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Use Of Influencers As Impact And Ethics In Digital Advertising

Dijital Reklamcılıkta Etki ve Etik Unsuru Olarak Influencerlerin Kullanımı

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With the widespread use of the Internet and social media, innovations have also emerged in the activities carried out in the field of marketing. Along with traditional media, social media channels have taken their place as effective tools in marketing efforts. Social media advertisements are new platforms where businesses will create awareness and increase brand perception in a positive way in their marketing efforts. (Wei et al., 2010). According to Battallar and Cömert (2015), marketing activities carried out by businesses through social media have some benefits for businesses. These are developing good relationships with consumers, providing easier access to the target market, branding, selling, when the opportunity arises, and advertising with less money. However, social media ads can be effective in a short time. In this, the comments, likes, etc. shared by other users about the advertised product, apart from the advertiser brand, have the feature of being a reference. As a result of the guidance of people's acquaintances, social media ads can spread to wider audiences. For example, sharing a post that people like on social media with other people in their network can be used to express the referral in question. This study is a descriptive study that tries to reveal the conceptual importance and elements of the Use of Influencers as an Influencer and Ethical Element in Digital Advertising by applying a descriptive research method. For this purpose, the relations between the results and evaluations in the current research studies and the theory and practices in digital advertising practices were evaluated in terms of ethical principles and effects.

Keywords: Ethics, Influencer, Digital Advertising, Impact**ÖZET**

İnternetin ve sosyal medya kullanımının yaygınlaşmasıyla birlikte pazarlama alanında da yapılan faaliyetlerde yenilikler kendini göstermiştir. Pazarlama çabalarında geleneksel medya ile birlikte sosyal medya kanalları da etkin birer araç olarak yerini almıştır. Sosyal medya reklamları pazarlama çalışmalarında işletmelerin farkındalık oluşturacakları ve marka algısını olumlu yönde artıracakları yeni platformlar olmaktadır (Wei vd., 2010). Battallar ve Cömert'e (2015) göre işletmelerin sosyal medya aracılığıyla yürüttükleri pazarlama faaliyetlerinin işletmelere sağladığı birtakım yararlar bulunmaktadır. Bunlar; tüketicilerle iyi ilişkiler geliştirme, hedef pazara daha kolay erişim sağlama, markalama, fırsat doğduğu anda satış yapabilme ve daha az para harcayarak reklam yapabilmektir. Bununla birlikte sosyal medya reklamları kısa sürede etkili olabilmektedir. Bunda reklam veren markanın dışında diğer kullanıcıların da reklamı yapılan ürün hakkında yaptıkları yorum, beğeni vb. paylaşımlarının referans olma özelliği bulunmaktadır. Kişilerin tanıdıklarının yönlendirmeleri sonucunda sosyal medya reklamları daha geniş kitlelere yayılabilmektedir. Örneğin, kişilerin sosyal medyada beğendikleri bir paylaşımı ağındaki diğer insanlarla paylaşması söz konusu yönlendirmeyi ifade etmede kullanılabilir. Marka tutumu, markaya karşı genel eğilim olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Bu çalışmada betimsel bir araştırma yöntemi uygulanarak Dijital Reklamcılıkta Etki ve Etik Unsuru Olarak Influencerlerin Kullanımının dijital reklamcılık uygulamalarındaki kavramsal önemini ve unsurlarını ortaya koymaya çalışan betimsel bir çalışmadır. Bu amaçla, mevcut araştırma çalışmalarında ortaya konan sonuçların ve değerlendirmelerin, dijital reklamcılık uygulamalarındaki teori ve uygulamaları arasındaki ilişkileri sonuçları itibarıyla etik ilkeler ve etkileri yönüyle değerlendirilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Etik, Influencer, Dijital Reklam, Etki**1. INTRODUCTION**

Brand attitude is defined as the general disposition towards the brand. It is very important for businesses to maintain a positive attitude towards the brand, especially when working with an influencer. Past research has shown that a chosen influencer can have a direct impact on how the brand is viewed or people's attitude towards the brand (Amos et al., 2008: 213). Here, it is expected that micro-influencers can positively affect brand attitude, as the qualities of the influencer are related to reliability. With the results to be obtained from here, it is also possible to obtain information about which macro influencer or micro influencer affects consumer reactions more positively in terms of brands. Thus, it also assists marketers in their decisions about selecting an effective influencer for their campaigns.

The concept of purchase intention includes people's desire or thoughts to purchase the advertised product in the near future. Kuo et al. (2009) defined purchase intention as the tendency of an individual to purchase a product as a result of a conscious plan created for the purchase of a brand's product. It is very important for brands to measure the intention of individuals to purchase a product that will be offered in the future. According to the researches, it has been determined that influencers have a great influence on this issue, and therefore, it has been stated that influencers have an impact on consumers' purchase intention (Nora, 2017: 5).

Thanks to the developing internet networks and sites in today's conditions, consumers can make their voices heard by other consumers and related institutions by sharing businesses that violate unethical behavior on all digital platforms. Studies on not going beyond ethical limits in advertising activities have recently taken their place on the agenda more effectively. However, the biggest problem encountered is the difficulties in applying ethical rules and principles.

Digital media can also be defined as a means of communication in which simultaneous information transfer and sharing is made. Communication tools that can be used easily without the need for technical knowledge and training have been developed thanks to internet technologies. Although the posts made appear only in a small area, due to the wide range of communication networks, they can be reached by many interested people almost everywhere in the world. That's why the power of social media is a global power. Businesses and consumers use the power of social media. As businesses expand their marketing areas and reach more masses, consumers use the power of social media to find the most suitable product for them in terms of comparison. Consumer comments have a great influence on consumers' preferences. Businesses, on the other hand, can increase quality while making improvements on negative comments. In a way, with a social testing environment, companies provide them to meet. One of the biggest reasons for the increasing competition in marketing is social media and the developing technology network.

Due to the increasing competition and globalizing market conditions, all businesses should give more importance to marketing ethics than in the past. Although it may seem that acting ethically and principled is losing in the short run, it guarantees success in the long run. Since the employee satisfaction of the ethical businesses will be ahead of the other businesses, it will be much easier for them to maintain their place in the market and to grow. The purpose of the concept of ethics in terms of marketing is to establish a general boundary regarding the ethical problems that arise. The concepts of product, price, transportation (distribution) and promotion are defined as the marketing mix. The areas where the concept of ethics is seen most intensely in marketing are the ethical problems experienced in the marketing mix and the ethical problems encountered during international marketing and marketing researches (Alemdar, 2010: 90). Social media has gained more and more importance day by day thanks to increasing technology and globalization. Thanks to communication and information technology, social media enables people to establish relationships with the whole world, communicate and build trust (Çelikten, 2014: 9).

Message credibility focuses on how trustworthy the message itself is, such as the phrase used in an advertisement. According to Appelman and Sundar (2016), message reliability is an individual's decision about the accuracy of the communication content. For example, given that influencer marketing on Instagram is a form of advertising, it is important to include the credibility of the statement made in such a post. The influencer, who will take place in the advertisement that needs to be conveyed to a certain target audience on social media, must have a reputation and trust in that audience. The messages conveyed by influencers, which are expressed with different adjectives such as "honest", "truthful", "candid" in the eyes of this audience, will affect the ideas, thoughts and beliefs of the audience with their internalization behavior (Can and Koz, 2018: 449).

2. INFLUENCER CONCEPT AND IMPACT

The concept of influencer, which we can define as a content producer, was actually seen as an alternative to conventional advertising channels and was met with interest in the advertising industry. Over time, bloggers and video content producers have become opinion leaders with over a million followers. Influencers, who have gained a great trust, reputation and respect in their fields, have now become the apple of the eye of brands that want to promote their products and services (Yaylagül, 2017: 223).

The Influencer Marketing industry has a value of close to 6 billion dollars worldwide. And all the predictions are that this value will reach 30 billion dollars in five years. The wages that influencers earn are so high that the majority of children around the world dream of becoming an influencer in the future. One of the most valid methods used by brands to sell their products, promote and reach more consumers is joint campaigns with influencers. Every year, huge advertising budgets are allocated to influencers, who are the new phenomena of the digital world. The decisive influence of influencers on consumer behavior continues to increase day by day (Influencer Marketing 2017, <https://creatorden.com/2017-turkiye-influencermarketing-raporu/>, Accessed:20 May 2018.).

It is a tradition to call the sum of the huge advertising budgets that brands set aside every year to sell their products and increase the awareness of their brands, as an advertising cake. Who gets how much from the advertising cake is determined by the interest of the consumer. According to April 2021 data, the share of digital ads in the entire advertising cake reached 54 percent and left traditional (conventional) media behind. The rapid rise of digital media, whose share in the advertising cake has reached this level from 6.97 percent in just 11 years, is literally stunning. With the increase in the place of social media and online shopping in our lives, influencers have become channels that have an important place in the digital world and have a strategic position

in campaigns (Sheldrake, Philip (2021). *Marketing and Public Relations in the Digital Age*, Trans. Ümit Şensoy, Istanbul: Turkish Airlines Publications.).

Everyone who actively follows social media has influencers that they find close to themselves and follow their suggestions. As you know, when we look at the meaning of the concept of influencer, we can say that it is the person who influences. If there is a situation of influence, it is a fact that this situation is based on trust. As Influencer reassures them on social media, users' trust will increase and they will begin to consider their suggestions more.

It can be clearly seen that companies are turning to micro-influencers. The reason for this is that mainstream influencers have been seriously consumed and despised by the industry, thus losing their credibility... The transformation of mainstream influencers into illuminated billboards damaged their reputation in the eyes of consumers and micro-influencers began to be more popular. The concept of influencer, which we are becoming more and more familiar with in the digital universe, provides an extremely convenient basis for advertising campaigns. Campaigns managed with influencers, each of whom is specialized in a field and have gathered all users who are interested in that field, are highly likely to succeed. Because each of them is like an opinion leader who gives confidence to people in their own field. This situation has not probably gone unnoticed by the advertising businesses that influencer marketing expenditures have increased by 60 percent compared to previous years (Ge and Gretzel, 2018: 1279).

On the other hand, there are many examples where things don't work that way. It is possible that many influencers, who act without thinking about digital ethics, recommend a product that they state they have used and that they have been satisfied with, without ever using it. In this case, it is open to debate that they do not feel any responsibility towards their users. As you may have witnessed many times, for example, we may be faced with the fact that an influencer promoting a make-up product does this with many filtered photographs. At this point, I am of the opinion that it is the best move to reveal and express this mistake correctly by avoiding feeding the culture of lynching.

3. THE DIGITAL CONSUMER CONCEPT AND ETHICAL ISSUES

The issue of digital ethics brought by internet technologies is waiting to be discussed as a virgin field. This concept, which has a criterion mission to determine the characteristics of an individual's behavior in the online environment, is discussed under many names such as internet ethics, digital ethics, robot ethics or cyber ethics or in a context related to these names.

According to Capurro, who uses digital media ethics and informatics ethics interchangeably, digital ethics has two different definitions, narrow and broad. In a broad sense, it is concerned with the impact of digital communication technologies on society and the environment. In a narrower sense, informatics ethics (or digital media ethics) deals with ethical questions about the Internet and information and communication environments operating over the Internet, such as mobile phones and navigation services.

The continuity of online life, the studies carried out to determine the lower and upper limits of human and later robot behaviors have been conceptualized using different names. However, when we look at the definitions, the framework defined by each concept remains within almost the same ethical framework. These concepts, which appear as digital ethics, cyber ethics, internet ethics or robot ethics, actually bring a moral definition to the behaviors and lifestyles of people in digital environments where daily life is carried (Peltekoğlu and Askeroğlu, 2019: 1053).

Undoubtedly, one of the most important aspects of man is his mysterious side. The sense of irresponsibility and endless freedom felt behind screens and keyboards can lead to Rousseau's good natured man for immoral behavior. This unbearable lightness of the online world frees people from feelings such as responsibility and embarrassment, allowing them to believe that they are free to do whatever they want, to share, to write. In addition to the social media accounts that people have their own names, it is now possible to see that fake, parody or bot accounts also appear and are used a lot. The question of how to interpret the ethical responsibility of the digital traces left by a fake account that is not real in the digital environment but managed by a real user is also within the scope of digital ethics.

All these factors have positive as well as negative aspects. A person who uses the internet can use a different product rather than the one that fits their needs perfectly just because of the negative comment of a different user. If the use of social media is correct and within the framework of the rules of marketing ethics, it provides more benefit than harm. Being conscious is very important in this regard. The number of companies that share

full of lies just for unfair gain and competition is too high to be underestimated. Research shows that consumer reviews are growing rapidly on the internet. Research shows that potential consumers are more interested in recommendations from other users rather than just vendor-generated product information. It is seen that there is a lot of orientation to the products and services offered by especially social media phenomena. Therefore, such interactions provided through social media help to increase the confidence level of the consumer and reduce the perceived risk (Bozkurt and Söyleyici, 2017: 42).

Ethics units of corporations and brands or managers responsible for ethical practices must implement ethical codes for marketing communication activities, including digital channels. After the ethical codes are created, it is also necessary to announce them to the public and consumers. Thus, social stakeholders will be informed in order to be a part of the process. In line with the said ethical codes; Consumers who detect an ethical violation of the brand or think that there is an ethical violation will also contribute to the process by reaching the brands with a responsible consumer awareness and reporting this situation.

Among the most important actors of digitalized marketing communication are digital public relations agencies, digital communication agencies and social media agencies. An ethical compromise should be reached between brands and the agencies they receive services from, and action should be taken in a way that does not victimize the society and consumers. At this point, an uncompromising holistic approach should be displayed in terms of ethics and the emergence of dualities should be prevented. We can present the necessity of including ethical codes as a standard in briefs and competitions as a concrete suggestion in this regard.

4. ADVERTISING AND ETHICS

In this section, the definition of advertising is made, the relationship between advertising and ethics is mentioned, and then the most common ethical problems in advertisements are examined. Advertising, in short, is a promotional activity for a good or service, for a certain fee, to announce it to large audiences through various broadcasting channels and to increase the sales and recognition of the company. It is also possible to define advertising as a news delivery system about the products and services that a small community has established in order to meet the wishes, needs and demands of large masses (Avcıkurt, 2010: 128).

Çelik et al. (2003) stated that it is important to consider the variables of the society in which the products and services are introduced to the advertisements, which are carefully prepared and selected, without harming the social, political and cultural values of the society addressed (Çelik, Akgemci, & Aydoğan, 2003:575).

Advertising can be performed using a variety of media, such as TV, newspapers, radio, brochures, sites, etc. Since each media has pros and cons, it is necessary to evaluate each of them before making a media choice. The most important thing to consider here is that the promotional environment should have the option of reaching numerous customers (Ilyas and Nayan, 2020:1).

Advertising has three important features. These are to inform, persuade and remind (Ramacitti, 1998:8). With advertisements, businesses can promote their goods and services to large audiences. With this broad expressive power, it can persuade the masses to buy by influencing them, and the goods and services are kept in mind due to the constant repetition of the messages (Aytekin, 2010:131). Advertising is a marketing tool that is intended to reach large audiences and is used more intensively than other promotional activities. In addition, advertising is the most frequently criticized promotional tool because it is open to giving misleading and deceptive information to consumers and there is no clear line between persuasion and deception (Torlak, 2007: 259). Today, even though advertisements have started to be controlled more in terms of social benefit, moral benefit and economic interests, and self-control mechanisms and necessary laws have been enacted, there are still unethical advertisements. Examples such as exaggerated advertisements, targeting children, showing the product better than it is, using famous names in advertisements to attract attention, tampering with prices, etc. can be given (Oyman, 1999: 293).

Ethical problems generally encountered as gene 1 in the literature regarding advertisements are given below (Bülbül, 2001: 269 •270; Cohan, 2001: 324325); The first and most general ethical problem in advertising is to make people think that happiness is hidden in high living standards and that there is a greater need for the products or services being marketed. In other words, advertisements try to impose that happiness or peace is more dependent on materiality than spirituality. Another ethical problem is the efforts of advertisements to create their own values. These values can be deceptive or inaccurate. Many researchers and scientists argue that the role of the advertising industry is increasing day by day in the formation of social values. So much so that advertisements present their products and services as something we need, buy or obtain. Another important ethical problem is the use of male or female bodies in advertisements. From this it is understood that

advertisements show our physical desires and pleasures. These kinds of advertisements or businesses that play with our pain aim to shorten the time of convincing men and women on the product. Advertisements push logical thinking into the background. In other words, with a successful advertising campaign, they persuade people to use products that are relatively unnecessary for them to use, such as acidic products such as cola, harmful products such as cigarettes or products with negative effects such as make-up. Advertisements, especially in recent years by using techniques such as wonderful photos, sound and visual effects, music, etc. with the development of technology and programming, are made fun, and they try to persuade by attracting the attention of the audience and potential customers. Countries are striving to adopt a production society instead of a consumption society. But advertisements are a major factor in the formation of the production society. The “rules to be followed in advertisements” determined by the necessary work offices and boards are as follows (Ural, 2003: 171).

Advertisements must be honest and accurate as well as comply with the required age and rules. Advertisements should not exploit customers' lack of knowledge, inexperience and needs, Witnesses used in advertisements must be experts in the field and have a good command of the subjects and products they testify, In the advertisement, any competitor company itself or its products should not be used, ridiculed and discredited activities should not be carried out, Advertising should not take advantage of people's feelings of fear.

In addition, advertisements that support religion, language, race and gender discrimination and advertisements that encourage violence should not be used, Objective data should not be used incorrectly and misleadingly in advertisements, Advertisements cannot exploit children's minds by exploiting their natural innocence, In order to make the advertisements persuasive, it must be provable and can be sent when requested, It is not allowed to advertise to the Self-Regulatory Board by providing incomplete information on a product's structure, quality, price and terms of use, or by presenting it in an exaggerated manner. From time to time, questions have arisen as to whether these principles are followed and whether social welfare is indeed promoted by the actions of advertisers (Zinkhan, 1994:1). Nowadays, it is seen that advertisements are more exaggerated and used too much inflation. It is understood that advertisers do not have knowledge about ethical norms and principles.

5. DIGITAL LIFE AND ETHICS

The phenomenon of digitalization, which has become a "life space" with its multi-layered structure, at the point of discussing and exploring the moral consequences of information-communication technologies shaping individual, social, cultural, political and commercial life is considered within the scope of moral philosophy (ethics) with its theoretical and practical dimensions and is the subject of increasing studies in this direction. The issue of Digital Life and Ethics, with its challenges that are also considered as a serious crisis and require urgent practical steps, considering the challenges faced with digitalization, is also vitally important in terms of protecting human dignity (Işıklı and Küçükvardar, 2016: 204).

The Oxford Dictionary defines ethics as “the moral principles that govern the conduct of a person or the conduct of an activity”. Digital ethics, on the other hand, indicates that the rules, principles and values of traditional ethics can no longer be valid for behaviors and lifestyles in online environments where almost all of human life is transmitted, and that new ethical terms and principles are needed. Trying to adapt a subject whose definition and borders are complicated online also poses a problem and various dilemmas in terms of definitions (Berry, 2011: 12).

Digital ethics explains the identification of human behaviors that occur in online life and drawing a certain moral framework to these behaviors. It creates an ethical dilemma if the individual, institution or organization that carries the information of the online environment is used in this environment more than necessary or regardless of the consent of the other party to which they carry the information. For example, the issue of how a hacker who has a lot of knowledge of the online environment should behave in front of a person or institution whose private information they want to access is the subject of digital ethics. For this and many other behaviors encountered in the digital environment, traditional ethical rules should be digitized or new digital ethical norms should be investigated (Lukevd., 2016: 7).

The Internet and computer technologies offer businesses and consumers a great deal of freedom space. While this area of freedom provides many advantages to businesses and consumers, it also brings with it some unique new problems. One of these problems is ethical violations in social media and online advertising. Ethical debates on digital ads are similar to ethical issues in offline ads (Şahin, 2018:95).

Advertising, which is included in marketing communication, has ethical principles in itself. These principles should also apply to online advertising. In solving ethical problems in online advertisements, it is important to

raise awareness of users as well as the necessity of legal regulations. Conscious users will be aware of unethical practices in online platforms and will be able to protect themselves from such practices (Kalan, 2016: 87).

Considering the studies on ethical problems in advertisements in digital media, it is seen that there are the use of personal data for commercial purposes and the security problem of personal data, the exposure of users to intense advertisements, confidential and vague advertising practices, the disappearance of the advertisement-news distinction, viral advertisements, the exposure of users to public morale and negative advertising practices, the use of women as sexual objects in advertisements, ignoring copyright in advertising content, deceptive or misleading advertising practices, mobile advertising and in-game advertisements (Cesur et al., 2016: 279-280, Binark and Bayraktutan, 2013: 80-85, Kalan, 2016: 80-85, Uzun, 2016: 292-295, Yılmaz and Erdem, 2016: 219-222, Şahin, 2018 :96). While online advertisements make it easier for businesses to achieve their goals, these unethical practices when designing these ads can reduce the trust in the business.

6. THE USE AND IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN DIGITAL ADVERTISING

Along with the technological developments, today, consumers carry out research in the pre-purchase decision-making process, purchasing activities and post-purchase evaluations on the internet. With the increase in the use of social media, consumers are searching for the products and services they are considering to buy on social media channels. For this reason, businesses have started to use social media platforms more in the promotion of their products and services.

Social media is defined as the platforms where users share their knowledge, ideas, interests and views with other users through networks based on internet communication. Participation, being connected, community building, mutual communication and openness stand out as the features of social media networks. The Web 1.0 base, where the users were not authorized to create the site content and could only access the information contained in the websites, allowed the content of the websites to be created by a selected group, as in the traditional media. Web 2.0, which is the continuation of the Web 1.0 base, is a network platform with the ability to connect to all devices. With the introduction of Web 2.0, users who read or watch messages have been replaced by users who obtain and upload content from the Internet (Ada et al., 2013; Caladine, 2008). With the emergence of the term "participatory web", internet users have transformed into not only consuming information but also producing and consuming information.

In today's world, where the rate of consumers' use of social media is increasing, it is possible to state that social media advertisements have become important applications that affect consumers' purchasing decisions. Along with the intense increase in social media usage, it is known that companies try to influence consumer decision processes through social media advertisements. The increasingly developing structure of social media and the increase in the intensity of consumers' use of social media while making their purchasing decisions is a clear indicator of an important change in consumer behavior. In today's world, social media becomes an intense competitive environment for businesses. Increasing its importance and value day by day, social media advertisements, and therefore social media marketing, are serious activities that have become necessary for companies today (Aksoy & Gür, 2018).

Social media tools are the most preferred new media tools today. The reason for this is that social media provides convenience to both consumers and companies. It provides time and easy accessibility while presenting a newly produced product or service to the consumer market. It provides the consumers with instant information about that product or service and the comments made by the users who have used the product before. Marketers carefully scrutinize learning opportunities, customer evaluations of their products and services, and comparisons made by customers with competing products. This information becomes critical when developing marketing plans, product changes, and service strategies. As the use of consumer-generated reviews continues to increase, the marketing challenge will be to manage this aspect of consumer word-of-mouth in a way that enhances brand equity and drives sales (Clow and Baack, 2018: 292).

7. SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING IN DIGITAL MEDIA

Individuals spend most of their daily lives on the internet. The role of social media usage is increasing day by day, especially in the time spent on the internet. With the increase in the use of social media, not only consumers but also businesses have turned their attention to this new platform. Social media has become both an important communication tool and a marketing tool for businesses (Ay, 2019: 15).

Unlike individual social networks, businesses actively use the media for advertising and marketing activities. It is possible for businesses to interact with consumers through social media, collaborate digitally with retailers,

and perform integrated marketing activities with much less effort and cost than before (Kim and Ko, 2012: 1481).

By using all the technological possibilities of the digital age, brands send an intense message to consumers. Brands transmit messages designed to contribute to the profitability and reputation of the brand in line with their own interests and perspectives. As a result of developments such as consumer awareness, the concept of transparency, and the intense use of digital media, brand-consumer interaction has evolved into a different dimension. As the content created by the users is accepted as a reference by the majority of consumers and affects consumer behavior, consumers are no longer only aware of the process, but have come to a position that directs the process. In particular, consumers or social media users who are influencers play an active role in this process. Influencers are one of the most controversial issues in terms of marketing communication ethics as well as playing an active role in the marketing communication process.

There are conflicts and conflicts of interest between social media platforms and brands, which consumers sometimes realize and sometimes are not aware of. These disputes, which lead to the victimization of consumers, can also appear as a process that works against social media platforms and brands. Collaborations between social media platforms and brands sometimes work against the consumer. In order to prevent all these, a functioning based on transparency and ethical rules should be ensured in the triangle of "social media platforms-brand-consumer". Same way; It is necessary to take all necessary measures to prevent the consumers from being harmed by the social engineering attacks that social media platforms and brands are exposed to as a result of negligence, mistake or intention. It should be kept in mind that cynical consumers, especially as a result of unethical marketing communication activities, will damage the reputation of brands and financial losses such as loss of market share and turnover will occur as well as loss of reputation.

In today's world, where the rate of consumers' use of social media is increasing, it is possible to state that social media advertisements have become important applications that affect consumers' purchasing decisions. Along with the intense increase in social media usage, it is known that companies try to influence consumer decision processes through social media advertisements. The increasingly developing structure of social media and the increase in the intensity of consumers' use of social media while making their purchasing decisions is a clear indicator of an important change in consumer behavior. In today's world, social media becomes an intense competitive environment for businesses. Social media advertisements, which increase their importance and value day by day, and therefore social media marketing, are serious activities that have become necessary for companies today (Aksoy & Gür, 2018).

The role of "providing information", which is stated to affect consumers' purchasing attitudes and intentions positively, has an important place in terms of revealing the benefits of products immediately at the purchase stage (Islamoglu, 2009). At the same time, it provides many information about the product to the consumer, such as providing information, informing the payment terms, and specifying the usage areas of the product (Ducoffe, 1996). As a result of easy access to the Internet and the widespread use of social media applications, the level of knowledge of consumers is increasing day by day, and the way they determine and express their needs and wishes is also changing. Providing entertainment is another feature that enables social media ads to produce more effective and efficient results. Providing entertainment is explained as being able to present pleasure, imagination and aesthetics for customers. Consumers also expect social media ads to be fun (Akkaya et al., 2018). It is thought that entertaining advertisements will be perceived more positively by consumers and increase the value of the advertisement (Amjad et al., 2015). The "credibility" of social media ads has an important place on purchase intention in terms of representing the accuracy and credibility of the ads. MacKenzie and Lutz (1989) argue that consumers' perceptions of the credibility of advertisements in general have a significant impact on their purchasing decisions.

Another social media advertising feature that can affect purchase intention is known as "contribution to the economy". Today, advertisements benefit from advertisements in order to maintain the existence of businesses. Social media advertisements play an important role in terms of reviving businesses and thus economies, improving the competitive environment and introducing various economic contributions to the market (Aksoy & Gür, 2018; Ting et al., 2015).

8. USING SOCIAL MEDIA AS AN ADVERTISING MEDIUM

Advertising, one of the elements of marketing communication, is the most effective way to communicate with large masses. Advertisements inform consumers about products and services in the market. Advertising is an impersonal presentation of products, services or ideas for a fee, in order to be announced and adopted by large

masses (Kotler, 2012: 504). As can be understood from the definition, traditional media advertisements are one-sided. However, social media is a means of communicating with consumers as well as just conveying a message to consumers. With the development of technology and the widespread use of the internet, social media has made significant progress in the field of commercial communication in the world. The use of social media in the field of marketing has outstripped the use of traditional media (Turgut, 2016: 58).

Consumers can conduct research on the products and services they want to buy through social media platforms and share their experiences with each other. All likes, comments, recommendations and opinions also provide information to businesses. By using this information, businesses can determine the sensitivities of consumers. In addition, thanks to the fan pages created by consumers, they can communicate with consumers one-to-one, promote their products and services, and instantly respond to consumers' requests and expectations online (Kahraman and Güven, 2019: 296).

Businesses can instantly monitor their advertising activities on social media tools. Businesses can access a lot of information such as how many people watched their advertisements, which industry was followed, whether the advertisement was skipped or not. In line with this information, businesses that perform their analyzes can see their activities that are positively received by consumers. Thus, they can realize a more successful marketing strategy.

Unlike traditional media tools, social media offers personalized and special messages to consumers. For this reason, businesses can increase consumers' brand awareness by highlighting their features that are not in their competitors, and increase their prestige by showing their positive aspects and interacting with consumers (Sabuncuoğlu, 2014: 03). With the increasing use of social media, businesses can reach their target customers more easily and thus improve their sales.

Content sharing is often the primary goal of a social marketing program. Consumers often ignore messages sent by businesses. For this reason, many marketing teams have been trying to find individuals to share information and other features about a brand (Crow and Baack, 2018: 290).

9. INFLUENCER ADVERTISING

Phenomenon Marketing Social media is spreading and developing around the world. The number of people who subscribe to social media is increasing day by day, and with the development of technology, these accounts can be accessed anytime and anywhere. This makes social media an important marketing platform for advertisers and brands. So much so that today, many companies and brands are present in various social networks and develop many digital advertising strategies in order to increase their awareness and sales. One of the most important pillars of the social media marketing method, which is much easier and less costly than the old techniques, is "phenomenon advertising", which is about the marketing of products or services by the phenomena in the social media (Aslan and Ünlü, 2016: 44).

The phenomena of companies and brands, where the internet network and access are unlimited, come into play and play a key role in reaching the target audience of the brands. Kurt (2013) defined phenomenon marketing as the use of the power of the people who have influence on the mentioned audience in order to deliver the products and services of the brands to the target audiences. Thus, instead of trying to contact large target audiences directly, companies aim to reach individuals who have gained the admiration of those people, that is, to influence the purchasing behavior of the masses (Kurt, 2013: 117).

Payments made by brands to influencers are more appropriate than traditional advertising tools. According to research conducted by Tomoson with marketers in 2015, influencer marketing has been determined to be the most cost-effective online customer acquisition channel. Accordingly, the most cost-effective online acquisition method was influencer marketing and e-mail marketing with a rate of 22% (Izea, 2017: 3).

The fact that the influencer has such a reputation in the eyes of the target audience leads to the idea that the product they advertise has the same characteristics. In another way, the characteristics of the influencer in the eyes of the audience are also reflected in the product they advertise. For this reason, in order for the advertisement to be successful, an influencer approved by the target audience must provide similarity in many different aspects such as the way of speaking, the way of behavior, political opinion, religion, language, lifestyle.

Experimentings/experiences can seriously affect the purchasing behavior of consumers today. End consumers give importance to real experiences rather than banners, posters or TV advertisements and take into account the experiences of the phenomena they feel close to and follow and their opinions about the product or service. In a

study conducted by Twitter and Annalect, it was concluded that 40% of the research participants bought the products that they saw in the phenomena they followed on channels such as Instagram, Twitter, Vine or Youtube or that these phenomena had marketed (Kowalczyk and Pounders, 2016: 350).

In order for brands to reach their target audiences, they need to know the influencers who adapt to this purpose. In order to apply a marketing in the desired way, they need to understand the structure of the influencer audience they are aiming for. Influencers spread the activities to their audiences according to the demands of the brands and allow those audiences to share these activities in their own circles. This model, called the fisherman effect, means first identifying the fish they are trying to catch, then choosing the right spot in the water, and finally tossing it to the place with the best impact area. This model helps to identify potential influencers and their audiences (Saltik-Yaman, 2018: 272).

This shows that without questioning the quality of the product or service purchased with phenomenon marketing, high sales revenue and prestige can be obtained by using social media and phenomena. Micro phenomena, also known as Influencer Marketing Agency in Turkey, should also be taken into account, the success of the campaign to be followed continuously should be determined, measured and analyzed and other marketing campaigns should not be neglected.

10. ONLINE SHOPPING IN THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM

Pointing out that digital marketing methods keep pace with technological developments and evolve rapidly, experts say that there are only two methods they know so far. One of them is to reach the customer in an organic way and the other is to reach the consumer with television, radio and newspapers in return for money by advertising. However, in recent years, the internet has started to create its own celebrities, its own economic relations and eco-system. Phenomena are the idols of the younger generations who grew up with them and the personalities they trust and admire the most. As such, they are also determinants in consumption habits (Mert, 2008: 1313).

The circulation of the print media and the rating of the visual media cannot be measured completely and can be manipulated very easily. For example, many newspapers are distributed free of charge and they add the number of newspapers they distribute for free to their circulation. On the other hand, only 2000 subjects are used in rating measurements, and what these two thousand people watch is checked. As such, these channels are not very reliable for companies that advertise. However, in digital advertisements, everything can be measured and analyzed very easily and the target audience can be determined more easily (Glucksman, 2017: 79).

Perhaps, to date, one of the most abused areas of the digital environment has been online shopping. Today, we can say that online shopping has become widespread very quickly. However, in the years when it first entered our lives before it became widespread, this environment by many malicious people led to the emergence of stories that resulted in users being defrauded. Apart from these fraudulent stories that have reached serious dimensions, we have also witnessed many incidents that have come to the fore on social media and made us laugh unintentionally. It is like a toy table instead of a table whose dimensions are not specified, and sending clothes in very different sizes, measurements and cuts to users than seen in the photograph (Freberg et al., 2010: 3).

In online shopping, shopping from a person/place whose reliability we do not confirm can sometimes cause withdrawal of money from our account without sending the product, sometimes stealing our account information, and sometimes sending a product other than the product we want (both in size and quality) to us. In online shopping, it is inevitable that we pay attention to shopping from reliable platforms and to the use of payment systems that will ensure our card information security. When we look back at the digital world, we can say that there are many more examples that we can evaluate within the framework of digital ethics. Unfortunately, digital ethics is not yet fully established in the virtual world. Here, it is useful to start from ourselves and reach the brands from there. First of all, we should question our behavior in social media within the framework of ethics. Then, we should question the behaviors of the brands and not normalize these unethical behaviors, but develop behaviors for brands/persons to take responsibility for these behaviors if necessary.

11. INFLUENCER ADVERTISING AND ETHICS

Today, brands are turning to influencers rather than famous people. This is due to consumers' trust in third parties. Because consumers believe more in the recommendations of people they trust and know, not businesses. At this point, influencers act as a friend that connects the brand to certain consumers. Influencers do not only affect their followers, they also announce the brand by influencing their followers. Influencers attract followers

to the brand's website, increase the visibility of the brand in social media, and increase the likelihood of purchasing by conveying their experiences and suggestions.

Brands want to find influencers suitable for their own image and both reach the target audience and increase their impact on the target audience. Reaching influencers and reaching the audience of that influencer is a very important step for brands. Brands produce various advertisements with influencers. However, these advertisements should not be presented directly to consumers. As a matter of fact, it is important for influencers to put these ads in their own posts without being noticed. For example, an influencer who has agreed with a perfume advertisement should avoid holding the perfume towards the camera by saying "I use this perfume in my daily life". They should post as if it were a normal photo, taking a photo with the perfume bottle visibly and posting it with a positive message. However, if they share a photo saying "use that perfume", people may feel uncomfortable with such advertisements.

In particular, consumers or social media users who are influencers play an active role in this process. Influencers are one of the most controversial issues in terms of marketing communication ethics as well as playing an active role in the marketing communication process. According to research done; social responsibility, product quality and ethics not only affect brand reputation, but also positively affect consumers' purchasing tendencies (Van Dyck, 2014).

In addition to the quality of the products, consumers also buy the image and emotional benefit of the products. At this point, it is a strong possibility that today's consumers realize a brand that is ethically problematic and not prefer that brand (Mavnacıoğlu, K. (2022). An evaluation on the ethics of marketing communication in the digital age. Ahi Evran University Journal of Social Sciences Institute, 8(1), 52-66).

Rapid developments in the field of communication and technology also bring wrong practices. Ethical and unethical practices, especially in marketing activities on social media, have become a frequently encountered situation. In order to realize the marketing practices in social media within the ethical limits, the solution proposals on the subject have been discussed frequently in recent years, but the main problem here is the difficulty of establishing ethical rules and principles in social media and putting them into practice. Businesses should act in accordance with ethical principles, despite the increasingly heavy competition conditions. Because when the consumer encounters an unethical practice of a business, they share this negative experience with other consumers by using the power of social media. In social media, where information spreads very quickly, businesses are more affected by negative comments (Çobanoğlu, E. (2007). Marketing Ethics. S. Tevruz, Ethics in Business Life (p. 185-206).

Even if unethical behavior is not directly against the consumer, the risk of crisis continues. Because the consumer of the digital age takes factors into account other than themselves, with the effect of interactions on social media platforms. Consumers can react to unethical behavior, whether it is against employees, public institutions, non-governmental organizations, or against other consumers. Consumer in the digital age; Since they are fed from various channels, not from a single channel as in the past, or because they are fed from interactions with other users even if they use a single channel, they have developed an awareness of issues such as social problems and environmental issues (Mavnacıoğlu, K. (2022). An evaluation on the ethics of marketing communication in the digital age. Ahi Evran University Journal of Social Sciences Institute, 8(1), 52-66).

12. ETHICAL PERCEPTIONS OF CONSUMERS IN INFLUENCER ADVERTISING

In this part of the study, message reliability, brand attitude and purchase intention are mentioned in relation to consumers' perceptions for influencer marketing. By using all the technological possibilities of the digital age, brands send an intense message to consumers. Brands transmit messages designed to contribute to the profitability and reputation of the brand in line with their own interests and perspectives. As a result of developments such as consumer awareness, the concept of transparency, and the intense use of digital media, brand-consumer interaction has evolved into a different dimension. As the content created by the users is accepted as a reference by the majority of consumers and affects consumer behavior, consumers are no longer only aware of the process, but have come to a position that directs the process.

Today, businesses work with pioneers who have a large number of followers on social media and attract the attention of young people in order to promote their goods and services. These pioneers are called the phenomenon. Social media phenomena are trending with their sharing of photos, videos, blogs, and thus gaining fame by increasing their number of followers. Since consumers are affected by the shares of social media phenomena, they also attract the attention of businesses. Social media phenomena sometimes make posts that are incompatible with the ethical and moral values of the society. These posts are sometimes noticed and

reacted, and sometimes not noticed. Phenomenons earn a high amount of income due to their marketing activities such as product promotion and advertisement on social media.

Influencers have no effect on consumers' ethical and moral values, their evaluations of advertising, and their purchase intention. Consumers make purchasing decisions by being influenced by the features of online advertisements or shares such as being fun and interesting. This finding is consistent with the results of studies conducted by Ducoffe (1996), Brackett and Car (2001), and Ghana (2017). If online advertisements leave a positive mark in the mind of the consumer, it can be said that they do not care about the ethicality of this advertisement and they intend to buy it. Otherwise, if the consumer considers online advertisements or posts as boring, unreliable, etc. negatively, they do not intend to buy.

Influencers' reluctance to disclose their brand collaborations poses a threat to brands as well as the sincerity of influencers. It is the responsibility of the brand as well as the influencer with the new regulations that influencers clearly indicate sponsored content using a hashtag, and secret collaborations cause brands to face legal sanctions (Campbell and Grimm, 2019).

In addition to the potential negative effects of influencer marketing on brands, the negative effects on consumers are also questioned. It is heavily discussed that influencer contents fuel an unsustainable consumption culture, cause body image and eating disorders, and expose children and adolescents to hidden advertisements (De Jans and Hudders, 2020; Griffiths et al., 2018; Marks, De Foe and Collett, 2020; O'Keeffe and ClarkePearson, 2011; Saiphoo and Vahedi, 2019). As the intensity of social media usage increases, it will be inevitable to understand the effects of influencers on consumer psychology and to bring a paradigm shift to prevent negative effects.

None of the potential risks of influencer marketing that we highlight in this section mean that brands or social media users should stay away from influencers. While the number of social media users is increasing rapidly every day and the budgets allocated by companies to influencer marketing activities are increasing from year to year (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021), it is neither possible nor necessary to keep a distance with influencers. The conclusion to be drawn from possible dangers is that influencers should consider their effects on the psychology of their followers while producing content, should not stop acting ethically, companies should also be meticulous when choosing the influencers they cooperate with and should not give up control of the ethical aspect of the content.

Today's consumer, together with all these expectations and even more strongly than other expectations, wants to trust brands. At the point where consumer trust is damaged, there may be grievances caused by brands. Consumers do not want to experience such grievances. Consumers want to trust brands, especially in terms of data privacy/security, which is one of the biggest ethical problems of the digital age. Considering that personal data is a part of the privacy of individuals, the desire to trust brands and the demand for protection of personal data from brands appear as the most natural right of consumers.

Eugene Kaspersky (2021), the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of cyber security company Kaspersky Lab, expresses the importance of data security in the lives of individuals in the digital world as follows: "Everyone has the right to live fearlessly in the cyber world". From this point of view, internet/social media users and consumers demand to act safely in digital media. Although internet/social media users and consumers take their own precautions in this regard, these precautions are often not sufficient. First of all, brands and social media platforms are expected to take action.

With the change in the priorities of consumers and society, the importance and impact of the concept of corporate citizenship has increased. According to a study, 40 percent of consumers state that corporate citizenship has a significant impact on their purchasing decisions (Walker, 2010). The fact that corporate citizenship-oriented communication studies are frequently emphasized on social media platforms and consumers' awareness of this concept naturally also affects consumer behavior.

According to a study conducted in England; 60 percent of consumers protest brands that do not act ethically, even if there is no organized boycott. According to a study conducted in 23 countries, 40 percent of consumers consider punishing brands for their unethical behavior, while 20 percent boycott brands (Levinson & Horowitz, 2011). Considering the intense use of social media, consumers can take a stance against brands not only by not purchasing products, but also by sharing their complaints on social media platforms, launching anti-brand initiatives by organizing with other consumers and carrying out negative viral spread.

According to Levinson and Horowitz (2011) today, consumers demand social and environmental responsibilities from institutions and brands that are carried out in an ethical manner. Today's consumer sees

themselves as a part of many world problems such as global warming, safe children's toys, working conditions of workers, ending dependence on fossil fuels such as oil. In the era of digitalization, especially with the emergence of new media, the channels in which individuals access information have diversified. Internet and social media platforms are at the forefront of these channels.

Marketing communication and brand expert Fons Van Dyck (2014) states that the difference between the consumer role and the citizenship role is gradually disappearing. According to Dyck (2014), everyone is a customer, citizen, consumer and human, that is, "consumer-human". In general, people continue their lives with consumer roles.

Consumers can also change their level of ethical expectations for brands during difficult times or crisis periods. During the pandemic period that the world is currently experiencing, all areas of life, especially health, have been affected. Consumer behavior and consumer roles of individuals have also been affected by this process. Especially in this sensitive and challenging period, consumers demand from brands to act ethically on every platform, not only for themselves but also for the health of public health and brand employees.

Even though the level of awareness of consumers towards brands has increased with digitalization, disappointed consumers can show cynical consumer behaviors by acting skeptical. Consumer behavior that emerges in line with the feeling of suspicion, disappointment and deception created by consumers against institutions/brands is called consumer cynicism. One of the reasons leading to consumer cynicism is unethical marketing communication activities of institutions and brands (Akçay and Özdemir, 2019). Consumers may be disappointed and cynical consumer behaviors may occur due to unethical behaviors such as deceptive/manipulating content and violation of data privacy in marketing communication activities carried out in digital media. Thanks to the interaction feature and viral spread power of digital channels, cynical consumer behaviors can spread quickly. When the consumers of the digital age are not satisfied with the brands, they can react clearly against the brands. "Ethical brand" gains importance at this point.

13. CONCLUSION

With the increase in the use of social media in Turkey and in the world in digital advertising channels, whose influence and share is increasing day by day in today's advertising world, it has become more important for businesses and their brands to use these channels and to exist in these channels. It is seen that consumers show more interest in social media advertisements than television and radio advertisements. Especially social media phenomena have become an important guide for users. They decide whether a product or service is suitable for them, based on the interpretations of the phenomena they follow.

Consumers often identify the social media phenomena they follow with themselves. Therefore, they are affected by their discourse. For this reason, it will be both less costly and more efficient for businesses to promote their products and services to phenomena. However, while doing this, they should also pay attention to social ethical and moral values. No matter how much consumers care about the fun of sharing on social media, they are also aware of unethical situations. As a matter of fact, a negative experience or negative comment shared on social media spreads very quickly. In this case, the business can quickly lose its reputation and be seriously affected by this situation.

In addition to these, social media phenomena earn a significant amount of money from product and service promotions. Some of these gains may be unfair gains. One of the biggest problems in social media is unethical gains. Although states have started to take serious steps to prevent such gains, they are not yet fully implemented. When consumers make a purchase decision, acting only in their own interests can create very inconvenient situations in the long run. Because social media is a virtual environment and all users can produce content as they want (Journal of Business Innovation and Governance, 2022; 5 (1): 1 2 151).

Especially with the rise of the internet and social media, transparency has gained importance and the secrets of brands have been revealed. Negative and unethical issues such as the production of shoes by child workers in the Far East and the poor conditions of coffee producers in South America have emerged. With the influence of the activists who brought such issues to the agenda, the chief executive officers (CEOs) of the companies had to be held accountable on these issues. Now, brands explain their approaches to such issues (Aksoy, 2017). Every step taken by brands is carefully followed by employees, suppliers, consumers, media, competitors, shareholders, public institutions, non-governmental organizations and social stakeholders. Considering the activities they carry out, the statements they make, their relations with consumers, and their effects on society and nature, ethical monitoring of brands emerges as a necessity beyond being a choice in some cases.

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