

# THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS ON CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING PROCESS: STUDY IN TURKISH FASHION INDUSTRY

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**Abstract:** Social media is becoming an important tool for communicating the information from one end to another end. The company uses social media to promote their products and services based on consumer profile and choice. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the marketing style adopted by fashion brands through a broad community of fashion influencers of social networks towards internet users in the fashion sector in Turkey, and to detect the strategies and means used by influencers to contribute in the formulation of consumer decision making. This study will try to show the different aspects of social media in Fashion industry precisely, and the improvement internet had witnessed throughout the last two decades evolving the marketing usage by companies and consumers with the continuous increase number of internet users that created a huge opportunity for companies to market their products while innovating their approaches and creating communities for their product users and prospect, yet this strategy was only reaching their own and loyal followers and didn't reach the new customer. The reason why many companies merge to collaborate with pertinent social influencers to increase their reach. Knowing that some social influencers could reach millions of followers through daily interaction and trust-based communication built between them, follower that trust their comments and opinion, and follow their recommendations. Fashion houses are aware of the impact influencers could have on their followers and use their power over the consumer to gain new markets. For this purpose, the researcher employed the Mann Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis test to compare the mean value for the respective variables to see the difference.

**Keywords:** Customer decision making, Fashion industry, Social media marketing, Influencers.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The basic introduction of the topic will be discussed. This will help the reader to understand how the topic has been emerged and has been widely important in these days and would be useful for the fashion industry for developing their policies and procedures in a competitive environment. Furthermore, it will also present the research question, objectives and significance of the study.

Nowadays, social media plays a significant role in the customer decision-making process. Customers continuously follow the product brand to get to know-how about its pros and cons and monitor the reviews from the general public after using such products thereby customer decision significantly influence by the social media. Thus, it is vital to conduct an empirical investigation where the researcher can test whether there is a significant difference regarding the effect of such variables on consumer decision-making process with respect to the fashion industry. An empirical investigation will be

conducted in order to see the difference with respect to gender, age and educational level for the variables of perceived persuasion, perceived self-identification, perceived trust, time pressure and urge to imitate on the customer decision-making the process in the fashion industry in Turkey.

•What is the difference with respect to gender, age and educational level for the selected variables on the Consumer decision making process in fashion industry in Turkey?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Internet

Internet became more interesting after it gave the user access to collaborate online actively in sharing contents and utilize platforms to generate knowledge and participate in exchanging the information. It made the world a small village, with easy interaction that we can see clearly on our daily life usage. For most Internet users, Internet access has become a daily activity (Howard et al., 2002). It had engendered a revolution in technologies with a huge a significant impact on different aspects of our life, generating more internet users, ready to connect. These people connect through what we call Web 2.0, which is an application among the applications implemented on the internet, it is associated with the Http that allows us to read web pages from a server and display on the client's browser, allowing each of us to be expressive toward the environment. (Web 2.0 is both usage and a technology paradigm. It's a collection of technologies, business strategies, and social trends) (Murugesan, 2007).

### B. Web 2.0

Web 2.0. Here is the trend word, the promise of a new web, a revolution as a new version of the internet. Real phenomenon based on a technological change and a break of scale related to the growth of the number of users or marketing recovery of old technologies refreshed by a new public craze. The web has become a shared platform for communication and collaboration. And the new thing is that it's also having a value on business models that are oriented on a combination of open access, focused advertising, and product audience (Murugesan, 2007).

### C. Social Media Influencers

According to (Bour, L. 2017) An influencer refers to anyone who has a reputation on a specific theme through the web and including social networks. We also find many bloggers influencers, in whom the phenomenon of influence began with the advent of blogs in the mid-90s. New digital opinion leader, the influencer is able to affect purchasing behavior through the holding of a blog, a Twitter account, Instagram, YouTube ... accompanied by a social activity intense and high media exposure. This stature gives it the power to prescribe new trends, which is why the influencer is so much sought after by brands. Brands thus consider influencers as essential levers, introducing them into their communication strategies.

### D. Fashion Industry Bloggers

A blogger according to (Alexander, 2018), is mainly a person who is known for their daily contents (website), they have a unique way to represent fashion topics, specific taste and a point of view through written articles or videos. Today, with the omnipresence of social networks, influencers occupy a growing place in our societies. Faced with this context, brands are moving towards this young market that offers new economic prospects. We often hear the word of blogger or influencer, the fashion industry is no longer ruled by the newspaper, editors and magazines. In the best front of catwalk rows, we find stylists, journalists, celebrities, editors, and some other in between those. With the internet revolution, we noticed the birth of a new phenomenon, new players that created tension in this industry who are the bloggers. Most successful bloggers work in collaboration with big brands in term of advertisements and campaign projects, they switched their passion into full-time business life. And some of them succeeded to launch their own brand name.

### E. Consumer Decision Making Process

Consumer behaviour, far from being a static concept, develops with new technologies and marketing tools. The fact is that companies are now addressing people who are more connected, resourceful and involved than ever before. The consumer 2.0 cannot be fooled, they must be seduced. Consumer behaviour encompasses all the factors that guide and influence the purchase and consumption of a good. This concept focuses on understanding what motivates the consumer, how he chooses, buys and uses goods, services or experiences to meet his needs or wants (Wink Strategies, 2016).

In fact, knowing the needs of future buyers makes it possible to propose an adapted offer. Identifying the buying behaviour provides an answer to the questions: What? When? Or? Who? Show the right product, at the right time, in the right place, and in the right person. The model of American researchers Engel, Blackwell, and Kollat, (Engel et al, 1968) It is based on the following 5 steps:

- Recognition of the problem
- Search for solutions
- Evaluation of options
- Decision and act of purchase
- Evaluation after purchase

#### **F. Social Media and Fashion Bloggers**

Marketing was defined efficient when the organization could identify their segments and targeted community of customers. Social media did facilitate this concept, in a way every fashion blogger shares contents that identify their lifestyle. And consequently, they bring together a community of Internet users with whom they share the same passion and same desires.

The great asset of social media is that it allows fashion bloggers to be everywhere on the networks and all the time. They have a considerable content production capacity. They are in a constant stream of publication. You can find them at any time of the day. They enter your daily life. By appealing to them, you benefit from very important visibility (Adopted Ta Com, 2018).

Design bloggers are getting to be specialists in their fields, they ace the codes of online life, the substance, the pace of production, the impacts of styles, what to state or not to say. They are on a few correspondence channels at once, they ace consummately their multi-channel methodology. They took their enthusiasm into the next dimension, on account of Social media. Today the customer appreciates the one to one approach, they want to have a customized content, they want to feel engaged to a community that matches their lifestyle, their standards, and this what exactly how fashion bloggers are characterized.

#### **G. Hypothesis Development**

In this research, there are six continuous variables and three categorical variables.

Continuous variables are Perceived persuasion/conviction, perceived self-identification, Perceived inspiration, Perceived trust, time pressure, urge to imitate.

**H1:** There is significant difference between male and female in term of perceived persuasion towards Consumer decision making process

**H2:** There is significant difference between male and female in term of perceived self-identification towards Consumer decision making process.

**H3:** There is significant difference between male and female in term of perceived inspiration towards Consumer decision making process.

**H4:** There is significant difference between male and female in term of perceived trust towards Consumer decision making process.

**H5:** There is significant difference between male and female in term of time pressure towards Consumer decision making process.

**H6:** There is significant difference between male and female in term of urge to imitate towards Consumer decision making process.

### **III. METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS**

#### **A. Research Design**

Most of the marketing and management empirical investigation deals with quantitative research as such empirical investigation try to answer basic research rather than the applied researcher. Further, the quantitative researcher will be easy to analyse for drawing and making inferences about the findings and facts as compared to qualitative research where the researcher will have to concentrate on interview, in-depth interviews, and open-ended questions. This research will follow the quantitative research method where the researcher will deal with numerical data with the help of descriptive analysis, frequency analysis, and other relevant analysis methods. Moreover, descriptive research also helps to draw the inferences about the finding thereby supporting to answer the developed hypotheses. Thus, social media factors effect on the consumer decision-making process will be analysed with respect to gender, education level, and age level.

#### **B. Sampling**

A sample is a subset of the population. Since, a population composed of sets of a different sample, thus it is one of that sample which will be analysed to generalize the information for the whole populations. There are different sampling methods such as probability and non-probability sampling technique. In probability sampling, each observation or individual has an equal chance for being selected while the non-probability technique is an approach where there is no way for giving the equal opportunity for selecting the sample. A probability approach will be followed where an equal chance will be given to each observation for being analysed. The study will collect the data from the sample size of 221 for analysing and making the inferences about the whole populations about the factors and comparing mean values of those factors which influence on the consumer decision-making process in the fashion industry.

#### **C. Research Approach**

The approach of the research deals and talks about the data nature with respect to its qualitative forms or quantitative form in relation to deductive or inductive approaches. When the information has been induced to generate and develop the theory thereof talking about the inductive approach. However, if the approach will help to explain and test the data with respect to currently existed theory thereof deductive approach. As, the researcher will attempt to test and compare the mean value with categorical variables such as age, education, and gender with the continuous variables thereby researcher will concentrate and follow the deductive approach.

#### **D. Data Collection and Instrument**

There are two types of data such as primary data and secondary data. Primary data is that one which is directly collected by the researcher by him/herself for analyzing purpose. Secondary data is that one which is already publicly available and can be accessible to the general public. Though it is quite easy to collect the secondary data, but the researcher will use the primary data in this study for analyzing and comparing the mean values of selected variables. There are different approaches for collecting the data such as questionnaire, survey, interviews, and open-ended questions. The study will employ the questionnaire to collect the data about the selected variables such as perceived persuasion, perceived self-identification, perceived trust, time pressure, urge to imitate and perceived inspiration that will be analyzed with respect to gender, education and age level.

The online questionnaire will be placed on the google forum and link will be shared to the selected sample who follow the fashion industry and use the social networks to keep themselves up to date about the fashion industry products and services. If there is any missing observation, then the whole response will be excluded in order to avoid any error or further misrepresentation. Similarly, whole data will be filtered to see and test to remove that response which has missing observations.

#### **E. Data Analysis Approach**

The researcher will use the online questionnaire to collect the data from the selected samples about the analyzed variables. Once, the data has been collected then it becomes immense for the researchers to select the appropriate approach or technique that will be used to analyze the data. Since the questionnaire has been used to collect the data thereby researcher has to deal with primary data. Thus, it is important for the researcher to analyze the data reliability before going to apply any other approach to draw the inferences about the whole populations. In order to see the internal consistency for the

collected data, Cronbach's alpha value will be obtained for each variable to see the reliability. Once, reliability of the variables has been ensured then the researcher will go for demographic and frequency analysis to see and compare the respondent's background and their personal characteristics. Once, it has been done then normality of each variable will be examined. It is one of the most important tests for the researcher because, if all the variables are normally distributed then the researcher will go for parametric test and if any of the variables are not normally distributed then the non-parametric test will be applied on that variable. Shapiro test will be used to see the variable normality. If the variable is normally distributed then ANOVA will be used to compare the mean value of each variable against gender, education level, and age level. However, on the other side, if there is any variable which is not normally distributed then in such case non-parametric test will be applied. Mann-Whitney test will be used against each continuous variable over categorical variable containing only two classes such as gender. However, the Kruskal-Wallis test will be applied on age level and education level against the continuous variables.

## F. Results' Findings

The total number of respondents is 221 in this study. The proportion of the male is 31.7 percent while female accounted for 68.3 percent. The frequency of respondent between the age of 17 – 23 is 36 with 16.3 percent weight. Likewise, the frequency for the age level of 24 – 30 is 137 with a weight of 62 percent. Finally, 30 – Or Above has a frequency of 48 with a weight of 21.7 percent. The frequency of respondent's undergraduate is 24 with 10.9 percent weight. Likewise, the frequency for the respondent's education level for the graduate is 64 with a weight of 29 percent. Similarly, respondent's having master's degree is represented with a frequency of 115 with 52 percent. Finally, Respondent's holding a Doctorate's degree has a frequency of 18 with a weight of 8.1 percent. The respondents use social media with 99.1 percent weight and 2 respondents said that they don't use the social media which accounted for only 0.9 percent. The frequency is 60 for the respondents who spend their time on social media is less than 30min with 27.1 percent. The frequency for 1 Hour to 2 Hours spending is 89 with a weight of 40.3 percent. The frequency for the respondents who follow the media influencers is 197 which accounts for 89.1 percent. The respondents who follow Facebook has a frequency level of 19 with 8.1 percent weight. Instagram has a frequency level of 152 with 68.8 percent weight.

All the variables are reliable as confirmed by Cronbach's alpha value. The results show that none of the variables has normality because the p-value is less than 0.05 which reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. The results show that there is a significant difference between male and female in term of perceived persuasion towards the decision-making process in the fashion industry. Similarly, there is a significant difference between male and female in term of perceived self-identification towards customer decision-making process in the fashion industry. Likewise, their male and female differ significantly towards the customer decision-making process in the fashion industry in Turkey with respect to the perceived inspiration. Furthermore, there is a significant difference between male and female in term of perceived trust towards the customer decision-making process. However, male and female have a difference which is statistically significant in term of time pressure for the customer decision-making process. There is no significant difference between male and female in term of an urge to imitate for the customer decision-making process in the fashion industry. The Kruskal-Wallis test shows that perceived persuasion statistically significantly differs in term of age level while making the customer decision process in the fashion industry. Further, a significant difference in term of perceived self-identification towards the customer decision-making process. Likewise, perceived inspiration differs in term of age towards the customer decision-making process.

The perceived trust also differs in term of age towards the customer decision-making process. However, time pressure does not differ in term of age towards the customer decision-making process. Furthermore, a statistically significant difference in Urge to imitate in term of age towards the customer decision-making process in the fashion industry in turkey. Moreover, there is a significant difference in term of perceived self-identification towards customer decision-making process with respect to education level. A significant difference in term of perceived self-identification towards customer decision-making process with respect to education level in the fashion industry also found. It is also found that there is a significant difference in term of perceived trust towards the customer decision-making process with respect to education level in the fashion industry. Furthermore, time pressure differs in term of education level towards the customer decision-making process in the fashion industry. Finally, no difference exists in term of education level with respect to urge to imitate for the customer decision-making process in the fashion industry.

The following table is representing the summary results of the tests conducted on the selected variables:

TABLE I: HYPOTHESIS STATUS

Hypothesis	Results
<b>H<sub>a1</sub></b> : There is a significant difference between male and female in term of perceived persuasion towards customer decision-making process in the fashion industry.	Accepted
<b>H<sub>a2</sub></b> : There is a significant difference between male and female in term of perceived self-identification towards customer decision-making process in the fashion industry.	Accepted
<b>H<sub>a3</sub></b> : There is a significant difference between male and female in term of perceived inspiration towards the customer decision-making process in the fashion industry.	Accepted
<b>H<sub>a4</sub></b> : There is a significant difference between male and female in term of perceived trust towards the customer decision-making process in the fashion industry.	Accepted
<b>H<sub>a5</sub></b> : There is a significant difference between male and female in term of time pressure towards the customer decision-making process in the fashion industry.	Accepted
<b>H<sub>a6</sub></b> : There is a significant difference between male and female in term of the urge to imitate towards customer decision-making process in the fashion industry.	Rejected
<b>H<sub>b1</sub></b> : Perceived persuasion differs in term of age level towards the customer decision-making process in the fashion industry.	Accepted
<b>H<sub>b2</sub></b> : Perceived self-identification differs in term of age level towards the customer decision-making process in the fashion industry.	Accepted
<b>H<sub>b3</sub></b> : Perceived inspiration differs in term of age level towards the customer decision-making process in the fashion industry.	Accepted
<b>H<sub>b4</sub></b> : Perceived trust differs in term of age level towards the customer decision-making process in the fashion industry.	Accepted
<b>H<sub>b5</sub></b> : Time pressure differs in term of age level towards the customer decision-making process in the fashion industry.	Rejected
<b>H<sub>b6</sub></b> : Urge to imitate differs in term of age level towards the customer decision-making process in the fashion industry.	Accepted
<b>H<sub>c1</sub></b> : Perceived persuasion differs in term of education level towards the customer decision-making process in the fashion industry.	Accepted
<b>H<sub>c2</sub></b> : Perceived self-identification differs in term of education level towards the customer decision-making process in the fashion industry.	Accepted
<b>H<sub>c3</sub></b> : Perceived inspiration differs in term of education level towards the customer decision-making process in the fashion industry.	Accepted
<b>H<sub>c4</sub></b> : Perceived trust differs in term of education level towards the customer decision-making process in the fashion industry.	Accepted
<b>H<sub>c5</sub></b> : Time pressure differs in term of education level towards the customer decision-making process in the fashion industry.	Accepted
<b>H<sub>c6</sub></b> : Urge to imitate differs in term of education level towards the customer decision-making process in the fashion industry.	Rejected

#### IV. RESULTS, LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Social media is becoming an important tool for communicating the information from one end to another end. The company uses social media to promote their products and services based on consumer profile and choice. Thereof, there are many social media factors that effect on the consumer decision-making process in turkey in the fashion industry. The study has been conducted by taking evidence from turkey. Following variables are analysed such as perceived persuasion, perceived self-identification, perceived trust, time pressure, urge to imitate against the gender, age level, and education level. For this purpose, the researcher employed the Mann Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis test to compare the mean value for the respective variables to see the difference. The results show that there is a significant difference between male and female in term of perceived persuasion towards the decision-making process in the fashion industry. Similarly, there is a significant difference between male and female in term of perceived self-identification towards customer decision-

making process in the fashion industry. Likewise, their male and female differ significantly towards the customer decision-making process in the fashion industry in Turkey with respect to the perceived inspiration. Furthermore, there is a significant difference between male and female in term of perceived trust towards the customer decision-making process. However, male and female have a difference which is statistically significant in term of time pressure for the customer decision-making process. There is no significant difference between male and female in term of the urge to imitate for the customer decision-making process in the fashion industry. The Kruskal-Wallis test shows that perceived persuasion statistically significantly differs in term of age level while making the customer decision process in the fashion industry. Further, a significant difference in term of perceived self-identification towards the customer decision-making process. Likewise, perceived inspiration differs in term of age towards the customer decision-making process.

The perceived trust also differs in term of age towards the customer decision-making process. However, time pressure does not differ in term of age towards the customer decision-making process. Furthermore, a statistically significant difference in Urge to imitate in term of age towards the customer decision-making process in the fashion industry in turkey. Moreover, there is a significant difference in term of perceived self-identification towards customer decision-making process with respect to education level.

A significant difference in term of perceived self-identification towards customer decision-making process with respect to education level in the fashion industry also found. It is also found that there is a significant difference in term of perceived trust towards the customer decision-making process with respect to education level in the fashion industry. Furthermore, time pressure differs in term of education level towards the customer decision-making process in the fashion industry. Finally, no difference exists in term of education level with respect to urge to imitate for the customer decision-making process in the fashion industry.

- The empirical investigation has been conducted by taking the sample from a resident of turkey thereby any change in the sample and sample size may give different results.
- The approach that has been used to collect the data was an online questionnaire, thereof any variation in the data collection might give a different outcome.
- The study uses the Mann-Whitney and Kruskal-Wallis test to compare the mean difference thereof any variation in the methodology might give different results.
- The study uses the perceived persuasion, self-identification, inspiration, trust, time pressure and urges to imitate thereby variation in variables might give different results.

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