kim et al., 2008). The development of trust depends on effective-bilateral relations and the effort spent by the parties (Huang et al., 2006). Trust is inherently variable, and trust is developed over long periods, and efforts will either decrease or disappear completely in the first disappointment (Elliott & Yannopoulou, 2007).

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). Building trust for the brand reduces the risks and uncertainties about the brand. Therefore, "trustworthy" brands are preferred by consumers (Özdemir & Koçak, 2012).

Brand trust has taken its place in the literature as part of consumer behavior in the 1990s (Ha, 2004). Brand trust is a process that is "thought out and carefully designed," and brand loyalty is formed. Brand trust is defined as "the willingness of the average consumer to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function" (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). In other words, brand trust is "consumer trust regarding the quality and reliability of the services offered by the institution" (Gabarino & Johnson, 1999). Brand trust is a fundamental concept for brand relationships because, in addition to increasing brand loyalty, it strengthens and manages the relationship between customer and business (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

The trust process of the brand is valued with the company's reliability, honesty, credibility, philanthropy, and contribution to society (Power , Whelan, & Davies, 2008). For this reason, businesses give more importance to the trustworthiness of their products and their reputation in the market (Harris & Whalen, 2006). One of the main goals of creating brand trust is gaining a permanent competitive advantage and increasing business performance with this advantage (Ha, 2004). In marketing, trust is the consumer's expectation that a business will keep its promises and fulfill its duties. These expectations will be based on the integrity, benevolence, and competence of the business (Nguyen et al., 2013). If consumers find that the level of these expectations is sufficient, they will be satisfied (Flavián et al., 2006).

The development of brand trust based on learning experiences overtime consists of the experiences of consumers and previous interactions. For this reason, brand trust summarizes the experience and knowledge of the individual with a brand (Gabarino & Johnson, 1999). Brand trust consists of two dimensions: trustworthiness and intentions. The trustworthiness is about meeting promises and satisfying needs. The intentions are about the goodwill and attitudinal behavior shown to the client when faced with a problem. The more available these features are the more trust for the brand (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005).

There are several factors that affect brand trust. Some of these factors are explained as follows (Lau & Lee, 1999):

- *Brand Reputation*; is the degree of reliability that consumers perceive against the brand. Consumers may trust the brand and purchase the product if they perceive other people think that the brand is good; and if the usage experience meets expectation, this may reinforce the consumer's trust on that brand.
- *Brand Predictability*; is about the consumer expecting the same performance every time from the same product. The predictability of the brand's activities and behavior by the consumer contributes positively to brand trust.
- *Brand Competence*; expresses the brand's ability to meet consumers' expectations and provide solutions to their problems. In other words, it is the evaluation of goods and services as good and reliable. The satisfaction of the product or service increases the trust in the brand.
- *Brand Liking*; is a factor related to the degree of consumers' liking the brand. Liking, on the other hand, strengthens the sense of trust against the brand.

- *Trust in The Company*; Consumers' trust in the business affects the trust in the brand of the business.

The opinions of consumers about trustworthiness level of the brand and the level of quality of the brand affect the brand trust (Shapiro, 1983). Brand quality indicates the trustworthiness of the brand, and if the consumer trusts the brand quality, they also trust the brand (Azizi, 2014).

Providing information by brands about goods and services ensures that the consumer will not encounter anything different while using the goods or services of the brand. This also creates a positive expectation about the brand which increases brand trust (Dawar, 1996).

In recent years, brands have been interacting with consumers by optimizing their marketing activities thanks to the social media platform and establishing the relationship between brand and customer based on trust (Delgado- Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001).

4.2. THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON BRAND TRUST

Businesses in today's world are now trying to use social media, which has become a marketing environment and concept because social media is of great importance for the business itself and its brand (Hacıefendioğlu & Fırat, 2014). Brand trust is one of the most powerful tools for establishing relationships with customers on social media and the internet (Anwar et al., 2011).

With the increasing competition, as the markets are more difficult to predict and the differences between the products decrease; creating, developing, and maintaining brand trust on the internet has made business marketing plans very important (Ha, 2004). The internet and social media tools are seen as one of the most important channels to gain customers' trust against the brand (Reichheld & Schefter, 2000).

Businesses that communicate with consumers and find solutions to consumers' problems and expectations via the internet get some advantages as follows (Strategic Direction, 2010):

- Gaining trust and loyalty,
- Closely communication,
- Convince customers with the right strategies,

- Providing an interactive communication space to marketers,
- Retaining customers and gaining new ones.

Brand trust is an important tool to make a tighter relationship between consumers and businesses on the internet (Deari & Balla, 2013). The social media communications between the brand and the consumers will not directly increase sales very quickly. But, the 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). Brand trust is important to increase customer loyalty through social media. The brand trust gained with satisfied consumers has the potential to turn satisfied consumers into loyal consumers for the brand (Ha, 2004).

Consumers want to trust brands. Ensuring brand trust in consumers can be a significant competitive advantage. In particular, the trust factor in the social media environment is significant for businesses and brands. (Hacıefendioğlu & Fırat, 2014). Social media relations increase brand trust. Social media provides communication opportunities and relationships linking consumers to consumers, brands to consumers, and consumers to brands. Customers can easily convey their thoughts about the product and brand to other customers and share them with other customers via social media. As a result of this relationship, brand trust is positively affected. If consumers join a brand-related community, they can be exposed to brand-related content and customer sharing who have a meaningful experience with the brand. Sharing meaningful experiences about the brand on social media strengthens the links between the brand and consumers. As a result of these advanced relationships provided through social media, consumers will perceive the brand more trustworthy (Habibi et al., 2014).

**THE EFFECT OF INFLUENCER CREDIBILITY ON BRAND TRUST AND
PURCHASE INTENTION: A STUDY ON INSTAGRAM**

1. THE PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH

This study's primary purpose is to investigate the effect of influencer credibility on brand trust and purchase intention on Instagram. Instagram is one of the social media platforms that is actively used by marketers and contains a vast and diverse audience. The reason why Instagram is chosen is that the interaction in the platform is high and it has too many users.

The use of the internet in the world increases every year, and 83% of these users used social media in 2019 (Kemp, 2020a). Therefore, businesses should not ignore the social media factor while determining their marketing strategies. Influencers have an important role in social media marketing strategies.

The research was carried out on influencers and their followers on Instagram because influencer marketing is rapidly growing in the digital world, and influencers prefer to use and be active on the popular social media platforms such as Instagram. The results obtained from the study are expected to contribute to the decision processes when businesses make plans for influencer marketing strategies on Instagram. Although only influencers on Instagram are taken into consideration in this study, the results may give insight about influencer marketing on other social media platforms as well.

The effect of influencers or influencer credibility on purchase intention has been investigated in the related literature. The effect of influencers' credibility on brand trust and purchase intention and the mediation effect of brand trust in the relationship between influencers' credibility and purchase intention has not been studied together on Instagram.

The source credibility scale of Ohanian (1990) is used to measure influencer credibility, which is an important factor for the research. Brand trust and purchase intention are determined as dependent variables. In addition, the differences in the relationships of the structural model between product categories are also analyzed. Lastly, the effect of demographic characteristics and Instagram usage habits on purchase intention of consumers are examined.

2. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES AND RESEARCH MODEL

In this study, the effect of the influencers' (who promote product/brand via their social media channels) credibility on brand trust and purchase intention, as well as the mediation effect of brand trust on the relationship between influencer credibility and the purchase intention are investigated. In this section, variables related to the research model and relations with other variables are explained.

Figure 10. Research Model
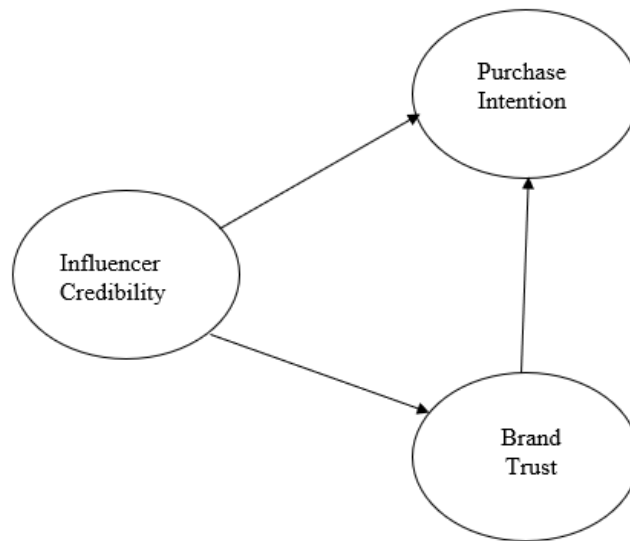
"Influencer Credibility" is a concept used to express that the person sending the message in communication affects the recipient's acceptance of the message (Ohanian, 1990). With the development of social media, some influencers called "celebrities" have emerged. These people, known as micro-celebrities, aim to attract attention and influence their followers by creating their online images (Khamis et al., 2017).

When the studies are analyzed in the literature, it is seen that the credibility and attractiveness of celebrities (as a source) affect consumers and are used by businesses as a marketing strategy (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 (2008), it was revealed that influencer credibility has positive effects on purchase intention. In the study by Eru et al. (2018), it is shown that source attractiveness has affected the purchase intention of youth, source attractiveness and trustworthiness have affected brand trust. In

the study of Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, (2005), they stated that brand trust is the result of brand-related experiences and that brand trust is positively associated with brand loyalty. Shamli (2019), stated that brand trust has a positive effect on purchase intention. According to the studies in the literature, the hypotheses of this study have been 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.

In the research carried out by Pornpitakpan (2008), 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 promoted by influencers.

H5: There are significant differences between the groups separated according to the product categories promoted by influencers.

$H5_a$: Influencer credibility effect on the purchase intention differs among the groups that are separated by the product categories promoted by influencers.

$H5_b$: Influencer credibility effect on the brand trust differs among the groups that are separated by the product categories promoted by influencers.

$H5_c$: Brand trust effect on the purchase intention differs among the groups that are separated by the product categories promoted by influencers.

3. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The scope of this study includes consumers who follow influencers on Instagram. Influencers are preferred because the vast majority of Instagram users follow one or more influencers, and these influencers promote products of various brands on the platform. The research model in the study was tested by applying an online questionnaire to people who use Instagram and follow at least one influencer.

There are many influencers on Instagram, and these influencers use sponsorships for product promotion with brands. One of the limitations of the research is that only the influencer that the participants in the survey followed most closely is considered. Lastly, only influencers on Instagram are considered, therefore the results may not be generalized to other social media platforms.

4. RESEARCH METHOD

The data collection method, population and sample of the research and data analysis method are included in this part of the study.

4.1. DATA COLLECTION METHOD

The questionnaire was applied to the participants by the online survey method via Google Forms between 01.01.2020 and 31.05.2020. The questionnaire included 5 main parts. In the first part, there were questions about demographic characteristics. The questions in the second part were about following Instagram influencers and Instagram usage habits. The questions in the third part were about the credibility of the Instagram influencers. The questions in the fourth part were about brand trust, and the questions in the last part were about purchase intention.

The participants were asked "Do you use Instagram?", the questionnaire was not continued with those who answered "no" to this question. Also, the question "Are you following influencers who occasionally promote brand/product on Instagram?" were asked to participants and the questionnaire was not continued in those who answered "no" to this question.

The research is designed as descriptive research and a structural equation model was used to investigate the effect of influencers' credibility on purchase intention and brand trust. 5-point Likert scale was used for the variables in the structural equation model. Questions were prepared according to the Likert scale as 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3- Undecided, 4- Agree, 5-Strongly Disagree.

The "source credibility" (influencer credibility) scale of Ohanian (1990) was used for the influencer credibility variable, which is in the structural model. The questions for the purchase intention variable in the structural model were adapted from the scales of Hsu & Tsou (2011), Mir & Rehman (2013) and Saxena (2011). The questions for the brand trust variable in the structural model were adapted from the scales of Chaudhuri & Holbrook (2001).

In addition to the questions related to the structural model variables, the participants were asked about their demographic characteristics such as gender, marital status, and educational status. Participants' Instagram usage habits, the product category which is promoted by influencer who is closely followed by participants, whether they researched through Instagram before purchasing and whether they bought a product they saw on Instagram are among the questions asked.

The applied questionnaire (English version) can be seen in Appendix 1, the applied questionnaire (Turkish version) can be seen in Appendix 2, and the Ethics Committee Approval required for the questionnaire's implementation can be seen in Appendix 3.

4.2. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The research population consists of Instagram users who follow influencers on Instagram. There are many domestic and foreign accounts on Instagram, which are perceived as influencers. Influencers generally use public accounts, and therefore it is not necessary to follow the accounts belonging to influencers to view their posts. Therefore, it is not possible to determine the research population precisely.

In this study, the convenience sampling method was used considering the answers of those who want to join the survey. According to Malhotra (2007), the convenience sampling method is suitable for descriptive research. In the survey conducted online, a total of collected and these data were used in the analyses.

4.3. DATA ANALYSIS

After collecting online data via Google Forms, data belonging to participants who use Instagram and follow influencers are defined in the SPSS program to be used in the analyses. The frequency and percentage distributions of the demographic characteristics and the participants' Instagram usage habits were determined.

After the descriptive statistics were made, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed to see if the questions of the variables were collected under the relevant factors as planned in this study. Then, the validity and reliability analysis of EFA were made and confirmed. After the EFA, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed in AMOS and the reliability and validity of the factors were verified one more time.

The proposed model and the hypotheses were tested using the structural equation model (SEM) in AMOS. Multiple group analysis was carried out to find differences between the product categories based on the promoted product category of influencer who is followed by participants. In addition to the structural equation model, the differences in purchase intention according to the participants' demographic characteristics and Instagram usage habits were analyzed using the One-Way ANOVA and t-test in SPSS due to the non-normal distribution of the data.

AMOS 21.0 program was used for CFA, SEM, and multi-group analysis, and SPSS 25.0 program was used for other analysis.

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Descriptive statistics, EFA, CFA, analysis of SEM, and analysis of differences in purchase intention according to demographic and Instagram usage variables are included in this part of the research.

5.1. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

According to 408 questionnaires that are suitable for analyses, the majority of the participants are women (69,9%), and the vast majority of the participants are single (80,1%). Regarding the education levels, most the participants have at least an undergraduate degree (69,4%). Moreover, 46,3% of the participants are students. Therefore, it is usual for the majority of participants to have an income level below 2.000 TL (48%). The distributions of these demographic data are given in Tables 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17.

Table 13. Distribution of Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	285	69,9
Male	123	30,1
Total	408	100,0

Table 14. Distribution of Marital Status

Marital Statue	Frequency	Percentage
Married	81	19,9
Single	327	80,1
Total	408	100,0

Table 15. Distribution of Education Level

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
Secondary education	3	0,7
High school	54	13,2
Associate Degree	68	16,7
Undergraduate	188	46,1
Graduate (Master's Degree or higher)	95	23,3
Total	408	100,0

Table 16. Distribution of Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Public employees	62	15,2
Wage workers in the private sector	82	20,1
Self-Employment	20	4,9
Student	189	46,3
Unemployed	55	13,5
Total	408	100,0

Table 17. Distribution of Monthly Income

Monthly Income	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 2.000 TL	196	48,0
2.000 TL – 2.999 TL	63	15,4
3.000 TL – 3.999 TL	48	11,8
4.000 TL – 4.999 TL	30	7,4
5.000 TL and above	71	17,4
Total	408	100,0

The distributions of the frequency of logging to Instagram, time interval of login to Instagram, and time spent on Instagram during the day of participants are given in Table 18, 19, and 20.

Table 18 shows that almost all of the participants (99,5%) login to Instagram at least once a day. Among these participants, 88,4% of them stated that they spend more than thirty minutes on Instagram during the day, as seen in Table 19.

According to Table 20 it is observed that the vast majority of participants (63%) login to Instagram between "19.00 and 01.00".

Table 18. Distribution of Frequency of Login to Instagram

Frequency of Login to Instagram	Frequency	Percentage
Several times during the day	394	96,6
Once a day	12	2,9
Once a week	1	0,2
Less than once a week	1	0,2
Total	408	100,0

Table 19. Distribution of Time Spent on Instagram During the Day

Time Spent on Instagram During the Day	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 30 minutes	47	11,6
30-60 minutes	113	27,8
1-2 hours	100	24,6
2-3 hours	72	17,7
More than 3 hours	74	18,2
Total	406	100,0

Table 20. Distribution of Time Interval of Login to Instagram

Time Interval of Login to Instagram	Frequency	Percentage
04:00 – 07.00	2	0,5
07.00 – 10.00	7	1,7
10.00 – 13.00	12	2,9
13.00 – 16.00	45	11,0
16:00 – 19.00	65	15,9
19.00 – 22.00	136	33,3
22.00 – 01.00	121	29,7
01.00 – 04.00	20	4,9
Total	408	100,0

Participants' purpose to login to Instagram was also questioned in the survey. A total of 892 answers were collected for this question, where more than one choice is allowed, and free entry is allowed along with the "other" option. The distribution of responses is given in Table 21. According to the results, the participants mostly use

Instagram to watch and view entertaining content (32,4%). Other purposes are as follows: "to watch or view the posts of the influencer, who I am following" (21,3%), "to watch or view informative contents" (20,4%), "to share posts on my account " (13,2%), and finally "to watch or view content that gives information about products before shopping" (11,4%). For the other option, there were 11 entries (1,2%) (Table 21).

Table 21. Distribution of Login Purposes to Instagram

Login Purposes to Instagram	Frequency	Percentage
to Watch or View Entertaining Contents	289	32,4
to Watch or View Informative Contents	182	20,4
to Watch or View Content That Gives Information about Products Before Shopping	102	11,4
to Share Posts on My Account	118	13,2
to Watch or View the Posts of The Influencer, Who I Am Following	190	21,3
Others	11	1,2
Total	892	100,0

The distribution of product categories that are promoted by the most closely followed influencers are shown in Table 22. Results reveal that participants mainly follow influencers that promote products in two categories. Cosmetics and personal care category ranks first with 30,1% and it is followed by clothing and accessories category with 25%.

Table 22. The Distribution of Product Category Promoted by the Most Closely Followed Influencer

Product Category	Frequency	Percentage
Cosmetics / Personal Care	123	30,1
Clothing / Accessory	102	25,0
Healthy Life	31	7,6
Electronics / Technology	18	4,4
Mother-child	13	3,2
Automobile	18	4,4
Books / Music / Hobby	36	8,8
Nutrition / Food	22	5,4
Home / Life / Decoration	20	4,9
Travel	18	4,4
Others	7	1,7
Total	408	100,0

The majority of participants (62,3 %) answered yes to the question "Do you search for a product on Instagram before purchasing it?" (Table 23). Another question was "Have you ever purchased a product that you have seen on Instagram?" (Table 24) and the majority of the participants answered as yes (69,9%). These results show that the vast majority of users are searching for information about products on Instagram before purchasing any product and they have a tendency to purchase the products they see on Instagram.

Table 23. Distribution of Searching Information Before Purchasing

Question	Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Do you search for a product on Instagram before purchasing it?	Yes	254	62,3
	No	154	37,7
	Total	408	100,0

Table 24. Distribution of Product Purchase Seen on Instagram

Question	Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Have you ever purchased a product that you have seen on Instagram?	Yes	285	69,9
	No	123	30,1
	Total	408	100,0

5.2. EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed in SPSS with the valid 408 questionnaires. The Principal Component Analysis model and Direct-Oblimin rotation method were used in exploratory factor analysis. According to Field (2009), if there is a possibility of a correlation between the factors, Direct-Oblimin rotation should be used. In addition to this "if you choose to set delta to greater than 0 (up to 0,8), then you can expect highly correlated factors; if you set delta to less than 0 (down to -0,8) you can expect less correlated factors". In the exploratory factor analysis delta was determined as (-0,2) to reduce the correlation because of correlations between the factors are predicted.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test and Barlett's test were used to check the fitness of the data for exploratory factor analysis. According to the results in Table 25, it can be said that the data is suitable for analyses since the KMO test result is above 0,7 and the result of the Barlett's test is significant.

Table 25. *Data Suitability Test for Exploratory Factor Analysis*

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0,961
Barlett's Test of Sphericity	Chi-Square	13.434,056
	df	253
	p	0,000

As a result of the exploratory factor analysis, the scale variables were loaded as five factors as assumed. These five factors explain nearly 88,5% of the total variance (Table 26). Three factors belong to the influencer credibility scale (expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness) and, the other two factors are brand trust and purchase intention.

Cronbach's alpha coefficient is used to measure the reliability of the scales. Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) suggested that Cronbach's alpha coefficient should be higher than 0,7 for all factors. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all the factors in the model were found to be above 0,7 (Table 27). For this reason, it can be said that reliability of the scale is provided. The mean and standard deviation values of the questions are also shown in Table 27.

Table 26. *Distribution of Factors in Exploratory Factor Analysis*

Factor	Initial eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings			Rotation sums of squared loadings
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	14,680	63,825	63,825	14,680	63,825	63,825	10,305
2	2,061	8,959	72,784	2,061	8,959	72,784	8,572
3	1,892	8,227	81,011	1,892	8,227	81,011	7,964
4	1,205	5,239	86,249	1,205	5,239	86,249	8,920
5	,508	2,209	88,459	,508	2,209	88,459	9,286
6	,398	1,729	90,188				
7	,269	1,168	91,355				
8	,255	1,109	92,465				
9	,192	,836	93,300				
10	,184	,799	94,099				
11	,167	,725	94,824				
12	,160	,695	95,519				
13	,147	,640	96,159				
14	,134	,584	96,743				
15	,127	,553	97,297				
16	,112	,489	97,785				
17	,104	,451	98,237				
18	,085	,368	98,605				
19	,079	,342	98,947				
20	,072	,312	99,259				
21	,062	,270	99,529				
22	,058	,254	99,782				
23	,050	,218	100,000				

Table 27. Exploratory Factor Analysis Statistics

Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	Question	Mean	Std. Deviation	Factor Load
Attractiveness (ICA)	0,939	ICA1	3,35	1,247	0,847
		ICA2	3,6	1,266	0,678
		ICA3	3,4	1,268	0,880
		ICA4	3,5	1,271	0,760
		ICA5	3,01	1,281	0,875
Trustworthiness (ICT)	0,972	ICT1	3,4	1,228	0,598
		ICT2	3,44	1,233	0,790
		ICT3	3,49	1,234	0,749
		ICT4	3,62	1,291	0,638
		ICT5	3,53	1,259	0,727
Expertise (ICE)	0,965	ICE1	3,25	1,203	0,932
		ICE2	3,6	1,246	0,582
		ICE3	3,6	1,236	0,590
		ICE4	3,54	1,230	0,638
		ICE5	3,6	1,264	0,597
Brand Trust (BT)	0,968	BT1	3,37	1,205	0,820
		BT2	3,35	1,195	0,861
		BT3	3,2	1,143	0,882
		BT4	3,33	1,178	0,865
Purchase Intention (PI)	0.963	PI1	3,45	1,259	0,852
		PI2	3,33	1,205	0,907
		PI3	3,42	1,229	0,918
		PI4	3,49	1,228	0,847

Convergent validity of the scales requires that the items of the factor are loaded under one factor, and all factor loadings must be greater than 0,5. (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As can be seen in Table 27, it can be said that the questions of each factor are loaded under the related factor, and convergent validity is provided because the factor loadings are higher than 0,5. Discriminant validity assumes that factors are separate from each other and there is no correlation between them. According to Gaskin (2020), in EFA, variables should not be loaded on more than one factor, and correlations between factors should be less than 0,7. According to EFA, all questions were loaded under one factor with the highest load, and as seen in Table 28, the correlations between factors are less than 0,7. Therefore, it can be said that discriminant validity is provided.

Table 28. *EFA Factor Correlation Matrix*

Factor	ICA	ICT	ICE	BT	PI
ICA	**1,000**	0,429	0,395	0,391	0,394
ICT	0,429	**1,000**	0,676	0,480	0,434
ICE	0,395	0,676	**1,000**	0,427	0,396
BT	0,391	0,480	0,427	**1,000**	0,541
PI	0,394	0,434	0,396	0,541	**1,000**

As a result of the exploratory factor analysis, the reliability and validity of the scales belonging to each factor were provided. Therefore, confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation model analysis were carried out in the next section.

5.3. CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

In confirmatory factor analysis, various goodness of fit statistics are used to evaluate the suitability of the measurement model. Acceptable and good values for some of the goodness of fit statistics that can be used to evaluate the model are shown in Table 29 (Meydan & Şeşen, 2015).

Table 29. *The Goodness of Fit Values for Confirmatory Factor Analysis*

Fit Indices	χ^2/df	RMSEA	RMR	CFI	NFI	GFI	AGFI
Acceptable Values	≤ 5	≤ 0,08	≤ 0,08	≥0,95	≥0,90	≥0,85	≥0,85
Perfect Values	≤ 3	≤ 0,05	≤ 0,05	≥0,97	≥0,95	≥0,90	≥0,90

The model of the first confirmatory factor analysis applied without any modification in the AMOS program including standardized factor loadings and correlations between latent variables are shown in Figure 11. According to the CFA results of the model, the Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) value didn't show an acceptable fit (Table 30). For achieving a better fit of the model, as suggested by Meydan and Şeşen (2015), covariances were applied between error terms by taking into account the modification indices; and then the model was tested again. The modified model is given in Figure 12. The goodness of fit statistics for the modified model are shown in Table 31. All the goodness of fit statistics were at least at an acceptable level for the modified model.

Figure 11. *CFA, Standardized Factor Loadings and Correlations of Measurement Model*
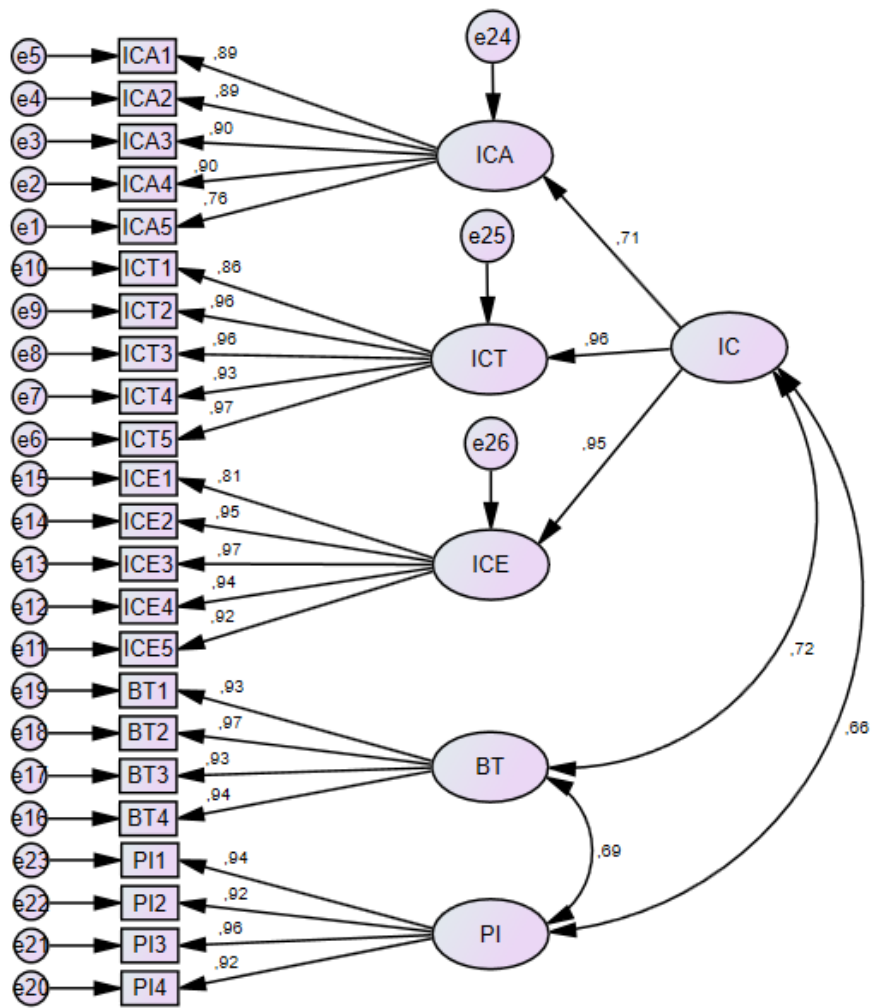
Table 30. *The Goodness of Fit Statistics of Confirmatory Factor Analysis for the First Model*

Fit Indices	χ^2/df	RMSEA	RMR	CFI	NFI	GFI	AGFI
First Model	3,116	0,072	0,074	0,965	0,949	0,869	0,839

Figure 12. CFA, Standardized Factor Loadings and Correlations of the Modified Model
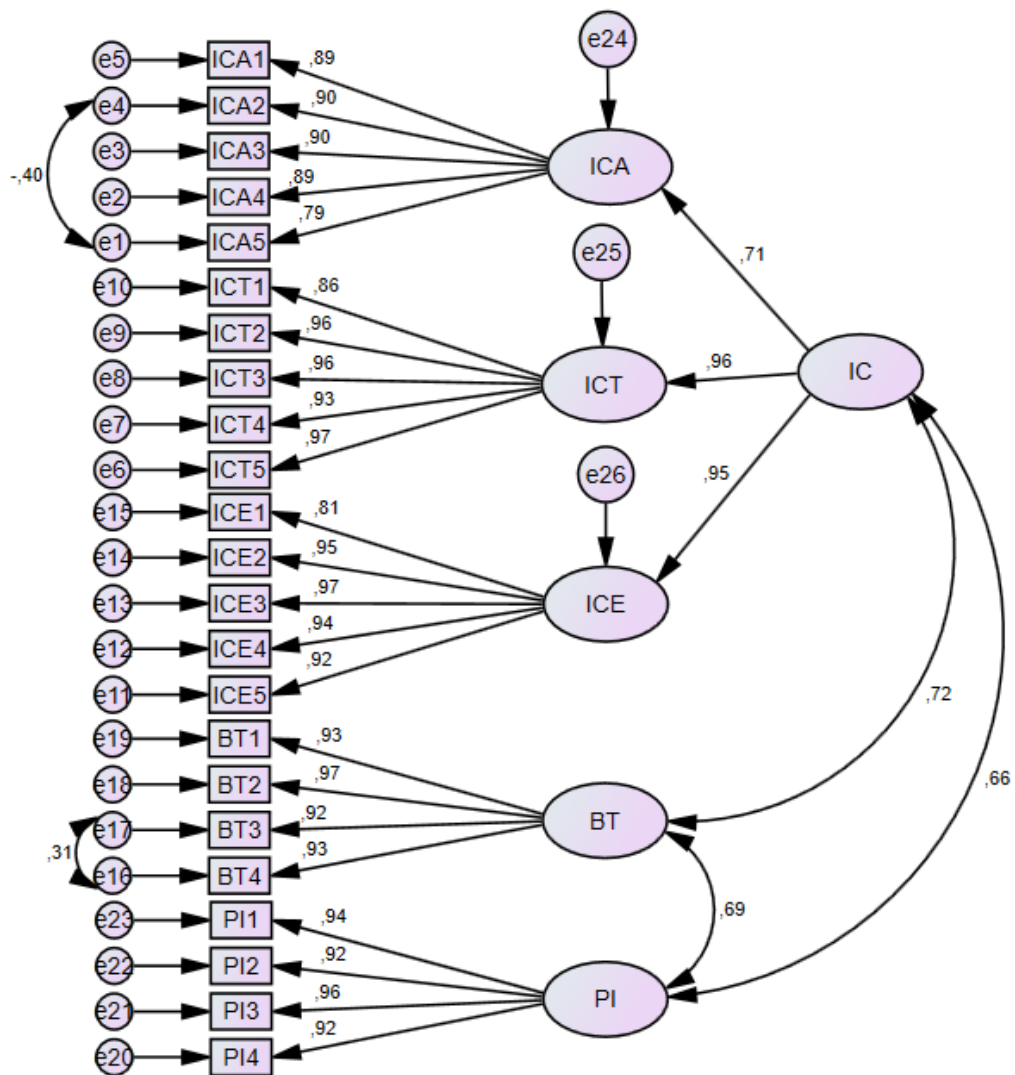
Table 31. The Goodness of Fit Statistics of Confirmatory Factor Analysis for the Modified Model

Fit Indices	χ^2/df	RMSEA	RMR	CFI	NFI	GFI	AGFI
Modified Model	2,855	0,068	0,074	0,969	0,954	0,882	0,854

Even if the CFA model fits well, the CFA model's reliability and validity should be checked before performing the structural equation model (SEM) analysis. Composite Reliability (CR) values should be checked for reliability analysis of the CFA model (Gaskin, 2020) and it is recommended that CR values should be above 0,7 to ensure reliability (Hair et al., 2014). As the CR value for each factor is found to be greater than 0,7, it can be said that the reliability of the modified measurement model is provided (Table 32).

Table 32. CR, AVE, and Factor Correlation Values of Modified 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.

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 32, the AVE values are higher than 0,5. Therefore, convergent validity is provided. To ensure discriminant validity, the square root of AVE values should be higher than the correlations between the factors (Hair et al., 2014). As seen in Table 32, the square roots of AVE (showed with bold font in the Table 32) values for all factors are higher than the correlations between factors, and it can be said that discriminant validity is provided. CFA also verifies the measurement model determined by EFA because of reliability and validity have been provided for the CFA model.

5.4. ANALYSIS OF STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODEL AND HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Structural Equation Model analysis was performed since the measurement model provided an acceptable fit in CFA. The analysis of the structural equation model shown in Figure 13 was done using the AMOS program. The goodness of fit statistics of this structural model is given in Table 33.

Table 33. 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

Standardized regression coefficients of the structural model are shown in Figure 13. It was seen that all the paths in the model were statistically significant (p <0,001).

Figure 13. Standardized Regression Coefficients of the Structural Model
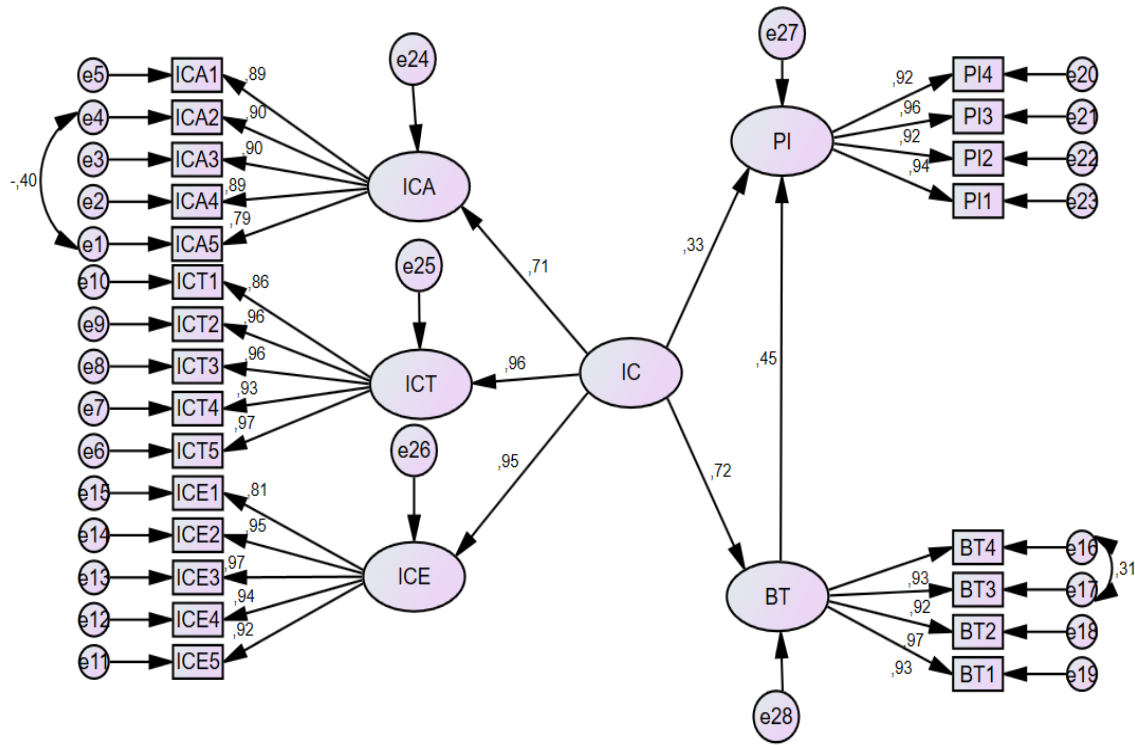
According to the results, influencer credibility (IC) significantly and positively affects brand trust (BT) (ß1 = 0,72) and purchase intention (PI) (ß2 = 0,33). Moreover, BT significantly and positively affects PI (ß3 = 0,45). Therefore, hypothesis H1, H2 and H3 are supported.

In addition to direct relationships between variables, there is an indirect relationship between influencer credibility (IC) and purchase intention (PI). BT has a mediation effect between IC and PI. Therefore, the total effect of IC via BT on PI increases (ß = 0,65) (Table 34). Therefore, hypothesis H4 is supported. Standardized coefficients of direct and indirect relationships related to the variables in the research model are shown in Table 34.

Table 34. *Direct, Indirect and Total Effects Between Model Variables*

	Standardized Direct Effects			Standardized Indirect Effects			Standardized Total Effects		
	IC	BT	PI	IC	BT	PI	IC	BT	PI
IC		0,72	0,33			0,32			0,65
BT			0,45						
PI									

Multiple group analysis was performed in AMOS for the two categories (cosmetic/personal care n=123 and clothing/accessory n=102), which are the two prominent categories that are promoted by the most closely followed influencers. As seen in Table 35, when the model is evaluated, there is a significant difference between group 1 (cosmetic/personal care) and group 2 (clothing/accessory) ($p < 0{,}001$). Therefore, H5 was supported, and it can be said that the product category, which is promoted by influencer has a moderator effect. Each path has been controlled via a chi-square difference test to see which of the structural paths differ according to product categories. The results of these tests are given in Table 36.

Table 35. *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 36. *General Model Differences between Cosmetics/Personal Care and Clothing/Accessory Groups for Each Relationship*

	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

Looking at the BT → PI relationship, the effect of brand trust on purchase intention for group 1 is significantly higher than group 2. When other relationships (IC → PI and IC → BT) are evaluated, the results show that the effect of influencer credibility on purchase intention and brand trust for group 1 are also significantly higher than group 2 ($p < 0{,}001$). According to these results, H5$_a$, H5$_b$, and H5$_c$ are supported. 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. All hypothesis results of the structural model are shown in Table 37.

Table 37. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Test Results
H1: Influencer credibility positively affects purchase intention.	Supported
H2: Influencer credibility positively affects brand trust.	Supported
H3: Brand trust positively affects purchase intention.	Supported
H4: Brand trust has a mediation effect on the relationship between influencer.	Supported
H5: There are significant differences between the groups separated according to the product categories promoted by influencers.	Supported
H5$_a$: Influencer credibility effect on the purchase intention differs among the groups that are separated by the product categories promoted by influencers.	Supported
H5$_b$: Influencer credibility effect on the brand trust differs among the groups that are separated by the product categories promoted by influencers.	Supported
H5$_c$: Brand trust effect on the purchase intention differs among the groups that are separated by the product categories promoted by influencers.	Supported

5.5. ANALYSES OF DIFFERENCES IN PURCHASE INTENTION ACCORDING TO DEMOGRAPHIC AND INSTAGRAM USAGE VARIABLES

In the previous section, using the structural equation model (SEM), the relationships between the variables in the study were examined. In this section, it is examined whether there is a difference in purchase intention according to demographic and Instagram usage profile of the participants.

In the analysis, the entire data set was taken into consideration (408 data) and analyses were carried out using the SPSS program. The average of the answers given to the questions regarding purchase intention was calculated for each person, and analyses were carried out with the value of PI$_{avg}$. To test whether there is a difference in purchase intention among the groups discussed, firstly, it was checked whether the PI$_{avg}$ data was normally distributed.

According to the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test (Table 38) performed in SPSS, the data is not normally distributed. But besides this, according to Hair et al., (2014), if skewness and kurtosis values are between -1 and +1, the data is normally distributed. When the descriptive statistics of the PI$_{avg}$ variable are examined (Table 39), it can be assumed that the data is normally distributed. Therefore, parametric tests are used to analyze the differences between the groups.

T-test was applied to test the differences between the two groups. For the differences between more than two groups, One-Way ANOVA test was applied. In cases where there was a significant difference as a result of a One-Way ANOVA test, all groups were examined to using the Post Hoc analysis (LSD). The results of the analyses are given in the relevant sections separately for each variable.

Table 38. Normality Test for the PI_{avg} Variable

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
	Statistic	**df**	**Significant**
PI_{avg}	0,189	408	0,000

Table 39. Descriptive statistics of PI_{avg} variable

		Statistic	**Std. Error**
Mean		3,4228	0,05783
95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	3,3091	
	Upper Bound	3,5365	
Median		3,8750	
Variance		1,364	
Std. Deviation		1,16808	
Skewness		-0,662	0,121
Kurtotis		-0,539	0,241

5.5.1. Purchase Intention Based on Gender

Whether there is a difference in purchase intention between male and female participants was examined by t-test. According to the results of this test, there is a significant difference between the two groups (p <0,05). When the mean is taken into consideration, it is seen that the effect of influencers on purchase intention is higher in female participants than male participants (Table 40).

Table 40. Results of the T-Test for Gender Groups

Gender	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	p
Female	285	3,6596	1,02132	6,547	406	0,000[*]
Male	123	2,8740	1,29958			

5.5.2. Purchase Intention Based on Marital Status

Whether there is a difference in purchase intention between single and married participants was examined by the t-test. According to the results of this test, there is no significant difference between the two groups as seen in Table 41 ($p > 0,05$).

Table 41. Results of the T-Test for Marital Status Groups

Marital Status	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	p
Married	81	3,5494	1,09432	2,243	406	0,276
Single	327	3,3914	1,18515			

5.5.3. Purchase Intention Based on Educational Level

One-Way ANOVA test was applied to examine the differences between five different groups that are separated depending on the educational level stated in Table 15. As shown in Table 42, there are significant differences in terms of purchase intention between groups at different educational levels ($p < 0,05$).

Table 42. Results of the One-Way ANOVA Test for Education Levels

Education Levels	Sum of the Squares	df	Mean Square	f	p
Between Groups	15,603	4	3,901	2,913	0,021[*]
Within Groups	539,715	403	1,339		
Total	555,318	407			

Post Hoc test (LSD) is performed to find the source of the differences in Table 43. According to the results, the purchase intention of the participants whose educational level is high school was significantly higher than those whose education level is secondary education, undergraduate and graduate (Master's degree or higher) ($p < 0,05$).

Table 43. Results of the Post Hoc Test for Education Levels

(I) Education Levels	(J) Education Levels	Mean Difference (I-J)	p
Secondary education	High school	-1,64815*	0,017*
	Associate degree	-1,31863	0,054
	Undergraduate	-1,21365	0,072
	Graduate (Master's degree or higher)	-1,11228	0,102
High school	Associate degree	0,32952	0,119
	Undergraduate	0,43450*	0,015*
	Graduate (Master's degree or higher)	0,53587*	0,007*
Associate degree	Undergraduate	0,10497	0,522
	Graduate (Master's degree or higher)	0,20635	0,262
Undergraduate	Graduate (Master's degree or higher)	0,10137	0,487

5.5.4. Purchase Intention Based on Monthly Income

One-Way ANOVA test was applied to examine the differences between five different groups stated in Table 17. As shown in Table 44, there are no significant differences in terms of purchase intention between different five groups that are separated depending monthly income of participants (p> 0,05).

Table 44. Results of One-Way ANOVA Test for Monthly Income of Group

Monthly Income	Sum of the Squares	df	Mean Square	f	p
Between Groups	2,004	4	0,501	0,365	0,834
Within Groups	553,314	403	1,373		
Total	555,318	407			

5.5.5. Purchase Intention Based on Frequency of Login to Instagram

According to the answers given by the participants to the question "How often do you login to Instagram?", the purchase intentions were compared. However, since there is only one person who answers less than once a week and once a week, these groups are not included in the analysis. As a result, it was determined that there were no significant differences between the groups (p> 0,05; Table 45).

Table 45. *Results of the T- Test for Frequency of Login to Instagram*

Frequency of Login to Instagram	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	p
Several times during the day	394	3,4423	1,16211	1,661	404	0,97
Once a day	12	2,8750	1,26805			

5.5.6. Purchase Intention Based on Occupation

One-Way ANOVA test was applied to examine the differences between five different occupation groups stated in Table 16. As shown in Table 46, there are no significant differences in terms of purchase intention among five groups that are separated depending on occupation of participants (p> 0,05).

Table 46. *Results of the One-Way ANOVA Test for Profession Groups*

Occupation	Sum of the Squares	df	Mean Square	f	p
Between Groups	6,747	4	1,687	1,239	0,294
Within Groups	548,571	403	1,361		
Total	555,318	407			

5.5.7. Purchase Intention Based on Time Spent on Instagram During the Day

According to the answers given by the participants to the question " How much time are you spending on Instagram during the day?", the purchase intentions were compared. As a result, it was determined that there were significant differences between the groups (p<0,05; Table 47).

Table 47. *Results of the One-Way ANOVA Test for Time Spent on Instagram During the Day*

Time Spent on Instagram During the Day	Sum of the Squares	df	Mean Square	f	p
Between Groups	31,112	4	7,778	5,986	0,000[*]
Within Groups	521,072	401	1,299		
Total	552,184	405			

Post Hoc test (LSD) was performed to find the source of the differences (Table 48). According to the results, the purchase intention of the participants who spent less than 30 minutes on Instagram was significantly lower than all other groups (p <0,05). The purchase intention of the participants who spent more than 3 hours on Instagram was significantly higher than those who spend between 30-60 minutes, and who spend between 1-2 hours (p <0,05).

Table 48. Results of the Post Hoc Test for Time Spent on Instagram During the Day

(I) Time Spent on Instagram During the Day	(J) Time Spent on Instagram During the Day	Mean Difference (I-J)	p
Less than 30 minutes	30-60 minutes	-0,45735*	0,021*
	1-2 hours	-0,56176*	0,006*
	2-3 hours	-0,78967*	0,000*
	More than 3 hours	-0,95493*	0,000*
30-60 minutes	1-2 hours	-0,10440	0,505
	2-3 hours	-0,33232	0,054
	More than 3 hours	-0,49758*	0,004*
1-2 hours	2-3 hours	-0,22792	0,197
	More than 3 hours	-0,39318*	0,025*
2-3 hours	More than 3 hours	-0,16526	0,382

5.5.8. Purchase Intention Based on Time Interval of Login to Instagram

According to the answers given by the participants to the question " Which time interval do you most login to Instagram?", purchase intentions were compared. As a result, it was determined that there were significant differences between the groups ($p < 0,05$; Table 49).

Table 49. Results of the One-Way ANOVA Test for Time Interval of Login Instagram

Time Interval of Login Instagram	Sum of the Squares	df	Mean Square	f	p
Between Groups	26,412	7	3,773	2,854	0,006*
Within Groups	528,906	400	1,322		
Total	555,318	407			

Post Hoc test (LSD) was performed to find the source of the differences (Table 50). According to the results, the purchase intention of the participants who login Instagram between 16:00 - 19:00 was significantly higher than who login between 19:00 - 22:00 ($p < 0.05$). Also, the purchase intention of the participants who login Instagram between 19:00 - 22:00 was significantly lower than who login between 22:00 - 01:00 and 01:00-04:00 ($p < 0,05$).

(I) Time Interval of Login Instagram	(J) Time Interval of Login Instagram	Mean Difference (I-J)	p
04:00 – 07.00	07.00 – 10.00	0,03571	0,969
	10.00 – 13.00	-0,47917	0,586
	13.00 – 16.00	-0,35000	0,674
	16:00 – 19.00	-0,76154	0,357
	19.00 – 22.00	-0,13235	0,872
	22.00 – 01.00	-0,55579	0,498
	01.00 – 04:00	-0,82500	0,334
07.00 – 10.00	10.00 – 13.00	-0,51488	0,347
	13.00 – 16.00	-0,38571	0,410
	16:00 – 19.00	-0,79725	0,082
	19.00 – 22.00	-0,16807	0,706
	22.00 – 01.00	-0,59150	0,187
	01.00 – 04:00	-0,86071	0,089
10.00 – 13.00	13.00 – 16.00	0,12917	0,730
	16:00 – 19.00	-0,28237	0,435
	19.00 – 22.00	0,34681	0,317
	22.00 – 01.00	-0,07662	0,826
	01.00 – 04:00	-0,34583	0,411
13.00 – 16.00	16:00 – 19.00	-0,41154	0,066
	19.00 – 22.00	0,21765	0,272
	22.00 – 01.00	-0,20579	0,306
	01.00 – 04:00	-0,47500	0,125
16:00 – 19.00	19.00 – 22.00	0,62919*	0,000*
	22.00 – 01.00	0,20575	0,245
	01.00 – 04:00	-0,06346	0,829
19.00 – 22.00	22.00 – 01.00	-0,42343*	0,003*
	01.00 – 04:00	-0,69265*	0,012*
22.00 – 01.00	01.00 – 04:00	-0,26921	0,333

5.5.9. Purchase Intention Based on Product Category Promoted by The Most Closely Followed Influencer

T-test was applied to examine whether there was a difference in purchase intention according to the product category that influencers promote. "Cosmetics/personal care" (group 1) and "clothing/accessory" (group 2) categories were the mostly answered (Table 22), and the analysis is made between these two groups. the purchase intention of the

participants who is in group 1 was significantly higher than who is in group 2 (p < 0.05; Table 51).

Table 51. *Results of the Product Category Promoted by the Most Closely Followed Influencer*

Product Category	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	p
Cosmetic/ Personal Care	123	3,7134	1,07108	2,821	223	0,005*
Clothing/ Accessory	102	3,2868	1,19632			

5.5.10. Purchase Intention Based on Searching Information Before Purchasing

One of the questions posed to participants is related to whether they search for a product on Instagram before purchasing it. In response to this question, most of the participants (254) stated that they do it. A significant difference was found between the two groups in terms of purchase intention between the participants who search and who do not (p<0,001; Table 52). As a result, it can be concluded that people who say they search for products are more likely to be affected by influencers than those who do not.

Table 52. *Results of the T-Test for Searching Information Before Purchasing*

Do you search for a product on Instagram before purchasing it?	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	p
Yes	254	3,7283	1,07937	7,197	406	0,000*
No	154	2,9188	1,13683			

5.5.11. Purchase Intention Based on Purchased Products that are Seen on Instagram

Another question that was posed to participants is ''Have you ever purchased a product that you have seen on Instagram?''. In response to this question, most of the participants (285) stated that they purchased. A significant difference was found between the two groups in terms of purchase intention between the participants who purchased and who did not (p<0,001; Table 53). As a result, it can be concluded that people who say they purchased are more likely to be affected by influencers.

Table 53. *Results of the T-Test for Product Purchase Seen on Instagram*

Have you ever purchased a product that you have seen on Instagram?	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	p
Yes	285	3,6877	1,04322	7,422	406	0,000*
No	123	2,8089	1,21428			

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Within the scope of the research, the effect of influencers' credibility on the purchase intention and brand trust was examined through the users who are following influencers on Instagram. In this context, the effect of "influencer credibility" on "purchase intention" and "brand trust", and the mediation effect of "brand trust" on the relationship between "influencer credibility" and "purchase intention" were analyzed using structural equation modeling in the AMOS program. Also, the structural equation model was tested by the AMOS program's multi-group analysis according to the product category promoted by the influencers. In addition to this, it was investigated whether participants' demographic characteristics, such as gender, marital status, educational status, monthly income and occupation cause differentiation upon purchase intention. The participants' habits of using Instagram, the product category promoted by the followed influencer, whether participants search on Instagram before buying any product and whether they purchased any product previously promoted by influencers, were evaluated in terms of differences in purchase intention. These differences in purchase intention were analyzed using One-Way ANOVA and t-test in SPSS program.

One of the important findings of the structural equation model is that influencer credibility has a significant positive effect on purchase intention and brand trust; and it is also seen that brand trust has a significant positive effect on purchase intention. Moreover, brand trust is 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 affects the purchase intention of consumers. Shamli (2019) found that sponsored product/brand promotions made by influencers on Instagram have a positive effect on consumer intention and brand trust. According to Eru et al. (2018), YouTubers' attractiveness affect consumers' purchase intention, and this attractiveness is effective in building trust against the promoted brand. At the same time, this brand trust has a mediation effect on the relationship between YouTuber's attractiveness and purchase intention (Eru et al., 2018). Looking at these studies in literature, it can be said that the effect of influencer credibility on brand trust and purchase intention is valid in other social media platforms as well as Instagram.

While developing influencer marketing strategies, one of the important factors that should be considered by companies is collaborating with Instagram influencers; because it positively affects brand trust and the purchase intention of consumers. Consumers demand to access information about products or brands through channels beyond television, Websites, and e-mail advertisements. The influencers that the consumers follow voluntarily play an important role at this point. Businesses should collaborate with influencers and prefer those who are perceived credible by consumers because consumers tend to purchase the products which are promoted by credible influencers. Also, influencers affect the brand trust, so collaboration with credible influencers should be established to create the trust that is important for building brand reputation. Credibility of influencers depends of several factors some of which are mentioned in the second part of the study. Companies may evaluate the influencers that they want to work with using those factors and criteria.

It is determined in this research that brand trust has a positive effect on consumers' purchase intentions. It is also observed that brand trust has an indirect and positive effect on the relationship between influencer credibility and purchase intention. Brand trust is an important factor for consumers. Building brand trust is more difficult, especially in social media platforms like Instagram and e-commerce. The rapid spread of information and the diversity of information sources make this process even more difficult. However, influencers, which are regarded as credible by their followers, can play an important role and should be taken into account in creating brand trust; because influencers can increase the tendency of potential consumers to purchase by creating trust on the brand. This success in creating brand trust will also have a significant impact on reaching more effective results in companies' marketing activities in the long term. In order not to lose this success achieved through influencers, companies should continue collaboration with influencers whose credibility is accepted by consumers. The brand should avoid partnerships with uncredible influencers that could break the trust of the consumer. Therefore, while planning influencer marketing activities, the right choice of a credible influencer should be considered because this will affect consumers' purchasing intentions directly and indirectly.

The research model was tested according to the product categories, which are promoted by followed influencers, and the most frequently given responses were cosmetics/personal care (group 1), and clothing/accessories (group2). Results of the chi-

square test applied to the structural equation model revealed that there were significant differences between the two groups. All the standardized regression coefficients in the structural model were significantly higher for the cosmetics/personal care category. This means that the effect of influencer credibility on purchase intention and brand trust, and the effect of brand trust on purchase intention are significantly higher for cosmetics/personal care product category than clothing/accessories product category. According to the data obtained from the participants of a study conducted by Nascimento (2019), the credibility of the influencer positively affects the consumers' intention to purchase for cosmetics and beauty products. According to research carried out by Ishani (2015), the influencers' credibility effect on purchase intention was analyzed according to the promoted product categories (cosmetics & clothing, etc.). The result of Ishani's study shows that influencers' credibility has a positive effect on consumer purchase intention and enjoyable shares of influencers increase this effect even more. There is no contradiction in terms of the effect of influencers' credibility on purchase intention in the analysis of this study and the results of the studies in the literature. This study's contribution to the studies in the literature reveals that influencers who share in the category of cosmetics and personal care as a product category have more influence on brand trust and purchase intention. Therefore, influencers who are perceived as credible by consumers become more important for businesses which sell products on cosmetics/personal care.

The first demographic question that is asked to the participants is their gender. Two gender groups were analyzed in terms of purchase intention, and a significant difference was observed. The effect of influencers on the purchase intention of female participants was significantly higher than male participants. This finding is in accordance with another study in literature. According to Fan and Miao (2012), women pay more attention to e-WOM credibility than men on social networks. Influencers are more effective in the purchase decisions of young women than traditional celebrities (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). According to the results of this research, the credibility of influencers plays an effective way to increase this effect. For this reason, it may be considered by businesses to bring forward the influencer marketing strategy, especially for products that target female consumers. Businesses that have a target audience of women can achieve more effective results by collaborating with influencers.

According to the education level, the effect of influencers on the purchase intentions of the participants significantly differs. It was observed that the purchase intention of the participants whose education levels are high school is higher than the participants whose education levels are undergraduate, and graduate. According to studies of Hui & Wan (2007) and Naseri & Elliot (2011), as the level of education increases, consumers are more likely to be exposed and adapt to internet technologies, so they are more confident in shopping online. The mentioned studies differ from the analysis results of this study, but Yüksel (2016) explained this situation as follows: As the level of education increases, consumers may be less influenced because they may be more skeptical about marketing activities and they may want to seek more information before purchase. Therefore, marketers should consider consumers with a high level of education when planning influencer marketing strategies on Instagram. It is recommended that they should convey detailed and satisfying information about the products which are promoted by influencers.

The differences in purchase intention of the participants according to their marital status, monthly income, occupation and frequency of login to Instagram were examined, and significant differences weren't found. According to a similar result obtained in Shamli's (2019) study related to Instagram and influencers marketing, there was no significant difference between participants' monthly income and purchase intentions. In the data of the research conducted by Kutlu (2019), it was examined whether there was a difference in terms of consumer intentions according to their marital status, and no significant difference was observed. In a study of Aytuna (2019) on influencers and Instagram marketing, it was investigated whether consumers' purchase intention differs according to their occupations, and no significant difference was found. One of the results obtained in the research is that those who login to Instagram once or more than once do not differ in terms of their purchase intention. The reason can be for this as approximately 97% of the participants state that they login several times during the day.

When the differences between the purchasing intentions of the participants according to the time spent on Instagram during the day were examined, it was observed that there were significant differences among the participants. Participants who spend more than 30 minutes on Instagram during the day have significantly higher purchase intention than those who spend less than 30 minutes during the day. There are also some differences between the groups that spend more than 30 minutes, and these differences

are as follows: Groups that spend more than 3 hours during the day have higher purchase intentions than those who spend 30-60 minutes and 1-2 hours during the day. It can be concluded that as the time spent on Instagram increases, the purchase intention also increases. Yüksel (2016) had a similar finding about YouTube; watching YouTube videos for long hours increases consumers' purchase intention. While consumers can easily see the contents of influencers that they follow, they can also see the posts of other influencers according to their interests in the explore section of Instagram. For this reason, the higher the number of followers of the influencers that the companies collaborate with, the more likely the content will appear to the consumers. It can be suggested that it will be beneficial for marketers to collaborate with influencers that have a high number of followers.

The differences in purchase intention of the participants according to the time intervals of login to Instagram were examined, and significant differences were found between some groups. Purchase intention of those who login to Instagram between 19:00 and 22:00 are lower than those entering between 16:00 - 19:00, 22:00 - 01:00 and 01:00 - 04:00. While marketing activities are carried out via influencers on Instagram, it will be an important factor for the posts to reach the consumers in the time intervals mentioned above (16:00 - 19:00, 22:00 - 01:00 & 01:00 - 04:00). Another time interval between these time intervals is 19:00 - 22:00, it is when the participants log in to Instagram most frequently. Therefore, when marketers and influencers share their posts on the platform, attention should be paid to the time interval. It is thought that it will be beneficial for the companies to share marketing messages between the hours of 16:00 - 04:00, when the users are the most active and tend to purchase. The posts/stories on Instagram are sorted from the newest post/stories to the oldest post/stories according to the shared time. The biggest difference that separates the stories from the posts is that stories stay only for 24 hours on the profile of users. If the user determines the story as the highlights, it is fixed on the user profile. The participants use Instagram intensively during these time intervals. Therefore, influencers' posts will receive high interaction during these time intervals because of the influencers are usually multi-follower accounts. Then, the posts may stand out in the Explore section of Instagram and may be exposed to marketing activities even if the users do not follow the influencers who cooperate with businesses.

There is also a significant difference in the product category that the influencer promotes in terms of purchase intention. Users who follow influencers that share in the

cosmetics and personal care category have higher intention to purchase than users who follow influencers that share in clothing/accessory category. This result is in accordance with the results obtained in the analysis for two groups in the structural equation model. As stated in the mentioned model, it is more important for the sellers of cosmetics/personal care products to cooperate with influencers to influence their consumers towards purchase.

Purchase intention was found to be significantly higher for the participants who search for product information on Instagram before purchase, and for the participants who had previously purchased a product that they had seen on Instagram. Therefore, it can be said that the effect of influencers is higher for people who use Instagram to search for product information and who purchase products that they have seen on Instagram. In the study carried out by Veissi (2017) in Finland, it was concluded that Instagram is a marketing platform that enables interactions with real-time comments and that consumers use the ideas and opinions of influencers before purchasing products for any brand. Participants are influenced by influencers on Instagram before buying any products, especially in cosmetic/beauty and clothing categories (Veissi, 2017). Therefore, it is in favor of marketers to see Instagram as a place where they can advertise their products and provide information about these products. Thus, it will be easier to influence consumers to purchase.

When all the results of the study are evaluated together, it can be concluded that Instagram influencers have a high effect on consumers' purchase intention. Therefore, it is possible to reach consumers and to increase consumers' purchase intention and trust for the brand by making collaborations with influencers. The number of users of the Instagram platform subject to the study and the high accessibility of these users reveals the importance of the platform for businesses. The influencers' credibility also plays an important role; because according to the results of this study, credible Instagram influencers increase both brand trust and purchase intention for the products that they promote. There is limited research in literature that uses the variables of the current study and the platform of Instagram. Therefore, it is believed that this study will contribute to the academic literature and present valuable insight to companies that want to include Instagram influencers in their marketing strategies.

Besides its unique implications, this study has some limitations. This study uses a sample of Instagram users who follow influencers on the platform, therefore the results

are applied for the Instagram platform and may not be generalized. Future research may focus on influencers on other social media platforms to test if the results of this study also apply to those platforms. In addition, two product categories were highly mentioned by the participants in this study, and the analyses included these categories only. Future research may include other product categories that are promoted by influencers. Also, it is thought that this study will be useful when determining the time intervals if future studies would like to analyze purchase intention according to the time interval of logging on Instagram. Because, between 04:00 and 16:00, there was no significant difference by consumers' purchase intentions. In future studies, these time intervals may be higher than 3-hour intervals.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire in English

Dear participant,

This questionnaire is about the implementation part of the thesis study on "The Effect of Influencers' Credibility on Brand Trust and Purchase Intention". The results of this study will only be used for scientific purposes and will not be shared with third parties. In order for the study to be successful, it is important to answer the questionnaire sincerely and not to leave blank questions. Thank you in advance for your interest.

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Please read the definition of the concept of **"influencer"** below before starting the survey.

Influencer; a person who promotes products or services via their social media account by sharing his/her own experiences or opinions about those products or services with the followers.

1. Do you use Instagram?

( ) Yes   ( ) No

2. Dou you follow accounts (influencers) on Instagram who occasionally promote brands/products and who have many followers?

( ) Yes   ( ) No

3. Your gender

( ) Female   ( ) Male

4. Your level of education

() Secondary education   ( ) High School   ( ) Associate Degree

( ) Undergraduate   ( ) Graduate (Master's Degree or Higher)

5. Your marital status

( ) Single   ( ) Married

6. Your monthly income

( ) less than 2.000 TL   ( ) 2.000-2.999TL   ( ) 3.000-3.999 TL

( ) 4.000-4.999 TL   ( ) 5.000 TL and above

7. Your occupation

( ) Public employees   ( ) Wage workers in the private sector

( ) Self-Employment   ( ) Student   ( ) Unemployed

8. How often do you login to Instagram?

( ) Several times during the day   ( ) Once a day

( ) Once a week   ( ) Less than once a week

9. How much time do you spend during the day on Instagram? (In the 8th question, those who choose the options several times during the day or once a day will answer this question.)

( ) Less than 30 minutes   ( ) 30-60 minutes   ( ) 1-2 hours

( ) 2-3 hours   ( ) More than 3 hours

10. In which time interval do you mostly login to Instagram? (Please mark only one option.)

( ) 04.00-07.00   ( ) 07.00-10.00   ( ) 10.00-13.00   ( ) 13.00-16.00
( ) 16.00-19.00   ( ) 19.00-22.00   ( ) 22.00-01.00   ( ) 01.00-04.00

11. For what purposes do you usually login to Instagram?

( ) to watch or view entertaining contents

( ) to watch or view informative contents

( ) to watch or view content that gives information about products before shopping

( ) to share posts on my account

( ) to watch or view the posts of the influencer, who i am following

( ) other (specify)……………………………………………………………….

12. In which product category does the influencer that you follow closely on Instagram mostly promote? (Please mark only one option.)

( ) Cosmetics / Personal Care ( ) Clothing / Accessory ( ) Healthy Life

( ) Electronics / Technology ( ) Mother-child ( ) Automobile

( ) Books / Music / Hobby ( ) Nutrition / Food ( ) Home/Life /Decoration

( ) Travel ( ) Others (specify)…………………………………

13. Do you search for a product on Instagram before purchasing it?

( ) Yes ( ) No

14. Have you ever purchased a product that you have seen on Instagram?

( ) Yes ( ) No

Please choose the degree of your agreement to the following statements, considering the influencer who shares in the category that you mentioned in question 12. **The influencer I follow is …**	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	attractive.					
2	classy.					
3	beautiful.					
4	elegant.					
5	sexy.					
6	dependable.					
7	honest.					
8	reliable.					
9	sincere.					
10	trustworthy.					
11	expert.					
12	experienced.					
13	knowledgeable.					
14	qualified.					
15	skilled.					

	Please choose the degree of your agreement to the following statements, considering the influencer who shares in the category that you mentioned in question 12.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
16	I believe in brand(s) promoted by the influencer.					
17	Brand(s) promoted by the influencer are safe.					
18	Brand(s) promoted by the influencer are honest.					
19	Brand(s) promoted by the influencer are reliable.					
20	Given a chance in the future, I predict that I would consider purchasing brands/products that are promoted by the influencer on Instagram.					
21	I will likely purchase brands/products that are promoted by the influencer on Instagram in the near future.					
22	Given the opportunity, I intend to purchase brands/products that are promoted by the influencer on Instagram.					
23	I intend to consider brands/products that are promoted by the influencer on Instagram in my future purchases.					

Appendix 2: Questionnaire in Turkish

Değerli katılımcı,

Bu anket formu "Etkileyici Kişi (Influencer) Güvenilirliğinin Marka Güveni ve Satın Alma Niyetine Etkisi" konulu tez çalışmasının uygulama kısmı ile ilgilidir. Bu çalışmanın sonuçları sadece bilimsel amaçlar için kullanılacak olup kesinlikle üçüncü kişilerle paylaşılmayacaktır. Çalışmanın başarılı olabilmesi için anket sorularına içtenlikle cevap verilmesi ve boş soru bırakılmaması önem arz etmektedir. Göstereceğiniz ilgi için şimdiden teşekkür ederiz.

Tez Danışmanı   Umut KEMEÇ
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Ankete başlamadan aşağıda yer alan **"etkileyici kişi (*Influencer*)"** kavramının tanımını lütfen okuyunuz.

Etkileyici Kişi (*Influencer*); sahip olduğu sosyal medya kanalı aracılığı ile bir ürün ya da hizmet hakkındaki deneyimlerini ve düşüncelerini takipçileri ile paylaşarak o ürünün tanıtımını yapan kimse.

1.Instagram kullanıyor musunuz?

( ) Evet   ( ) Hayır

2. Instagram 'da zaman zaman marka/ürün tanıtımı yapan ve çok sayıda takipçisi bulunan hesapları (etkileyici kişileri) takip ediyor musunuz?

( ) Evet   ( ) Hayır

3. Cinsiyetiniz

( ) Kadın   ( ) Erkek

4. Eğitim Durumunuz

( ) İlköğretim ( ) Lise   ( ) Ön lisans   ( ) Lisans   ( ) Lisansüstü

5. Medeni Durumunuz

( ) Bekar   ( ) Evli

6. Aylık Ortalama Geliriniz

( ) 2.000 TL'nin altında   ( ) 2.000-2.999TL arası   ( ) 3.000-3.999 TL arası

( ) 4.000-4.999 TL arası   ( ) 5.000 TL ve üzeri

7. Mesleğiniz

( ) Kamuda ücretli çalışan   ( ) Özel sektörde ücretli çalışan

( ) Serbest Meslek   ( ) Öğrenci   ( ) Çalışmıyor

8. Instagram'a ne sıklıkla giriyorsunuz?

( ) Gün içinde birkaç kere   ( ) Her gün bir kere

( ) Haftada bir kere   ( )Haftada bir kereden daha seyrek

9. Instagram'da günlük ortalama ne kadar zaman geçiriyorsunuz? (8. soruda gün içinde birkaç kere veya her gün bir kere seçeneklerini tercih edenler cevaplayacaktır.)

( ) 30 dakikadan az   ( ) 30-60 dakika arası   ( ) 1-2 saat arası

( ) 2-3 saat arası   ( ) 3 saatten fazla

10. Instagram'a <u>en çok</u> hangi zaman aralığında giriyorsunuz? (Lütfen sadece tek bir seçeneği işaretleyiniz.)

( ) 04.00-07.00   ( ) 07.00-10.00   ( ) 10.00-13.00   ( ) 13.00-16.00
( ) 16.00-19.00   ( ) 19.00-22.00   ( ) 22.00-01.00   ( )01.00-04.00

11. Instagram'a genellikle hangi amaçlarla giriyorsunuz?

( ) Eğlenceli içerikler izlemek/görmek için

( ) Bilgilendirici içerikler izlemek/görmek için

( ) Alışveriş yapmadan önce ürünlerle ilgili bilgi veren içerikleri görüntülemek için

( ) Kendi hesabımda paylaşım yapmak için

( ) Takip ettiğim etkileyici kişilerin (Influencer'ların) paylaşımlarını görüntülemek için

( ) Diğer (belirtiniz)……………………………………………………………………….

12. Instagram'da <u>en yakından</u> takip ettiğiniz etkileyici kişi (Influencer) en çok hangi ürün kategorisinde tanıtım yapıyor? (Lütfen sadece tek bir seçeneği işaretleyiniz.)

( ) Kozmetik / Kişisel Bakım   ( ) Giyim / Aksesuar   ( ) Sağlıklı Yaşam

( ) Elektronik / Teknoloji   ( ) Anne / Çocuk   ( ) Otomobil

( ) Kitap /Müzik / Hobi   ( ) Beslenme / Yemek   ( ) Ev / Yaşam / Dekorasyon

( ) Seyahat   ( ) Diğer (belirtiniz)…………………………………

13. Herhangi bir ürünü almaya niyetlendiğinizde o ürün ile ilgili Instagram'da araştırma yapar mısınız?

( ) Evet   ( )Hayır

14. Instagram'da gördüğünüz bir ürünü hiç satın aldınız mı?

( ) Evet   ( ) Hayır

Lütfen aşağıdaki ifadeler katılıp katılmama durumunuzu 12. soruda belirttiğiniz kategoride paylaşım yapan <u>etkileyici kişiyi</u> düşünerek yanıtlayınız. **Takip ettiğim etkileyici kişi …**	Kesinlikle katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle katılıyorum
1	çekicidir.					
2	stil sahibidir.					
3	güzel/yakışıklıdır.					
4	şıktır.					
5	seksidir.					
6	itimat edilebilirdir.					
7	dürüsttür.					
8	inanılırdır.					
9	samimidir.					
10	güvenilirdir.					
11	uzmandır.					
12	tecrübelidir.					
13	bilgilidir.					
14	niteliklidir.					
15	yeteneklidir.					

	Lütfen aşağıdaki ifadeler katılıp katılmama durumunuzu 12. soruda belirttiğiniz kategoride paylaşım yapan <u>etkileyici kişiyi</u> düşünerek yanıtlayınız. **Etkili kişinin tanıttığı…**	Kesinlikle katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle katılıyorum
16	marka/markalara inanırım.					
17	marka/markalar güvenilirdir.					
18	marka/markalar dürüsttür.					
19	marka/markalar güven verir.					
20	Gelecekte imkanım olursa etkili kişinin Instagram'da tanıttığı markaları/ürünleri satın alabileceğimi düşünüyorum.					
21	Yakın gelecekte etkili kişinin Instagram'da tanıttığı markaları/ürünleri gerçekten satın almam olasıdır.					
22	Fırsatım olursa etkili kişinin Instagram'da tanıttığı markaları/ürünleri satın alma niyetindeyim.					
23	Gelecekteki alışverişlerimde etkileyici kişinin Instagram'da tanıttığı markaları/ürünleri değerlendirmeyi düşünüyorum.					

Appendix3. Ethics Committee Approval

T.C.
AFYON KOCATEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL VE BEŞERİ BİLİMLERİ BİLİMSEL ARAŞTIRMA VE YAYIN ETİĞİ KURULU
KARARLARI

TOPLANTI SAYISI:08	KARAR TARİHİ:11.12.2019

KARAR 2019/132

Üniversitemiz Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Yüksek Lisans öğrencisi Umut KEMEÇ'in "The Effect Of Influencer Credibility on Brand Trust and Purrchase Intention: A Study on Instagram/ Etkileyici Kişi (Influencer) Güvenirliliğinin Marka Güveni ve Satın Alma Niyetine Etkisi: Instagram Üzerine Bir Çalışma" başlıklı Yüksek Lisans Tezi kapsamında kullanacağı veri toplama araçlarının, etik açıdan sakıncalı olmadığına, katılanların oy birliği ile karar verildi.

ASLI GİBİDİR

Prof.Dr. İsa SAĞBAŞ

Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimleri Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etik Kurulu Başkanı

	ADI SOYADI	İMZA	NO	ADI SOYADI	İMZA
1	Prof. Dr. İsa SAĞBAŞ		5	Prof. Dr. Uğur TÜRKMEN	
2	Prof. Dr. H. Hüseyin BAYRAKLI		6	Prof. Dr. İsmail AYDOĞUŞ	
3	Prof. Dr. Mustafa GÜLER		7	Prof. Dr. Nusret KOCA	*
4	Prof. Dr. Celal DEMİR				

CURRICULUM VITAE

Umut KEMEÇ was born in Ankara in 1994, completed his undergraduate education at Afyon Kocatepe University, Department of Business Administration in English in 2018, and completed his master's degree at Afyon Kocatepe University, Department of Business Administration in English in 2020. He has been working as a project manager at Afyon Kocatepe University International Relations Office since 2018.