



THE EFFECTS OF E- WOM'S INSTAGRAM PRODUCT PREFERENCES AS A MARKETING COMMUNICATION

Bir Pazarlama İletişimi Unsuru Olarak E Wom'un Instagram Ürün Tercihlerine Etkisi

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ÖZ

Sosyal medya web siteleri, elektronik ağızdan ağıza (eWOM) yönelik konuşmalar için değerli fırsatlar yarattı. İnsanlar artık marka ürünlerini ve hizmetlerini arkadaşlarıyla ve tanıdıklarıyla görüşebiliyorlar. Bu çalışmanın amacı, eWom'un instagram ürün tercihlerinin bir pazarlama iletişimi olarak etkisini araştırmaktır. Araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak anket formu kullanılmıştır. Sonsuz evren için% 5 örnekleme oranı, 384 kişi güvenilir bir sayı oluşturuyor. Araştırmanın örneği, kolay örnekleme ile seçilen 400 kişiden oluşmaktadır. Çalışmada veri analizi SPSS 16 paket programında yapılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde Kolmogorov-Smirnov testinin sonucu olarak nonparametrik test olan Mann-Whitney U Testi ve Kruskal Wallis H Testi ve frekans ve yüzdeler gibi tanımlayıcı istatistikler uygulanmıştır. E wom ve Instagram ürün tercihi arasında bir ilişki olduğu doğrulandı. Buna göre, instagram ürün tercihi olan kişilerin e-wom algılamaları, intstagram ürün tercihi olmayan bireylerden daha yüksektir. Kişilerin Instagram ürün tercihleri E-wom uygulamaları tarafından olumlu etkilenir. E-wom uygulamaları Instagram'ın tüketici algılarını artırmaktadır.

ABSTRACT

Social media websites have created valuable opportunities for electronic word of mouth (eWOM) conversations. People are now able to discuss products and services of brands with their friends and acquaintances. The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of eWom's instagram product preferences as a marketing communication. Survey form was used as data collection tool in the research. The 5% sample rate, 384 people constitute a reliable number for the infinite universe. The sample of the research consists of 400 people selected by easy sample. Data analysis in the study was done in SPSS 16 package program. In the analysis of the data, Mann - Whitney U Test and Kruskal Wallis H Test, which are nonparametric tests, were applied as the result of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage. It was confirmed that there was a relationship between e wom and Instagram product preference. Accordingly the e wom perception of individuals, who are having instagram product preference, is higher than the individuals who are lack of intstagram product preference. Instagram product preferences of individuals are influenced positively by E-wom applications. E-wom applications raise consumer perceptions of Instagram.

1. INTRODUCTION

Interpersonal impact and Word of Mouth (WOM) are the most significant information source when people decide to consume. Nowadays, internet makes gather information possible between customers. The consumers' reviews are published via internet are available for other customers who need these comments. These reviews are undeniably beneficial for other customers' successful product and service choices. In this respect, online communities are source which give way to gathering and sharing information between customers about product and services. Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) expands via forums, blogs, social network sites and idea platforms. Customers express their comments, complains and suggestions about product and services via such electronic communication channels. In addition to this, according to Edwards, Social media giants like Facebook and Instagram have revolutionized the way people communicate by allowing users to upload images and sharing their views about products, services and experiences with friends on the network (Edwards, 2011). As a result, social networks, especially among younger generations, are an important component of life and even become a familiar activity. Furthermore, established in 2010 by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger, Instagram is a relatively new social networking site and serves as a photo sharing platform for mainstream users. Generation cohorts are known to have distinctive values and lifestyles due to their

own experiences in the constituent years (Meredith and Schewe, 1994; Noble and Schewe, 2003), and it is believed that different cohorts will have different behavioral responses to Instagram. This kind of understanding is essential as it completes market segmentation and targeting strategies (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010). Hence, the present study is aimed to investigate the effect of E-wom as a marketing communication tool over Instagram product preference.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Social Media

Social media play a role in providing information, receiving and exchanging information without border restrictions (Kim et al., 2013). It is also a channel for sharing views and information and for building social connections with others (Akar and Topcu, 2011). What's more, it not only maintains relationships with friends and family, but also makes it easier to make new friends and build communities in line with their interests and goals (Bergstrom and Backman, 2013). It is also reported that people often spend more than 50% of their time on social media sites using their mobile phones (Bergstrom and Backman, 2013). Social media has gradually become a vital marketing tool for organizations of all sizes (Thomas and Akdere, 2013). The different features of social media have changed and developed their business operations and have enabled businesses to connect effectively with consumers. As a result, many organizations have begun to use social media to interact with their masses. Simultaneously, social media has increasingly turned consumers into advertisers or self-promoters (Roberts and Kraynak, 1998). Research in recent years has shown that when consumers are interested in purchasing a product today, they take into consideration the opinions of peers rather than the communication of businesses (Akar and Topcu, 2011). For this reason, they tend to acquire product information by asking for advice from friends or other consumers in the same social groups on social networking sites (Clemons, 2009). In particular, they tend to look online for some people's opinions or comments on products before making a purchase decision (Sema, 2013).

2.2. Marketing and E-wom

In daily life, all people are engaged in information exchange by communicating with each other in various ways, with or without awareness (Arndt, 1967). The effect of word-of-mouth marketing is particularly evident on consumer behavior such as information seeking, evaluation, decision-making (Kalpaklıoğlu & Toros, 2011:4114; Brown & Reingen, 1987). From the 1960s onwards, research on marketing discipline has shown how effective is word of mouth marketing on consumers. For example, it has been stated that word of mouth marketing is seven times more efficient than newspaper ads, four times than direct sales, and twice as efficient as radio advertisements (Katz and Lazarsfeld: 1955). It can be said that word of mouth communication is effective in all steps such as information seeking, evaluation and decision making in the consumer decision making process (Brown, Broderick & Lee, 2007).

2.3. E-wom

In the pre-Internet period, consumers shared their experiences by means of products, brands, or corporations in environments such as friendships, family conversations, where traditional marketing takes place. The rapid development of technology and the increased use of the internet have led consumers to experience online experiences of brands and products. In this regard, Cheung and Lee (2012) pointed out that electronic word of mouth communication is more effective than traditional word of mouth communication in terms of speed, durability and most importantly it is measurable. It is also important to maintain geographical boundaries in front of communication. In addition to this, According to Goldsmith, e-WOM is a social communication tool where a web user often sends and receives messages about product information via online E-WOM has given consumers a new world where they can communicate with each other and influence each other (Goldsmith, 2006). Internet and information technology not only allowed consumers to report their views on the product, but also allowed them to become a tool and marketing channel for the organizations (Chan, 2011).

2.4. Instagram

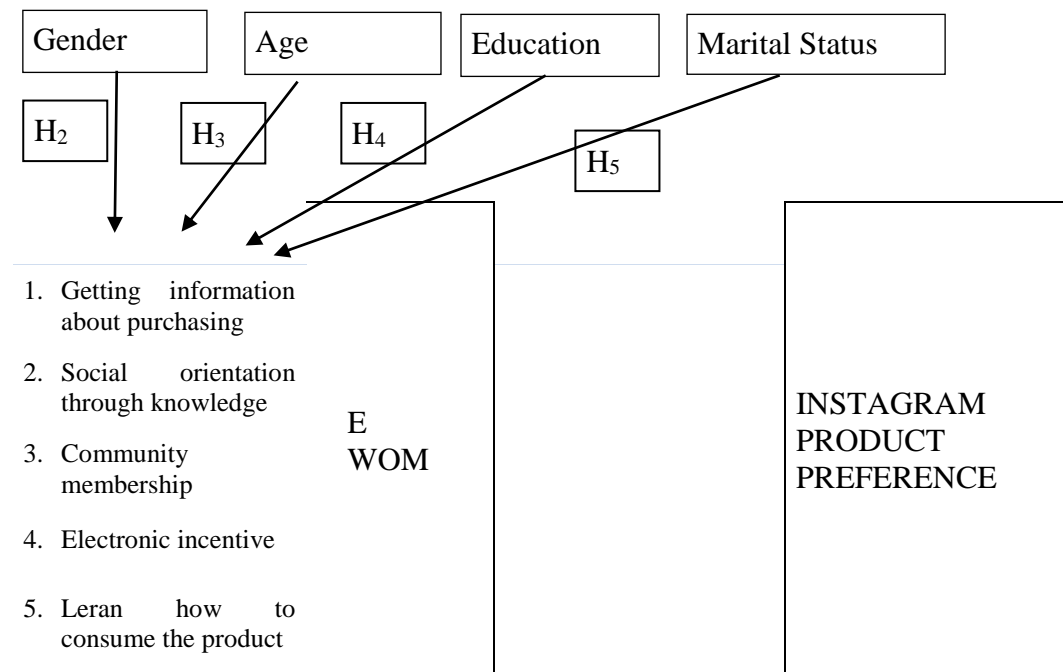
For decades, the most preferred social networking platforms are Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. But in recent years Instagram crushed the top of the market. Though it is a photo-based social networking

application, it is thought that more than 100 million users, launched in 2010, have become one of the fastest growing social media in a short period of time using Instagram regularly (Egan, 2015; Goor, 2012; Thomas and Akdere, 2013). Instagram uses mobile technology to provide a visual link between brands and consumers (Egan, 2015). By combining physical spheres with digital spheres, Instagram improves their online presence and identity and provides more interactive communication and effective information distribution (Abbott et al., 2013; Chante et al., 2014). Accordingly, countless organizations use it to create organizational-consumer networks to make their products more relevant to consumers' values and lifestyles. In Instagram there is a higher probability of consumers following high-level organizations themselves and their products (Lariviere et al., 2013). As followers increase, all the photos, events and updates related to the brand they publish on their profiles are easily visible, shared, spoken and spread (Goor, 2012)

3. METHOD

3.1. Modeling and Hypotheses of the Research

The data obtained through the questionnaire in the research have been analyzed and interpreted. The research model is as following.



The research hypothesis is as following;

H₁: e-Wom, is influential over Instagram product preference

H₂: Gender is influential on e-Wom perception.

H₃: Age is influential on e-Wom perception.

H₄: Educational status is influential on eWOM perception.

H₅: Marital status is influential on e-Wom perception.

3.2. Universe and Sampling

The universe of the research is the students of the Gelisim University. According to Yazicioglu and Erdoğan (2004), At the 5% sample rate, 384 people constitute a reliable number for the infinite universe. The sample of the research consists of 400 people selected by easy sample.

3.3. Data collection Tool

Survey form was used as data collection tool in the research. The questionnaire contains questions of 4 demographic features, 1 about the use of Instagram and 16 about e-Wom (Electronic Oral Communication) scale. The scale was developed by Hennig-Thurau and Walsh in 2003. The scale consists of 5 sub-dimensions. These scales together with Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient are as following; for Purchasing information sub-dimensions 0,752, for social orientation sub-dimension through knowledge is 0,781, for community sub-dimension is 0,804, for electronic stimulation sub-dimension is 0,793, for subdimension of learning how to consume the product is 0,812.

3.4. Data Analysis

Data analysis in the study was done in SPSS 16 package program. In the analysis of the data, Mann Whitney U Test and Kruskal Wallis H Test, which are nonparametric tests, were applied as the result of Kolmogorov - Smirnov test and descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage. The Post Hoc Bonferroni test was conducted to determine which variable was the source of the variance.

3.5. Findings Related to Demographic Characteristics

Table 1. Findings of Demographic Characteristics

		f	%
Gender	Female	217	54,2
	Male	183	45,8
	Total	400	100,0
Age	Under 21 years old	124	31,0
	22-37 years	178	44,5
	38 years and over	98	24,5
	Total	400	100,0
Education	High school	78	19,5
	University	235	58,8
	Graduate	87	21,8
	Total	400	100,0
Marital Status	Single	256	64,0
	Married	144	36,0
	Total	400	100,0

54.2% of the respondents were female, 44.5% were between 22-37 years, 58.8% were university graduates and 64% were single.

3.6. Findings related to Instagram Product Preference

Table 2. Instagram Product Preference Findings

		f	%
Instagram preference	product		
	Yes	126	31,5
	No	274	68,5
Total		400	100,0

31.5% of participants were purchasing products through Instagram and 68.5% were not.

3.7. E-Wom Perception by Demographic Characteristics

Table 3. Kolmogorov - Smirnov Test Results

Dimensions	Average	Standart deviation	Normal "Z"	Distribution	p
Getting information about purchasing	11,95	3,72	4,178		0,000
Social orientation through knowledge	11,59	3,57	4,975		0,000
Community membership	12,05	2,67	3,337		0,000
Electronic incentive	4,95	1,85	3,215		0,000
Learn how to consume the product	5,35	1,62	5,293		0,000

According to Kolmogorov - Smirnov test results, getting information about purchasing, social orientation through knowledge, community membership, electronic incentive and learning how to consume the product sub dimensions do not comply with normal distribution conditions ($p < 0,05$). In this case, the nonparametric tests Mann-Whitney U Test and Kruskal Wallis H Test were used in the affinity tests.

Table 4. Differences in e-WOM Perception by Demographic Characteristics

	Getting information about purchasing	Social orientation through knowledge	Community membership	Electronic incentive	Leran how to consume the product
Gender					
Female	12,50	11,63	12,23	5,28	5,53
Male	11,29	11,55	11,82	4,55	5,13
Z	3,008	1,028	1,080	3,575	1,596
p	0,003	0,304	0,280	0,000	0,110
Age					
21 yaş ve altı	11,26	11,54	11,84	5,79	4,18
22-37 yaş	11,19	10,39	11,66	5,22	4,52
38 yaş ve üzeri	12,95	12,59	12,82	6,95	5,35
X ²	14,411	16,609	15,039	9,410	8,602
p	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
Education					
High school	12,10	12,20	12,00	4,99	5,09
University	11,27	11,21	11,79	4,09	5,21
Graduate	11,95	12,08	12,15	4,95	5,35
X ²	2,124	1,057	1,116	2,341	2,547
p	0,152	0,304	0,280	0,135	0,110
Marital Status					
Single	11,50	11,06	11,22	4,74	4,75
Married	12,95	12,59	12,05	5,95	5,30

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Z	6,457	6,509	8,514	3,408	9,880
p	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000

However, subscale for acquiring knowledge and subscale for electronic incentive differ according to gender ($p < 0,05$). The H2 hypothesis is partially rejected. Women's perception of purchasing and electronic incentives is higher than men's. The sub-dimension of acquiring information by age, social orientation sub-dimension through information, community sub-dimension, electronic incentive sub-dimension and sub-dimension of learning how to consume product differ ($p < 0,05$). The H3 hypothesis can not be rejected. According to the Bonferroni test results of post hoc tests, the difference is due to the age of 38 years old and over. The e-Wom perception of individuals aged 38 years and over is higher than individuals aged 38 years or less. According to educational status, learning sub-dimension, knowledge sub-dimension, social affiliation sub-dimension, community sub-dimension, electronic incentive sub-dimension and learning sub-dimension of product consumption do not differ ($p < 0,05$). The H3 hypothesis is rejected. According to the marital status, learning sub-dimension, knowledge sub-dimension, social affiliation sub-dimension, electronic sub-dimension, and sub-dimension learning how to consume the product differ ($p < 0,05$). The H4 hypothesis can not be rejected. The e-Wom perception of married individuals is higher than that of single individuals.

Table 5. Differences of e-WOM Perception According to Instagram Product Choice

	Getting information about purchasing	Social orientation through knowledge	Community membership	Electronic incentive	Leran how to consume the product
Instagram Product Preference					
Yes	12,32	12,17	12,52	5,63	5,62
No	11,77	11,28	11,68	4,52	4,92
Z	8,521	6,842	8,574	6,954	7,058
p	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000

According to Instagram product preference, e-Wom perception is examined. According to Instagram product preference, learning subdimension, social orientation subdimension, community subdimension, electronic incentive subdimension and subdimension learning how to consume product differ ($p < 0,05$). H1 hypothesis can not be rejected. Instagram product preference is higher for individuals who buy products than individuals who do not have e-Wom sense in Instagram product preference.

3.8. Discussion and Result

With the growing popularity of social networks, businesses want to get more involved in such environments and promote their products / services to consumers through advertising, fan pages, viral or oral communication campaigns. Along with the developments in digital media, social media has become a marketing channel. Contemporary and creative businesses frequently prefer Word of mouth marketing practices, especially in social media. Among the social networks, Instagram stands out with its high number of members and an advertising system that enables businesses to target using detailed information from their users. Other marketing communications that stand out in the Instagram network apart from advertisements are mouth-to-mouth messages. Businesses also take the support of consumers when they create marketing messages. Allowing consumers to be involved in this process, thereby making them feel part of the business, and developing a strong sense of trust and ties between them. This increases consumers' confidence in the business and influences product choice. In this study, the effect of electronic word-of-mouth marketing perception on Instagram product choice was examined. It was determined that gender, age and marital status were effective on e-wom. Women's e-wom perceptions are higher than men's, e-wom perceptions of individuals aged 38 and over are lower than 38 years and below, and e-wom perceptions of married women are higher than those of single women. In the study there was a relationship determined between e-wom and

Instagram product preference. Accordingly, the e-wom perception of individuals who are found in product preference in Instagram is higher than those who are not. Instagram product preferences of individuals are influenced positively by E-WOM applications. E-WOM applications raise consumer perceptions of Instagram. Consumers' knowledge and attitudes about the product are influential on other consumers. Utilizing consumer experience, the reliability of the product choice is increasing and this affects the product choice positively (Yan et al., 2016; Liu et al., 2017). Many studies in the literature have found that e-WOM applications have a positive effect on consumer behavior. E-WOM applications have a positive effect on consumers' product preferences and purchase intentions (Yoo et al., 2013; Films and McLeay, 2014; Chang and Wu, 2014; Jun et al., 2017). However, studies in the literature have focused on factors such as helping other consumers, supporting the company, social interaction, giving advice, factors affecting the electronic word of mouth. In our study, the electronic word of mouth was taken into account in terms of demographic factors. It makes sense for the electronic word-of-mouth communication to be structurally related to other people, and in this sense being a social phenomenon, taking factors with social content instead of demographic factors. In this respect to the following reserches it will be appropriate to include social factors in order to improve the results of the study.

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