



## THE EFFECT OF CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS ON THEIR ATTITUDE, BEHAVIOR AND PURCHASE INTENTION IN SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING

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### Abstract

*Social media is defined as a virtual platform on which users share their knowledge and experiences and recently, social media gained a new dimension with the help of technology. As consumers spend more time indoors, at work, or at home, the use of social media increases and they develop a good knowledge about products and services through advertisement. The aim of this study is to examine the effects of consumer perceptions about social media advertisements on the attitudes, behaviors, and purchase intentions, and to evaluate them with regard to the consumer purchase decision process. According to the research results; information giving, entertainment, and favor to the economy factors affect attitude on social media advertisement, attitude on ad factors affect behavior and purchase intention, and finally, behavior factors affect purchase intention positively. It is concluded that while the reliability factor has no effect on attitude, value corruption factor affects attitude negatively.*

**Keywords:** Social Media, Online Advertising, Social Media Advertisements, Consumer Behavior, Online Consumer Behavior, Purchase Intention

**Jel Classification:** M30, M37, M39

## SOSYAL MEDYA REKLAMCILIĞINDA TÜKETİCİ ALGILARININ TUTUM, DAVRANIŞ VE SATIN ALMA NİYETİ ÜZERİNE ETKİSİ

### Özet

*Kullanıcıların bilgi ve tecrübelerini paylaştığı sanal bir ortam olarak tanımlanan sosyal medya son zamanlarda teknolojinin yardımıyla yeni bir boyut kazanmıştır. Tüketiciler evde veya işyerinde daha fazla vakit geçirdiğinde sosyal medya kullanımı artmakta ve reklam aracılığıyla ürün ve hizmetler hakkında*

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*daha iyi bilgi edinmektedirler. Araştırmanın amacı, sosyal medya reklamlarında tüketici algılarının tutum, davranış ve satın alma niyetine etkisinin incelenmesi ve tüketici satın alma karar süreci açısından değerlendirilmesidir. Araştırma sonucuna göre, bilgi vericilik, eğlence ve ekonomiye yararlılık faktörleri sosyal medya reklamlarına yönelik tutumu, tutum, davranış ve satın alma niyetini ve son olarak davranış, satın alma niyetini pozitif yönde etkilemektedir. Güvenilirlik faktörünün tutum üzerinde bir etkisinin olmamasına karşın değer yozlaşması faktörü tutumu olumsuz yönde etkilemektedir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sosyal Medya, Online Reklamcılık, Sosyal Medya Reklamları, Tüketici Davranışı, Online Tüketici Davranışı, Satın Alma Niyeti

**Jel Sınıflaması:** M30, M37, M39

## I. Introduction

Internet as an information and communication technology is one of the major initiators of the recent stunning developments in the technology area. The web gives people more power to control various aspects of their lives: their time, their money, their decisions, their gratification, their knowledge, and their communication.<sup>1</sup> As for firms, it allows them to build and manage relationships with individual customers in a much more cost-effective manner than possible in other domains.<sup>2</sup> In a short span of time, it becomes possible to reach large masses. One of the most important tools for this interaction is social media. Being able to suggest new ideas, share, and discuss them with other users, share photographs and videos over social media, and attract the attention of people day by day, has consequently increased the power of social media in numerous areas. One of these areas is advertising. Businesses concentrate on advertising on social media because reaching to target groups is easy, low-cost with respect to its effect, provides one-to-one communication, and its updatability provides advertisers using social media with the opportunities to track their competitors, familiarize their customers, take their pulse, and measure their behavior before and after the advertisement.

In parallel with the rapidly developing technology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, consumption patterns, requirements, and expectations are changing. Consumers are now using new communication channels, and they've switched from passive and follower mode to active and participator mode. Differentiation of communication styles and mediums changed consuming perception and consumer behavior; consequently, brand new market environments and purchasing forms had constituted.<sup>3</sup> Businesses which are looking for alternative solutions to respond to ever-changing consumer requests and to satisfy them will be able to survive and outscore their rivals. That's why

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1 Windham, L., Orton, K. (2000). The Soul of The New Consumer, New York, Windsor Books, p.37.

2 Close, A. G. (2012). Online Consumer Behavior: Theory and Research in Social Media, Advertising and E-Tail, United States of America, Routledge, p.215.

3 Kaban Kadioğlu, Z. (2012). New Generation of Consuming Perception and Turkey at Information and Communication Technologies Era, Social Media/Academy, İstanbul, Beta Publishing, p.156.

knowing about consumer behavior during purchasing processes and factors affecting purchasing behaviors are key skills in this area. Also, it is therefore necessary for consumer research to examine and understand consumer behavior in digital environments. This has been happening over the last decade, with increasing amounts of research focusing on digital consumer behavior issues.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Social Media

Social media is an environment that provides a set of tools available to both individuals and organizations, enabling information dissemination and sharing and creating content to facilitate conversation guided toward completion of both strategic and social goals that may eventually lead to consumption.<sup>5</sup> Social Media can be described as internet and mobile-based tools and devices that integrate technology, telecommunications, and social interaction enabling the construction, co-construction, and dissemination of words, images (static and moving), and audio.<sup>6</sup> Simply, social media can be defined as a wide-based platform that allows individuals to state their opinion through the internet without a time and place restriction, and this platform is based on the actualization of an interactive medium that enables an exchange of views and ideas.<sup>7</sup> Clearly, people are exposing themselves to more and more digital and social media. This is for many purposes, including their roles as consumers when they search for information about products, purchase and consume them, and when they communicate with others about their experiences.<sup>8</sup> While social media is a sharing tool for individuals, it is a public relations tool position for companies that bring threats and opportunities together.<sup>9</sup> For this reason, businesses that exist on social media must correctly define threats and opportunities in question and carry on their activities accordingly.

Before anything else, the emergence of social media is based on the change in Web technologies. Although the Internet began to develop in the 1960s, the “World Wide Web” (the network that embraces the world) was developed by Tim Berners-Lee between the years 1989-1991. After the development of the Internet, some authors suggested the idea that interconnected pages could be created in which users could browse information freely. Based on this idea, Berners-Lee and his team created the first version of the four basic elements of the web: ‘html,’ ‘http,’ a ‘web server,’ and a browser. Websites created during this period, which is called Web 1.0, are pages that have a static structure and are readable only. It is not possible for readers to interact with the owner of a web page or with each

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4 Stephen, A. . (2016). The Role of Digital and Social Media Marketing in Consumer Behavior, *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 10, p. 17.

5 Plume, C. J. et al. (2017). *Social Media in the Marketing Context*, Amsterdam, Chandos Publishing, p. 11.

6 Dabner, N. (2012). Breaking Ground’ in the Use of Social Media: A Case Study of a University Earthquake Response to Inform Educational Design with Facebook, *Internet and Higher Education*, 15(1), January: 69.

7 Bulunmaz, B. (2011). Social Media Usage at Automobile Sector and Fiat Case, *Global Media Journal*, 2(3), Fall: 29.

8 Stephen, 2016, 17.

9 Yavuz, M. C., Haseki, M. İ. (2012). E-Marketing Applications at Accommodation Businesses: A Model Proposal Based on E-Media Tools, *Çağ University Journal of Social Sciences*, 9(2), December: 127.

other through these pages. Web 1.0 refers to a medium in which there is no interaction and therefore users do not have the right to speak and there is unidirectional information transfer.<sup>10</sup>

The web that started to develop with Web 1.0 reached a point where internet users abandoned the one-way communication and was able to change the content by means of Web 2.0<sup>11</sup>; The concept of Web 2.0 is used to describe the second generation of the ‘world wide web’ (www). This concept is used to describe the web tools that have features different from the first generation web tools. In Web 2.0, information is sent by general users. Pages have features like feedback, elements that have links, and writing comments by users. Additionally, users become not only web readers but also web writers.<sup>12</sup>

Web 2.0 technologies make it easier for users to contribute to mediums that are aimed to provide content and ideas to the society. There are many examples of Web 2.0 applications which have become increasingly popular recently including blogs, wikis, tagging and folksonomic tools, and photo and social address-sharing sites like Flickr and delicious.<sup>13</sup>

When the statistics about social media usage is analyzed, it stands out that social media usage increases day by day and it becomes an indispensable part of human life. According to the report named “2015 Turkey Digital Future in Focus”, which was prepared by Comscore, 42% of internet users in Turkey are under the age of 24 , 22% of them are between the age of 25-34, 17% of them are between the age of 35-44, 11% of them are between the age of 45-54, and lastly 7% of them are above the age of 55. 14

In the “Digital in 2017 Global Overview” report last published in January / 2017, prepared by We Are Social and Hootsuite via the data collected from 238 countries, there is internet, mobile, and social media user statistics. 3.773 billion people, corresponding to 50% of the world’s population, use the internet and 2.80 billion of the population using the internet is actively using social media. In Turkey from January 2016 to January 2017, the number of internet users increased by 4%, 2 million people, and the number of active social media users increased by 14%, 6 million people.<sup>15</sup>

## 2.2 Social Media Advertisements

Nowadays, developments at information technologies, the role of internet in daily life, changes in consuming habits, and dynamic market structure has changed not only conventional communication

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10 Kekeç Morkoç, D., Erdönmez, C. (2015). The Effect of Web 2.0 Technology in the Training Processes: The Sample of Vocational School of Çanakkale Social Sciences, *Journal of Higher Education and Science*,5(3), Aralık/December: 336.

11 Bozkurt, A. (2013). Açık ve Uzaktan Öğretim: Web 2.0 ve Sosyal Ağların Etkileri, XV. Akademik Bilişim Konferansı, Antalya, 23-25 Ocak.

12 Horzum, M. B. (2010). Öğretmenlerin Web 2.0 Araçlarından Haberdarlığı, Kullanım Sıklıkları ve Amaçlarının Çeşitli Değişkenler Açısından İncelenmesi, *Uluslararası İnsan Bilimleri Dergisi*, 7(1): 605.

13 Karaman, S. et al. (2008). Öğrenme 2.0 Yaygınlaşıyor: Web 2.0 Uygulamalarının Eğitimde Kullanımına İlişkin Araştırmalar ve Sonuçları, *inet-tr’08 - XIII. Türkiye’de İnternet Konferansı*, Ankara, 22-23 Aralık.

14 Martin, B., (2015). 2015 Europe Digital Future in Focus, <https://www.comscore.com/Insights/Blog/2015-Europe-Digital-Future-in-Focus>, (Date Accessed: 16.11.2017)

15 Kemp, S., (2017) Digital in 2017 Global Overview, <https://wearesocial.com/special-reports/digital-in-2017-global-overview>, (Date Accessed: 16.11.2017)

instruments and content of communication messages but also communication mediums at which sender and receiver exist. Access to information becomes easier for consumers and then companies and consumers become in contact with themselves and each other. Thus, a more interactive structure is formed, searching and obtaining information functions of consumers that are realized at sharing platforms and become a part of daily life. By means of this alternation which includes the socialization phenomenon in itself, companies start using social networks as a tool for advertisement.<sup>16</sup>

Social media advertisements are stronger than traditional media advertisements, owing to the fact that they enable people to deal with their friends and other real people. In the past, advertisements focused on the properties and benefits of the product, but nowadays social media advertisements have customized content in order to leave maximum impression on every single user.<sup>17</sup>

According to the year, 2016 figures of IAB (Interactive Advertising Bureau) Turkey, digital advertising investments increased by 13.7% to 1.872,4 Million Turkish Liras. 64 percent of Social Media advertisements, which has reached the size of 262,4 million Turkish Liras, have appeared on mobile devices. Programmatic purchasing continued to increase in 2016, and its size has reached to 993,8 million Turkish Liras.<sup>18</sup>

When the advertisement applications that appear in social media tools are examined, it is likely to say that numerous big and successful companies, which aim to exist at the developing world and increase its market popularity, prefer these social media tools so as to promote their brands and provide consumer participation to their activities.

In terms of its advantages, online advertising has some features that make it different from traditional advertising. One of the most important features of online advertising against traditional types of advertising is that it can provide direct access to the goods or services that are advertised on the internet.<sup>19</sup> Consumers can have information about a company, product, or service by clicking on the advertisement and can go one step further and buy the advertised product with the help of that internet advertisement they clicked.<sup>20</sup> As an advertising medium, the Internet is both a communication area and a distribution channel for the customer. Another important distinguishing feature is that the global structure of the Internet has a unique impact on internet advertising. No other advertising tool can be offered 100% globally.<sup>21</sup>

16 Kazançoğlu, İ. et al. (2012). Effect of The Attitudes of Consumers Towards Advertisements at Social Network Sites on Purchasing Behaviors: Facebook Case, *International Journal of Economic and Administrative Studies*, 4(8): 177.

17 Kerpen, D. (2011). Likeable Social Media-How to Delight Your Customers, Create an Irresistible Brand, And Be Generally Amazing on Facebook (and Other Social Network), United States of America, McGraw-Hill Books, p. 176.

18 DigitalAge, (2017). 2016 Yılı Dijital Reklam Rakamları Açıklandı, <http://digitalage.com.tr/2016-yili-dijital-reklam-rakamlari-aciklandi/>, (Date Accessed: 15.11.2017)

19 Çalikuşu, F. (2009). Comparison of Internet Advertisement Types from the Point of Consumer Attitudes, *Journal of Öneri*, 8(32), July: 203.

20 Şahin, A. (2006). İnternet Reklamlarının Pazarlama Etiği Açısından Değerlendirilmesi: Mersin Üniversitesi Öğrencileri Üzerinde Yapılan Pilot bir Çalışma, *Öneri Dergisi*, 7(25), Ocak: 122.

21 Çalikuşu, 2009, 203.

Advertisements are traditionally trying to raise awareness, increase intent to buy, and transform passive buyers into customers. At the end of a linear advertisement, the buyer becomes more conscious and decides whether or not to buy the product. What makes social media advertising different and valuable is that they start a conversation. For a company, what an advertisement on Facebook and Twitter needs is creating likes or followers respectively.<sup>22</sup> By these means, users can be informed about the companies, products, and prices quicker than other consumers, and that provides them great advantages.

An online advertisement can be delivered in real time 24 hours in a day, 7 days in a week, and 365 days in a year. In addition to this, an advertising campaign can be launched, updated, or canceled instantly. Besides, an advertiser can track the progress of a campaign on a daily basis, and when the advertiser realizes that the campaign produces very little response in the first week, the advertiser can replace it with a new one till the second week. This is a much more advantageous situation than the printed media, where the advertisement cannot be changed until a new edition of the advertisement is published, or the TV where the high costs of the advertisement developing often prevent making changes.<sup>23</sup> This advantage is also valid for consumers. Consumers who are able to reach advertisements and therefore many products with very low costs, can also examine many product alternatives and make a comparison between alternatives in a short time thanks to online advertisements.

To measure social media advertisements and to determine the reach of the advertisements to the target audience is also easier than other advertising channels. By means of this measurement, the profile of the target audience can be clearly revealed. At the same time, the number of clicks on the advertisements demonstrates the target audience's interest in the advertised product and brand, and the extent of the information they want to obtain. In this way, with the aid of the databases formed, the target groups are traced. At the same time, such advertisements also provide more control for the target audience over the advertising process because the person can determine the advertisement, the duration of it, and the intensity of the information in the direction of his / her will.<sup>24</sup>

Social media platforms build a convenient interface in which users share their personal interests, experiences, and everyday life. This information enables advertisers to target their consumers with highly relevant ad messages in terms of demographical, geographical, and psychographic elements.<sup>25</sup> A further strength of social media advertising is its flexibility: advertisements can be turned on and off, or the content changed, in near real-time, allowing researchers to better control expenditure and the flow of participants into a study and to evaluate the effectiveness of advertisements.<sup>26</sup>

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22 Kerpen, 2011, 183.

23 Zeff, R., Aronson, B. (1999). Advertising on the Internet, Wiley Computer Publishing, 2nd Edition, United States of America, p. 14.

24 Özkaya, B. (2010). Reklam Aracı Olarak Advergaming, Marmara Üniversitesi İ.İ.B.F. Dergisi, 29(2): 464.

25 Jung, A-R. (2017). The Influence of Perceived Ad Relevance on Social Media Advertising: An Empirical Examination of A Mediating Role of Privacy Concern, Computers in Human Behavior, 70: 303.

26 Frandsen, M. et al. (2014). Exploring the Viability of Using Online Social Media Advertising as a Recruitment

## 2.3 Consumer Perceptions at Social Media Advertisements

Language and wording in social media advertisements, content of the messages, visual and auditory tools, and many other factors like these have a certainly considerable influence on the perceptions and attitudes of consumers towards advertisements and consequently towards businesses. Among these mentioned perceptions, the most frequent ones in literature are summarized below:

### 2.3.1 Informativeness

Informativeness aspect means the ability of advertisements to put forward up-to-date, timely, and easily accessible information. The informativeness feature of advertisements influences customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions of customers, and is additionally regarded as a major factor for acceptance of the advertisement by the customer.<sup>27</sup> Today, consumers' desire to reach information quickly and directly can't be ignored. Thus, the importance of informativeness is emphasized once again.

Many marketing studies have examined consumers' information search given its importance for the development of advertising programs. Information search is a crucial step in the consumer decision-making process. Since advertising perception and persuasion are closely linked, positive consumer beliefs regarding a company's website advertising should affect their information seeking behavior, and by extension, a more positive attitude towards website advertising should increase on-line information search.<sup>28</sup>

Consumers highly involved in a website likely interact more with its different elements and try to find out related product information.<sup>29</sup> Social Media Advertising provides a suitable platform for such a purpose because of its format, which displays the aspects of individual persona, personal contacts, as well as further product information such as 'likes' (this refers to a user pressing a button marked 'like' somewhere on the content of a page or post) and genuine personal comments posted by individual users. It is therefore likely that consumers with a collectivist culture regard SMA as an informative media suited to the acquisition of information relevant to potential future consumption.<sup>30</sup>

Wang, Sun, Lei and Toncar (2009) argue that the information seeking factor acts as a positive predictor of the formation of consumers' attitude towards online advertising. Besides that,

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Method for Smoking Cessation Clinical trials, *Nicotin & Tobacco Research*, 16(2), February: 248.

27 Ünal, S. et al. (2011). Attitudes Towards Mobile Advertising—A Research to Determine The Differences Between the Attitudes of Youth and Adults, *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 24, 2011: 365.

28 Karson, E.J. et al., (2006). An Examination of Consumers' Attitudes and Beliefs Towards Web Site Advertising, *Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising*, 28(2): 79.

29 Richard, M.O, Habibi, M.R. (2016). Advanced Modeling of Online Consumer Behavior: The Moderating Roles of Hedonism and Culture, *Journal of Business Research*, 69: 1105.

30 Van-Tien Dao, W. et al. (2014). Social Media Advertising Value: The Case of Transitional Economies in Southeast Asia, 33(2): 275.



Schlosser, Shavitt and Kanfer (1999) affirm that consumers' attitude towards internet advertising is influenced by informative and the advertisement's utility for building purchasing behavioral decisions. Thus, information is considered as a very valuable incentive in marketing because consumers react very positively to advertisements that transfer incentives. Consumers always want to have quick access to information that they are looking for in their current content of use, and it is possible that the information is automatically delivered to the consumers.<sup>31</sup>

### **2.3.2 Entertainment**

Uses and gratifications research has demonstrated that the value of entertainment lies in its ability to fulfill the audiences' needs for escapism, diversion, aesthetic enjoyment, or emotional release.<sup>32</sup> By means of changing conditions, as a result of diversification at product alternatives, users expect to enjoy watching advertisements more.

Entertainment of advertising information is significantly related to the advertising value of traditional advertising. Entertainment services can increase customer loyalty and add value for the customer. Therefore an entertaining advertising message is being perceived more positively by the recipient and affects recipient perception about advertisement value.<sup>33</sup>

### **2.3.3 Reliability**

This factor is defined as the general consumer perception about the truthfulness, credibility, solidity, trustworthiness, and believability of an advertisement.<sup>34</sup> The credibility of an advertisement is influenced by different factors, but especially the company's credibility and the bearer of the message. Advertiser credibility can be defined as the extent to which a customer perceives the company to be a credible source of information, and this credibility, in turn, assures the customer of the company's reputation, integrity, and goodwill. Advertising credibility is evaluated through the content the advertisements deliver. The relevance and credibility of advertisements are considered crucial when consumers must make decisions or take actions on the basis of uncertain information.<sup>35</sup> Many authors postulate that credibility has a direct relationship with both advertising value and attitude toward advertising.<sup>36</sup> A highly reliable advertisement has an identically high impact on the target market.

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31 Ling, K. C. et al. (2010). The Determinants of Consumers' Attitude Towards Advertising, *Canadian Social Science*, 6(14): 117.

32 Ducoffe, R. H. (1996). "Advertising Value and Advertising on the Web, *Journal of Advertising Research*, 36(5): 23.

33 Liu, C-L. et al. (2012). Determinants of Consumer Perceptions Towards Mobile Advertising- A Comparison Between Japan And Austria, *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 26(1): 24.

34 Ling, K. C. et al., 2010, 116.

35 Liu, C-L. et al., 2012, 24.

36 Brackett, L. K., Carr, B. N. (2001). Cyberspace Advertising vs. Other Media: Consumer vs. Mature Student Attitudes, *Journal of Advertising Research*, 41(5), September/October: 24



### **2.3.4 Good for Economy**

'Good for economy' reflects the point of view that advertising speeds up the adoption of new goods and technologies by consumers, fosters full employment, reduces the average costs of production, elevates producers about healthy competition, and increases the standard of living on average.<sup>37</sup> In addition, an essential view of advertising supporters is that advertising is the lifeblood of business.<sup>38</sup> Hence, it can be said that advertising adds positive value to the economy by supporting both production and consumption of a product.

Web advertising saves consumers time and makes it possible for them to choose from a wide variety of merchandise from their homes or offices. When shopping for costly items where price comparison in an information-rich environment is fairly easy and the potential for savings significant, the economic motivation to shop on the web could be strong. Another aspect of the economic motivation is consumers' ability to receive free products. Good for the economy is a societal effect.<sup>39</sup>

### **2.3.5 Value Corruption**

Web advertising has the power to mold users' values; thus, web advertising has the potential to corrupt the values of its users.<sup>40</sup> Value Corruption reveals one's belief about the impact of advertising on people's outlook on life.<sup>41</sup>

Considering this information, it is possible to say that this factor has an effect on the attitudes of consumers towards advertisements. Therefore, businesses must know the structure of their target consumer groups and they should design their advertisements according to this structure, so that their advertisement messages will be correctly perceived and evoke positive attitudes, not provoke a reaction.

## **2.4 Attitude, Behavior, and Purchasing Intention towards Social Media Advertising**

Attitudes of consumers towards advertisements are one of the most important factors that affect the purchasing process as well as it affects purchasing intention. Here below, attitude and behavior towards social media advertisements and purchasing intention concepts are explained.

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37 Pollay, R. W., Mittal, B. (1993). Here's the Beef: Factors, Determinants, and Segments in Consumer Criticism of Advertising, *Journal of Marketing*, 57, July: 102.

38 Ling, K. C. et al., 2010, 118.

39 Wolin, L.D. et al. (2002). Beliefs, Attitude and Behavior Towards Web Advertising, *International Journal of Advertising*, 21(1): 92.

40 Wolin, L. D. et al., 2002, 93.

41 Wang, Y. et al. (2009). Examining Beliefs and Attitudes Toward Online Advertising Among Chinese Consumers, *Direct Marketing: An International Journal*, 3(1): 59.

### 2.4.1 Attitude towards Social Media Advertisements

Attitude towards advertisement is the tendency to respond either positively or negatively against advertisement stimulus during the exposure to an advertisement. While positive attitude towards advertisement is called liking, disliking means negative attitude.<sup>42</sup> Consumers who have positive attitudes towards an idea or a product can easily be persuaded and a great majority of advertisements are used so as to strengthen positive attitudes, change negative attitudes, and persuade consumers. The attitudes position as a fundamental variable for marketers and arises from the fact that it is one of the principal factors which affects the consumer's final decision.<sup>43</sup> Marketers must be able to know how attitude and demographic factors of consumers can affect their attitude toward online ads, so marketers can determine their consumer target based on consumers' attitude. By knowing this, it is not difficult for marketers to achieve according to their goods or services.<sup>44</sup> Consumers are more likely to have a stronger intention to purchase a product when they react favorably to an advertisement about that product.<sup>45</sup> When advertising is considered as a persuasive communication activity, attitudes towards advertisement and advertising becomes an important component in the persuasion process. Thus, for advertisers who attempt to influence consumers that have negative attitudes towards advertisements, the primary problem is not the failure of the advertisement; it is the ignored negative attitudes.<sup>46</sup> Consumers may have different attitudes to stimuli from the ads that they get because of differences in circumstances, motive, nature, and other drivers that are tailored to the needs of consumers at the time.<sup>47</sup> Concordantly, businesses must pay attention to consumer attitudes towards social media advertisements.

### 2.4.2 Behavior towards Social Media Advertisements

Developments in information technology transform consumers into online consumers, and the majority of the new generation almost starts to shop as an online consumer. Consequently, in recent years, online consumer behavior is accepted as a research area in many disciplines such as information systems, marketing, management science, psychology, and social psychology.<sup>48</sup>

Online consumer behavior is affected by a consumer's attitude towards online shopping. This is because a consumer's attitude towards online shopping significantly affects a consumer's intention

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42 Kazançoğlu et al., 2012, 163.

43 Çalikuşu, F. (2009). Comparison of Internet Advertisement Types from the Point of Consumer Attitudes, *Journal of Öneri*, 8(32), July: 205.

44 Martini, E., Widaningsih, S. (2015). Effect of Online Advertising Towards Online Attitude of Adolescents in Indonesia, *International Journal of Science and Research*, 4(12): 733.

45 Hwang, J. et al. (2011). Structural Effects of Cognitive and Affective Responses to Web Advertisements, Website and Brand Attitudes, and Purchase Intentions: The Case of Casual-Dining Restaurants, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 30(4): 897.

46 Onay, A. (2012). Attitudes Towards Advertisements: A Qualitative Research, *Gümüşhane University E-Journal of Faculty of Communication*, 1(4), September: 52.

47 Martini, E., Widaningsih, S., 2015, 734.

48 Uygun, M. et al. (2011). Factors That Affect Consumers' Online Shopping Behaviors, *Journal of Organization and Management Sciences*, 3(2): 374.

to use the internet for information search and therefore their intention to use the internet for shopping. As such, if a consumer has a positive attitude towards online shopping they are also likely to have positive intentions to search for online products and price information.<sup>49</sup>

### **2.4.3 Purchase Intention**

Willingness to buy is an important indicator within the purchase decision-making process and is defined as “a hypothetical construct that states how likely a person is to purchase a good in a shopping situation.” Willingness to buy is a psychographic characteristic, useful as a variable for online buying segmentation.<sup>50</sup> Previous studies have included purchase intentions as a key indicator of the success of online advertisements.<sup>51</sup> Although online advertising is an effective tool to reach larger audiences, it is important that advertisers incorporate features to make it more effective.<sup>52</sup>

## **3. Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Proposed Model**

This research is based on the casual proposed model which tries to determine whether there is a casual relationship between the variables which are related with the case, without creating an effect that can change the current status of the case. In the study, first, a theoretical model is developed based on the assumption that perceptions of consumers about social media advertisements influence their attitude, behavior, and purchasing intention. In the second step, whether the factors which affect consumer’s perceptions towards social media advertisements affect consumer’s attitudes towards social media advertisements is examined. In the third step, the question that whether there is a relation between the attitudes of consumers towards social media advertisements and consumers’ behavior is investigated. Finally, the relation between behavior and purchasing intention is studied.

Our proposed model is based on the studies of Wang et al. (2009), Wolin et al. (2002), and Hwang et al. (2011). In the model, the effect of perception about social media advertisements on attitude towards advertisements, the effect of attitude on consumer behavior and purchasing intention, and the effect of behavior on purchasing intention are shown.

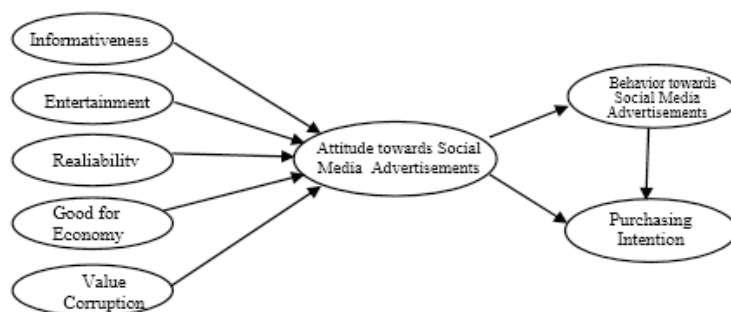
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49 Isaksson, J., Xavier, S. (2009). Online Communities–Segments and Buying Behavior Profiles, Boras, University of Högskolan I Boras, p. 24, (Unpublished Postgraduate Thesis)

50 Isaksson, J., Xavier, S., 2009, 23-24.

51 Hwang, J. et al., 2011, 899.

52 Wei, K. K. et al. (2010). Online Advertising: A Study of Malaysian Consumers, International Journal of Business and Information, 5(2), December: 113.

**Figure 1:** Proposed Model

### 3.2 Population and Sample

The research population consists of students studying at universities in the Marmara region of Turkey. The reason why the Marmara region was chosen is because this region has the highest population density in Turkey and the reason why university students are selected as the sample is because they use social media frequently. According to the results of the “Household Utilization of Information Technologies” questionnaire done by TÜİK (Turkish Statistical Institute) in April 2012, youth (age between 16 and 24) constitutes more than half of the internet population in Turkey (67.7%). Additionally, 93% of internet users have graduated from college or above. For this reason, university students can be accepted as representatives of internet users in Turkey. In this framework, a questionnaire was conducted to 1057 students studying in Trakya, Kırklareli, Namık Kemal, Marmara, Haliç, Doğuş, Kocaeli, Sakarya, Yalova, Uludağ, Onsekiz Mart and Balıkesir Universities which were selected based on convenience sampling in the Marmara region of Turkey.

### 3.3 Data and Data Collection

Necessary data for the research was collected by using the face-to-face questionnaire method. While collecting data, the perception scale (Wang et al., 2009), attitude towards advertisement scale (Wolin et al., 2002), behavior scale (Wolin et al., 2002), and purchasing intention scale (Hwang et al., 2011) are used. These scales mentioned above were applied to online advertising before, for this reason, by means of essential changes; their sentence structure and wording were made suitable for social media advertising. Statements that are composing these scales are situated as six point Likert type scale questions (1=Strongly Disagree, 6=Strongly Agree).

The questionnaire consists of three parts. In the first part, there are 15 statements about 5 factors which are for measuring perceptions towards social media advertisements. These factors are Informativeness, Entertainment, Reliability, Good for Economy, and Value Corruption. In the

second part, there are 7 statements which are for measuring consumers' attitude, behavior, and purchasing intention towards social media advertisements. In the third part of the questionnaire, there are demographic and socio-economic questions for the purpose of obtaining complementary information about the participants of the research.

### **3.4 Research Variables**

Independent variables of the research were Informativeness, Entertainment, Reliability, Good for Economy, and Value Corruption, which consists of consumer perceptions towards social media advertisements. Endogenous variables were determined as Attitude towards Social Media Advertisements, Behavior towards Social Media Advertisements, and Purchasing Intention.

### **3.5 Research Hypotheses**

Although the studies on advertising attitudes have varied widely in the types of samples used and the data collection methods employed, they have focused upon many of the same dimensions of judgment. Respondents typically have been asked not only about their overall attitudes toward advertisements but also their perceptions of advertising's trustworthiness, offensiveness, informativeness, entertainment value, and effect on product prices and value, as well as attitudes toward regulatory issues.<sup>53</sup> Before hypothesizing about the research, previous researches relevant to the topic were examined and summarized below:

In the research done by Zafar and Khan (2011) on Pakistani university students, their attitudes towards social network advertisements were examined, and it was concluded that reliability, informativeness, and entertainment perceptions towards social network advertisements have positive effects on attitudes. As a result of the research about effect of perceptions regarding online advertisement on attitudes done by Wang et al. (2009), after the evaluation of the perceptions of Chinese university students regarding online advertisements, it is concluded that informativeness and economy factors have positive effects on attitude, and the value corruption factor has a negative effect on attitude. Additionally, it was found that there is a significant relationship between attitude and purchasing intention. Also, it was concluded that entertainment and reliability factors do not have a meaningful effect on attitude. Following the research done by Ling et al. (2010) on students studying in a private university in Malaysia, it was observed that reliability, information, and economy factors have a positive effect on the attitude towards advertisement. Ünal et al. (2011) analyzed the attitudes of young and adult consumers towards mobile advertisements, and they deduced that entertainment, information, and reliability factors have a positive effect on the attitudes towards mobile advertisements. Besides, it was seen that there is a positive relationship between attitude and purchasing intention. By Ducoffe (1996), the effect of online advertisements on attitudes was investigated and it was concluded that information and

53 Schlosser, A. E. et al. (1999). Questionnaire of Internet Users' Attitudes Toward Internet Advertising, *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 13(3), Summer: 36.

entertainment factors have strong positive effects on the perceived value of advertisement and the value of the advertisement has strong positive effects on attitude. Moreover, Wolin et al (2002) examined metropolitan consumers' attitudes and behaviors towards online advertisements and they inferred that the information factor has a positive effect but the value corruption factor has a negative effect on attitude and behavior. In addition, it was deduced that the economy factor does not have either positive or negative effects on attitude and behavior, and there is a positive relationship between attitude and behavior.

Hypotheses which were prepared in the light of the information above, are listed below. By using these hypotheses, the relationships between perceptions of consumers about social media advertisements and their attitudes towards advertisements, their behaviors, and purchasing intentions were tested.

**Hypothesis 1.** Perceptions regarding whether social media advertisements are informative have positive effects on the attitude towards social media advertisements.

**Hypothesis 2.** Perceptions regarding whether social media advertisements are entertaining have positive effects on the attitude towards social media advertisements.

**Hypothesis 3.** Perceptions regarding whether social media advertisements are reliable have positive effects on the attitude towards social media advertisements.

**Hypothesis 4.** Perceptions regarding whether social media advertisements are good for the economy have positive effects on the attitude towards social media advertisements.

**Hypothesis 5.** Perceptions regarding whether social media advertisements are corruptive to the values of the society and youth have negative effects on the attitude towards social media advertisements.

**Hypothesis 6.** Attitudes towards social media advertisements have positive effects on behavior.

**Hypothesis 7.** Attitudes towards social media advertisements have positive effects on purchasing intention.

**Hypothesis 8.** Behaviors towards social media advertisements have positive effects on purchasing intention.

#### **4. Data Analysis**

At this part, questionnaire results are assessed in the light of the information obtained from literature, and statistical operations were realized by using SPSS 16 and Lisrel 8.80 packaged software.

##### **4.1 Findings about Demographic Characteristics**

It is possible to say that participants of the research were equally distributed in terms of gender. There are 561 female (53.3%) and 491 (46.7%) male students. When participants' frequency

distribution of age information is analyzed, it is understood that 160 of students (15.2%) are between 15 and 18, 639 of them (60.7%) are between 19 and 22, 154 of them (14.6%) are between 23 and 26, 44 of them (4.2%) are between 27 and 30, and finally 55 of them (5.2%) are 31 and above. Majority of the participants are between the age interval of 19 and 22.

When the students participated in the research, they were asked how often they visit social networks in a day, 21 of them (2%) said never, 199 of them (18.9%) said once, 411 of them (39.1%) said 2 to 4 times in a day. It was seen that 172 of them visit 5 to 7 times in a day, meanwhile, 249 of them stated that they visit more than 7 times in a day. When the students were asked how much time they spend at social networks, 17 of them (1.6%) answered as never, 451 of them (42.9%) less than 2 hours, 389 of them (37.0%) 2 to 4 hours, 117 of them (11.1%) 5 to 7 hours, and 78 of them (7.4%) more than 7 hours. When participants' most preferred social network choices are considered, majority of them (40.9%) visit Facebook. Respectively, Google+ (22.8%), Twitter (16%), Youtube (14.7%), LinkedIn (2.6%), Myspace (1.7%), Pinterest (0.5%), Friendster and Delicious (1%), and finally other social network sites (0.7%) follow Facebook.

#### 4.2 Factor Analysis

In order to evaluate the adequacy of data, before applying factor analysis to the data in question, KMO and Bartlett Tests were performed. Regarding the KMO value, values between 0.5 and 1.0 were taken as acceptable, whereas values below 0.5 were the indicator of the inconvenience of factor analysis for the data set in question. However, the minimum KMO value that is considered favorable for researchers is 0.7.<sup>54</sup> When results of the Bartlett and KMO tests were analyzed, 0.881 value in the KMO test showed that the sample size was enough and result of the Bartlett test as 8835.221 and  $p=0.00$  were found significant at a 1% level. Hence, it is concluded that data is suitable for factor analysis.

After it was understood that statements in the questionnaire were suitable for factor analysis, again a factor analysis was done so as to determine the dimensions and number of dimensions at which these statements will be gathered. As a result of the analysis, it was seen that statements were gathered under 8 factors, and furthermore, factors, questions corresponding to factors, related factor loadings, Eigenvalues, variance explanation percentages of factors, and reliability regarding every factor were given in Table 1. As it is seen in the table, *Informativeness* explains 12.956%, *Entertainment* factor explains 10.576%, *Reliability* factor explains 10.126%, *Good for Economy* explains 8.283%, *Value Corruption* explains 8.260%, *Attitude towards Advertisement* factor explains 8.098%, *Behavior* factor explains 6.831%, and lastly *Purchasing Intention* factor explains 5.966% of the total variance. After all, factor loadings of variables were between 0.637 and 0.888, and since all of the loadings are greater than 0.63 and the difference between factor loadings is greater than 0.10 for all of the variables, construct validity is ensured for the 8-factor scale which explains 71.1% of the total variance in the performed application.

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54 Altunışık, R. et al. (2012). Research Methods in Social Sciences-SPSS Applied, Sakarya, Sakarya Publishing, Enhanced 6th Edition, p. 266.



**Table 1:** Results of Factor Analysis for Participants' Perceptions

Statements	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained (%)	Cumulative Percent	Cronbach Alpha
<b>Informativeness</b>		6.854	12.956	12.956	.719
Social media advertisements are good resources for product/service information	.743				
Social media advertisements serve related information.	.791				
Social media advertisements give up-to-date information.	.559				
<b>Entertainment</b>		1.723	10.576	23.532	.850
Social media advertisements are entertaining.	.848				
Social media advertisements are enjoyable.	.839				
Social media advertisements are pleasing.	.625				
Social media advertisements are interesting.	.654				
<b>Reliability</b>		1.458	10.126	33.658	.795
Social media advertisements are convincing.	.769				
Social media advertisements are reliable.	.830				
Social media advertisements are sensible.	.699				
<b>Good for Economy</b>		1.439	8.283	41.941	.683
Social media advertisements have positive effects on economy.	.794				
Social media advertisements raise our life standards.	.579				
Social media advertisements for public products give better results.	.699				
<b>Value Corruption</b>		1.192	8.260	50.201	.650
Social media advertisements encourage undesirable values.	.852				
Social media advertisements deform values of youth.	.860				
<b>Attitude towards Social Media Advertisements</b>		1.168	8.098	58.299	.805
Social Media Advertisements are very bad(1).....very good (6)	.827				
I don't appreciate(1) .....I appreciate(6) Social Media Advertisements	.812				
Social Media Advertisements are not necessary(1)..... necessary(6)	.781				
<b>Behavior towards Social Media Advertisements</b>		.953	6.831	65.130	.843
When I see social media advertisement at my computer screen, I show close interest.	.846				
When I see social media advertisement at my computer screen, I click on the advertisement for more information.	.874				
<b>Purchasing Intention</b>		.854	5.966	71.096	.489
If I require the advertised product, I will purchase it.	.637				
For the product that I want to buy, I will visit the store at which it is sold.	.888				

According to the Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) values, which are found for assessing reliability in terms of internal consistency of the observed variables regarding the factors that are obtained by factor analysis, purchasing intention factor has low reliability (0.489). But, informativeness (0.719), reliability (0.795), good for economy (0.683), and value corruption (0.650) factors have medium reliability and entertainment (0.850), attitude towards advertisement (0.805), and behavior (0.843) have high reliability.

### 4.3 Findings Regarding Structural Equation Model

The proposed model was estimated using the Lisrel 8.80 software by means of the Weighted Least Squares (WLS) method. Even the studied data was measured by the Likert scale. If they do not show severe deviations from normal distribution, Maximum Likelihood (ML) method can be used. Meanwhile, the most proper method, which is recommended in case of severe nonnormality of observed variables with large sample sizes, is the Asymptotically Distribution Free method. ML estimation is based on the assumption that the data comes from the multivariate normal distribution.

In order to analyze the data in terms of multivariate normality, Mardia's multivariate normality test was applied and multivariate skewness and kurtosis coefficients were examined. The Multivariate skewness coefficient must be 0 and multivariate kurtosis coefficient must be  $k(k+2)$ , then the data set regarding the model would be suitable for the multivariate normal distribution. Here,  $k$  shows the number of observed variables, and since in our study there are 22 variables, the multivariate kurtosis coefficient must be  $22(22+2) = 528$ . When the skewness values of the data set were examined, the skewness coefficient found was 34.911, and the Z value found was 42.578. When the kurtosis values were examined, the kurtosis coefficient found was 691.637, and the Z value found was 34.932. Additionally, it is concluded that the data does not appear to follow multivariate normal distribution in point of multivariate skewness ( $p=0.000$ ), kurtosis ( $p=0.000$ ) and skewness-kurtosis ( $p=0.000$ ).

Failing to ensure multivariate normality also means failing to ensure univariate normality. For the purpose of examining distributive features of univariate distributions, skewness and kurtosis values for observed variables were examined. In addition to different directions in terms of their signs, skewness and kurtosis values were substantially large. Additionally, the Kolmogorov Smirnov Z tests were also applied, which aim at determining the distribution of data by means of the SPSS 16 package software. According to the test results, significance values were found as  $p=0.000$  for all of the variables. Considering the large sample size relative to the small set of observed variables, the WLS estimation method based on the correlation matrix of 22 observed variables was preferred as the estimation method.

### 4.4 Evaluation of Model Adequacy

In Table 2, generally accepted evaluation criteria about goodness of fit and calculated values concerning the model are shown. Regarding the model, the chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) value is 656.01, the

degrees of freedom is 191, and the p value is 0.0 (<0.05). If we look at the chi-square value and corresponding p value, this model does not seem to be acceptable, however, SEM's chi-square values show an increase in parallel with the sample size. For this reason, this value is not enough to evaluate the adequacy of model. Other criteria in the table are RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation), NFI (Normed Fit Index), CFI (Comparative Fit Index), GFI (Goodness of Fit Index), and AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index) values. These values take part in good fit criteria. In conclusion, it is possible to say that the model is an acceptable fit.

**Table 2:** Goodness of Fit Indexes and Calculated Values

Fit Index	RMSEA	NFI	CFI	GFI	AGFI
<b>Calculated Value</b>	<b>0.048</b>	<b>0.96</b>	<b>0.97</b>	<b>0.98</b>	<b>0.98</b>
<b>Ideal Value</b>	<b>&lt;0.07</b>	<b>&gt;0.95</b>	<b>&gt;0.95</b>	<b>&gt;0.95</b>	<b>&gt;0.95</b>

**Source:** Hooper, D. et al. (2008). Structural Equation Modeling: Guidelines for Determining Model Fit, *Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*, 6(1): 53-60.

Furthermore, from latent variables to indicator variables, path coefficients, t values,  $R^2$  values, AVE (Average Variance Extracted), and CR (Composite Reliability) values were examined regarding the measurement model, and results were given in Table 3. When this table is examined, it is seen that all of the path coefficients are significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). Besides the coefficient of determination,  $R^2$ , indicates a measure of the variability of each item explained by the latent variable. When the  $R^2$  values in the table are analyzed, among the statements which are used to measure Informativeness, it is seen that 73% of the total variability in S2 is explained by the Informativeness latent variable. In other words, the item S2 is the best explained statement by the Informativeness variable. If other statements are examined, S5 is the best explained statement with 90% by the Entertainment latent variable, S10 is the best explained statement with 76% by the Reliability latent variable, S12 is the best explained statement with 63% by the Good for Economy latent variable, S15 is the best explained statement with 80% by the Value Corruption latent variable, S17 is the best explained statement with 85% by the Attitude towards Advertisement latent variable, S19 is the best explained statement with 90% by the Behavior latent variable, and finally S21 is the best explained statement with 56% by the Purchasing Intention latent variable.

**Table 3:** Path Coefficients, t, R2, AVE and CR Values Obtained from the Measurement Model

Factors	Path Coefficient	t value	R <sup>2</sup>	AVE	CR
<b>Informativeness</b>					
S1. Social media advertisements are good resources for product/service information.	1.00*	-	0.64	0.68	0.87
S2. Social media advertisements serve related information.	1.07	36.79	0.73		
S3. Social media advertisements give up-to-date information.	1.03	34.87	0.68		
<b>Entertainment</b>					
S4. Social media advertisements are entertaining.	1.00*	-	0.82	0.80	0.94
S5. Social media advertisements are enjoyable.	1.05	99.63	0.90		
S6. Social media advertisements are pleasing.	0.94	60.25	0.73		
S7. Social media advertisements are interesting.	0.94	60.84	0.73		
<b>Reliability</b>					
S8. Social media advertisements are convincing.	1.00*	-	0.73	0.75	0.90
S9. Social media advertisements are reliable.	1.01	52.57	0.75		
S10. Social media advertisements are sensible.	1.02	46.51	0.76		
<b>Good for Economy</b>					
S11. Social media advertisements have positive effects on economy.	1.00*	-	0.54	0.55	0.79
S12. Social media advertisements raise our life standards.	1.09	31.58	0.63		
S13. Social media advertisements for public products give better results.	0.95	27.70	0.48		
<b>Value Corruption</b>					
S14. Social media advertisements encourage undesirable values.	1.00*	-	0.53	0.67	0.80
S15. Social media advertisements deform values of youth.	1.23	8.14	0.80		
<b>Attitude towards Social Media Advertisements</b>					
S16. Social Media Advertisements are very bad(1).....very good (6)	1.00*	-	0.61	0.61	0.76
S17. I don't appreciate(1) .....I appreciate(6) Social Media Advertisements	1.18	42.05	0.85		
S18. Social Media Advertisements are not necessary(1)..... necessary(6)	1.00	36.21	0.61		
<b>Behavior towards Social Media Advertisements</b>					
S19. When I see social media advertisement at my computer screen, I show close interest.	1.00*	-	0.90	0.84	0.91
S20. When I see social media advertisement at my computer screen, I click on the advertisement for more information.	0.92	39.90	0.77		
<b>Purchasing Intention</b>					
S21. If I require the advertised product, I will purchase it.	1.00*	-	0.56	0.40	0.56
S22. For the product that I want to buy, I will visit the store at which it is sold.	0.64	12.29	0.23		

\*It is fixed to 1 for the purpose of scaling.

The discriminant validity among factors was evaluated using the strategy of Fornell and Larcker (1981) by comparing the square root of the AVE for each factor shown on the diagonal of Table 4 with the correlations shown below the diagonal. Because the square roots of the AVEs for the factors are greater than the correlations between a given factor and other factors, discriminant validity exists. Thus, the discriminant validity among factors is acceptable.

**Table 4: Discriminant Validity**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Informativeness (1)	0.83							
Entertainment (2)	0.83	0.89						
Reliability (3)	0.70	0.78	0.86					
Good for Economy (4)	0.73	0.74	0.82	0.74				
Value Corruption (5)	-0.02	0.03	0.08	0.16	0.82			
Attitude towards Social Media Advertisements(6)	0.58	0.60	0.50	0.48	-0.07	0.78		
Behavior towards Social Media Advertisements (7)	0.55	0.61	0.59	0.63	-0.02	0.51	0.91	
Purchasing Intention (8)	0.54	0.47	0.50	0.53	-0.04	0.41	0.60	0.63

#### 4.5 Testing Hypotheses

Hypotheses and their results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Hypotheses, Path Coefficients, Hypothesis Test Results and SMC Values Belonging to Structural Model

Hypotheses	Path Coefficient	Standard Error	t Value	Result	SMC Value
H1. Informativeness → Attitude	0.17	0.075	2,24*	Accepted	0.66
H2. Entertainment → Attitude	0.26	0.072	3,58**	Accepted	
H3. Reliability → Attitude	0.070	0.062	1,13	Rejected	
H4. Good for Economy → Attitude	0.36	0.094	3,82**	Accepted	
H5. Value Corruption → Attitude	-0.17	0.035	-4,97**	Accepted	
H6. Attitude → Behavior	0.90	0.029	30,59**	Accepted	0.54
H7. Attitude → Purchasing Intention	0.37	0.061	6,07**	Accepted	0.44
H8. Behavior → Purchasing Intention	0.26	0.054	4,82**	Accepted	

\*p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01

So as to determine whether perceptions of the participants about the informativeness of social media advertisements have a positive effect on their attitudes towards social media advertisement, one-sided hypothesis testing for the path coefficient was performed. As a result of the analysis, it is seen

that the path coefficient to Attitude from Informativeness was 0.17 with a t-value of 2.24, which is higher than 1.65 of one-sided critical value at a 5% significance level, and can be examined in Table 5. Accordingly, it was concluded that students' perceptions about social media advertisements, whether they are informative or not, have positive effects on their attitudes towards social media advertisements and hypothesis 1 is accepted. As it was mentioned in literature, informativeness is a principal factor that affects consumers' purchasing decisions and their attitudes towards social media advertisements. As one can see that, consumers adopt a positive manner towards social media advertisements which offer up-to-date and easily accessible information.

When Table 5 is examined, it is seen that the path coefficient to Attitude from Entertainment was 0.26 with a t-value of 3.58, which is higher than 2.33 of one-sided critical value at a 1% significance level. According to this result, it was concluded that students' perceptions about whether social media advertisements are entertaining or not, have positive effects on their attitudes towards social media advertisements and hypothesis 2 is accepted. Entertainment factor has a characteristic that can satisfy the aesthetic pleasure and emotional relief needs of consumers and it affects their attitudes towards social media advertisements in a positive way. Hence, this result is parallel with the literature findings.

According to the analysis result which aims to identify students' perceptions about whether social media advertisements are reliable or not, have positive effects on their attitudes towards social media advertisements. It is seen that the path coefficient to Attitude from Reliability was 0.070 with a t-value of 1.13, which is lower than 1.65 of one-sided critical value at a 5% significance level, as can be examined in Table 5. In literature, several authors state that there is a direct relationship between reliability and consumer attitude towards advertisements. However, according to the analysis result, hypothesis 3 which formulates that reliability perception has a positive effect on attitude is rejected, and it is concluded that students' reliability perception about social media advertisements has no effect on their attitude.

The analysis result which aims to identify participant students' perceptions about whether social media advertisements are good for the economy or not, have positive effects on their attitudes towards social media advertisements. It is seen that the path coefficient to Attitude from Good for Economy was 0.36 with a t-value of 3.82, which is higher than 2.33 of one-sided critical value at a 1% significance level, as can be examined in Table 5. It is identified that perceptions about whether social media advertisements are good for the economy or not, have positive effects on attitudes towards social media advertisements and hypothesis 4 is accepted. Encouraging healthy competition between businesses, speeding up the adoption of new goods, increasing the average standard of living, and in short, being a vital point for business life, are the beneficial social effects of advertising on the economy. According to the research result, consumers adopt positive attitudes towards social media advertisements which they regard as good for the economy.

The analysis result which aims to identify participants' perceptions about whether social media advertisements deform values of society and youth or not, have negative effects on their attitudes

towards social media advertisements. It is seen that the path coefficient to Attitude from Value Corruption was -0.17 with a t-value of -4.97 and the absolute value of this t-value is 4.97, which is higher than 2.33 of one-sided critical value at a 1% significance level, as can be examined in Table 5. Eventually, it is concluded that perceptions about value corruption have negative effects on attitudes towards social media advertisements and hypothesis 5 is accepted. Social media advertisements have the power to affect consumers' view of life, and as a result, they have a potential to corrupt social values. When the results of the research are examined, it is found that students adopt negative attitudes towards social media advertisements which deform values of youth and encourage undesirable values in society.

According to the analysis result which aims to identify whether participant students' attitudes towards social media advertisements have a positive effect on their behaviors, it is seen that the path coefficient to Behavior from Attitude was 0.90 with a t-value of 30.59, which is higher than 2.33 of one-sided critical value at a 1% significance level, as can be examined in Table 5. Consequently, the hypothesis 6 which formulates that attitude has positive effects on behavior is accepted. Students' positive attitudes towards social media advertisements reflect their behaviors positively, and in the same way, their negative attitudes affect their behaviors negatively.

According to the analysis result which aims to identify the relationship between attitude and purchasing intention, it is seen that the path coefficient to Purchasing Intention from Attitude was 0.37 with a t-value of 6.07, which is higher than 2.33 of one-sided critical value at a 1% significance level, as can be examined in Table 5. So, the hypothesis 7 which states that student's attitudes towards social media advertisements have positive effects on their purchasing intentions is supported and accepted. It is inferred that positive attitudes are one of the most important determinants of the purchasing decision process and they affect purchasing intention positively.

Lastly, according to the analysis result which aims to identify whether participant students' behaviors regarding social media advertisements have positive effects on their purchasing intentions, it is seen that the path coefficient to Purchasing Intention from Behavior was 0.26 with a t-value of 4.82, which is higher than 2.33 of the one-sided critical value at a 1% significance level, as can be examined in Table 5. Consequently, it is found that students' behaviors regarding social media advertisements affect their purchasing intention in a positive way and that hypothesis 8 is accepted.

When the SMC (Squared Multiple Correlation) values acquired from the model are compared with the other relevant studies in literature; it is seen that in the research done by Ling et al. (2010) about attitude towards advertisements, 31.8% variance of attitude variable is explained by reliability, informativeness, hedonic pleasure, and good for economy factors; and in the research done by Wolin et al. (2002) about the effect of advertisements on attitude and behaviors, 48% variance of attitude variable is explained by seven factors as information, hedonic pleasure, social role and image, good for economy, materialism, falsity, and value corruption, and lastly 41% variance of behavior variable is explained by attitude. On the other hand, in this research, 66% variance of attitude variable is explained by informativeness, entertainment, good for economy,



and value corruption factors, and 54% variance of behavior variable is explained by attitude factor, and finally, 44% variance of purchasing intention is explained by attitude and behavior factors. Also in this study, obtained SMC values are higher than previous studies in the literature.

## **5. Conclusion**

The aim of the study is to examine the effect of consumers' perceptions about advertisements on social media based on their attitude, behavior, and purchasing intentions and to evaluate these perceptions from the point of the consumer purchasing decision process. 1052 students who are studying at universities located in the Marmara region of Turkey are the sample group of the study. The questionnaire was presented to the participants, and the data obtained from the answers was analyzed and interpreted. According to the results, the importance of social media and advertisement is emphasized once more. In general, results of the research show that consumers' perceptions about social media advertisements are effective on their attitude, behavior, and purchasing intentions.

In view of the hypothesis, test results, informativeness, entertainment, and good for economy factors have a positive effect on the attitude towards social media advertisements. The attitude towards advertisements has a positive effect on the behavior and purchasing intention, and this behavior has a positive effect on purchasing intention. While the reliability factor does not have any effect on attitude, it is concluded that the value corruption has a negative effect on attitude. Consequently, participant students adopt positive attitudes towards social media advertisements which put forward up-to-date, timely, and easily accessible information, have entertaining content, and enable them access to several product options and price comparison facilities. Similarly, advertisements which encourage undesirable values in society provoke negative attitudes. On the other hand, it is concluded that reliability of the social media advertisements does not affect participant students' attitudes. Finally, it is found that participant students' positive attitudes towards social media advertisements affect their behavior and purchasing intention, and their positive behaviors affect their purchasing intentions positively in the same way too.

### **5.1 Limitations of the Research**

Only the students studying in the public universities located in the Marmara region of Turkey have participated in our research, and other universities were left out of the scope. The data obtained through the questionnaires is limited in the sense that the participants were from Marmara region. Moreover, the fact that the research is done in Turkey, limits the generalizability of its results. Cronbach's alpha value for assessing the reliability of the Purchasing Intention Scale was low, and the reasons are thought to be that statements which measure purchasing intention of the participants are few in number, and were not equally loaded. The research is limited to the questions in the questionnaire and the answers of the participant consumers. The conclusion and generalizations which are deduced in the light of the findings obtained are only valid within the researched population sample.

## 5.2 Managerial Implications

On the basis of the findings which were obtained as a result of the research, the recommendations listed below can be offered to the businesses which aim to introduce effective and good quality advertisements and also affect the purchasing decision process of the consumers:

- Businesses should appear on social media and share their information and campaigns on social media tools.
- Before presenting an advertisement about a product/service on social media, participation of consumers to this decision should be provided and after presentation, during the process, the effectiveness of the advertisement should be measured.
- Businesses should evaluate consumers' perceptions on advertising, keeping in mind that they are influenced by several factors such as informativeness, entertainment, good for the economy, and value corruption.
- In the social media environment at which competition intensifies increasingly, businesses should design visually attractive advertisements so as to impress their target groups and direct them on their own accord.
- Online shopping becomes widespread every passing day where reliability is still an important factor for consumers. For this reason, businesses should be careful about the reliability and persuasiveness factor in their advertisements.
- Businesses should efficiently evaluate the consumers' purchasing decision process on social media. They should follow the ever-changing conditions in order to satisfy the expectancies and needs of the online consumers whilst planning their advertisement campaigns.

## 5.3 Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the academic value of this study, some recommendations for the future research are presented below:

- A study which collects data from both public and private university students will enable generalization of the results. Furthermore, a comparative study can be performed by including university students studying abroad.
- Future research may use different scales and the results obtained may be compared with the ones obtained in this study.
- In this study, a model is developed by means of the questionnaire method and using this model in the experimental studies in the future is thought to contribute to the literature.
- Applying the study to various consumer groups that have different socio-demographic characteristics is regarded necessary in order to enhance the subject of the research.
- Apart from the consumer perceptions about social media advertisements, there are demographic variables which are assumed to affect attitude, behavior, and purchasing intention. Therefore, measuring these variables will enlighten the research topic further.

Rapid growth in social media usage leads to the creation of a new environment for advertisement, and by means of these advertisements, it becomes easier to reach the consumers. From this point of view, social media advertisements have an important place for both businesses which aim to go the extra mile and consumers who intend to reach the right products and services. Businesses can reach their target groups quickly and with low cost, and consumers can reach required goods and services in a cheaper and quicker way through social media.

Social media users are always exposed to advertisement overload. If businesses become familiarized with target groups' attitudes and behaviors and understand their ever-changing expectations and necessities, they will be able to design attractive advertisements which will, in turn, direct consumers' purchasing. Interpreting consumers' attitudes and behaviors correctly and developing proper strategies are the inevitable necessities for the success of the advertisements.

The principal focal points of this study are the social media advertisements and online consumer behaviors that are overemphasized by the businesses which aim to be successful in a fierce competition environment. As it is understood from the results of the study, advertisements on social media affect consumer behaviors. Ultimately, this study is expected to constitute as an additional source for future studies.

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