



REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
ADANA ALPARSLAN TÜRKES SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATION

**HOW SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS AFFECT
CONSUMER BEHAVIOR: A CROSS-NATIONAL STUDY**

ANASTASIA IŞIK

MASTER'S THESIS

ADANA 2021



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MASTER'S THESIS

ADANA 2021

I hereby declare that all information in this thesis has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all information that is not original to this work.

ANASTASIA IŞIK

ABSTRACT

HOW SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS AFFECT CONSUMER BEHAVIOR: A CROSS-NATIONAL STUDY

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Department of Business and Administration
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Celile Özçiçek DÖLEKOĞLU
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The development of the Internet has resulted in socio technological changes because of social media platforms. This has created a gap in the literature to study consumer behavior. Consumer Behavior is a complex and constantly changing issue that needs to be investigated from a multidisciplinary perspective. Especially, consumer behavior needs a close investigation over the past years as consumers have gained new behaviors and habits because of Covid-19 lockdowns. Cross-cultural comparison gives an accurate review of the impact of social media platforms (SM) on consumer behavior and highlights behavioural patterns that are particularly specific to a society. Bearing all these in mind, the effects of SM platforms on two societies of Russian and Turkish consumers have been studied. Therefore, this study aims at revealing the influence of e-WOM and SM Ads on socio-demographic factors, nationalities, decision-making styles, and time spent on SM. For this reason, two samples were used for this research consisting of 300 Turkish and 250 Russian consumers. Online questionnaires have been distributed to the participants. Exploratory factor analyses have been done to reduce the number of variables to explain and interpret the results. In addition, a series of non-parametric tests have been implemented to tests hypotheses. The findings of the study show that there is no significant difference between countries regarding the use of the Internet. In general, people use the Internet for SM usage and spend approximately 1-3 hours a day. SM usage increased during COVID-19 in Turkey but there was no change in Russia. Adopting the well-established Consumer Style Inventory to profile consumer shopping orientation on SM, this study identified five main decision-making styles for both countries. In Turkey, the most popular shopping orientations have become “Novelty-fashion consumers” and “Ad Marionette consumers” in Russia.

Keywords: Consumer Behavior, Social Media, Online Advertising, e-WOM, Decision-making styles.

ÖZET

SOSYAL MEDYANIN TÜKETİCİ DAVRANIŞLARININ ÜZERİNE ETKİSİ: ULUSLARARASI ÇALIŞMA

Anastasia IŞIK

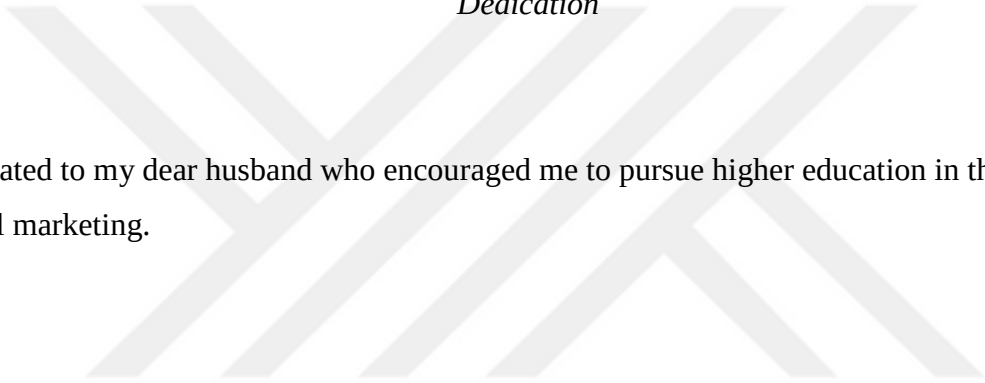
İşletme ve Yönetim Anabilim Dalı

Danışman: Prof. Dr. Celile Özçiçek DÖLEKOĞLU

Temmuz 2021, 125 sayfa

İnternetin gelişimi, sosyal medya platformları nedeniyle sosyo teknolojik değişimlere neden olmuştur. Bu durum literatürde tüketici davranışlarını incelemek için bir boşluk yaratmıştır. Tüketici Davranışı, multidisipliner bir bakış açısıyla araştırılması gereken karmaşık ve sürekli değişen bir konudur. Özellikle tüketicilerin Covid-19 karantinaları nedeniyle yeni davranış ve alışkanlıklar kazanması nedeniyle tüketici davranışlarının son yıllarda yakından incelenmesi gerekmektedir. Kültürler arası karşılaştırma, sosyal medya platformlarının (SM) tüketici davranışı üzerindeki etkisinin doğru bir şekilde incelemesini sağlar ve özellikle bir topluma özgü davranış kalıplarını vurgular. Tüm bunlar göz önünde bulundurularak, SM platformlarının iki farklı toplum olan Rus ve Türk tüketicilerin üzerindeki etkileri incelenmiştir. Bu nedenle bu çalışma, e-WOM ve SM Reklamlarının sosyo-demografik faktörler, milliyetler, karar verme stilleri ve SM'de geçirilen süre üzerindeki etkisini ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu nedenle bu araştırma için 300 Türk ve 250 Rus tüketiciden oluşan iki örneklem kullanılmıştır. Katılımcılara online anketler dağıtılmıştır. Sonuçları açıklamak ve yorumlamak için açıklayıcı faktör analizleri yapılmıştır. Ayrıca, hipotezleri test etmek için bir dizi parametrik olmayan test uygulanmıştır. Araştırmanın bulguları, internet kullanımı konusunda ülkeler arasında anlamlı bir fark olmadığını göstermektedir. Genel olarak insanlar SM kullanımı için interneti kullanmakta ve günde yaklaşık 1-3 saat harcamaktadırlar. COVID-19 sürecinde Türkiye'de SM kullanımı artmıştır fakat Rusya'da bir değişiklik olmamıştır. Tüketici Stil Envanteri esas alınarak, SM profil tüketici alışveriş yönelimleri incelenmiştir ve her iki ülke için beş ana karar verme stilleri belirlenmiştir. Türkiye'de en popüler alışveriş yönelimleri “Yenilikçi moda tüketicileri” ve Rusya’da “Kukla Reklam tüketicileri” olarak ortaya çıkmıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Tüketici Davranışı, Sosyal Medya, Çevrimiçi Reklamcılık, e-WOM, Karar verme stilleri



Dedication

Dedicated to my dear husband who encouraged me to pursue higher education in the field of digital marketing.

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NOMENCLATURE

SM	: Social Media
CB	: Consumer Behavior
Ads	: Advertisements
e-WOM	: Electronic- Word of Mouth
CSI	: Consumer Style Inventory
ARPA	: the Advanced Research Projects Agency
WWW	: World Wide Web
Web 2.0	: The Second Generation of Websites
SB	: Social Business
SMM	: Social Media Marketing
SC	: Social Commerce
IoT	: Artificial Intelligence
BI	: Buying Intention
TRA	: The Theory of Reasoned Action
TAM	: The Technology Acceptance Model
FAI	: Facebook Audience Insights
AIO	: Activities, Interests, and Opinions
GNI	: Growth National Income
KMO	: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin



I. INTRODUCTION

“But for all the good we’ve achieved; the web has evolved into an engine of inequity and division; swayed by powerful forces who use it for their own agendas”.

Tim Berners-Lee

Digitalization has become a part of human evolution in the 21st century. People can think that these changes positively impacted their lives since it makes their lives easier and more interesting. However, there are an enormous number of negative impacts which people have not realized yet. One of such controversial issues is Social Media (SM) platforms which stay under the umbrella of digital marketing. SM has occurred thanks to technological advancements on the Internet. SM platforms became a vital part of human lives due to the conveniences it has brought. At present, it is hard to find a person who hasn't used at least a couple of SM platforms in the world. Moreover, the use of SM has emerged extremely fast among people. For this reason, the rapid expansion of SM has caused changes in a route map of marketing. As a result, traditional marketing has given way to digital marketing. Besides, new rules have been set by decision-makers and rulers of the digital world which are big technological companies since 70% of all digital ad dollars spending is captured by three companies which are Google, Facebook, and Amazon (“Martech”, 2019). On the other hand, consumer behavior (CB), which has always been a part of curiosity, has also been involved in this process of change. Knowledge about CB helps marketers to develop a functional strategy and achieve quick results. Organizations strive to know everything about their customers or potential ones in order to send them highly profitable personalized advertisements (ads) and get the highest value from them. They want to know their consumer's professions, marital status, emotional state, income level, geographical position, psychographic values, and many more. The best way to study CB is SM platforms as people leave a lot of data about themselves consciously or unconsciously. All these data are collected to improve machine learning algorithms that study patterns of human behavior by technological companies. Afterward, these data are sold to organizations and used in the development of successful marketing strategies. For these reasons, CB can be influenced by the smart algorithms of SM platforms. Therefore, researchers and decision-makers focused on the question of how consumers are affected by SM platforms. As a result of this, increasing numbers of studies have been conducted on this issue.

As early as twenty years ago, SM entered and integrated into people's lives by becoming its essential part that can't be separated, hence, had a great impact on people, but most of all, on the consumers. Before SM arose, consumption development was at the preliminary stage, in which rational consumers were economic-driven, buying products mostly by their functional characteristics without doing some deep search about them. Herstein et al. (1953) point out that *"Traditional economic theory implicitly defines consumer rationality in terms of expected utility maximization and a set of explicit axioms sufficient for utility functions to exist"* (as referred from Shugan, (2006) (p 2). However, the SM emergence has let consumers easily search and compare the information about products, services, or brands and also see them as if they were exhibited on the vitrine of the supermarket. For this reason, SM caused the mindset of consumers to evolve, which gave the rise of smart-consumers that could compare and choose products on SM beyond their functional characteristics, but, on the other hand, be more focused on its symbolic values. For Azizağaoğlu et al. (2012) in symbolic consumption, consumers buy and consume products in order to meet their physical, psychological, and social needs. Thus, the influence of SM shouldn't be neglected when studying CB. Bearing all these in mind, it is unreasonable to study CB in traditional settings without taking into close consideration the influences of digital technologies, especially SM websites on consumers.

1.1. Social Media Background – New Era of Consumption

1.1.1. From Early Internet to Social Media Platforms Era

The world has been continuously evolving. Today, Internet technology has a more ubiquitous presence in our lives than it did just a few decades ago. There have been a lot of significant changes in the way people do things as a result of the influence technology has on their daily lives. Different smart devices which work through the Internet connection make things easier for people. People's working conditions, their communication with other people, and most especially consumers' decision-making processes about shopping have become easier with the help of different technological innovations. Hence, people keep up with all these changes and processes spontaneously almost at the same speed with the growing world.

The Internet is also known as the “Net”, a global computer network system in which users search for information. Initially, the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) of the U.S government invented the Internet in 1969. Therefore, it was first called the ARPANet in the beginning. The purpose of ARPA was to build a network system that would allow users to

connect a computer of one university to other computers at various universities. The biggest advantage of the ARPANet's interface was that the net could keep on working even though a portion of it could be lost in case of some of the military conflicts or other disasters, as information could be forwarded or sent in more than one direction. However, the main purpose of the Internet invention was a political reaction in response to the Soviet Union's launching of Sputnik 1. For this reason, it was later renamed DARPA which was focused on the race of superiority between countries developing different projects that would help in technological and scientific advances. But the most important progress in IT was made by Tim Berners-Lee, who was an English scientist when he developed the World Wide Web (WWW) in 1989. This event has changed our contemporary understanding of communication. Before WWW, the Internet meant that there were texts on the screens of computers. Thus, its interface was visually not very attractive even though it was convenient for exchanging and getting information. An example of this is the Catalogue of the US Library of Congress. The WWW is also known as Web 1.0 which attributes to the first phase of WWW's evolution. Web 1.0 defines the first generation of websites in which users were only allowed to see the content passively. WEB 1.0 websites have the following features such as read-only, web as a reading platform, developer authorship, software applications, commercial/ proprietary, and impersonal. The primary trials of the WWW were at the CERN research facilities (one of Europe's biggest research facilities) in Switzerland in December 1990.

Browser and web server programs were accessible until 1991, and some preparatory sites existed in places like the College of Illinois until 1992. There were almost 26 websites until the end of 1992. By the end of 1994, there were a million browser websites in use, which is a steep growth. Every year from 1994 to 2000, the WWW saw a great deal of development, the growth of which had not been seen with any preceding technology. After all these, the Internet era began. The first search engines started to appear in the mid-1990s, and the Google search engine came on the scene in a short time and built a supreme market position. Within the early days, the Internet was simply utilized for viewing texts. Nonetheless, online shopping and online purchase of merchandise came a little bit afterward. The first large commercial website was Amazon, a website that focused only on book markets in the beginning. The Amazon concept was created in 1994, a year in which some users claimed the Internet grew with an astonishing percentage (%2300). Amazon saw that online shopping was the way of the future, and chose the book market as an area where much could be accomplished. By 1998, there were 750,000

commercial websites on the WWW. The internet caused significant changes to existing industries. Besides, it became a powerful sales medium for them. For example, consumers of travel industries could compare various airlines and hotels and choose the one which was the most convenient for them. Moreover, consumers would describe where they wanted to travel in some cases so that the travel companies would meet the needs of the consumers practically thanks to these developments. All positive improvements quickly changed the way conventional markets worked. In many businesses, the world would never be the same again (Net History, 2021). Nowadays, the Internet has become an essential tool that is used by millions of thousands of people across the globe to get what they want easily and quickly. Moreover, the use of the Internet in people's daily life has taken a highly important place beyond the predictions and possibilities.

SM platforms emerged after the second generation of websites (Web 2.0) had been invented. The Web 2.0, which is also called as "Participative Web" or "Social Web", defines websites with the content generated by the users where they can easily participate in sharing social media content, lead the discussion, evaluate different photos or videos and share opinions by creating a sociable culture on the Net. In other words, those applications that we use every day such as Skype, Whatsapp, YouTube, Google Maps, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. These are all the second-generation websites that are based on Web 2.0. The term was initiated by Darcy DiNucci in 1999 and it became more popular after Tim O'Reilly and Dale Dougherty introduced it at the O'Reilly Media Web 2.0 Conference in 2004. In contrast to Web 1.0, WEB 2.0 has some qualifications like reading, writing, collaborating, web as a publishing platform, collective intelligence, public authorship, web as a software platform, open-source/shared and it knows about the users and their needs ("Wikipedia", 2021). Solomon (2004) defines the inception of the SM as a period that has caused a Horizontal revolution to occur. There was a shift from Web 1.0 websites to Web 2.0 after the first Web 2.0 conference was organized by O'Reilly Media and MediaLive.

SM brought many changes to people's lives, yet a comfortable centralized SM platforms interface allowed the technology companies to gather users' private information which caused many troubles. The technological companies started to invade people's privacy, misuse people's data, and even help governments spy on them. Thus, people start to consider deleting their Facebook accounts or finding an alternative to Google. However, users can not do anything to

avoid all these troubles without deleting their accounts because these gigantic companies have so many major services on the Internet (“Finivi”, 2021).

Nevertheless, Web 3.0 which was created 3 decades after Web 1.0 was first introduced as a third-generation is also known as Dweb. Web 3.0 is recognized as the next stage in the transformation of the Internet. It is a kind of "semantic web" or a "web of data" which could interpret the information to supply people with a more interactive and improved experience by understanding and combining the data gathered. The biggest advantage is that it is a decentralized web that challenges the dominant technology companies over users in the contrast to centralized (Web 2.0) since the Dweb, which is the latest version of the decentralized type of cyberspace, offers better control for the users, more competitive environments among Internet companies, and less control over the users by huge enterprises (“The conversation”, 2019). Manwaring (2018) perfectly describes this as:

"A third wave of emerging information technologies, variously described as 'ubiquitous' and 'pervasive' computing, 'ambient intelligence', the 'Internet of Things', and 'eObjects' is currently driving significant sociotechnical change. Computer processors capable of data collection, processing, and communications are being embedded in everyday objects, such as hairbrushes, fitness trackers, household appliances, and cars. The technologies comprising the third wave are referred to as eObjects (enhanced objects). The sociotechnical change reflected in new digital data collection, profiling, and targeting methods using eObjects may provide commercial entities with an enhanced ability, not only to target consumer preferences but also to exploit consumers' cognitive biases and individual vulnerabilities" (p 1).

Therefore, it is hard to imagine the whole magnitude and the power of marketers over consumers thanks to these collected data by eObjects.

The chart below represents the rate of people who use the Internet. It shows the number of people who used the Internet for the last 3 months from 1990 to 2016. The chart begins in 1990, which is one year before the first web browser was initiated by Berners-Lee. At that time, there was a limited number of computers that were connected to a network around the world and the data for 1990 shows that only half of one percent of the world population (0.5%) was online. As can be understood from the chart, it began to change in the 1990s only in several places in

the world. In 2000, almost 50% of the population was reaching information throughout the Internet in the US. On the other hand, the Internet didn't have much influence across most parts of the world yet such as South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, the East Asia and Pacific region, until 2000 since they were not still online. In 2016, after 15 years, three-quarters (76%) of the population was online in the US. During all these years, some countries from various parts of the world could catch up: Iceland is on top of all these with 98%; in Denmark and Norway 97%; in South Korea and Japan 93%; in France 86%; in Spain and Singapore 81%; in Malaysia 79%; in Russia 73%; in Turkey 58%.

Moreover, this chart presents the historical development of Social Media platforms. The timeline of the chart indicates when the latest websites and social media platforms were initiated and became a part of millions of people's daily life. For example, Wikipedia was launched in 2001 and Skype in 2003. The Facebook platform was created in 2004. In the following year, YouTube and Google Maps came up. Twitter was launched in 2006 while Github and Chrome web browsers in 2008. Whatsapp was created in 2009. Instagram and WeChat were launched in 2010 and 2011 ("Our world data", 2021).

As shown in figure 1.1, it is very clear that the number of online people is increasing each year as a result of growing global trends. The speed of the changing world is unbelievably fast. The Internet has already made lots of changes in the world, but SM platforms are the biggest changes that the Internet has brought.

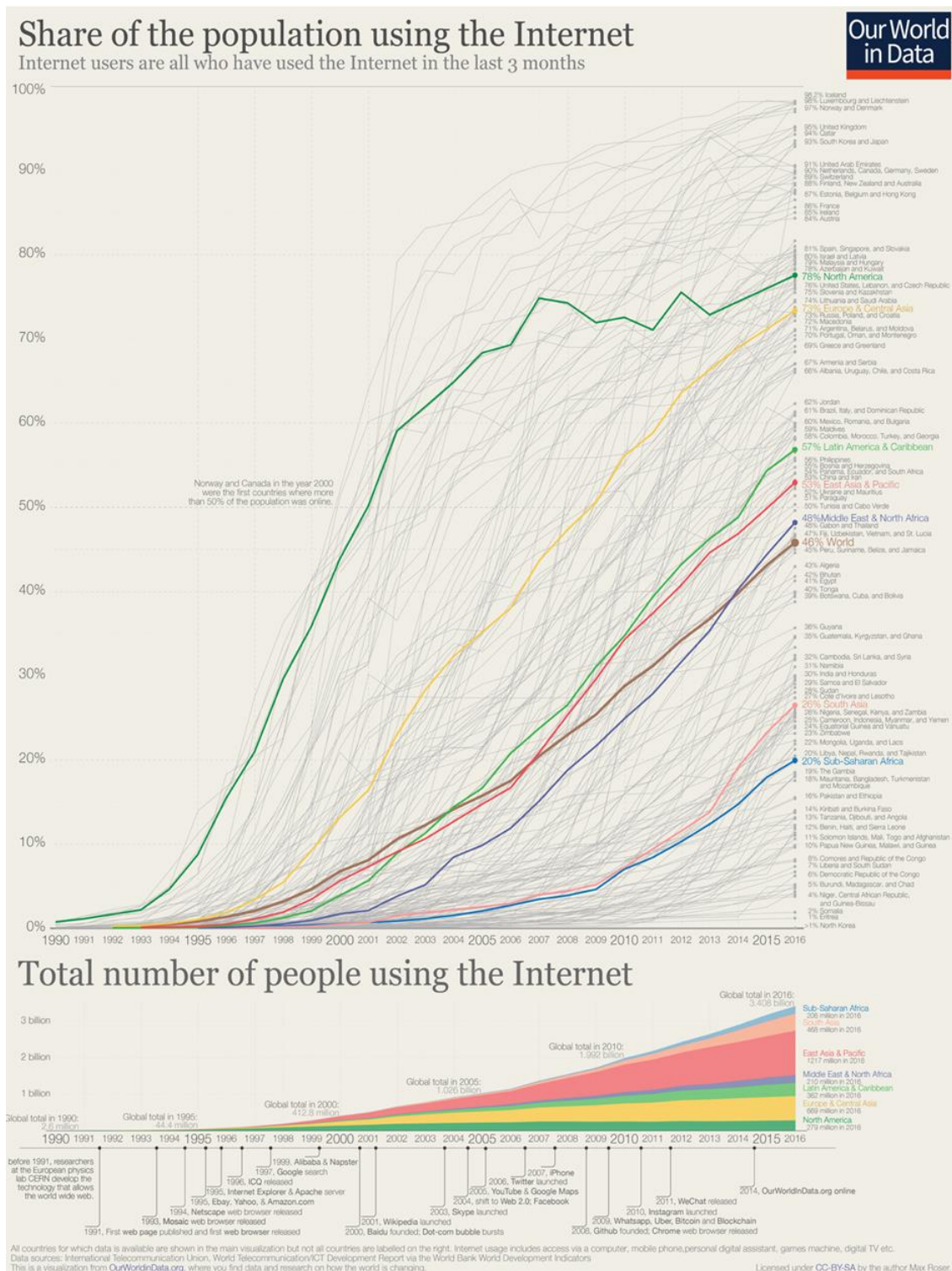


Figure 1.1. Share of the Population Using the Internet

The statistical data shows the historical change of Internet users in the Russian Federation and Turkey between 2000 and 2016. There were 2.378 million Internet users in Turkey in 2000. The number went up almost five fold up to 12.531 million users between 2000 and 2006. While

the number of Internet users increased from 2.894 million users to 25.834 million users between 2000 and 2006 in the Russian Federation, the number doubled up to 25.939 million users in Turkey in 2009. In comparison, the number of Internet users went up dramatically to 41.506 million users the same year in Russia. By 2016, the number of Internet users accounted for 46.196 million users, which means the proportion of 58% of all Turkish population using the Internet. In contrast, Internet usage went up to 102.258 million users, which means 73% of the population in Russia in 2016 (“Internetlivestats”, 2016).

1.1.2. Advantages and Disadvantages of Social Media

Throughout history, SM is considered to be a double-edged sword for society. It has numerous advantages as well as disadvantages for the following reasons.

On the one hand, SM lets people connect and communicate with each other across the globe. Such applications like Skype, Whatsapp, Viber have gone beyond the international borders allowing people to communicate freely, conduct businesses and conferences in remote places throughout the world.

Moreover, education has become easier, as anyone can complete an educational degree online without even leaving one's bedroom, or get any additional information about the area of interest through YouTube or Wikipedia. Even the principal of New Milford High School communicates with students and parents on Twitter to make organizations. In classes, students are generally invited to use their cell phones to take part in classroom polls and quizzes by the teachers (“Usatoday30”, 2011).

Besides, SM keeps us informed and updated on the most recent events around the globe, so we don't need to buy newspapers or watch TV news to keep the track of events. Also, many communities help people in need, organizing special donation charity programs for them through SM apps. For example, in Turkey, the program "map of need" provides necessary help for people in need (“Ihtiyachariatasi”, 2020). and The Salvation Army which is the second-largest charity in the U.S.A. also collects cash with the effort of Online Red Kettle through the platforms such as Flickr, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube (“Latimes”, 2010).

Most consumer brands use SM to increase their Brand Equity. Before using SM, Ford company wasn't that popular but it did the best thing by using SM to improve its consumer relations. To

regain the brand's reputation back to North America in 2010, Ford rewarded 100 Indie famous bloggers "agents" for publicly "lifecasting" their experiences with the Ford Fiesta car. This marketing strategy has worked perfectly since it created authentic and interesting content for SM that makes the brand extremely popular there. Ford achieved this with SM only for 5 million dollars, which has traditionally cost auto marketers lots of millions. In this way, Ford saved a lot thanks to SM ("Fastcompany", 2011).

When it comes to entertainment, nowadays the world-famous circus which is called Cirque du Soleil has the most sensational and unique acrobatic and visual scenes. SM has become the most important way for cirque to reach its fans. Before SM, traditional channels were used to be as a supplementary to cirque's marketing efforts, but now ways of communication such as radio and print have become a secondary means of messaging. As a result, SM has become the primary source of advertising ("Zdnet", 2010).

On the other hand, SM seems like an addiction. For example, people are waiting with anticipation when their friends will put likes on them and putting likes to them in return after users put some photos on Instagram. When people meet their friends for a chat, they unconsciously take their smartphones in hand and move into another virtual world of SM completely forgetting about their interlocutors. It's become like a social disease that they aren't able to recover from. Moreover, the usage of SM causes many psychological disorders. An example of this is that many teenagers commit suicide, especially in low-income families because they feel that their life is extremely miserable in comparison with the lives of their peers who pretend to live luxurious lives on SM. This leads to many false beliefs and misperceptions about real life and conditions.

Another fact that raises some issues is that SM facilitates a massive impact on our society such as cyber harassment, hacking, fraud, and scams, and so on. One of the most important issues is that SM can be a destructive weapon in manipulating the human mind. For instance, the Facebook Cambridge Analytica data violation happened at the beginning of 2018 at that time millions of Facebook users' data were used without permission by Cambridge Analytica in a political advertising campaign to manipulate the outcome of the political elections. This data violation was the largest data breach the world has seen in Facebook history ("Wikipedia", 2020). Cambridge Analytica violated the major profile data of 50 million Facebook users.

Whistleblower describes how the firm used this data to target American voters (“The guardian”, 2018).

Moreover, Netflix, which is a famous media platform, released a new documentary which is called "The Social Dilemma". The film, which was made by Americans, was directed by Jeff Orlowski in 2020. This film reveals the damaging effects that SM has caused on society. The film addresses important issues of SM's effects on mental health such as the psychological well-being of youth and increasing teen suicide percentages). The film contains conversations with many former executives, employees, and other experts from leading technology organizations and SM like Apple, Google, and Facebook who share professional experience in the high-tech industry. They indicate that SM platforms have played a vital role in bringing about a good change in society; however, professionals also argue that these SM platforms cause cultural, political, and social issues. These conversations are presented along with a script dramatizing adolescent SM addiction and describe how an artificial intelligence-based social media algorithm can work.

Besides, the film focuses on how SM exploits its users as raw material and manipulates them for the sake of financial gain by means of data mining and surveillance capitalism. Usual users think that it is they who use SMs for free but the situation is reversed as it is they who have been used for purposes of extremely profitable digital products. It explicitly shows the effect of SM's development to create an addiction among users, manipulate political elections, and also spread rumors about aiding conservative groups such as flat-earthers and conspiracy theories like Pizzagate (“Today”, 2020). Pizzagate is a conspiracy theory based on influential supporters of Hillary Clinton who are associated with a secret organization of pedophiles. It appeared in the United States during the 2016 presidential election. The theory emerged as a result of articles and posts published on various websites and SM discussed the possible connection of the popular Comet Ping Pong restaurant-pizzeria with a secret and influential pedophile organization in Washington. All these publications were based on the correspondence between Hillary Clinton's chief of staff, John Podesta, and the owner of a pizza restaurant published on Wikileaks at the height of the election race. Proponents of the theory base their assumptions on "suspicious" matches, Instagram photos, and other indirect signs. The theory has been criticized and called fake news by many magazines and newspapers in the political world, from The New York Times to Fox News. D.C. The Police Department called Pizzagate a "fake conspiracy

theory" ("Politifact", 2016). Similarly, the Flat Earth Society is a pseudoscientific organization founded in England and later revived in the United States, promoting the idea of a flat Earth. The Flat Earth Society advocated the idea that the Earth is shaped like a flat disk. According to the researchers, people who believe that the earth has a flat shape are extremely religious. With all these in mind, it can be assumed that SM has an undeniable power and effect on how things or events are shaped and resulted, which leads to many changes in people's lives all over the world ("Today", 2018).

Even though there are lots of effects of SM on human beings, it seems that people are not aware of the dimensions of this fact. Bid technological organizations violate some moral ethics by interfering in people's lives through SM platforms and mobile phones where they gather the private data of people invisibly. As a result, smart algorithms of technology companies are built upon human behavior and they can almost predict everything perfectly. Advertising that is based on artificial intelligence uses patterns of human behavior. For this reason, they predict what people want correctly so that they send ads on purpose that are ideally matched with the current emotional state of people. This can be ads of the coupon of a favorite restaurant for the target person who is more inclined to make a purchase at that moment. Harvard professor Shoshana Zuboff, sometimes called the Karl Marx of our time, shed a light on this by introducing a new term, which is "surveillance capitalism". The concept of surveillance capitalism, as explained by Shoshana Zuboff (2019), emerged as a result of the activities of ad companies. It was conducted by Google's AdWords and then adapted by Facebook which saw the possibilities of using raw personal data to target consumers more precisely through targeted advertising. She also sees surveillance capitalism as an organization that works through the instruments of the digital world since it draws upon the growingly popular system of digital instrumentations to depend on, reconstruct and even form all the human experiences from different perspectives. Hence, effective social participation leads to behavioral modification or in other words shapes consumer behavior. In addition, it forecasts future consumer behavior that results in increased commercial revenues. Shoshasxmna Zuboff (2019), says that *"In our time, surveillance capitalism repeats capitalism's "original sin" of primitive accumulation. It revives Karl Marx's old image of capitalism as a vampire that feeds on labor, but with an unexpected turn. Instead of claiming work (or land, or wealth) for the market dynamic as industrial capitalism once did, surveillance capitalism audaciously lays claim to private experience for translation into fungible commodities that are rapidly swept up into the*

exhilarating life of the market" (p 11). Thus, Internet giants and small startups have already changed a lot and continue to change the world. New technologies force people to change their habits, behavior, and lifestyle. Entrepreneurs and investors saw a new gold mine on the world wide web. By starting to develop this vein, they changed capitalism. The capitalism of the twentieth century relied on the working class: it extracted raw materials and produced goods, the sale of goods brought a surplus that turned into capital – a simple and understandable scheme. However, according to Zuboff (2019), the capitalism of the twenty-first century relies on the users' data on SM. She emphasizes that people's private and personal experiences have been hijacked by Silicon Valley and used as the raw material for extremely profitable digital products. Ford and General Motors – two examples of successful enterprises of the last century-operated according to the scheme presented above. Henry Ford knew perfectly well that it was the workers who were the main element of the economy, and therefore he was the first to raise their wages, hoping to return it to the turnover of capital. It took GM 40 years and 735,000 employees to reach its maximum capitalization of \$225 billion. By the end of 2016, Facebook reached a capitalization of \$332 billion with a staff of no more than 18 thousand people. Facebook is a social network that does not produce material goods. Clearly, something has changed in the world. The so-called surveillance capitalism was born, it is based not on the workers, but on the lives of each of us, professor Zuboff (2019), concludes. She also claims that people think that technology companies gain as much information as they have given them; however, people's personal information is the least important part of the information that companies learn about them. An example of this would be Facebook as it knows people's hobbies, preferences, and friends. Besides, artificial intelligence algorithms retrieve a lot of information from the digital traces people leave behind. Google's navigation platform knows where people are all the time and what they think. People's preferences and choices have been analyzed to train models or patterns of consumer behavior. Therefore, their algorithms train models based on this analysis since it is discovered that people with similar characteristics behave alike over time. This information allows companies to place ads on SM based on the necessary pattern of consumer behavior by predicting what they are likely to do soon. There was a case of a supermarket chain in which artificial intelligence algorithms could understand that the girl was pregnant even before she did because of the fact that the girl switched from fragrant shampoo to more neutral smelling products. The market algorithms assumed that this girl was pregnant since the olfactory senses of pregnant women become stronger. Her father didn't know about this until he was constantly sent special offers for baby products. As it is

clear from the example, artificial intelligence algorithms gather and analyze trillions of terabytes of behavioral data. Thus, big technological companies can predict people's behavior, personalities, emotions, sexual orientation, and political orientation.

The technological advancements of the Internet and SM have quickly spread across the globe. The spread of the SM and the Internet in, Russia and Turkey, and all over the world has been increased dramatically for the last 4 years (“DataRePortal”, 2021). In world, while half of the world population was online in 2017, the number of Internet users for the first time in history reached up to 4.54 billion users by January 2020. Moreover, the number of active SM users has increased from 2.789 billion in 2017 to 3.80 million in 2020. Thus, users of the Internet have increased with an exponential progression in the world for the past 4 years.

In Turkey, there was a rapid growth of Internet users from 48 million to 62.07 million and active SM users from 48 million to 54 million between 2017 and 2020. However, the population remains steady almost 84 million people. In the meantime, Turkey is one of the biggest SM markets on the planet (“Rechargeasia”, 2020).

In the Russian Federation, while the total population remained constant from 143.4 million in 2017 to 145.9 million in 2020, the number of Internet and active SM users grew sharply from 105.3 million to 118 million of the Internet users and from 55.9 million to 70 million of active Sm users between 2017 and 2020. These are huge numbers when the total population of the Russian Federation is taken into consideration (“Datareportal”, 2020) (Table 1.1.).

Table 1.1. Population and Users' Statistics Yearly in Russia and Turkey

		Total population	Internet Users	Active SM users
January 2020	World	7.75 bil	4.54 bil	3.80 mil
	Growth	+1.1%	+7.0%	+9.2%
	Turkey	83.88 mil	62.07mil	54 mil
	Growth	+1.2%	+4%	+4.2%
	Russia	145.9 mil	118.0 mil	70 mil
	Growth	+0.07%	-0.4%	+0%
January 2019	World	7.676 bil	4.388 bil	3.484 bil
	Growth	+1.1%	+9.1%	+9%
	Turkey	82.44 mil	59.36 mil	52 mil
	Growth	+1.4%	+9.3%	+ 2%
	Russia	143.9 mil	109.6 mil	70 mil
	Growth	-0.03%	-0.4%	+3.3%
January 2018	World	7.593 bil	4.021 bil	3.196 bil
	Growth	-	+7%	+13%
	Turkey	81.33 mil	54.33 mil	51 mil
	Growth	-	+13%	+6%
	Russia	144 mil	110 mil	67.8 mil
	Growth	-	+4%	+15%
January 2017	World	7.476 bil	3.773 bil	2.789 bil
	Growth	-	+10%	+21%
	Turkey	80.02 mil	48 mil	48 mil
	Growth	-	+4%	+14%
	Russia	143.4 mil	105.3 mil	55.9 mil
	Growth	-	+2 %	-

1.1.3. Covid-19 and Social Media Lockdown

2020 was especially an important year in the history of SM platforms. The Covid-19 outbreak has changed the way people used to live before. Thousands of people have become sick and public health officials examined the cases to be able to understand how the virus was spreading. People all over the world tried to understand the causes and effects of Covid-19 on their personal and professional lives during these unpredictable times. Because of the Covid-19,

everybody had to stay at home for quarantine so that everyone started to spend most of their time online. During this lockdown at home, the behaviors of people and especially consumers inevitably changed. Despite the rigid rules of quarantine, people were still obliged to do their work and other duties. For all these reasons, millions of employers and employees started to work remotely, teachers and students switched to online education, businessmen arranged online business meetings, and consumers did online shopping. As a result of all these, living online has become a part of human life naturally by means of SM platforms in a short time.

SM platforms have become a vital issue in people's lives, especially during the pandemic. However, there are different aspects of these issues. Sinan Aral, who is the Professor of Management at MIT Sloan and managing director on the Digital Economy, ensures an insightful and sophisticated analysis of the power, danger, and upsides of Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and other social platforms for both organizations and society. In his book, he described "The hype machine" as the big power that SM has on us. He also emphasizes the importance of the incredible impact which Covid-19 pandemic has on SM.

Aral (2020) identifies the period of Covid-19 as a "black swan" event, the impact of which was felt on all spheres of people's lives such as health, economy, and work. This event will remain in people's memory for a long time because they won't forget where they were locked down, whom they wanted to see, and how they managed the huge mental and physical stress that the Covid-19 brought. Moreover, there was a real shock that was delivered to the world's communication system which was the core system of all the connections on the planet. Popular tourist attractions turned into ghost towns and billions of people had to go home and spend more time on their computers, mobile phones, tablets through the Internet and SM platforms.

"The day the offline world stood still, the online world ignited like a digital forest fire. Demand for social media skyrocketed. Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, and Facebook Life saw 50% increases in usage overnight. Voice calling over Facebook's apps doubled, while group calls in Italy grew by over 1000%. As movie theaters closed, new downloads of Netflix jumped 66% in Italy and 35% in Spain. Netflix crushed under the weight of the surge... Digital natives were already on social media, but the coronavirus forced many digital Luddites to use social technologies for the first time. New users flocked to the social platform in droves, building armies of fresh profiles, wiring into

what I call the "Hype machine" - the real-time communications ecosystem created by social media" (p 1).

Thus, he describes the ecosystem created by SM as the "Hype machine" since this idea is about exploiting the power of SM by exploiting the people.

The changing conditions during the Covid-19 extremely influenced consumers by causing new Generation Novel or Gen N to emerge. *"Meet Generation Novel, a growing cross-generational psychographic of digital-first consumers galvanized by the disruptive effects of COVID-19. This emergent and significant customer segment isn't just digital-centric. It's also emotionally charged, as pandemic-fueled fear, anxiety, and worry take their toll. With the impact of the novel coronavirus likely to endure, companies must prioritize the study of Gen N. Doing so will help executives understand how consumers' increased and accelerated use of technology affects their preferences, behaviors, and routines. These insights can guide brand, product, and market strategies to be more timely, relevant, and empathetic at a time when there is no pandemic playbook to follow"* as Brian Solis (2020) claims. Therefore, all these changes brought by pandemics make consumers change their behaviors and habits which results in a new generation novel of our digitalized world ("Fastcompany", 2020).

Moreover, a huge digital evolution has been witnessed as consumerism was altered toward the digital experience. An excellent example of it would be findings revealed by McKinsey. He concluded that the Covid-19 was the greatest booster which went beyond 10 years of the United States e-commerce penetration in almost 90 days ("McKinsey", 2020). Thus, the pandemic period was an important impetus to the advancement of social commerce, as most of the e-commerce platforms also selling their products on SM platforms. Social commerce lets consumers do shopping without ever leaving SM platforms and have a seamless experience of purchasing ("Buffer", 2020). Facebook became a new face for e-commerce companies because of its value of services, where online users can express themselves and communicate with their favorite brands by engaging through their networks (Sharma & Bhatt, 2018). Coronavirus lockdown, also, has fueled Facebook's introduction of new tools that let small businesses set up online storefronts on its website and Instagram. Organizations now can upload a catalog of merchandise to a new "Facebook Shop", accessible through their Facebook page or Instagram page. SM apps give an opportunity for shoppers to browse merchandise directly within their

apps, save products and make an order without leaving the apps (“Retailwire”, 2020). And these positive developments quickly affected the company of Facebook so that its latest net profit report shows double-digit growth both in the revenue and in the number of registered members (“Socialmediatoday”, 2020). Despite the fact that Instagram is a new and developing platform for businesses, a new analysis estimates that sales on the SM are aimed to generate \$10 billion a year by 2021 (“Tamebay”, 2019). Therefore, these SM websites have become vitally necessary channels for business communications and they have played a huge role in shaping consumer behavior during coronavirus lockdowns.

The increase in the Internet and SM usage during pandemics have resulted in spreading much misinformation around it. The Covid-19 outbreak has brought not only physical distractions for people but also mental ones, as much distrustful information and news have been spread into the Web, especially in SM websites. Almost all knowledge known about the pandemic comes through SM platforms. That's why people start to search for information online in order to keep themselves safe and to search for a possible escape route after facing these challenges. However, the misinformation about the pandemic only ignited a feeling of powerlessness as it was difficult to find trustworthy information. Therefore, a new phenomenon was suggested by the World Health Organization (WHO) as an expression to define it: *"An infodemic is ‘an overabundance of information—some accurate and some not—that makes it hard for people to find trustworthy sources and reliable guidance when they need it’"* (“WHO”, 2020). For all these reasons, people can feel defenseless and they can be exposed to feelings of anxiety and stress because of misinformation that they have met on SM platforms.

This misinformation quickly spread due to the fact people read news from unofficial sources such as Socia Media platforms. That's why the World Health organization tries to track myths and rumors and respond to them on Socia Media platforms. According to the reports of WHO (2020):

"Due to the high demand for timely and trustworthy information about Covid-19, WHO technical risk communication and SM teams have been working closely to track and respond to myths and rumors. WHO is making public health information and advice on the Covid-19, including myth busters, available on its social media channels (including Weibo, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest) and website" (WHO, 2020).

SM usage has accelerated significantly due to the outbreak of coronavirus. In the world, SM users rose to 4.20 billion by January 2021. This figure has grown by 490 million over the past 12 months, in comparison, there were 321 million new users over the year in January 2020 (“Datareportal”, 2021).

1.1.4. Social Media from Marketing Perspective

Marketing can be studied from different perspectives on SM. First of all, social business (SB) can be defined as a process that creates its own ecosystem on SM that systematically enhances the engagement among employees, customers, and shareholders of the organization so as to enhance the "output" or value of customers. Besides, business partnerships may have been formed after engagement with each other. *According to IBM (2015) “social business is about moving beyond the social media tools you’re currently familiar with to unlock the potential of the people and gain a competitive advantage. Today, by combining social networking tools—internally and externally—with sophisticated analytic capabilities, companies are transforming their business processes, building stronger relationships among their employees, customers, and business partners, and making better decisions faster. This is what makes a social business—embracing networks of people to create new business value and opportunities”* (“IBM”, 2015). Furthermore, engaging employees, customers, and shareholders of the organization can help the organization transform all those participants from passive viewers to active ones. Social business, also, processes conversations or transactions on SM by gathering consumers' opinions and attitudes about products/brands/services as well as their dissatisfactions or complaints about products/brands/services from the messages in the conversations. After this selected information is evaluated, some symptoms of the problems related to products/brands/services are revealed as a result of the analysis of the collected data. Thus, the necessary steps are taken in order to eliminate the problems toward products/brands/services of the organization. Further, some innovations and improvements can be implemented too.

Secondly, social media marketing (SMM) is one of the most popular marketing tools among marketers. *Social media marketing is used across sectors and refers to “the utilization of social media technologies, channels, and software to create, communicate, deliver, and exchange offerings that have value for an organization's stakeholders”* (Tuten & Solomon, 2017, p. 18). There is very thing difference between SMM and SB. According to Evans (2010), these two

terms can be differentiated as: *"Social media marketing—properly practiced—seeks to engage customers in the online social locations where they naturally spend time. By comparison, social business picks up on what they are talking about and what they are interested in and connects this back into the business where it can be processed and used to create the next round of customer experiences and hence the next round of conversations"* (Evans, 2010:7).

Thirdly, SM has also shaped marketing into another form called Social Commerce (SC).

The concept of SC emerged among the commercially increasing use of social networking sites and the other SM websites in 2005 (Curty & Zhang, 2011). It creates a new kind of electronic commerce (e-commerce) (Wang & Zhang, 2021). Laudon and Traver (2018) stated that SM was primarily popular amongst youngsters who used SM for playing video games when SM was created. After that, it emerged mainly for the e-commerce industry. E-commerce pushed by SM was forced to use the platform for utilizing it for e-commerce activities. SC is developing and transforming the field of online marketing which cooperates with SM and online shopping ("Investopedia", 2021). While consumers contact online shopping sites in traditional e-commerce, there are online communities that provide support for the users through interactions and user-generated content (Kim & Srivastava, 2007). Marketers use different tactics and techniques to create content and make posts that enhance e-commerce and online sales on SM websites in the framework of SC. According to Investopedia (2021):

"The popularity of social networks such as Facebook and Instagram allows vendors to showcase their products and quickly respond to follow buyer-led trends and fads. Fashion and shopping-related blogs use social commerce and media to entice shoppers to purchase linked items online. For example, many popular fashion blogs have Instagram accounts that allow followers to like, share, and comment on the offered product. The tagged article frequently links directly to the store's shopping cart or check out desk".

Thus, SC is considered another essential application for marketers. In practice, these mentioned types of activities on SM make it possible for marketers to utilize SM in various ways.

1.1.5. Different Categories of Social Media

SM platforms can be divided into 11 categories:

1. Social Networks (Facebook; LinkedIn; Google+; Myspace).

According to Quesenberry (2015), all kinds of SM platforms, especially social networks seem to attract a lot of attention and cause. Social channels like Facebook and LinkedIn are gigantic. The Facebook website is called “The Social Network” thanks to its huge networking area all over the world and the film about its establishment. This platform is not the only social network but there are also other popular ones. A social network is a kind of website where users contact each other by sharing professional or personal content. Popular examples of social networks include Facebook, Linked In, and VKontakte, Odnoklassniki in Russia.

Facebook has 2.74 billion monthly active users. The average Facebook Page shares 1.55 posts per day (“Hootsuite”, 2020).

LinkedIn, on the other hand, a business-focused network that is essential for both B2B and B2C products and services. LinkedIn has 722 million members. Furthermore, LinkedIn is used by 40 million people to search for jobs each week and 3 people can find a job through LinkedIn each minute (“Hootsuite”, 2021).

VKontakte is a social network that is most popular in Russia. More than 470 million users have an account there. More than 75% of site users are older than 25 years. More than 92 million visitors come to the site every day. VK is chiefly used by Russian speakers and available in many languages. VK permits users to message each other privately or publicly; create public pages, events, and groups, and play computer-based games; tag and share images, video, and audio (“Russian promo”, 2018).

Odnoklassniki is an SM that helps in finding former classmates and is used mainly in former Soviet Republics and Russia. Odnoklassniki is the second most popular SM in Russia, after VK (VKontakte) but more than Facebook, which is in the 3rd place. Nowadays, it has more than 330 million users who are users between 25 to 44 years (44% of the total). Every day 59 million users visit this website (“Russian promo”, 2018).

2. Messaging Apps (**WhatsApp**; **Facebook Messenger**; **Viber**; **Kik**).

Social messaging is chat applications or instant messaging developed on SM to communicate on mobile phones with fewer limits compared to traditional texting (“Wikipedia”, 2021). Messaging apps are really popular and the number of active users around the world has increased to over five billion monthly. Top apps exceed over one billion users and each of them are like these: Facebook Messenger (1.3 billion) and WeChat (1.2 billion) (“DataReportal” 2021), and Kik (300 million), (“Kik”, 2021), and Viber (236 million) (“Viber”, 2021).

Telegram is a Russian developed application that has been around since 2013, but now it's becoming more and more popular. As WhatsApp shook its user's trust due to security issues, the Telegram app, in turn, stands out because of its focus on security and speed. Furthermore, Telegram is also a desktop messaging app and a cloud-based mobile. Also, it is comfortable for those whose phone lacks memory. It has also been introduced with a function of voice chat, which is a new dimension of live talks on Telegram. There are more than 500 million monthly active users on Telegram and it is one of the 10 most downloaded apps across the globe in 2021 (“Telegram”, 2021).

Kik is an application that is commonly used by teens between 13 and 24 years old. Thus, it is ranked as a top ten app for teens in the US. This app helps teens to better engage with their favorite brands and friends by means of millions of emojis, gifs, and stickers. There are more than 300 million registered members in 2021 (“Kik”, 2021).

WeChat is a SM platform as well as multi-purpose messaging, and mobile payment app created in China. WeChat has been accepted as China's "super app" and "app for everything" due to its various functions. WeChat offers hold-to-talk voice messaging, text messaging, video conferencing, broadcast (one-to-many) messaging, video games, sharing of videos, photographs, and location sharing (“Wikipedia”, 2021). According to the findings of a survey done by a website which is called Review 42 (2020), it was found that there are 1.17 billion registered members on WeChat.

Rakuten Viber, or simply **Viber**, is an instant messaging application. However, initially, it was created as an e-money service to support small supermarkets to survive in rural areas of

Japan. Currently, there are over 70 billion businesses on Rukunet Group and 1.4 billion members around the world (“Global Rakuten”, 2021).

3. Blogs and Forums (**WordPress; Tumblr**).

The blog is a shortened form of Weblog, which portrays websites that contain reverse-chronological posts or arrange passages including diary commentaries or stories on particular subjects that extend from personal to political issues (“Codex WordPress”, 2017). Blogs often create strong communities of interest, and bloggers can be extremely influential in becoming opinion leaders and influencers in specific areas. There are 31.7 million bloggers in 2021 in the US (“Firstsiteguide”, 2021). In digital marketing, blogs can be considered as a tool to successfully create a marketing strategy. As a result, it helps to increase sales revenue of products by creating space for customers to write their reviews and read comments about people’s personal experiences. For organizations, blogs have worked truly well as part of their whole strategic marketing strategy (Zhang, 2009).

WordPress has come a long way since its release in 2003. There has been incredible growth in its popularity and the growth doesn’t seem to be slowing down. In fact, WordPress powers over 39.5% of all the websites on the Internet. WordPress allows users to create their own website very easily so that even inexperienced users can handle this task. More than one in five websites are likely created by the **WordPress** platform. WordPress’s popularity has surged in the last decade. In 2021, WordPress gets 163 million visitors per month and also users publish an average of 70.5 million new posts and 52.1 million new comments each month (“Cyberchimps”, 2021).

Tumblr is created for people to make a blog and put everything they want there such as stories, TV shows, photos, Spotify tracks, mp3s, art, fashion, and links. Tumblr has 522 million different blogs that contain various stuff created by users (“Tumblr”, 2021). Tumblr had 347.5 million unique visitors in 2020 and 327 million in 2021 (“Statista”, 2021).

4 Microblogging (**Twitter; Pinterest; Sina Weibo; Slack**).

Microblogging is a type of conventional blogging where there is smaller content in both file size and length of the content. Microblogs constrain posts to smaller bits of information like single images, video links, or short sentences that are known as micro-posts. Similar to

conventional blogs, users can post on various topics such as their political opinions, their favorite dinner meals, or TV shows, etc (“Wikipedia”, 2021). As a result there is a small difference between traditional blogs and microblogging, however, microblogs can be used in many different ways for many purposes (Quesenberry, 2020). The most popular microblogs are Twitter, Pinterest, Sina Weibo, and Slack.

Twitter is an online SM platform that allows users to broadcast short messages called tweets. On Twitter, anyone can follow anyone who is different from Facebook or LinkedIn where users need to approve social connections (“WhatisTechtatget”, 2015). The Twitter platform defines itself as “what’s happening in the world and what people are talking about right now” (“Twitter”, 2021). Datareportal (2021) proposes that Twitter has grown to over 353.1 million monthly active users.

Pinterest is a kind of mobile and web SM platform that allows discovery of visuals, collection and sharing and also it serves as a tool for storage. Pinterest is sometimes called an inspiration app because there are so many truly beautiful pictures so that users can create their own "boards" to arrange their content and get a sip of inspiration. An example of this can be photography, home decor, flowers, and design. All registered members can browse each others' boards and "Like" or "Repin" favorite photos (“Techterms”, 2021). Pinterest, which is even a newer platform than Twitter, began in 2010 but Datareportal claims (2021) that it has grown to over 200 million monthly active users in 2021.

Sina Weibo is the largest Chinese microblogging platform with more than 521 million monthly active users in December 2020 (“Chinainternetwatch”, 2020).

Slack is a popular microblog which is used in organizations. It provides quick communication among employees. Today, there are 12 million daily active users and more than 150 countries have daily users there. Furthermore, it is used by companies like Pinterest, Time, Samsung, Ogilvy, Ticketmaster, and eBay (“Slack”, 2021).

5 Media Sharing (**YouTube; Instagram; Snapchat**).

Users can upload their videos, photos, and audio with the help of media sharing sites to a website so that those sharings can be accessible from all over the world. If the users want, they can share all those things with their friends or a selected group of people (“Affilorama”, 2021).

YouTube is a platform where users view, upload, and share the video. It has attributed its most recent increase in popularity thanks to younger audiences. As observed by Hootsuite (2021) YouTube has more than 2 billion users and 1 billion hours of video is watched each day in total.

Instagram is an online mobile SM platform that is not completely computer-friendly. This platform is visually orientated that's why its main feature is to take photos or make videos and share them with the world. It may resemble a personal photo album, but a digital one (“Instagram”, 2021). Nevertheless, it became one of the main and important channels for businesses to sell their products. Hootsuite (2021), finds that Instagram has 1.22 billion users and 130 million users click on shopping posts every month. Moreover, 81% of users use Instagram to research brands and products.

Snapchat is a kind of messaging service which involves photo and video-sharing. In this platform, media and messages are not available for a short time after sharing. Although it is one of the newest social platforms, it grew quickly in popularity among young people and users due to the anonymity of messages being deleted after ten seconds. According to the results revealed by Datareportal (2021), this SM has 498.2 million users. Furthermore, Snapchat is planning to incorporate new augmented reality technology (AR), which is a total breakthrough because it will allow users to try on products on themselves in real-time (“Zdnet”, 2021).

TikTok is a short-term video-sharing social networking service. TikTok is the international version of the Chinese app called Douying. Nevertheless, TikTok became available worldwide after merging with another Chinese SM platform Musical.ly. The most popular video made on the categories such as pranks (54 billion), fitness/sports (43.3 billion), home reno (28.6 billion), beauty/skincare (21.8 billion), fashion (17.5 billion), recipes/cooking (12.9 billion) life hacks/advice (8.3 billion), pets (7.5 billion), outdoor (1.2 billion) (“Influencemarketinghub”, 2021). Recent statistics of TikTok represent that there are 689 million monthly active users worldwide in 2021 (“Datareportal”, 2021). However, because there are contents that threaten

security and spread in a contagious way. In many countries, discussions about its ban are ongoing but it was banned in the USA.

6 Geosocial (**Foursquare**).

Users started to share their location with friends or the public in real-time thanks to the advancements brought by smartphones. **Check-in** is stated to be a self-reported positioning to share a user's physical location utilizing SM platforms ("Wikipedia", 2021). **Geotagging** is a similar activity in which geographical location is added to media like video, social media posts, or pictures ("Wikipedia", 2021). **Geosocial** is a kind of SM platform where users can connect and coordinate with local people, businesses, or events thanks to user-submitted location data ("Pewinternet", 2013). Kaplan (2016), stated that a vital part of reviews and ratings come from geosocial SM, with 90% of smartphone users searching for recommendations depending on location.

Foursquare City Guide, also known as **Foursquare**, is a mobile app developed by Foursquare Labs Inc in which users can search and look for local places. Foursquare offers users tailored personalized recommendations to visit a place which is closer to the user's current location based on users' preferences, history of browsing, and check-in history ("Eater", 2015). There are more than 55 million monthly active users on Foursquare in 2021. Moreover, Turkey is the biggest fan of this SM platform because its residents are most likely to engage with this app among all countries in the world ("Review 42", 2021).

7 Social Live Video (**Twitch; Houseparty**)

Live streaming video is video content which is compressed and sent over the Internet. It can be displayed in real-time (Rouse, 2008). The live streaming video started with the Meerkat app. This sparked a huge interest in mobile broadcasting when it was launched in 2015. Meerkat users had the option of connecting their Twitter and Facebook accounts to stream directly to their followers as soon as they went live. Nevertheless, Meerkat was quickly shut down in 2016 and replaced by the Houseparty app ("Wikipedia", 2021).

Houseparty experienced a huge rise in popularity after lockdown during the Covid-10 as it was downloaded more than 17 million times in 2020. Before the lockdown Houseparty app wasn't much popular ("Foxbusines", 2020).

Twitch is a live streaming SM platform that is popular with e-sports competitions, in addition to creative content, and music broadcasts in real life online (Net-aware, 2021). In 2020, there were 140 million monthly active users and 26.5 million daily active users. In addition, 9.7 million streamers go live each month, which means an increase of 41% over 2020 (“Hostingtribunal”, 2020).

8 Ratings and Reviews (**Yelp; TripAdvisor**).

Reviews are kinds of reports in which people share their opinions about the quality of product, service, and performance. **Ratings** are another kind of a measurement where people evaluate how bad or good the place or service is. In contrast to reviews, ratings are expressed mainly on a scale that is a relative evaluation or estimate (“Marriam-Webster”, 2017).

Yelp is a platform that publishes people's reviews about businesses. In addition, it provides a reservation service that is called Yelp Reservation. Yelp platform helps millions of consumers to evaluate and compare businesses that are close to their living area thanks to 184 million reviews worldwide. Besides, Yelp has more than 178 million unique visitors monthly in 2021 (“Review 42”, 2021).

TripAdvisor platform is an online travel company that offers people a wide range of options such as planning, booking, and taking a trip. It also provides total guidance on where to visit, what to see, or what to eat for travelers. TripAdvisor is based on machine learning algorithms that constantly get smarter due to the accumulated data of people. This results in providing a better service for customers (“TripAdvisor”, 2017). There are 463 million monthly unique visitors on TripAdvisor and it has amassed 860 million opinions and reviews about 8.7 million restaurants, accommodations, and attractions in 2021 (“Expandedramblings”, 2021).

9 Social Bookmarking (**Reddit; Digg**).

Social bookmarking is a platform where people can save, add, annotate, and share bookmarks of links or documents. Many online bookmark platforms have been available since 1996; however, this term "social bookmarking" became popular after Del.icio.us, which was founded in 2003, popularized it (Quesenberry, 2020).

Reddit is a social news platform and forum where registered users submit content in the form of links or text. Moreover, the content is socially promoted and curated by registered members through voting (“Search.TechTarget”, 2021). There are 52 million daily active users and approximately 430 million users who visit the website every month. Reddit had 30 billion views each month in 2020 (“Businessofapps”, 2020).

10 Social Knowledge (**Wikipedia; Quora**).

Writing is usually the solo act of one person who amasses information and afterward shares written stuff with other people. It can be books, encyclopedias, and articles. Nevertheless, wikis helped to change it. A **wiki** is a platform where editing can be done collaboratively by multiple users. The name “wiki” derives from **WikiWiki- Web**, which was the first platform to utilize a wiki-style of programming in 1995 (“Merriam-Webster”, 2017).

Wikipedia is a source of free information in many languages on many subjects. This information can be edited or added by anyone. Besides, there are professional authors who watch for errors, and pages on controversial subjects (“Dictionary Cambridge”, 2021).

Quora is a platform in which users ask questions and these questions are answered by other users. 300 million unique people visited this website a month in 2020 (“Wikipedia”, 2020).

11 Podcasts (**RSS**).

Podcasts is a radio program platform based on other people's insights, stories, or answers to questions. It consists of an episodic series of spoken digital audio records that can be downloaded to a laptop or a smartphone (“Wikipedia”, 2021).

RSS is a web feed platform that collects news from many different websites in a single news aggregator which is called web syndication. Besides, there is standardized computer-readable format in all news. Websites often use RSS feeds to distribute constantly updated information, such as news headlines, blog entries, episodes of audio, and podcasts (“Wikipedia”, 2021).

12 Voice only app (**Clubhouse**)

The inconceivable increase in interest in SM platforms brings along with the innovations that increase the competitive power in these platforms and the search for difference. Updates follow

each other in a new application or application every day. In 2021, a different service began to be offered to SM users and the Clubhouse phenomenon emerged. The privilege offered by Clubhouse has begun to be imitated by other platforms. Twitter, Instagram, etc. They tried to create a new space for users by opening chat rooms.

Clubhouse

Strielkowski (2021), says that Clubhouse is accepted as a new SM phenomenon. Nevertheless, the COVID-19 pandemic with its social lockdowns and isolations helped this phenomenon come true. If there hadn't been a pandemic, it couldn't have occurred. The new SM phenomenon was invented by Rohan Seth and Paul Davison, who are two graduate students from Stanford University with a wide range of experience in IT organizations. They launched the Clubhouse application that offered a live streaming audio chat where users are gathering in different rooms based on their interests in April 2020. Furthermore, it got a name as "Silicon Valley's hottest start-up" since it showed remarkable growth in just 6 months which is from \$100 million to \$1 billion. Strielkowski also (2021) stated that

"Clubhouse appeared on the market thanks to the growing demand for informal real-life-like online conversations. All Clubhouse conversations are real-time which means one can hear people throwing out their opinions on the subject and raising her or his hand to throw theirs. Unlike other social networks, it offers a certain form of an online audio narrative therapy that is used for the development of social and emotional skills or for treating substance use and mental disorders (Beaudoin et al., 2016; or Wendt et al., 2017). The name of the Clubhouse app bears the striking resemblance to the so-called "Clubhouse model" which represents a type of psychosocial rehabilitation for patients with mental health disorders that makes them actively engage with their communities and participate in their social lives by using various programs and services (Mutschler et al., 2021) " (p 3).

1.2. Background of Russian and Turkish Nationalities

Cultural factors apply a broad and profound impact on CB. Marketers need to realize the role played by the buyers' social class, culture, and subculture (Armstrong et al., 2014). CB is deeply impacted by cultural factors, for example, social class, buyer culture, and subculture. Fundamentally, culture is part of every society and is the significant cause of individual wants

and behavior. The impact of culture on buying behavior differs from one country to another. For this reason, marketers have to be extremely cautious in analyzing the culture of different groups, regions, and countries. Each culture contains various subcultures, for instance, nationalities, religions, geographic regions, and racial groups, etc. Marketers can use these groups in order to segment the market into different niches. For example, marketers can develop products according to the needs of a specific geographic group (Gajjar, 2013).

Everywhere in the world, consumer behavior has gone through a progressive transformation that is occurring by techno sociological developments these days. In a world where there are no border limitations, it is necessary to take the cultural factor of consumers into consideration since it influences CB greatly. Thus, two societies of Russian and Turkish consumers have been taken into consideration in this study.

Russian society has undergone fundamental changes in political regimes and ideology as a whole starting from the last century to the present day. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR), a one-party state governed by the Communist Party, was formed in 1922. It strived to build "Communism" which is a philosophical, social, political ideology and movement liquidating the division in the social strata of society, state, common ownership of the capital goods, and abolishing money usage. Besides, socialist states, which are based on the Soviet model, have realized a planned economic system. For this reason, there was very little product differentiation as well as imported products. Also, from time to time, there was a deficit of some products and food shortages. The marketing science was in its "infancy" stage and a few attempts were made in order to shift the focus from the production of industrial goods to some consumer goods. However, when the "iron curtain" fell in 1991 because of the dissolution of the USSR, the Democratic Republic of Russia was declared, which caused the popularization of consumerism and consumer goods. The term "consumer" was officially introduced in 1991. According to Article 3 of the Consumer Protection Law, the consumer is a *"real and legal person who acquires, uses or makes use of a good or service for commercial or non-professional purposes"*. Globalization has caused "newly-made" consumers to undergo five eras of Marketing evolution which are the Production era, the Product era, the Selling era, the Marketing era, and the Holistic or Social era with exponential progression. Meanwhile, due to the abolishing of the Sultanate, in 1923, the Turkish republic was formed where democracy was a dominant form of government that gave rise to freedom of political expression, freedom of

speech, freedom of the press. For this reason, Turkish society has experienced the Marketing eras of evolution much earlier. As a result, Turkish consumers have been able to develop attitudes and beliefs relative to the internal and external markets and obtain a profound knowledge in marketing science for more than a century. However, Russian people have struggled to change their mindsets and started thinking in a new way as a consumer so quickly, and it is questionable whether they have managed to adapt to SM websites.

In this study, Russian and Turkish consumers will be explored and compared to each other in terms of cultural factors affecting their CB. Since these two societies have undergone different cultural, political, and religious changes for the last one hundred years, their consumers passed through five eras of Marketing evolution at different times and under different circumstances. As Barksdale, Kelly, & MacFarlane, (1978) emphasized: *"Soviet economic policy since 1917 has shown wide swings in practice and ideology. The result for Soviet marketing has been an evolution of attitudes and practice which can be described as a divergence from the evolutionary path of Western marketing, followed by a gradual reconvergence"* (p. 262). In consequence, the term "consumer" was officially introduced only after the USSR was dissolved, and the "iron curtain" had finally fallen in 1991, and, as a result, the Democratic Republic of Russia was declared. The establishment of the new Republic has brought the idea of consumerism and consumer-driven marketing strategies with it. However, before the collapse of the Soviet Union, socialist states planned an economic system in which most or all of the important decisions about the production and distribution of goods and services are made by the government or rulers in the society ("Encyclopedia", 2019). For this reason, the system was product-driven in which small product differentiation was existing in the marketplace along with a deficit of some products and food shortage. *"For more than 40 years the Soviet Union was a production-oriented economy. Consumer goods were given low priority, relative to industrial goods, and consumer preferences received little attention. Throughout this period the need for marketing was minimized by a deliberate shortage of consumer goods. With increasing prosperity in Russia, the problems of balancing production and consumption became increasingly difficult"* (Barksdale, Kelly, & MacFarlane 1978, p. 272).

Nowadays, the Russian neighboring consumer's market is considered to be a strategically important economical and political market for Turkey since it provides imported goods, improves the tourism industry, agricultural sectors, and, also, make a deal on major construction

projects in the energy sector such as the TurkStream pipeline and a nuclear reactor which is Russian-built, owned and operated in the south of Turkey. Turkey is seen as an important neighbor for Russia since it supplies some of the agricultural goods, sells a long-range air and missile defense system. Besides, an informal "industry" or "suitcase" trade commerce has emerged.

This dissertation aims to unravel some of the mysteries surrounding CB on the SM platforms. There is, therefore, a clear need to further investigate online consumer behavior on SM. It is, thus, hypothesized that dependent factors such as e-WOM and SM ads have an influence on independent factors such as socio-demographic, time spent on SM, and decision-making styles. For this reason, these factors have been investigated in this study. Turkey and Russia have close economical and political relationships so it is important to study the influence of SM on CB in these countries. Hence, all hypotheses would be tested separately for both countries. Moreover, taking this into account, it seems important to focus on the cultural aspect, especially, nationalities of Turkish and Russian consumers since only cultural values can limit and differentiate consumers in our globalized world. Therefore, an independent factor which is nationalities regarding dependent variables has also been investigated.



II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review has been investigated under 5 chapters: Consumer Behavior, Social Media, Digital Marketing, Buying Consumer Intention, Decision-making styles.

2.1 Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior is a relatively "young" science and one of the most interdisciplinary ones. Bennet (1989), defines consumer behavior as *“a dynamic interaction of affect and cognition, behavior, and environmental events by which human beings conduct the exchange aspects of their lives”* (p 40). According to Solomon et. al. (2010), consumer behavior is defined as *“the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy needs and desires”* (p.28). Kardes (2008) proposes that CB includes the activities of the decision-making process such as searching, dispoiting, purchasing, selecting, and using. As a result, consumer's needs and wishes regarding the product are met. With all these in mind, CB involves the mental, emotional, and behavioral activities of the consumers over the process of pre-purchasing, purchasing, and post-purchasing stages. Some researchers (Kotler 2010; Manali Khaniwale 2015; Al-Salamin et al., 2016) emphasize that a consumer's buying behavior is influenced by internal and external factors. Further, they classified them as external (cultural and social) and internal (personal and psychological) factors.

There is a growing body of literature that recognizes the importance of investigating CB in human lives. Belk (1975), tried to explore the situational influence on CB and has combined five groups of dimensions characterizing a situation: Social Surroundings, Physical Surroundings, Task Definition, Temporal Perspective, Antecedent States. Vinson (1977), found that personal values have a profound impact on CB. Bauer (1960), emphasized the importance of risk-taking in the decision-making process (Referred by Baker, 2001). Levy (1981), analyzed the responses of consumer storytelling about the purchase and use of products. Bayton (1958) established the basic factors of CB, such as motivation, cognition, and learning. Henry (1976), provided empirical evidence for the commonly held theory that culture is an underlying determinant of CB. Manrai et al. (1996), developed a conceptual model of the effects of culture on consumer behavior. Havlena (1991), examined the role of the perceived risk across a wide range of product categories in CB. However, these results were based upon data from over 30

years ago, and it is unclear how contemporary CB was impacted by Internet technologies (IT). For this reason, there is a limited body of research about the effects of IT on contemporary CB to my best knowledge.

2.2.1 Models of Consumer Behavior

Consumer models range in their complexity and varieties. Several CB models are utilized by scholars. For example, studies of Kotler (1965), showed the importance of buyers' psychological process or "black box", and presented five different models: the Hobbesian model, the Pavlovian learning model (behavior brought about by learning, practice, and experience), the Veblenian model, the Freudian model, and Marshallian model (Referred by Baker, 2001). In addition, Maslow (1943), invented the psychological model that involves a hierarchy of needs, where people are motivated by their strongest needs, and Scheff (1967), designed a sociological model in which buying is influenced by social norms or society. There were more sophisticated CB models created in the late 1960s. An example of this would be the Nicosia model (1966), the Howard and Sheth model (1969), and the EKB, later renamed EBM (Engel et al., 1990). These three models are called the "grand models" of CB.

The Nicosia (1966) model has four stages of activities in the decision-making of consumers such as consumer attitude-formation, search and evaluation of information, buying the product, and post-purchase evaluation. Furthermore, the Howard and Sheth (1969), model also has four phases of items such as inputs (stimuli); outputs (consumer behavior and purchase decision); learning and perceptual constructs; and external variables (psychological, social, and marketing factors). Engel et al. (1990), designed the EKB model, which was later renamed as EBM. The model also has four stages of actions such as information input, processing of information, decision phase, and decision process. Moreover, the consumer's decision process includes five stages: need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, buying choice, and post-purchase behavior. These factors are further impacted by individual characteristics, the psychological processes of consumers, and the environment. Karimi (2013), claims that these three grand models focus on the phases of the purchase process and are slightly different from each other in their emphasis on various factors. Nevertheless, these models were criticized because of their complexity and unclear definition of variables as well as lack of empirical support, and many interrelations.

Voramontri and Klieb (2019), stated that as a result of the reaction to these models the new model was introduced between the 1970s and 1980s. Thus, simpler models such as the Bettman model, and the theory of planned behavior (TPB) by Ajzen were created. The TRB model, for example, doesn't deal with the decision-making process of consumers whereas the Bettman model shows the process as if the decision tree is guided by how consumers perceive external information under the constraint of limited information processing.

Simon (1960), argues that grand models were too complicated but these models included a part of the decision process that was plausible and concise in line with the study of Herbert Simon on the decision-making process. Therefore, Karimi et al. (2015), assure that EKB or EBM model simplified the grand models by removing many items and their interrelations. Thus, it focuses only on five decision-making stages of consumers such as problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior. The EKB or EBM model was named as the classical or traditional model of consumer behavior and became one of the most commonly used and well-known standard models in CB research.

Existing researchers recognize the critical role CB played by each step of consumers' decision-making process (Gros, C. H. 2012, & Nolcheska, 2017), of food retailers (Li & Darban, 2012), among youth (Nyagucha, 2017), and, also, for complex purchases (Voramontri et al., 2019), and how the psychographic variables (Jashari et al., 2017), and consumer perception (Grover et al., 2017), impacted on SM. Zhang et al. (2016), also, conceptualize social commerce with the various decision-making stages. Chitharanjan (2016), investigated issues being faced by Apple Inc related to the improper strategy of SM marketing and online ads that influence customers' behavior.

2.2 Social Media

For Zigler and Child (1969), socialization has always been a part of human nature. It is a well-known fact that surviving is easy when you are a part of a social group as you can get support when you need it. Since the dawn of mankind, socialization is considered to be a part of the selection process as well. As it was vitally important for people to be a part of the social group, they looked for acceptance and admission there. The term socialization refers to the *“whole process by which an individual develops, through the transaction with other people, his specific patterns of socially relevant behavior and experience”* (Zigler & Child, 1969, p. 474). Thus,

people learned how to live in tribes, build big cities, lead a cosmopolitan lifestyle, and speak the same language as they have an innate tendency to socialize. In the 21st century, social media became a new digital playground for socialization in the World Wide Web, which erases all international barriers and limitations. Kohli et al. (2014), suggests that SM is *"consumer-generated media that covers a wide variety of new sources of online information, created and used by consumers intent on sharing information with others regarding any topic of interest"* (Kohli, Suri, & Kapoor, 2014, p. 1). As observed by Smith (2009), recently, SM is a rather new phenomenon in which the World Wide Web has seen a proliferation of user-driven web technologies like social networks, blogs, and media sharing platforms. In general terms, these technological innovations have fueled the growth of a global community, user-generated content, and the publishing of consumer opinions (Smith, 2009). Safko and Brake (2009), propose that SM takes us back to the old times when humans lived in clans and groups and took decisions together as they were affected by each other if core functions of SM are taken into consideration in simple terms. In other words, the SM consists of practices, activities, and behavior among communities of individuals who meet online in order to share knowledge, information, and opinions by utilizing conversational media (Web-based applications). According to Ward (1974), SM offered a new digital space for socialization which greatly impacted the consumption behavior and habits of its users. Moreover, Ward states that the notion of socialization is closely related to the particular area of consumer socialization, which is the process of developing consumer-related information, expertise, and attitudes. Moschis and Churchill (1978), define consumer socialization as *"the process by which young people develop consumer-related skills, knowledge, and attitudes"* (Moschis & Churchill, 1978, p. 599). Sabermajidi et al. (2019), to be more specific, consumers learn about the consumption environment by gaining knowledge from the environment, advertisement observation as well as interaction with adults or peers. This knowledge then reconstructs their purchasing behavior and their consumer experiences. Thus, as consumers' traditional environment of socialization has been changed by the digital SM environment, it has given rise to the evolution of traditional consumer to a digital one so that the new type of consumer called "E-consumer" has arisen and the new era of consumption has begun. Therefore, the rules of the marketing world were changed when traditional marketing was replaced by a new holistic system called digital marketing in which subdivision such as social media is taking an important place. *"The advent of Web 2.0 and the Social Web is a game-changer, on numerous fronts. The collaborative technologies that now define contemporary marketplaces—technologies commonly called*

“social media,” the “Social Web,” or “Web 2.0”—offer a viable approach to driving changes in deeper business processes across a wide range of applications. There is something here for most organizations, something that extends very much beyond marketing and communications” (Evans 2010:4). Given the visible influence of digital technology in marketplaces across the globe, the utilization of SM is now accepted as a “must-have” in business. Many organizations such as businesses, nonprofits, and governmental agencies use social media for the marketing purpose to reach their customers and stakeholders for launching a process of customer engagement that could be a key leading to success.

2.3. Digital Marketing

Nowadays, marketing is changing its functions since it becomes digital continuously. Ongoing technological developments present marketers with new opportunities as well as challenges such as the Internet of things (IoT), analytics, 3D printing, big data, cloud computing, consumer neuroscience or neuromarketing, and artificial intelligence (AI). These are newly ascending spheres in which marketers are supposed to function efficiently. This is also valid for digital marketing. The term "Digital marketing" means the process of promoting and selling products or services by implementing online marketing strategies such as social media marketing (SMM), email marketing, and research marketing (“Digital marketer”, 2021). American Marketing Association (2021), defines digital marketing as any marketing method carried out through electronic devices. Additionally, this encompasses online marketing efforts conducted on the Internet. The process of digital marketing can be carried out by utilizing SM, blogs, websites, search engines, video, email, and other channels in order to reach customers.

Organizations have recognized the effectiveness of digital marketing in the developing world. Therefore, organizations integrate online and offline marketing methods in order to meet the needs of customers better and build a successful business. Chaffey (2013), stated that the use of technologies helps digital marketing to improve knowledge about customers' needs and match them more precisely. According to Kannan (2017), digital marketing creates new customer experiences employing interactions among customers. Digital marketing applies digital touchpoints with customers that help to create and improve communications with customers by building strong customer relationships. For these reasons, digital marketing offers new opportunities for organizations to influence consumers.

One of the important implications of digital marketing is SMM which is applied across various areas. SMM refers to “the utilization of social media technologies, channels, and software to create, communicate, deliver, and exchange offerings that have value for an organization's stakeholders” (Tuten & Solomon, 2017, p. 18). There are many ways to improve marketing strategy thanks to SMM. As observed by Song (2001), displaying ads is a powerful marketing tool for building brands and increasing traffic for organizations to achieve success through SM. There can be a variety of formats of displaying ads to be used to target potential audiences such as native ads, banner, image, video, text, or media-rich. Bala and Verma (2018), nowadays, monotonous ads and marketing techniques have been replaced by digital marketing. Besides, it is so powerful that it can boost the economy and create huge opportunities for governments to function more effectively. Pütter (2017), argued that organizations are integrating SM mechanisms to improve the relationship with consumers instead of focusing on short-term ads through the Internet. SM offers the distinctive chance to use word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing to different audiences, improving brand awareness and supporting consumer-to-consumer communications through a widespread SM (Kozinets, de Valck, Wojnicki, & Wilner, 2010). Furthermore, SM communication puts a profound impact on the decision-making process of consumers. SM platforms create a positive environment for consumer socialization (Vinerean et al., 2013). When everything is taken into consideration, it is important to analyze CB in order to understand the effect of digital marketing and SMM on consumers.

For this reason, the influence of SM platforms will be investigated and measured by the following dimensions. These dimensions are digital advertising and e-WOM.

2.3.1 Digital Advertisements

Recent investigators have examined the effect of digital advertising on consumers on SM. In order to better understand the effects of digital ads, Harms et al. (2019), examined consumer perceptions of article-style native advertisements and banner advertisements. While Yoo et al. (2005) explored the effects of the degree of animation on memory and attitudes toward ads, Kim et al. (2010), investigated the effects of the attributes of web advertisements on customers' purchase intentions.

Advertisements are the essential tools influencing CB on SM platforms. Nowadays, online advertising has become the world's main advertising medium, estimating 355.6 billion dollars

of total digital ads expenditure, and 97.66 billion dollars of total social media ads expenditure in 2020 (“Datareportal”, 2021). According to Belanche et al. (2019), SM has proven to be interactive platforms with many opportunities for improved audiovisual presentation of services and products which help users’ control their advertising experiences and offer more sophisticated and attractive types of digital advertising rather than traditional mass media.

In general, all online ads are called digital display advertising. Being a quickly growing category, digital display ads are graphic ads on Internet websites or SM platforms. The main goal of display ads is to deliver general advertisements and brand messages to users in order to turn them into potential customers or to retarget old customers (“Searchengineland”, 2021). There are a variety of categories of displaying advertising such as Photo ads (Banner), Video ads, Stories ads, Carousel ads, Collection ads, and Playable ads (“Hootsuite”, 2021).

Photo ads (Banner) involve a graphic display that is in the shape of a rectangular. They appear at the bottom, on the top, or on the other parts of websites and SM platforms. The horizontal type of banner ad is known as a leaderboard whereas the vertical banners are known as a skyscraper and are located on a web page's sidebars. Photo ads (Banners) are a popular kind of online ads which are image-based but not text-based (“Investopedia”, 2021).

Video ads contain online display ads that have videos within them. They involve short, looping video clips, which play automatically in users’ feeds, and original long videos. However, it is generally accepted that video ads occur before, during, or after some video stream on the Internet.

Stories ads are ads that exist stop News Feed on SM. They are also full-screen and vertical, so when customers watch them, they can just see the content on their mobile devices. The new story starts after the previous ends. In this way, it is easy to access a continuous stream of full-screen content (“Wordstream”, 2018).

Carousel ads allow users to include 10 different images or videos in one ad. Carousel ads help to display different characteristics of a product and explain the process in detail. They work really well to present multiple services and products at the same time.

Collection ads include a cover photo or video and also four smaller product images which include pricing and other details that resemble a catalog.

Playable ads are interactive previews of users' games or apps. They offer a trial for users before they purchase (or download). In the beginning, a lead-in video inspires people to start playing, via a button (tap to try). Here, users can click and test a demo version instantly even if they don't need to install anything ("Hootsuite", 2021).

Campbell et al. (2008), claim that the introduction of different media modalities enabled by the Internet has caused the creation of environments in which paid ads are increasingly diverse in form. Thus, advertisers can reach consumers more easily by employing targeted ads enabled by the Internet environment. These online ads are increasingly targeted more narrowly to the individual consumer that makes advertising effective. For Speicher et al. (2018), targeted ads are ads that are shown only to a particular group of users that have attributes or features selected by the marketer. Non-targeted ads such as banner ads on websites in contrast to targeted ads are shown to all users regardless of their characteristics and attributes. They also stated that the targeted ads ecosystem includes marketers who choose an audience for ads to be shown; ad platforms such as Facebook or Google that accumulate data about their users and make it available for marketer's use for targeting; users of SM platforms that are consumers of the ads. Moreover, they assure that targeted ads are the potential for discrimination caused by the ability of a marketer to use the extensive personal (behavioral, interests, and demographic) data. As a result, a marketer can include necessary targeted groups and exclude users that are of no interest to him. These data about users' personal characteristics are collected by SM platforms with the aim of utilizing targeted ads. Fransen et al. (2015), argue that consumers can identify manipulative or persuasive online ads and then they resist them. Cho et al. (2003), stated that consumers also totally avoid these types of ads. Therefore, marketers seek to create ads that wouldn't look like they try to persuade consumers to buy something. This resulted from developing native ads. *Native advertising* is a kind of paid marketing ad which delivers targeted and useful content in a form that looks like the SM website's non-ad content. For Wojdyski (2016), "*Native advertising is a means of presenting consumers with a commercial persuasive message that resembles the non-third-party content provided by the same publisher. This strategy of presenting editorial content that is paid for by a third party goes by many other names: sponsored content, partner content, advertorials, and branded journalism, to name a*

few. However, the term “native advertising” appears to have become the most widely used name for this practice, perhaps in part because its two words most clearly convey its inclusion criteria: First, that the format of the message in some ways matches, or is “native” to, the format of non-paid content presented by the same publisher, and second, that the content of such messages is paid to advertise” (p.5). Hence, native ads look the same as a simple non-paid poster on the news feed posted by friends. This creates an effect of the content presented not by ad companies but by some other users which make look ads more attractive and trustful. Harms et al. (2019), explore the most popular digital advertisements and also emphasize the role of Native advertising since marketers shifting their ads budgets to native ads. He also stated that a rise of 31% ads expenditures on native ads was estimated for 2018. This accounts for over half of total display ad expenditure in the US (58.3%). Thus, native ads became an indispensable tool in digital marketing strategy.

2.3.2 Electronic WOM

Influence marketing sets out by recognizing those people able to use influence over potential buyers and organizing the subsequent marketing strategies around these influential people. The authors claim that the term “influence” is not understood completely. This “influence” initially reflects the “power” produced by an individual or entity concerning (or over) another individual. Therefore, influence marketing correspondingly stems from the joining of diverse sources of information and practices such as digital marketing, word-of-mouth, neuromarketing, and social marketing (Paço & Oliveira, 2017). Hence, it is very common to relate the concept of influence marketing with SM instruments. These communication instruments include a large set of online technologies and tools, such as chat rooms, blogs, discussion forums, Internet discussion boards, service ratings websites, and social networking websites (Ngai et al., 2015). The range of influence marketing includes YouTubers, bloggers, and opinion leaders. The successfulness of each influencer type changes inconsistent with the product undergoing communications and the target audience that this influencer has an impact on. This communication instrument not only offers advantages to the users but also offers new promotional strategies for marketers (Gremier et al., 2001). Thus, influence marketing helps in shaping successful marketing strategy. In this study, influence marketing is explored under the umbrella of electronic word-of-mouth.

Katz and Lazarsfeld (1966), are one of the earliest scholars who put forward a definition of word-of-mouth. They identified it as the exchanging of information about the product among

consumers in a way that can influence and shape their behavior as well as changing their attitudes toward services or products. For Litvin et al. (2008), it is also a discussion between consumers about service, products, or company. Moreover, consumers are independent of commercial influence by brand. Yang (2017), claims that nowadays the new term of WOM communication is called electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM). Abubakar and Ilkan (2016), argue that this type of communication has taken on special importance with the occurrence of SM platforms since these platforms have made communication one of the most influential tools on the Internet. For this reason, SM plays an important role in information spreading about products/brands/services between customers.

The existing body of research on electronic e-WOM on SM suggests that credibility, quality, usefulness, and needs of information, adoption of information, and attitude towards information are the key factors (Erkan et al., 2016), which triggers consumers' purchase intention, and affecting it in two ways: indirectly by reinforcing product involvement and directly (conformity with peers) (Wang et al., 2012), thus consumers are buying either very inexpensive or very expensive items (Forbes et al., 2013).

2.4 Buying Consumer Intention

Consumer buying intention (BI) is a vital outcome of marketers' action, as the aim of any marketing campaign is to persuade the consumer to consider their product and, consequently, purchase it. Moreover, BI is the most influential predictor and the antecedent of behavior. Davis et al. (1992), says that *"Behavioral Intention, a widely researched construct in marketing and other behavioral sciences, occupies a central role in Fishbein and Ajzen's theory of reasoned action (1975; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), Triandis's theory of interpersonal (1977; 1979), and Jaccard and King's (1977) subjective probability model"(p 391)*. Therefore, the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) stated that a person's behavior is determined by its behavioral intention to perform. This intention is, in turn, a function of attitude toward subjective norms and behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The technology acceptance model, TAM (Davis, 1986), is based on TRA. All of the mentioned models are based on the idea of planned behavior, however, these approaches have failed to address unplanned purchases.

Online consumer BI differs from the traditional consumer BI in that there are IT and online milieu needed to be taken into consideration and evaluated accordingly. There are a variety of

factors influencing online consumers' BI. It is argued that there are two views by which consumer's online behavior can be measured such as the consumer-oriented view and the technology view. According to Zhou et al. (2007): *"The consumer-oriented view is focused on each consumer's beliefs about online shopping. This view examines online consumer behavior from the perspectives of consumer demographics, cognitive and psychological characteristics, trust and perception of risks of online shopping, shopping motivation, and shopping orientation. Those factors can be described as internal factors. A technology-oriented view studies online consumer behavior by exploring the technical specifications of online stores, which include user interface features, website content and design, and system usability, which can be defined as external factors"*. (Zhou et al., (2007), as cited in Chen, H. (2012)) (p. 41). However, this concept has a limitation in that it evaluates consumer online behavior only in terms of online shopping activities. In such shopping activities, a consumer may already have an idea or some experience about his online shopping journey. Besides, it can be planned behavior or knowledge based on many previous online shopping activities. But most of the products purchased by consumers are not the products that consumers bought before or are planning to buy, it is the products that marketers persuade them to buy, hence these change the route in consumer online BI and as a result in CB. Therefore, it is possible to sell consumers products that they didn't plan to purchase. For this reason, a new method should be designed to predict online CB and consumer BI. More than that, it might not be right to evaluate online CB in the frame of some specific online stores since CB was formed much earlier before the consumer entered the online store as a result of his buying intention. Thus, it is intended to investigate consumer online behavior or BI as an antecedent of CB on SM platforms in this study in order to get comprehensive knowledge and expand the idea of online behavior with regards to internal and external factors influencing consumer online BI.

There are a variety of factors impacting online consumer BI on SM platforms which are intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic factors are unique that differ every consumer from each other based on socio-demographic and psychographic variables (Decision-making styles). Extrinsic factors, on the other hand, are those factors that consumers are exposed to in the online milieu. These extrinsic factors on SM platforms are namely online ads and e-WOM was mentioned earlier.

Besides, few studies have been conducted on factors affecting buying intention online. Zhu et al. (2020), explored the effect of online reviews on purchase intention whereas Chen (2012),

observed perceived value and trust's influence on online buying intention. Recent evidence suggests that e-WOM is one of the most influential factors affecting brand image and purchase intention of brands of consumer markets (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). However, previously published studies are limited to local surveys, similarly, international studies are limited to an extremely small sample number, thus can not be considered as extensive ones.

2.5. Decision-Making styles

The influence of the World Wide Web varies on the different stages of the decision-making process. Initially, it supported only the phase of information research about products, however, later trends in SM online have extended the Internet's influencing role to all the decision stages (Voramontri & Klieb, 2019).

Антонова and Патоша, (2018), claim that the consumer, satisfying his needs in the process of everyday consumption, acquires habits and stereotyped forms of behavior. They further refer to Bettman (1979; 1998), who described such stereotypical CM in which the consumer does not behave rationally, but relies on simple strategies when making a decision. Gradually, such habitual forms of behavior form a style of consumer behavior that includes habitual patterns of solving everyday consumer problems - strategies of CB. Антонова and Патоша, (2018), also emphasize that CB strategies are stable systems of actions carried out by the consumer in connection with the choice, purchase, and final use of a product to satisfy material and spiritual needs in the most acceptable way for him. Thus, strategies reflect the underlying level of consumer behavior. The basis of the strategy of CB is formed by the styles of consumer decision-making. In this sense, it is justified to use the style of consumer decision-making as a basis for identifying strategies of CB. CB strategies are distinguished by generalizing decision-making styles. Sproles (1986) defined *"a consumer decision-making style as a mental orientation characterizing a consumer's approach to making choices. It has cognitive and affective characteristics (for example, quality consciousness and fashion consciousness). In essence, it is a basic consumer personality, analogous to the concept of personality in psychology"* (p. 268). This concept is vital to marketing since it determines CB and is relevant for market segmentation (Sproles & Kendall, 1986; Walsh et al., 2001).

Further, Sproles (1986) puts forward three ways to characterize consumer styles such as the consumer typology approach, the psychographic or lifestyle approach, and the consumer

characteristics approach. The psychographic approach counts over 100 characteristics relevant to CB.

2.5.1 Psychographic or Lifestyle Approach

Understanding the decision-making behavior of consumers related to purchasing activities is essential for organizations' marketing strategies. One of the strategies that marketers use is segmentation. Thus, the psychographic approach is applied by marketers in order to segment consumers and investigate consumers' motivations for buying products. Solomon (2020), claims that *"psychographics involves the use of psychological, sociological and anthropological factors...to determine how the market is segmented by the propensity of groups within the market and their reasons to make a particular decision about a product, person, ideology, or otherwise hold an attitude or use a medium"* (p.264). While demographics permit marketers to represent who purchases the product, psychographics tell them why the consumers purchase. Hence, analyzing consumers from a psychographics perspective is a vital tool in revealing and segmenting potential consumers. For example, Facebook Audience Insights (FAI) tool helps businesses to find and target their consumers and potential ones via analyzing their demographics and psychographic variables.

The psychographic or Lifestyle approach refers to a personal manner of living with consistency and is manifested in different aspects of personal activities, interests, and opinions (AIO) (Kotler, 1976). These dimensions consist of social events, work, hobbies, entertainment, vacation, club membership, shopping, community, sports for activities; job, family, home, fashion, recreation, media, food, achievements for interests; politics, social issues, business, education, economics, culture, products, themselves for opinions Solomon (2020). Kaynak and Kara, (2001), analyze the lifestyle characteristics of consumers from an ethnocentric point of view. That's why they used AIO statements to analyze Azeri and Kyrgyz consumers. Wells, (2011), argues that the lifestyle and psychographic approach adds a useful and interesting increment to the standard demographic profile since this approach allows to create a detailed, "humanized" portrait of consumers. Engel et al. (1993), stated that the lifestyle approach is about people's living and how they spend resources such as money and time. This resource allocation is reflected in people's activities, their opinions on various issues, and things they are interested in. Therefore, the psychographic approach is a widely utilized conceptual

framework that explores consumer lifestyle to better understand their products' motivations and preferences.

2.5.2 Consumer Typology Approach

Tauber (1972), argues that consumer types could be examined by utilization of shopping orientations approach. This approach aims to describe types of general consumers by exploiting consumer shopping behaviors and orientations. Previous researchers claim that shopping orientations can also be expressed as shopping personalities or shopper taxonomies (Darden & Reynolds, 1974; Moschis, 1976; Stone, 1954). According to the literature, shopping orientations are also called shopping personalities or shopper taxonomies (Darden & Reynolds, 1974; Moschis, 1976). Furthermore, this typology approach categorizes consumers based on their decision-making processes such as choosy, economic, information seeking, apathetic, brand loyal, quality conscious, price-conscious, and variety seeking (Walsh et al., 2001). This approach may be criticized since it is questionable that consumers could be differentiated into distinct univariate behavior typologies. Schmalen, (1994), said that labeling consumers only as 'price conscious' or 'economic' is impractical and does not satisfy the increasing research about "hybrid consumer". The consumer typology approach is not widely used since this approach illustrates its inefficacy. To be specific, decision-making typologies most of the time count several types which are usually irrelevant and their understanding is confined.

2.5.3. Consumer Characteristics Approach

The consumer characteristics approach is one of the best approaches for evaluating the psychological orientations of consumers since it is based on the determination of affective and cognitive orientations particularly related to the consumer decision-making process. Sproles's (1985), research on consumer decision-making styles is one of the earliest studies in investigating affective and cognitive orientations of consumers. He also expresses that most of the consumers are influenced by one or more decision-making styles, which manage their buying behaviors and uncover their mental characteristics or personality. Furthermore, consumer decision-making styles are predictable and existent. Though different styles of decision-making have been explored in a variety of cultural environments, the general applicability of the Consumer Style Inventory (CSI) tool has not been accepted yet (Lyonski, Durvasula, & Zotos, 1996; Hanzae & Aghasibeig, 2008; Anić, Piri Rajh, & Rajh, 2009; Walsh, Hennig-Thurau, Wayne-Mitchell & Wiedmann, 2001). Sproles and Kendall (1986), developed

CSI which is a comprehensive instrument used for evaluating consumer decision-making styles. These measurement instruments can be simply applied in consumer research which provides a base for complete characteristics of consumer decision-making styles. CSI examines the affective, psychological, and cognitive orientations related to a consumer's shopping comparison, information seeking, and shopping preferences during their consumption. A recent study on CSI analyses the pertinence of CSI instruments in various countries. National culture has been accepted to influence individual attitudes and values even though consumer decision-making style illustrates a partially consistent pattern of affective and cognitive responses significantly (Hofstede, 1980). Therefore, culture is expected to have a crucial impact on consumer decision-making style (Cheryl, Bennett, & Hartel, 2005). As a result, more research should be done to investigate consumer decision-making styles and to examine CSI tools in various countries. Having valid and reliable tools are a necessity for generating the consumers' shopping orientation profile, which can be utilized to guide marketing strategy.

In this thesis, CSI was improved to examine consumer decision-making styles of Russian and Turkish consumers on SM. Thus, CSI is one of the basic shopping orientations, which is equal to the concept of personality in psychology (Sproles & Kendall, 1986). To be able to develop CSI, Sproles and Kendall (1986) benefited from the findings of previous studies. As a result of their evaluations and analyses, they revealed eight standard consumer decision-making characteristics, each of which represented a vital mental approach to consumption independently.

Eight characteristics are represented below (Walsh et al., 2001):

- 1) **Perfectionism, high-quality consciousness:** is characterized by consumers' search for the best or highest quality while choosing products. This trait defines consumers who are careful, systematic, and selective in their shopping.
- 2) **Brand consciousness:** is characterized by consumers' beliefs. They believe that a higher price means better quality and thus they prefer buying more expensive and famous national brands. They also prefer popular best-selling brands which are advertised more.
- 3) **Novelty-apparel consciousness:** is characterized by consumers' taking pleasure from searching for new things, which are so-called novelty seekers. They are

presumably to shop more impulsively and less attentively. In addition, they are less sensitive to prices.

- 4) **Hedonistic, recreational shopping consciousness:** characterized consumers who view shopping as entertainment and recreation. These consumers shop just for fun and find shopping as a fun activity.
- 5) **Price Conscious, 'value for money shopping consciousness:** is characterized by consumers' search for sale prices. They are sensitive to lower prices and are probably comparison shoppers. They also focus on getting the best value for the price they paid for.
- 6) **Impulsiveness:** is characterized by consumers who don't make any plans before shopping and don't care about how much money they spent. This trait is referred to as careless and impulsive shopping.
- 7) **Confusion from over choice:** is characterized by consumers who have difficulties in choosing products because there is a variety of competitive brands. They are mostly confused about the quality of various brands.
- 8) **Habitual, brand-loyal orientation:** is characterized by consumers who go for their favorite brands and have formed habits while choosing these brands respectively.

Thus, these approaches are utilized to segment and target potential customers on a market, as well as to develop a product positioning strategy resulting from delivering the highest value for customers. There is a growing body of research on CB that recognizes the critical role played by consumer decision-making styles, on consumers who do online shopping and whether there is a socio-demographic difference between them (Güler Binkanat, 2019), and, also demographic difference (Erdem, 2016), and dining information search (Peng, 2011). However, these studies related to decision-making styles, have failed to explore the influence of SM ads and e-WOM platforms on them. Hence, it is the first study that investigates the impact of SM platforms on decision-making styles.

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

For Kothari (2004) research methodology is a structured procedure that provides a solution to the research problem. It is defined as a science of how research is carried out employing scientific methods. In scientific research, various steps have been studied that are commonly accepted by a researcher while exploring a problem in his research in addition to the logic that stays behind them. Therefore, researchers have to understand which of the research methods or techniques are pertinent to their research and what is the reason behind their choice, and why they have to choose exactly such a method and what would it mean and indicate. Chitharanjan (2016), also claims that research methodology is a systematic process being utilized for gathering information and data with the aim of getting in-depth knowledge about any important subject. It is known as a reliable structure used by researchers in order to conduct their study effectively. With regard to a study, the research methodology enlightens the readers about the methods and techniques being utilized in the study for effectively obtaining the desired outcomes. The research methodology provides better knowledge and understanding of how the research has been conducted and in what ways the researcher has made efforts to achieve the desired objectives. The essential foundation of research methodology is enabled by research approach, research philosophy, research design, research type, sampling technique, data collection, data analysis, accessibility issues, and ethical considerations, and research limitations.

3.1 Research Onion

The research methodology that has been applied in this thesis was systematized utilizing the Research Onion approach (Saunders et al., 2009). Research onion is the process in which the researcher implements research methodology in a strict order starting from research philosophy to techniques and procedures or from external layers of Onion to internal ones. Thus, the research onion mostly focuses on the essential structure of the research methodology. Besides, it assists the researcher to conduct the study logically and comprehensively. With all this in mind, the researcher applied the research onion approach in this thesis in order to structure the research methodology efficiently by implementing the research through various layers.

Research philosophy: According to the Research Onion approach the first thing that needs to be identified is the research philosophy. Saunders et al. (2009), state that research philosophy

is a system of assumptions and beliefs embarked on research. The researcher can make a number of assumptions that are sometimes consciously and sometimes not (Burrell & Morgan 2016). These assumptions result from how a researcher comprehends his hypothesis, the methods he utilized, and interpret his findings (Crotty, 1998). Johnson and Clark (2006), claim that business and management researchers have to be aware of the research responsibilities and choose one out of existing research philosophies as it has a profound effect on a study. Thus, adequate research philosophy enables the reader to comprehend the capabilities of the researcher and gives a broad idea about how the study has been done. Saunders et al. (2009), highlights five major research philosophies in business and management such as pragmatism, positivism, interpretivism, critical realism, and postmodernism. Therefore, positivism has been adopted since the nature of this study is objective and the study is quantitative in nature.

Research approach: There are two types of research approaches that could be utilized which are the inductive and deductive approaches (Saunders et al., 2007). O'Leary (2013), emphasizes that the research approach should be based on the research philosophy of a study, and both are interdependent on each other. For Leary (2004), the deductive approach involves deriving hypotheses from a theory. With all this in mind, the positivism research philosophy and deductive research approach are interrelated. Therefore, the deductive research approach has been implemented since positivism research philosophy has been applied in this thesis.

Research Strategies: There are different research strategies that can be applied such as case studies, experiments, surveys, grounded theory, archival research, ethnography, and action research (Saunders et al., 2007). In this study, a self-administered questionnaire was designed, administered, and distributed through the Internet and SM platforms. Therefore, the self-administered questionnaire gave the researcher a great deal of quantitative data that was crucial in order to retrieve useful findings and answer the research question. As a result, the self-administered questionnaire method allowed the collection of necessary data and drew theories from findings.

Research Choices: The researcher has the choice among three different research methods that are the mixed methods, the monomethod, and the multi-methods (Saunders et al., 2007). To conduct the research, the researcher decided to use the mono methods. Azorín and Cameron (2010), claim that monomethod research uses only one type of method either qualitative or

quantitative. Therefore, for this dissertation, a monomethod with a quantitative approach has been selected by the researcher. For the purpose of data collection, self-administered questionnaires have been created in the Google Forms platform. The link to the questionnaire has been distributed through the Internet and different SM platforms to the sample by the researcher.

Time Horizons: There are two types of time horizons as longitudinal studies and cross-sectional studies (Saunders et al., 2009). The cross-sectional time horizon is the one that is appropriate to this study since the thesis focuses on the investigation of a phenomenon at a particular time. This research is interested in the effect of SM on CB and the different decision-making styles of consumers. Therefore, the study is a ‘snapshot’ taken at a particular time and does not aim to explore developments and changes of this increasing effect over time.

Techniques and procedures: For the purpose of the study, some variables were identified that were of interest to the study. During the course of the research, the influence of the different SM platforms on consumers and especially on their decision-making styles was explored. Moreover, it was further investigated how this influence was characterized according to the differences between consumers based on cultural dimensions such as nationalities. Thus, the influence of SM in terms of online ads, e-WOM, decision-making styles, or authentic experience towards two nationalities of Russian and Turkish consumers has been investigated. For this reason, questionnaires in two foreign languages (Russian and Turkish) were designed. The questionnaire counts 27 questions.

Research design: For Malhotra (2012), the research design is a roadmap for carrying out the marketing research study. It offers information about each step of the marketing research study. Applying the research design causes all the data needed to solve and structure the marketing management-decision problem. Panneerselvam (2014), claims that research design is the scheme of how the thesis is to be conducted. Research design differs and varies in each study according to the nature of the study specifically. Research design chiefly presents detailed information on what the researcher hopes to justify or reveal with the help of the study. The descriptive research design has been adopted in this study due to the nature and objectivity of the study. This specific research design would be helping in analyzing the effect of SM platforms and online ads on CB extensively and lead towards the increase of the understanding

and knowledge of the subject. Therefore, with the aim to carry out the study, the descriptive research design would be performed so as to frame a hypothesis over it.

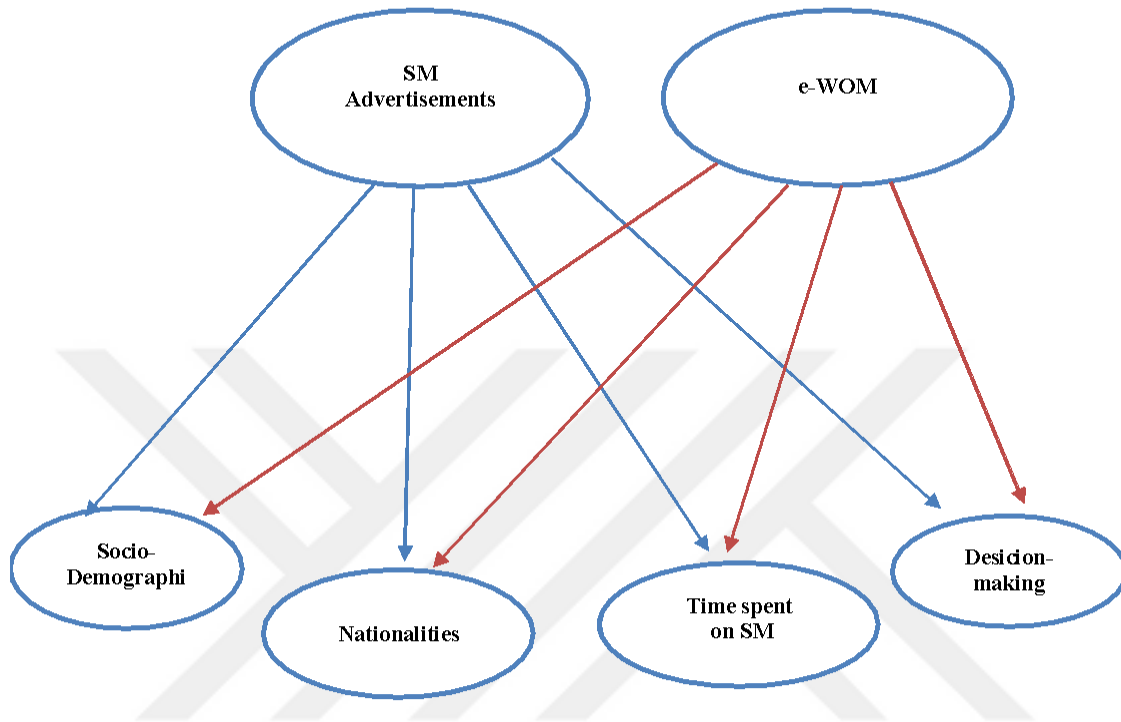


Figure 3.1. Research Design

Turkey

- H1: There is a significant difference between SM ads and socio-demographic variables.
- H2: There is a significant difference between SM ads and time spend on SM
- H3: There is a significant difference between SM ads and decision-making styles.
- H4: There is a significant difference between e-WOM and socio-demographic variables.
- H5: There is a significant difference between e-WOM and time spend on SM
- H6: There is a significant difference between e-WOM and decision-making styles.

Russia

- H7: There is a significant difference between SM ads and socio-demographic variables.
- H8: There is a significant difference between SM ads and time spend on SM
- H9: There is a significant difference between SM ads and decision-making styles.
- H10: There is a significant difference between e-WOM and socio-demographic variables.

H11: There is a significant difference between e-WOM and time spend on SM

H12: There is a significant difference between e-WOM and decision-making styles.

Nationalities

H13: There is a significant difference between e-WOM and nationalities.

H14: There is a significant difference between SM ads and nationalities.

Research type: Research type has been involved with the nature of the study being conducted by the researcher. Pickard (2012) claims that the nature of particular research could be quantitative or qualitative. It has been assumed that the researcher must adopt both quantitative and qualitative aspects of the research in order to identify more effective and relevant outcomes (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Therefore, this research would be conducted with the quantitative aspects since it involves numerical data and would be analyzed by applying techniques effectively.

Data Collection: In regard to carrying out the research effectively it is vitally important to gather the most reliable and relevant data from different sources. The data could be gathered employing secondary and primary sources or from both based on the requirements of the research. The researcher in this thesis would be making use of the secondary data gathered by online articles, journals, books, and websites and primary data which would be gathered through questionnaire technique. These findings would be focusing on the estimation of the effect of SM platforms and online ads on CM.

Sampling method: Sampling is the technique that helps extract a subgroup out of the population effectively and, in this way, a sample representing the entire population as a whole. It has been stated that it is a statistical method being conducted to gain data representation for a set of selective groups. At the beginning of the research, it is vital for the researcher to pay attention to the selection of the appropriate sample for the research process (Neuman & Robson, 2012). There are only two main types of sampling methods which are non-probability sampling and probability sampling. Thus, in this thesis, the probability simple random sampling method was implemented by the researcher since this method is considered to be one of the most convenient and effective ones. In the simple random sampling method, all the subgroups have equal chances to be chosen. Thus, this method leads to the reduction of biasness and makes the

analyses easier. In addition, it provides in selecting a necessary number of the sample out of the huge population.

3.2 Population and Sampling Design

Cooper and Schindler (2014), argue that population needs to be studied since it is the total collection of elements. This thesis was interested in making references about consumers aged from eighteen to sixty-five in the Russian Federation and the Turkish Republic. Additionally, these consumers are users of social media platforms. Hence, they are affected by marketing tools applied thereby advertisers. As a result, it changes the CB and decision-making process of the consumers. According to Worldometers (2021), it is projected to be 145,988,333, and Datareportal (2021), found that there are 99 million SM users in Russia out of them. Worldometers (2021), estimated that there are 85,134,366 million people living in Turkey and Datareportal (2021), found that there are 60 million SM users there. Therefore, the first population is 99 million Russian users and 60 million Turkish users.

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), stated that sampling design is a guide that helps to understand how the sample is separate from the population. Saunders et al. (2009), describe sampling design as the technique or procedure, or process that is exploited by a researcher to select a subgroup from a population to participate in the study. The subgroup is thoroughly chosen to be representative of the entire population with pertinent features. Each case or member is referred to as a respondent or a subject. The sampling frame of this thesis is Russian and Turkish SM users aged from 18 to 65. These are people who use SM platforms and have accounts there. Internet users that don't use SM platforms and don't have accounts there are excluded from the sample frame. Besides, users under 18 years old and higher than 65 years old are also excluded from the sample frame.

This thesis adopted a random sampling technique to sample users of SM from Russia and Turkey who are the target population. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), claim that the random sampling technique is a method in which stratum or a study population have the same chance of being sampled.

A sample size consists of a group of participants which includes the target population thoroughly selected to represent that population Cooper and Schindler (2014). Ombath (2009), claims that if a researcher needs to draw an inference valid for the entire study population so

that he should draw a sample somehow that would represent that population. In this study, there are two samples of Russian and Turkish consumers who use SM consisting of 300 (sample 1) and 250 users (sample 2) are represented. Besides, the percentage of sample size biases with the main population represented and is estimated since a piece of information related to the main population is available and it consists of more than 100.000. For this reason, sample biases would be estimated by means of specific confidence intervals. The criteria for sample size is determined by formula from the studies of Krejcie and Morgan (1970), and Cochran (1977), (cited in Cohen et al., 2000; Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtler, 2006). Thus, this formula is preferred since it is a simplified formula of proportions and also because it estimates the acceptable sampling error.

See the formula below.

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \times p \times q}{e^2} \quad (1a)$$

n: 300 for the first sample and 250 for the second

q: 1-p

e: biases

t: confidence interval

p: 0,50

q: 0,50

Z: %95 (%95 the table value of confidence interval =1,96)

According formul 1, biases:

$$e = \frac{\sqrt{Z^2 \times p \times q}}{n} \quad (1b)$$

For the sample 1 size consists of 300, with the level of significance of 95% will indicate 5,6% of the standard deviation at most.

$$e = \frac{\sqrt{1,962^2 \times 0,50 \times 0,50}}{300} \quad e = 0,0056$$

For the sample 2 size consist of 250, with the level of significance of 95% will indicate 5,6% of the standard deviation at most.

$$e = \frac{\sqrt{1,962^2 \times 0,50 \times 0,50}}{250} \quad e = 0,0067$$

3.3 Data Collection Methods

In this study, primary data were obtained by conducting an online survey that was designed in inconsistency with the specific objectives of this research. The online survey included 27 questions out of which "22" close-ended questions, "1" open-ended question, and "3" a 5-point Likert scale (1- never, 2- rarely, 3- sometimes, 4- often, 5- always) that based on the research objectives and "1" question was control question. In the survey, the first 5-point Likert scale was designed by Baker and Churchill (1977), which includes three behavioral intention items that measure how likely the participants would consider buying the products upon their next visit to the shop. Thus, this scale was adapted upon the research so that the question was changed to "**After I saw products/services on SM platforms I**". The second 5-point Likert scale was designed by Bambauer-Sachse and Mangold (2011), which measures e-WOM. This scale was also adopted according to the research and the number of questions was transformed and increased from 6 to 8. The last third 5-point Likert scale, which is also adapted in accordance to the research, was introduced by Sproles and Kendall (1986), which uses eight-factor Consumer Style Inventory. Sproles (1985), claims that most consumers are commanded by one or more decision-making styles in their choice of services and goods, which reveal their mental or personality characteristics. Consumer decision-making styles are predictable and existent. Sproles and Kendall's (1986), stated that the eight concepts of CSI include brand consciousness; perfectionism or high-quality consciousness; hedonistic shopping consciousness; brand loyal orientations; recreational, price and "value for money" shopping consciousness; confusion from overchoice; impulsiveness; habitual; and novelty-fashion consciousness toward consumption (Table 3.1.).

Table 3.1. Likert Scales

Variables	Number of variables	References	My questions:
Buyer's purchase intention	3 items	Three behavioral intention items Baker & Churchill (1977) consisted of three statements about how likely the participants would consider purchasing the product upon their next visit: <i>"I would like to try this product"</i> <i>"I would buy this product when I would see it in the store",</i> <i>"I would actively seek out this product in the store in order to purchase it".</i>	After I saw products/services on SM platforms I: 1. <i>"I would like to try this product/service";</i> 2. <i>"I would buy this product when I would see it in the store or online",</i> 3. <i>"I would actively seek out this product in the store or online in order to purchase it".</i>
e-WOM	8 items	Electronic World of Mouth Bambauer-Sachse, S. and Mangold, S. (2011): 1. <i>"I often read other consumers' online product reviews to know what products/brands make good impressions on others",</i> 2. <i>"To make sure I buy the right product/ brand, I often read other consumers' online product reviews",</i> 3. <i>"I often consult other consumers' online product reviews to help choose the right product/ brand",</i> 4. <i>"I frequently gather information from online consumers' product reviews before I buy a certain product/brand",</i> 5. <i>"If I don't read consumers' online product reviews when I buy a product/brand, I worry about my decision",</i> 6. <i>"When I buy a product/brand, consumers' online product reviews make me confident in purchasing the product/brand"</i>	Electronic World of Mouth 1. <i>"I consider the product/service suggestions of the phenomenon/influencers I follow",</i> 2. <i>"I often consult other consumers' online product reviews to help choose the right product/ brand"</i> 3. <i>"To make sure I buy the right product/ brand, I often read other consumers' online product reviews"</i> 4. <i>"When I buy a product/brand, consumers' online product reviews make me confident in purchasing the product/brand"</i> 5. <i>"If I don't read consumers' online product reviews when I buy a product/brand, I worry about my decision"</i> 6. <i>"I am happy if other people make a purchase decision by reading my reviews"</i> 7. <i>"I make an effort to get a product that goes viral on Social Media"</i> 8. <i>"I often read other consumers' online product reviews to know what products/brands make good impressions on others"</i>
	28 items	Sproles and Kendall's (1986) eight-factor CSI measurement: Factor 1-Perfectionistic, High-Quality Conscious Consumer 1. <i>"Getting very good quality is very important to me".</i>	CSI measurement: 1. <i>"I feel the advertisements in SM pushing me to buy something"</i> 2. <i>"Ads in SM are so personalized that they whet my appetite to buy the product/service"</i>

Authentic experiences
"Decision-making styles

2. "When it comes to purchasing products, I try to get the very best or perfect choice".
3. "In general, I usually try to buy the best overall quality".
4. "I make a special effort to choose the very best quality products".
5. "I really don't give my purchases much thought or care".
6. "My standards and expectations for products I buy are very high".
7. "I shop quickly, buying the first product or brand I find that seems good enough".
8. "A product doesn't have to be perfect, or the best, to satisfy me".

Factor 2-Brand Conscious, "Price Equals Quality" Consumer

9. "The well-known national brands are best for me".
10. "The more expensive brands are usually my choices".
11. "The higher the price of a product, the better it's quality".
12. "Nice department and specialty stores offer me the best products".
13. "I prefer buying the best-selling brands".
14. "The most advertised brands are usually very good choices".
15. "A product doesn't have to be perfect, or the best, to satisfy me".

Factor 3-Novelty-Fashion Conscious Consumer

16. "I usually have one or more outfits of the very newest style".
17. "I keep my wardrobe up-to-date with the changing fashions".
18. "Fashionable, attractive styling is very important to me".
19. "To get variety, I shop different stores and choose different brands".
20. "It's fun to buy something new and exciting".

Factor 4-Recreational, Hedonistic Consumer

21. "Shopping is not a pleasant activity to me".
22. "Going shopping is one of the enjoyable activities of my life".

3. "Ads in SM like a magician always know what I want"
4. "Searching for products or services in SM is intriguing"
5. "I always have a chance to find an interesting product or service in SM"
6. "SM is like a slot machine since it is not clear which product or service will come across there"
7. "SM helps me evaluate all options regarding products/services"
8. "I try to find as much information as possible about products/services/brands in SM"
9. "I like to discover new brands in SM"
10. "I use SM to find the latest fashion products/services/brands"
11. "I try to stay up-to-date by following the products/services/brands in SM"
12. "I take advantage of special product or service offers/discounts in SM"
13. "Product/service prices in SM are more reasonable"
14. "I usually choose lower-priced products"
15. "If there is a product or brand I like, I won't change it easily"
16. "I go to the same stores every time I go shopping"
17. "I change the brands I buy regularly"
18. "SM'da ürünler hakkında ne kadar fazla bilgi edinirsem en iyi seçimi yapmak o kadar zor oluyor"
19. "I'm confused by all the information I get about different products in SM"
20. "Shopping at SM is not a pleasant activity for me"
21. "Going shopping is one of the most enjoyable activities of my life"
22. "Shopping in stores is wasting my time"
23. "Usually, I regret careless shopping"

23. "Shopping in the stores' wastes my time".

24. "I enjoy shopping just for the fun of it".

25. "I make my shopping trips fast".

**Factor 5-Price Conscious,
"ValueforMoney"Consumer**

26. "I buy as much as possible at sale prices".

27. "The lower price products are usually my choice".

28. "I look carefully to find the best value for the money".

24. "I take the time to shop carefully to find the best product"

25. "When I see an attractive product/service in SM, I buy it quickly"

26. "My standards and expectations for the products I buy are very high"

27. "A product doesn't have to be perfect or the best to satisfy me"

28. "SM helps make the perfect choice regarding a product or service"

Factor 6--Impulsive, Careless Consumer

28. "I should plan my shopping more carefully than I do".

29. "I am impulsive when purchasing".

30. "Often I make careless purchases I later wish I had not".

31. "I take the time to shop carefully for best buys".

32. "I carefully watch how much I spend".

Factor 7-Confused by Overchoice Consumer

33. "There are so many brands to choose from that often I feel confused".

34. "Sometimes it's hard to choose which stores to shop".

35. "The more I learn about products, the harder it seems to choose the best".

36. "All the information I get on different products confuses me".

Factor 8-Habitual, Brand-Loyal Consumer

37. "I have favorite brands I buy over and over".

38. "Once I find a product or brand I like, I stick with it".

39. "I go to the same stores each time I shop".

40. "I change brands I buy regularly".

3.4 Research Procedures

A pilot study was conducted to pretest an online survey and to understand respondents' consistency in choosing the right information needed for this study. The online pretest questionnaire has been sent to 30 participants. Feedback gathered from the participants was incorporated into the survey before finishing the final copies. After the final copies of the online survey were completed the results of the questions were examined and quality checked to guarantee that there is no missing information.

3.5 Data Analysis Methods

Data analysis is the process of bringing meaning, order, and structure to a lot of information gathered in a study (Mugenda et al., 2012). Moreover, Blumberg et al. (2014), establish that data analysis is a process of collecting, transforming, and modeling data to retrieve helpful information, supporting decision making, and suggesting conclusions. Mugenda et al. (2012), further state that data has to be organized before it can be presented and analyzed. Furthermore, Durrett (2010), noticed that data would assist the researcher in testing the hypothesis that he formulated for the study. First of all, the descriptive statistics method was used in the research and summarized by the use of percentages, frequency distribution, frequencies, mean, and standard deviation, bars, and pie charts. Tables and figures were favored since they give a clear understanding of the research findings as well as the phenomenon being investigated (Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Therefore, adopting this method the gathered descriptive data would be analyzed by the investigator and would also assist in making the results general to the population. In addition to this, the gathered data would be analyzed effectively with the help of different tools to inference appropriate results from the research. There is a systematic procedure of conducting the data analysis appropriately. The process is as follows:

1. Average of frequencies tables and basic statistics were calculated. 5-Likert scale statements were implemented for each country.

With the help of the SPSS program, a few quantitative analysis has been conducted by the researcher such as descriptive statistics and frequency distribution.

4. Exploratory factor analysis and reliability analysis were implemented on all the variables to test the reliability and validity of the measurement. The principal components method was applied. Factors were extracted based on Eigenvalues that were greater than 1. Afterward, Varimax rotation was applied.

According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2006), measurement tools made with Likert-type scales include different sub-dimensions, which are frequently used in field studies. "Factor analysis" is a method that researchers frequently use to obtain new variables or factors by determining common dimensions and making use of the existing relationships among many variables. In factor analysis, interrelated variables are gathered in different dimensions and these newly formed variables are called factors. Factor analysis reduces the number of variables by creating factors that have strong correlations and also aims to simplify the interpretation of these factors.

As was stated by Maskey et al. (2018), factor analysis is usually implemented in research to define a large number of measured variables which are survey scales with a small number of underlying factors which are called latent variables. Henson and Roberts (2006), found that "modern conceptualizations of factor analysis include both exploratory and confirmatory methods, as well as hybrids invoking exploratory factor extraction followed by a confirmatory rotation of confirmatory maximum likelihood factor analysis" (p 395).

Stewart, D. W. (1981), observed that "factor analysis is a multivariate statistical technique that is concerned with the identification of structure within a set of observed variables. Its appropriate use involves the study of interrelationships among variables in an effort to find a new set of variables, fewer in numbers than the original variables, which express that which is common among the original variables. Factor analysis establishes dimensions within the data and serves as a data reduction technique" (p 51).

5. In order to test the hypothesis the researcher has applied nonparametric tests so that to gain an enhanced understanding of the relationship between dependent variables and independent variables respectively. A series of Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis tests were performed.



IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Socio-Demographic Variables

The first sample used for this research is made up of 300 respondents representing Turkish consumers, and 71.3 % of respondents are female. As it can be seen from the data in Table 4.1, 39.3 % of respondents are between 18-30, and 60.7% of respondents are between 31- 51 years old. Almost two-thirds of the participants (60.3%) stated that they were university graduates while a minority of participants indicated that they were high-school (12.3%) and secondary school (0.7%) graduates. The bottom half of the table shows some of the main characteristics of the participants in terms of income, the number of family members, and working status. Thus, 37.6% of their income was from 959\$ to 1.370\$¹ and higher. Moreover, 63.7% of the participants said that they lived in a family with 3-4 family members. According to Kasapoglu (2019), the nuclear family is the most common family type in Turkey. According to the TÜİK (2020), the household involves 3.3 persons, and the percentage of the nuclear family is 65%. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents (32.7%) reported that they were unemployed. White-collar middle managers (22.3%), blue-collar workers (20.3%), and those who own their business (20.0%) are almost equal to each other. However, white-collar senior executives were in the minority at 4.7% (Table 4.1.).

The second sample consisted of a total of 250 Russian respondents who completed the survey. Of these 250 respondents, 68.8% are female and 47.6% are between 18-30, and 52.4% are between 31-51 years old. For 2017, women in Russia live up to 77.6 years, and men up to 67.5. The average life expectancy in the country is 72.7 years (“Fontanka”, 2018). The frequency distribution shown in Table 4.1 represented that 44.8% were university graduates and 28.8% were high-school graduates. The income profile of the sample indicated that 27.2% of the participants were earning below 410\$, 56.4% of respondents had an income between 411\$ - 958\$. In 2019, Growth National Income (GNI) per capita for Russian Federation was 12.720\$. GNI per capita of the Russian Federation increased from 4.655\$ in 2000 to 12.720\$ in 2019 with a growing annual rate of 12.38% on average (“Knoema”, 2019). Furthermore, 32.4% of the participants said that they live in a household of 1 or 2 people and 64.0% of them live in a household of 3 to 5 people. Russia has had approximately 55.38 million households in 2019

¹ 1 Ruble = 0,10 TL / 1 USA \$ = 73 Ruble 1 USA \$ = 7,39 TL (Şubat 2021)

by increasing nearly 817 thousand since 2010. The number of households in the city centers was more than three times higher than in rural areas. Most of the Russians lived in extended households with children, parents, and other relatives. Approximately one-quarter of the population lived in a household with two parents and a child or several children. 10% of the residents had a single-person household. The size of Russia's average household was 3.2 persons. Russia was lower than other countries in Europe in terms of household net adjusted disposable income. In 2019, it reached up to 19.2 thousand U.S. dollars whereas it amounted to 26.2 thousand U.S. dollars in Czechia and 40.7 thousand U.S. dollars in Germany. Moreover, the COVID-19 had a significant effect on poverty levels in Russia. Even though the inhabitants were supported financially during the crisis, approximately 30 % of the population who live in households with children under three years old felt themselves under the poverty line ("Statista", 2019).

Table 4.1. A Cross-Cultural Descriptive Analysis Outputs (%)

Gender			Marital Status			Working Status		
Turkey	Russia		Turkey	Russia		Turkey	Russia	
Male	28.7	31.2	Married	49.7	44.0	White-collar senior executive	4.7	4.8
Female	71.3	68.8	Bachelor	50.3	56.0	White-collar middle manager	22.3	15.2
						Blue-collar workers	20.3	36.4
Age	Turkey	Russia	Family members	Turkey	Russia	(public and private sector workers)		
18-25	28.3	28.4	1	4.3	7.2	My own business	20.0	13.6
26-30	11.0	19.2	2	19.0	25.2	Unemployed	32.7	30.0
31-40	27.7	24.8	3	31.7	37.2			
41-50	24.0	17.2	4	32.0	19.6			
51 >	9.0	10.4	5	9.7	7.2			
			6>	33.0	3.6			
Income			Education			Turkey	Russia	
< 410 \$	29.7		< 410 \$	27.2	Secondary School	0.7	14.0	
411\$ - 684 \$	17.7		411 \$ - 684 \$	28.0	High-School	12.3	28.8	
685 \$ - 958\$	15.0		685 \$ - 958 \$	28.4	Graduate	60.3	44.8	
959 \$ - 1.369\$	15.3		959 \$ -1.369 \$	11.6	Post-Graduate	26.7	12.4	
>1.370\$	22.3		> 1.370 \$	4.8				

4.2 Internet Connection/Access

As a response to the first question in the survey ("What electronic devices do you use while connecting to the Internet?"), 74.3% of the Turkish participants indicated that they connect through mobile telephone, PC or tablet while it was 57.2% in Russia (Tablo 4.2).

Internet usage is increasing in the world, especially in developing countries. According to the website "We are social" (2021), globally the average amount of time spent by Internet users aged from 16 to 64 each day through different kinds of media and devices was 6h 54m hours in January 2021. Similarly, the average amount of time spent each day was 6h 43m in January 2020. This result is consistent with that of GlobalWebIndex (2021). It shows that the typical

Internet user spends almost 7 hours per day. Turkey is located at the top of the list. In Turkey, the average amount of daily time spent on the Internet rose up to 7h 57m in January 2021 likewise the number was 7h 29m in January 2020 (“Datareportal”, 2021). It was found that most of the participants (54%) spent more than 5 hours per day on the Internet. This score fell behind in general.

In Russia, the average amount of daily time spent on the Internet is 7h 52m in January 2021 (“Datareportal”, 2021). The results suggest that 53% of Russian users spend more than 5 hours daily using the Internet. In terms of the use of the Internet, there is no significant difference in both countries. Mobile telephone and tablet PC are among the most popular tools to access the Internet (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2. Internet Connection/Access (%)

Connection type		Internet Time spend				
		Turkey	Russia		Turkey	Russia
PC/ Laptop computer		4.7	10.8	>1	0.3	4.4
				1-3	19.7	27.6
Mobile telephone/tablet pc		74.3	57.2	3-5	26.0	33.2
				5-7	27.3	19.6
All		21.0	32.0	7>	26.7	15.2

4.3 The Purpose of the Internet Use

In Turkey, 81.3% of the participants reported using the Internet for the purpose of SM usage while 52.7% of them were using it for watching movies and TV or listening to music. Moreover, 39.3% of them said that they used the Internet for a job or career, and 35.7% for reading newspapers and news, 33.7% for shopping, and finally 28.7% for education. These findings are in agreement with that of Russian data. Turkish participants benefit from the Internet to use SM more than Russian participants. The data shown in Table 4.3. also supports this finding.

A similar observation was made by Hootsuite (2021) indicating that there is a huge increase in online and digital activities due to the changes which were brought about by the pandemic. Here are the percentages of Internet users who reported spending more time on the following activities due to the Covid-19. 54% of respondents reported watching shows and films on streaming services more while 43% of them spend longer time using SM platforms.

Furthermore, 42% of them spend longer time on messenger service; 36% of them spend more time on mobile apps; 35% of them spend more time playing computer games.

Table 4.3. The Purpose of the Internet Use (%)

	Turkey	Russia
3.3 Using social media	81.3	75.2
3.4 Watching movies and TV / listening to music	52.7	63.6
3.1 Job /Career	39.3	48.4
3.2 Reading newspapers and news	35.7	38.4
3.6 Shopping	33.7	35.6
3.7 Education	28.7	37.6
3.5 Following the Bolgers	5.7	21.2

4.4 Social Media Usage

4.4.1 Social Media Time Spent

SM usage is increasing thanks to the convenience brought by Internet access, the differences, and the privileges offered by SM platforms. When the Turkish participants were asked how much time they spent daily on SM platforms, the majority (37%) replied that they spent between 1 and 3 hours a day. What is more, 30.7% of them responded that they spent between 3 and 5 hours. Finally, 24.3 % of them replied that they spent over 5 hours a day (Table 4.4). Thus, the findings of Hootsuite (2021), show that the average time spent on SM is 2h 57m in 2021 and 2h 51m in 2020 in Turkey. In Russia, in response to the question about time spent by the users on SM, most of the participants (40.8%) indicated that they spend 1-3 hours on SM whereas 44.4% of them spent from 3 to 7 hours per day (Table 4.4). According to Hootsuite (2021), Russian users spend 2h 28m on average on SM. These findings are also in agreement with that of GlobalWebIndex (2021). It shows that SM accounts for more than one-third of the time people spent on the Internet and so that they are now spending an average of almost 2 and half hours per day on SM platforms. According to the analysis done by Gros (2012), it is argued that 99% of consumers use a computer and 68% of them use smartphones to access SM. Moreover, he states that the average time spent on SM showed that 23% of respondents used SM more than 10 hours per week, 27 % of them used it between 5 and 10 hours and 29% of them used it between 2 to 5 hours per week. This was also observed by Datareportal (2021) and the results indicate that the average amount of time users spent each day on SM platforms is 2h 25m in January 2021, which is similar to the time they spent in 2020 (2h 24m).

4.4.2 The Most-Used Social Media

Each of the Turkish and Russian surveyed interviewees said that they have an SM account. As a response to the 6 questions in the survey (Out of all SM platforms that you have accounts on, which one do you use the most?), Turkish consumers said that they use Instagram (44.7%), WhatsApp (32.3%), Facebook (8%), Twitter (7.3%), and YouTube (6.7%). These findings are consistent with the analysis done by ("Datareportal", 2020), which shows that the world's most-used SM platforms are respectively Facebook, Youtube, Whatsapp, FB messenger, and lastly Instagram. Nevertheless, Vkontakte (24.4%) and Telegram (6.4%) are among the most preferred SM in Russia. It is not unexpected since these SM were created especially for Russians. That's why it would be more likely for Russians to use these platforms over Facebook and Viber, etc. (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4. Social Media Usage (%)

SM Time spend				The most-used SM			
Time	Turkey	Russia	Rank	Turkey		Russia	
>1	7.3	12.0	1	Instagram	44.7	WhatsApp	28.8
1-3	37.7	40.8	2	WhatsApp	32.3	Vkontakte	24.4
3-5	30.7	28.4	3	Facebook	8.0	Instagram	21.6
5-7	18.3	12.0	4	Twitter	7.3	Telegram	6.4
7>	6.0	6.8	5	YouTube	6.7	YouTube	6.0

4.5 Social Media Usage During Covid-19

While the world is changing technologically, there is also a rapid change in social, economic, and environmental areas. Especially, the pandemic and natural disasters which occurred in 2020 have led to a new world order. Long quarantine periods with the motto of 'stay at home' have required people to adapt for this new situation. Hence, everyone has become a part of the digitalized world of the World Wide Web in order to adapt and survive during those difficult times. In this process, the use of SM has also increased rapidly. As a result, while the total world population is 7.81 billion people, it is the first time in history when half of the world's population uses the Internet and SM platforms. According to the findings by Datareportal (2021), the number of Internet users has reached up to 4.66 billion, which increased 7.3 %. This means that there are 361 million users this year, which is more than the previous years. On top of this, people using SM around the world increased up to 4.20 billion, which increased 13.2 % and this means that there are 490 million users more. Much of this growth in SM use is the direct result of the new habits that people adopted during COVID-19 lockdowns. Table 4.5 provides

the breakdown of SM usage during Covid-19 lockdowns in the Turkish audience. Most of the participants (74.0%) responded that their SM usage increased while only 24.7 % of them said that their behavior didn't change. As noted by Digital Commerce 380 (2020), the majority of the participants agreed that their SM consumption (72%) and posting (43%) have grown during Covid-19 lockdowns. However, these results are slightly different from those of Russian users. The participants on the whole demonstrated that their SM behavior during the pandemic didn't change and it stayed at the same 58.4%. This has resulted from the fact that quarantine lockdown lasted only a month in Russia, for this reason, there can be no change (Table 4.5).

Table 4.5. Social Media Usage during Covid-19 (%)

SM during Covid-19	Turkey	Russia	Covid-19 use 1st wave SM	Turkey	Russia
Increased	74.0	39.6	Increased	64.0	40.8
Decreased	1.3	2.0	Decreased	7.7	4.8
Didn't change	24.7	58.4	Didn't change	28.3	54.4

4.6 Account Owners on Social Media Platforms

The majority of Turkish participants stated that they have an account in the following SM platforms: Whatsapp (98.3%), Instagram (94%), Youtube (81.7%) whereas the minority of the participants use SM platforms such as Vkontakte (2.3%), WeChat (2.0%), Odnoklassniki (2.0%) (Tablo 4.6). These results match with those of the datereportal report (2021) stating that Youtube is the first platform (94.5%) in popularity followed by Instagram (89.5%), Whatsapp (87.5%), Facebook (79.0%), and Twitter (72.5%) in Turkey. These results differ somewhat from those of Russian users, which indicates that WhatsApp (88.4%), Vkontakte (70.4%), and YouTube (69.6%) are SM platforms in which respondents have accounts. Vkontakte (VK) is preferred by Russians over Facebook because VK was developed natively by a Russian citizen Pavel Durov and it caters to the needs of Russians (Tablo 4.6). The analysis done by Datareportal (2020) argues that the most used platform for communication in Russia is WhatsApp messenger since 52% of Russian residents use it every day. Secondly, the social network VKontakte, which is used by 51% of Russians every day. The third is the YouTube video service with 47%. In addition, 70%, 75%, and 81% of Russian residents use these services at least once a week, respectively. Among users of other sites, the most popular answer turned out to be "I use less than once a month or do not use it at all." These are Twitter- 63%, Telegram- 61%, Viber- 46%, Instagram- 41%, Facebook- 37% and Odnoklassniki- 35%.

Table 4.6. Account Owners on Social Media Platforms (%)

	Turkey	Russia
Whatsapp	98.3	88.4
Instagram	94.0	68.4
Youtube	81.7	69.6
Facebook	64.0	31.2
Twitter	58.7	16.8
FB messenger	41.3	7.6
Zoom	36.7	26.8
LinkedIn	29.7	10.0
Pinterest	26.3	18.8
Telegram	20.3	56.8
Skype	17.7	29.6
Snapchat	16.3	8.8
TikTok	7.3	26.4
Twitch	3.7	4.8
Tumblr	3.0	6.0
Reddit	2.7	5.6
Viber	2.3	31.2
Vkontakte	2.3	70.4
WeChat	2.0	4.8
Odnoklassniki	2.0	33.2

4.7 The Most Popular Content on Social Media

As it is clear in Table 4.7, the summary statistics of the most popular content on SM and the percentage of the participants are shown in detail. Almost two-thirds of the participants (67.3%) said that they follow or search for news on SM in Turkey. This is mostly because of insecurities and uncertainties that have been brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Much of our public knowledge about COVID-19 comes from SM platforms. Therefore, information seeking in the face of danger can be an adaptive behavior. It allows people to make informed decisions about keeping themselves safe such as looking for possible solutions when they are faced with peril. This broadly supports the results obtained by the worldwide (2020) survey in which respondents say that they use each medium to access news content: 82% social media, 65% television, 55% messenger apps, 28% print media, and 30% broadcast radio. Also, respondents say that they use each SM platform to discover and access news content: 46% of Facebook, 27% of YouTube, 20% of Whatsapp, and 13% of Instagram.

The analyses done in this study show that Turkey takes first place in terms of the trust in SM for news (51%) (Table 4.7). However, SM can't be considered a reliable news source since there

is a lot of distrustful information and misinformation. That's why the World Health organization tries to track myths and rumors and respond to them on SM platforms (WHO, 2020).

Secondly, 42.3% of Turkish users said that education is the most popular content. Al-Amad et al. (2021) argue that the COVID-19 pandemic has forced university leaders, institution deans, and policymakers in universities to search for alternatives to the traditional system of education. A perfect example of this would be universities in Egypt that encourage their academic staff to utilize digital learning platforms such as Zoom and Google Classroom. Moreover, SM platforms are formally exploited by universities and their academic staff. Facebook was the most frequently used SM for academic purposes and utilized by teaching assistants with a percentage of 100, and professors with a percentage of 96, while only 88% of administrators used Facebook for formal academic purposes.

Thirdly, 41% of them suggest that they follow career or job content the most. Al-Amad et al. (2021) claim that people start to work at home since the organizations are closed and remote work was encouraged because of Covid-19 isolations. Thus, people follow the career and job content on SM platforms in order to stay up to date.

Fourth, 40% of them said that they follow health-related content on SM. Al-Amad et al. (2021) also emphasize that there has been a great deal of trending on SM platforms in the early days of COVID-19 emergence in an unprecedented way. He also asserts that a new phenomenon which is known as "Infodemic" emerged as a result of viral posts on SM platforms. Based on his findings, 68% of the respondents considered themselves to be active users of SM platforms for information during COVID-19. Furthermore, WhatsApp (41%) and Instagram (39.6%) were the most frequently used platforms for information during COVID-19 whereas the least used ones were Snapchat (7.6%) and Tiktok (1.1%). These findings are in line with those of Russian data which is shown in Table 4.7; News (58.4%), Education (36.0%), and Career or Job (36%). Furthermore, the results of a study conducted by "We are social" (2021) support these findings. The primary reasons why global Internet users from 16 to 64 years old use SM are to stay up to date with news and current events (36.5%) and find funny or entertaining content (35.0%).

Table 4.7. The Most Popular Content on Social Media Platforms (%)

	Turkey	Russia
News	67.3	58.4
Education	42.3	36.0
Career / job	41.0	36.0
Health	40.0	30.0
Comedy	39.3	38.0
Personal care / beauty / aesthetics	34.3	27.6
Art	29.7	22.8
Moda	28.3	28.0

4.8. Brand Research Behavior

The results obtained from the preliminary analysis of brand research behavior are presented in Table 4.8. The Turkish participants on the whole demonstrated the tendency (79.7%) of searching information through search engines such as Google, Yahoo, Yandex. These findings are consistent with that of Russian participants (74.4%). Moreover, 45% of the surveyed Turkish users said that they search for information about brands on photography and video sharing platforms such as Youtube and Instagram and 35% of them said they do it sometimes while Russian is in the minority 9.8% said yes and 18.4% who said sometimes. Findings of a study done by Hootsuite (2021) reveal that 90% of Instagram users follow a business account and 50% of users visited this SM to buy a product after seeing a product in Stories. In addition, 50% of Instagram users are more interested in a brand after seeing ads of it on Instagram. Thus, the Instagram platform has become a must-have application for entrepreneurs and businesses. Moreover, 79.0% and 63.0% of the Turkish interviewees argued that they don't use blogs (WordPress, Blogger, Tumblr, Forums) and ranking (Yelp; TripAdvisor, Amazon Reviews) for brand research. This further supports the results by Russian users.

What's more, only 23% and 32.3% use social networks like Facebook and LinkedIn for brand research whilst 12.4% and 31.6% of Russian. These results differ somewhat from those by Gros (2012) where he explored those consumers who used different Social Media types to find information about products/services/brands. According to Gros (2012), consumers use reviews sites (59%) and social networks (58%) the most for brand research needs. Afterward, they use multimedia sharing (46%), forums (41%), and blogs (30%). Kurtuluş et al. (2015) claim that the most used social media platforms are SM (47.4%) and blogs/micro-blogs (28.7%) in Turkey. The respondents also stated that their motivation to use SM is the search for information

(21.1%), sharing information (14.5%), and social interaction (12.5%). Microblogs such as Twitter and Pinterest are among the preferred websites in brand research behavior in Russia (Table 4.8).

Table 4.8. Brand Research Behavior (%)

	YES	Turkey			YES	Russia	
		SOME TIMES	NO			SOME TIMES	NO
Search engines (Google, Yahoo, Yandex)	79.7	18.0	2.3		74.4	18.4	7.2
Social networks (Facebook, LinkedIn)	23.0	32.3	44.7		12.4	31.6	56.0
Microblogs (Twitter; Pinterest)	15.0	27.0	58.0		42.0	35.6	22.4
Photography/Video sharing (YouTube, Instagram)	45.0	35.0	20.0		9.8	18.4	72.4
Blogs (WordPress, Blogger, Tumblr, Forums)	9.0	12.0	79.0		3.6	14.0	82.4
Ranking (Yelp; TripAdvisor, Amazon Reviews)	15.7	21.3	63.0		9.2	20.0	70.8

4.9 The Rates of Exposure to Advertisements

Quesenberry (2020) claims that Instagram was only launched in 2010, but this photo video-sharing SM website has grown enormously thanks to its mobile app. As Datareportal (2021) reports, Instagram has more than 1.22 billion users. The statistics of the most popular ads to click are displayed in Table 4.9. Story ads are among the most popular types of advertisements since 31.3% of consumers click on them in Turkey and 33.6% in Russia. As noticed by Belanche et al. (2019), Instagram Stories is an extremely innovative new SM development that was launched in August 2016. Instagram Stories are an Instagram feature, which performs also on other platforms, such as Snapchat, Facebook that permit users to upload authentic content like photos, short videos, and live stream transmission, which remain on the website for only 24h. With regard to design and appearance, they are different from most SM walls, where users have to scroll down, Instagram Stories are shown on the whole screen for 15 s. Each story is followed by another story. In turn, advertisers present their ads within the Stories feature which is the same as an original users' story but labeled as “advertising” on the top left of the screen. These types of ads also allow users to click on them to access more information on a brand profile due to the fact searching the information is an important part of the shopping for the decision-making process. Moreover, 18.3% of Turkish consumers reported that they click on Carousel ads, including 18% of Russian. Carousel ads include three to five images of the

product that can be scrolled left or right, which increases the engagement rate of users. Similarly, product collection and catalog ads are also among the popular types of ads with a percentage of 17.3% in Turkey and 7.6% in Russia. Video ads click almost equal to ads in the news stream with the percentage of 15.3% and 15% in Turkey (Table 4.9). According to Wojdyski (2016), ads in the news feed typically integrated communication into the user's SM feed in a way that resembles the rest of the feed content. However, in Russia ads in the news stream are the most popular category with 34.8%. This is confirmed by Deloitte (2018), saying that ads in the news feed and banners are considered to be the most acceptable types of advertising on SM in Russia. This explains that 458\$ million was spent on banner ads in Russia while only 116\$ million was spent on banner ads in Turkey in 2020 ("Datareportal", 2020). Nevertheless, in this study, banner ads occurred to be an inefficient and bad investment so only 8.4 % of Russian click on them. Consequently, findings concerning banner ads are not supported in this study.

Table 4.9. The Rates of Exposure to Advertisements (%)

	Turkey	Russia
Story ads	31.3	33.6
Carousel ads	18.3	18.0
Product collection and Catalog ads	17.3	7.6
Video ads	15.3	18.8
Ads in the news stream	15.0	34.8
Following ads	13.3	15.2
Banner	7.0	8.4
Pop-up ads	7.3	7.6
Games ads	4.7	4.8

4.10 The Most Popular Content of Advertisements

The increase in the use of SM and advances in technology cause consumers to be followed more closely. As a result of this, consumers are exposed to many advertising messages during most of their online time. In SM platforms, the most popular content of ads is clothes, shoes, and bags with a percentage of 60.3% in Turkey. Those are followed by personal care and cosmetics with a percentage of 34.3%. Ads with electronic content take third place in popularity with a percentage of 29.7%. Afterward, there are sports, diet, and nutrition merchandise (26.3%), furniture and decoration (25.7%), health (21.7), household appliances (white goods, home textiles, kitchen appliances) (20.7%), education (20.3%), jewelry or accessories (12.7%), children's products (11%), and finally non-governmental organization (2.3%). In Russia, on the

other hand, the most popular content of ads is clothes/shoes/bags (54%), household appliances (30.8%), and personal care/cosmetics (26%), respectively (Table 4.10). The analysis done by Deloitte (2018), shows that the product categories with the highest perceived usefulness were found to be clothing 66%, electronics 51%, and household appliances 44% in Russia.

Table 4.10. The Most Popular Content of Advertisements (%)

	Turkey	Russia
Clothes / Shoes / Bag	60.3	54.0
Personal care / Cosmetics	34.3	26.0
Electronic	29.7	22.8
Sports / Diet / Nutrition	26.3	18.8
Furniture / Decoration	25.7	10.0
Health	21.7	18.4
Household appliances (white goods, home textiles, kitchen appliances)	20.7	30.8
Education	20.3	22.0
Jewelry / Accessories	12.7	22.0
Children's products	11.0	10.4
Non-governmental organisation	2.3	2.8

4.11. Purchase of a Product During a Month After Exposure to Advertisements

According to data collected by Hootsuite (2020), 928.5 million users can be reached by ads on Instagram. Instagram is a perfect tool in creating brand awareness since 92% of Instagram people say that they've followed a brand, clicked on their website, or made a purchase after seeing a product or service on the SM website. In addition, Facebook ads reach 1.95 billion of the website's 2.5 billion monthly users worldwide. Thus, the average Facebook user clicks 12 ads during 30 days. Moreover, 52% of all online brand discoveries occur on SM platforms. Therefore, the importance of SM ads can't be neglected as it leads to direct sales, increases brand awareness, maintains a relationship with current customers and attracts new ones.

As shown in Table 4.11., 60.7% of the Turkish and 56.4% of Russian participants reported having purchased some products during a month after exposure to these ads whereas 39.3% and 43.6% of them said that they clicked on the ads but didn't make a purchase.

Table 4.11. Purchase of a Product during a Month after Exposure to Advertisements(%)

	Turkey	Russia
YES	60.7	56.4
NO	39.3	43.6

4.12 Purchased Products

When Turkish consumers asked what they have bought after being exposed to the ads during a month, 27.3% of the interviewees stated that they purchased clothing or underwear, which makes it the most popular category to be purchased on SM. Furthermore, 19.7% of them bought products from the personal care or cosmetics category which is followed by shoes or bags, books, and kitchenware. However, only a small number of respondents indicated that they bought home textiles, children's products, and household appliances. These results differ slightly from those revealed by TÜİK (2020) that shows 60.9% of individuals who are shopping online bought clothes, shoes, or accessories. This was followed by printed books, magazines, or newspapers (26.1%) whereas there were deliveries from restaurants, fast-food chains, catering services (22.5 %), cosmetics, also beauty or wellness products (21.1%), and cleaning products or personal hygiene products (17.6%). Moreover, the least popular category is furniture, home accessories, or gardening products (17.0%).

These results differ somewhat from the data of Russian consumers, which shows clothing 30.4%, shoes and bags 18.4%, and accessories 16.8% are the most spread types of purchased products (Table 4.12). According to Deloitte (2020), the most popular categories of products purchased online include clothing (83%), electronics, and home appliances (75%). Compared to clothing, footwear is bought online much more rarely (Only 62% of participants claimed to have done so). The findings of the Russian consumer insight survey PWC (2018) show that the most popular categories for online purchases are: clothing and footwear (75%), health and beauty, books and media, toys, and electronics.

Table 4.12. Purchased Products (%)

	Turkey	Russia
Clothing / underwear	27.3	30.4
Personal care / Cosmetics	19.7	14.8
Shoes / Bag	17.3	18.4
Electronic	14.0	12.2
Books	12.3	10.8
Kitchenware	11.7	2.0
Accessory	10.7	16.8
Food	10.7	3.6
Furniture	9.0	4.4
Sports products	8.7	2.8
Cleaning / Disinfectant products	7.7	2.8
Education	8.7	2.4
Home textiles	7.0	2.4
Children's products	7.0	7.2
Household appliances	5.0	8

4.13. Recommendations for Shopping on Social Media

Quesenberry (2020), stated that evangelism marketing is a form of WOM in which marketers develop relationships with customers who strongly believe in a product or service and who voluntarily advocate for the brand. This is also sometimes called advocate marketing. From the questionnaire, it is obvious that 7.7% of the consumers strongly advocate for brands that are sold on SM. Furthermore, 75% of them would suggest shopping on SM if they are asked for advice. This is further evidenced by Russian consumers (Table 4.13).

Table 4.13. Recommendations to Shop on Social Media Platforms (%)

	Turkey	Russia
I recommend it at every opportunity	7.7	12.4
If they ask, I recommend	75	74.8
I definitely do not recommend	17.3	12.8

4.14 Electronic WOM

These are the findings of question 17 in the survey about e-WOM as a response to the statement (*"I consider the product/service suggestions of the phenomenon/influencers I follow"*) in the survey, 51.2% of Russian consumers answered sometimes, often, and always respectively, while only 34% of Turkish consumers approved this statement. This indicates that Russian consumers rely on influencers' suggestions about the products more than Turkish consumers. Besides, another statement was (*"If I don't read consumers' online product reviews when I buy a product/brand, I worry about my decision"*) in the survey, 68% of Turkish participants responded sometimes, often, and always and 54.4% of Russians. This means that online product reviews are extremely important for consumers in both countries. Furthermore, the next statement was (*"When I buy a product/brand, consumers' online product reviews make me confident in purchasing the product/brand"*) in the survey, 33% of Turkish consumers said always and 27.3% of them said often while 15.6% said always and 31.6% often of Russian consumers. Thus, the rate of confidence about online reviews is higher in Turkey than in Russia. As a response to the statement (*"I make an effort to get a product that goes viral on Social Media"*), both Turkish (52%) and Russian (42.4%) said that they would never buy such products. Thus, consumers don't rush to buy extremely popular products in both countries (Table 4.14).

Table 4.14. E-WOM of Turkish/Russian Consumers (%)

	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Always		
	Turkish	Russian	Turkish	Russian	Turkish	Russian	Turkish	Russian	Turkish	Russian	
I consider the product / service suggestions of the phenomenon / influencers I follow	35.7	25.2	27.3	23.6	25.0	30.0	9.0	15.2	3.0	6.0	
I often consult other consumers' online product reviews to help choose the right product/ brand	16.3	14.4	24.3	21.6	32.3	33.6	20.3	23.6	6.7	6.8	
To make sure I buy the right product/ brand, I often read other consumers' online product reviews	10.0	14.8	17.7	20.0	20.0	26.8	31.0	25.6	21.3	12.8	
When I buy a product/brand, consumers' online product reviews make me confident in purchasing the product/brand	7.3	17.2	18.3	15.2	14.0	20.4	27.3	31.6	33.0	15.6	
If I don't read consumers' online product reviews when I buy a product/brand, I worry about my decision	11.7	25.2	20.3	20.4	31.3	28.0	19.7	16.4	17.0	10.0	
I am happy if other people make a purchase decision by reading my reviews	18.7	28.0	18.7	21.2	17.7	24.0	18.3	16.8	26.7	10.0	
I make an effort to get a product that goes viral on social media	52.0	42.4	27.0	24.4	14.7	18.8	4.7	6.8	1.7	7.6	
I often read other consumers' online product reviews to know what products/brands make good impressions on others	16.0	18.4	21.3	27.2	18.3	26.4	22.0	16.4	22.3	11.6	
Reliability Statistics Turkish consumers											
Cronbach's Alpha	.875	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items					.869	N of Items	8		
Reliability Statistics Russian consumers											
Cronbach's Alpha	.813	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items					.810	N of Items	8		

4.15. Factor Analysis

Technological advancements have impacted the culture of consumerism greatly. Internet technologies in advertising, media, and direct mailing have offered consumers unlimited shopping choices and information about the product. On top of these, the rise of different shopping centers, and a huge number of online shops have given the opportunity to buy necessary products without any trouble. However, an overabundance of products on the marketplaces has brought a great variety of choices for consumers as making a decision has become hard to make for consumers. Even more, organizations do their best to stand out from the crowd in a highly competitive environment. In spite of all efforts made, there are still some brands that are more likely preferred by consumers whereas some are not preferred. Moreover, the introduction of SM has changed the behavior of consumers significantly and the analytic part of traditional CB as well. Thus, it would be mistaken to measure the behavior of consumers only in a scope of a classic decision-making process, in turn, a consumer decision-making style is a better approach that makes a meaningful sense in order to find the reason that stands behind consumers' preferences of various products.

In the light of these data, factor analysis was implemented to the CSI Likert scale for Turkish and Russian consumers. The items were first examined in terms of their reliability to the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity for both countries (Table 4.15). The results of the KMO of sampling adequacy analysis showed that the correlations between items were suitable for factor analysis. In addition, according to Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, there is a sufficient level of correlation between items to perform factor analysis.

Exploratory factor analysis results are summarized in table 4.16 and table 4.17.

Table 4.15. KMO and Bartlett's Test Turkey and Russia

KMO and Bartlett's Test	Turkey		Russia	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.888		.874	
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3.340.318	Approx. Chi-Square	2.485.764
df	210		171	
Sig.	.000		.000	

According to the factor analysis results, the scale of CSI used in the present study consists of five dimensions for both Turkish and Russian consumers. For Turks, the total variance explained is 65,88% and the explained variance of the scale is 39,059 % for the first dimension (Novelty-Fashion Consumer), 8,288% for the second dimension (Ads Marionette consumer), 7,651% for the third dimension (Perfectionistic, High-Quality Conscious Consumer), 5,672% for the fourth dimension (Impulsive, Careless Consumer), 5,205% for the fifth dimension (Confused by Overchoice Consumer) (Table 4.16).

For Russians, the total variance explained is 67,562 % and the explained variance of the scale is 39,242 % for the first dimension (Ad Marionette), 10,730 % for the second dimension (Price-conscious consumer), 6,228 % for the third dimension (Novelty-Fashion consumer), 5,884% for the fourth dimension (Impulsive, Careless Consumer), 5,478 % for the fifth dimension (Perfectionistic, High-Quality Conscious Consumer) (Table 4.17). Basic component factor analysis was applied to the "Consumer Style Inventory Scale", which measures consumer purchasing styles used as a measurement tool in the study. The original version of the scale, developed by Sproles and Kendall (1986), consists of 8 sub-dimensions as stated in the previous sections of the study. Within the scope of the present study, 28 items given with the measurement tool were interpreted by taking into account the factor loads greater than 0.30 and eigenvalues greater than 1, which are widely applied in the literature in the factor analysis of the principal components. As a result, 7 items and 9 items out of 28 were excluded from the analysis for Turkish and Russians respectively because they didn't meet the condition. According to the data obtained from the analysis results, one different factor was obtained as "Ads marionette consumer " was different from the original scale. The results obtained from the studies in the literature while obtaining the factors were compared and the factor names were determined in the light of these results. Similarly, in the study of Bikari (2013), who adapted the scale to Turkish, it was observed that 21 of the 40 items were excluded from the analysis because they did not meet the relevant conditions, and the scale was reduced to 3 sub-dimensions.

In this study, the results of the factor analyses found 5 factors. It was found 4 factors based on the CSI that match this scale such as (1) Novelty-Fashion-Explorer Consumer, (3) Perfectionistic, High-Quality Conscious Consumer, (4) Impulsive, Careless Consumer, and (5) Confused by Overchoice Consumer. Moreover, it was also found 1 new factor that doesn't fit

in CSI that is (2) Ads Marionette consumer. Therefore, these results identify the most crucial characteristics of Turkish consumers (Table 4.16). These findings are slightly different from the findings of factor analysis for Russian consumers. The results also revealed 5 factors out of which 4 factors matched CSI such as (2) Price-conscious consumer, (3) Novelty-Fashion-Explorer Consumer, (4) Impulsive, (5) Perfectionistic, High-Quality Conscious Consumer. Further, Ads Marionette consumer factor was also found that doesn't match CSI (Table 4.17). Furthermore, these results corroborate the idea of Sproles, G. B., & Kendall, E. L. (1987), who suggested that CSI measures the cognitive, psychological, and affective orientations based on information seeking of consumer, product choices, and products comparison in consumers' consumption. Though different factors affect the decision-making process of consumers, certain basic styles of decision-making are considered to be common among consumers.

Novelty-Fashion Consumer factor was found different in terms of variance between Russian (6,228 %) and Turkish (65,88%) consumers. It is a characteristic that defines consumers who adore new and innovative products. What's more, they become enthusiastic in searching for new and trendy things. An example of it can be a study done by Haryanto et al. (2019) in which they found that the higher the people's awareness about fashion, the higher their probability to buy KFC as a foreign brand. It implies that people with fashion consciousness tend to select a foreign brand instead of a local brand. This phenomenon explains people with this lifestyle who are more inclined to prefer new and innovative products, get satisfaction by looking for new things, want to wear fashionable clothes, and advise others to purchase a similar product. People who lead the fashion-orientated lifestyle tend to consume modern brands, which is reflected in all aspects of life even in choosing food brands. For them, KFC is seen as a foreign or modern brand, while WSGC is a local brand as a result of the connotation that impacts people's preferences in choosing the brand. Therefore, in this study, we found that fashion-driven consumers are more likely to use SM in researching for the brand.

Ads Marionette consumer defines the consumers that are easily manipulated by online ads on SM. As a result, it became a new problem facing consumers regularly. This factor is different in each country since variance explained 39,242 % in Russian while it is 8,288% in Turkey. Danciu (2014), investigates the spectrum of persuasion in advertising. There are many tools to manipulate an ordinary consumer such as deceitful advertising, emotive persuasion, exaggeration of quality, fallacious arguments, emotional appeals. He also gives examples of

manipulations through language and visual techniques of manipulation. Manwaring (2018), also explores how consumer behavior is manipulated by marketers. He stated that traditional computing and the increase of e-commerce industries introduced new opportunities for marketers to collect data on consumers and exploit behavioral research to enhance the persuasiveness of their marketing. He also refers to this as "digital consumer manipulation" (DCM). Furthermore, a "third wave" or Web 3.0, which is discussed in the introduction part, has brought eObjects. Thus, rapid socio-technological changes brought about by eObjects would increase opportunities for DCM. It has been a long time since consumers have been watched and have been implemented persuasive tactics by advertisers. However, eObjects data collection will offer more competitive advantages to marketers. As the prominent volume, closeness, and personalization of information collected by eObjects, combined with the capability to utilize eObjects as extra promoting channels, stand no chance for the consumer to escape from highly personalized ads. As a result, it may give crucial harm to consumers. These are not surprising since in total 801\$ million was spent in Russia on SM ads while only 203\$ million on SM ads in Turkey ("Hootsuite", 2020).

Perfectionistic or High-Quality Conscious Consumer is a characteristic that shows consumer's thorough brand research and seeking the best quality products. This factor is also different between countries in terms of the significant level of variance for Turkey (7,651%) and Russia (5,478 %). In this study, it was also found that consumers are highly sensitive to a good quality of products and goods. The analysis is done by Walsh et al. (2001), emphasizes that German consumers adore and also demand products of high quality. Moreover, they are ready to struggle in order to find a perfect product for them. Besides, Niu, H. J. (2013), stated that factors of brand, price, and quality consciousness are the strongest in estimating adolescent buying behavior in Taiwan.

Impulsive, Careless Consumer characteristic means that people are inclined to purchase products on impulse or on the spur of the moment and they don't worry about the price and how much they spent in order to get the "best buys". This factor hasn't shown the difference in significance level of variance in both countries since Turkey has 5,672% and Russia has 5,884%. As observed by Niu, H. J. (2013), based on the factors of consumer styles, found that factors such as recreation and impulsiveness are negatively correlated with adolescent buying behavior in Taiwan. In their study, Cowart & Goldsmith (2007), revealed that impulsive

consumers purchase more clothes online and also spend more time online than other consumers. They also conclude that a significant number of online apparel purchases are bought unplanned and on impulse. These findings are consistent with that of Phau and Lo (2004), stating that the characteristics of impulsiveness like urgency may be incorporated in the psychology of online consumers. They also revealed that apparel lovers usually displayed impulsive behavior. In addition, Stern (1962), who stated that fashion-driven impulsiveness occurs when a product is seen in a new style and the customer decides to buy it because of fashion trends.

Confused by Overchoice Consumer is characteristic of consumers who failed to pick up a product because of too many choices. This factor is only relevant for Turkish consumers with 5,205% of explained variance. Some businesses consider that the great variety of products provide consumers with more value since consumers can choose among many products. However, it only confuses consumers and complicates the decision-making process. As a result, a consumer may not make a purchase simply because he can't choose. Ceylan et al. (2018), claim that designing new products can result from better customer satisfaction due to functional and emotional benefits. However, the decision-making process of many customers becomes more complex and difficult because of confusion resulting from diversity. Therefore, product diversity brought by SM can have a negative impact on consumer choice and the decision-making process. As an example of these negative effects are dissatisfaction, negative word of mouth, postponement of purchase decision, cognitive dissonance, delaying or postponed purchasing, feeling of burnout, loss of loyalty and confidence (Mitchell et al., 2005).

The Price-Conscious Consumer is a characteristic of consumers who search for discounted prices and are sensitive to lower prices in general. This factor occurred only in Russian with 10,730 % of explained variance. Hiu et al. (2001), examined the applicability of decision-making styles to Chinese consumers. As a result, they assured that this dimension needs to be redeveloped if the CSI is to be applied to different cultures. They refer to studies of Lyonski et al. (1996), who had to drop all three factors of the price-conscious consumer applied to the Greek and Indian samples, and Hafstrom et al. (1992), who obtained Cronbach's alpha value of 0.31 for the same dimension. Nevertheless, these findings are different from findings of factor analysis for Russian consumers that show Cronbach's alpha value is 0.771 for the price-conscious consumer dimension. Therefore, the original CSI scale is valid and reliable. Besides,

Household expenditure per capita declined down to 4,5% between 2000-2020 years in Russia (“Ceicdata 2021”). For this reason, Russian consumers are extremely price-conscious.



Table 4.16. Exploratory Factor Analysis Turkey

	Novelty- Fashion Consumer	Ads- Marionette consumer	Perfectionistic, Conscious Consumer	High- Quality Consumer	Impulsive, Careless Consumer	Confused Overchoice Consumer	by
	1	2	3		4	5	
I use SM to find the latest fashion products / services / brands	.799						
I like to discover new brands in SM	.769						
I try to stay up-to-date by following the products / services / brands in SM	.755						
I try to find as much information as possible about products / services / brands in SM	.696						
SM helps make the perfect choice regarding a product or service	.649						
SM helps me evaluate all options regarding products / services	.632						
I always have a chance to find an interesting product or service in SM	.617						
Ads in SM are so personalized that they whet my appetite to buy the product / service		.787					
I feel the advertisements in SM pushing me to buy something		.768					
Ads in SM like a magician always know what I want		.749					
I take the time to shop carefully to find the best product			.820				
I go to the same stores every time I go shopping			.749				
My standards and expectations for the products I buy are very high			.739				
Usually, I regret careless shopping			.471				
After I saw products/services on SM platforms I "I would buy this product when I would see it in the store or online"				.880			
After I saw products/services on SM platforms I "I would actively seek out this product in the store or online in order to purchase it"				.793			
After I saw products/services on SM platforms I "I would like to try this product/service"				.694			
I'm confused by all the information I get about different products in SM					.704		
The more I learn about products on SM the harder it is to make the best choice					.672		
I change the brands I buy regularly					.622		
SM is like a slot machine since it is not clear which product or service will come across here					.566		
Variance (%)	39,059	8,288	7,651	5,672	5,205		
Reliability	.918	.833	.724	.775	.698		
Eigen Value	8.202	1.740	1.607	1.191	1.093		

Table 4.17. Exploratory Factor Analysis Russia

	Ad Marionette	Price conscious consumer	Novelty-Fashion consumer	Impulsive, Careless Consumer	Perfectionistic High-Quality Consumer
	1	2	3	4	5
I feel the advertisements in SM pushing me to buy something	.743				
Ads in SM are so personalized that they whet my appetite to buy the product / service	.806				
Ads in SM like a magician always know what I want	.764				
Searching for products or services at SM whet my appetite	.699				
I always have a chance to find an interesting product or service in SM	.583				
SM is like a slot machine since it is not clear which product or service will come across there	.660				
SM helps me evaluate all options regarding products/ services	.550				
I take advantage of special product or service offers /discounts on SM		.672			
Product / service prices in SM are more reasonable		.785			
I usually choose lower priced items		.782			
I go to the same stores every time I go shopping		.704			
I like to discover new brands in SM			.732		
I use SM to find the latest fashion products / services / brands			.798		
I try to stay up-to-date by following the products / services / brands in SM			.793		
After I saw products/services on SM platforms I "I would like to try this product/service"				.817	
After I saw products/services on SM platforms I "I would buy this product when I would see it in the store or online"				.764	
After I saw products/services on SM platforms I "I would actively seek out this product in the store or online in order to purchase it"				.710	
I take the time to shop carefully to find the best product					.785
My standards and expectations for the products I buy are very high					.769
Variance (%)	39,242	10,730	6,228	5,884	5,478
Reliability	.879	.771	.898	.804	.497
Eigen Value	7.456	2.039	1.183	1.118	1.041

4.16 Test of Normality

This study aims at defining the difference between dependent and independent variables that have been mentioned in chapter 3. For this reason, the test of normality has been applied in order to identify which hypothesis tests would be used. SM ads and e-WOM are used as the dependent variable. Test of normality was applied to independent variables (socio-demographic, time spent on SM, decision-making styles). The results of the test of Normality were given in table 4.18 and 4.19 below. All of these variables have not been distributed normally. Thus, non-parametric tests (Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal Wallis), were implemented for both Russian and Turkish data.

Table 4.18. Social Media Shopping and e-WOM Test of Normality Turkey

	Shapiro-Wilk	Sig	Kolmogorov-Smirnov
Novelty fashion consumer	.000		.000
Ads Marionette consumer	.000		.000
Perfectionist consumer	.000		.000
Impulsive consumer	.000		.000
Confusedby Overchoice consumer	.000		.000
Gender women	.000		.000
Gender men	.000		.000
Age	.000		.000
Education	.000		.000
Income	.000		.000
Occupation	.000		.000
Household size	.000		.000
Time spend	.000		.000

Table 4.19. Social Media Shopping and e-WOM Test of Normality Russia

	Shapiro-Wilk	Sig	Kolmogorov-Smirnov
Ads Marionette consumer	.000		.000
Price conscious consumer	.000		.000
Novelty fashion consumer	.000		.000
Impulsive consumer	.000		.000
Perfectionist consumer	.000		.000
Gender women	.000		.000
Gender men	.000		.000
Age	.000		.000
Education	.000		.000
Income	.000		.000*
Occupation	.000		.000
Household size	.000		.000
Time spend	.000		.000

*100.000Ruble> .001

4.17 Hypotheses Tests

Table 4.20. presents the hypothesis tests for dependent variables e-WOM and SM Ads (Turkey) and independent variables (socio-demographic, time spent on SM, decision-making styles). The influence of two factors e-WOM and SM Ads on gender, age, education level, income occupation, household size, time spent on SM, and decision-making styles were investigated. There are altogether 12 factors that might have an impact on purchasing products after being exposed to SM ads within a month as well as being impacted by e-WOM on SM. A series of Mann-Whitney U tests for gender variables were performed. Other variables were analyzed using Kruskal-Wallis tests. The results of factors influencing e-WOM and SM ads for Turkey are presented in Table 4.20 and for Russia Table 4.21. Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis test are equivalent to Student's T-test for nonparametric data. The data for this study were not normally distributed. On the basis of median splits of scores, respondents were divided into low, medium, and high groups on decision-making styles groups. To define the criterion for classifying low, medium, and high groups, this study has put all medians into the three groups.

As indicated in Table 4.20 hypothesis tests for Turkey, among the five decision-making styles, all of the variables have a significant impact on e-WOM ($p = .000$). However, only novelty fashion consumers have an impact on SM ads ($p = .027$).

The mean rank for high *Novelty fashion consumers* is significantly higher than for the rest of the groups, indicating that respondents who exhibit high novelty fashion characteristics tend to be impacted by e-WOM more since they search for more information about products or services on SM. But the mean rank of this factor is low for SM ads, indicating that consumers with low novelty fashion characteristics are more presumably purchase a product after seeing it in SM ads. This results in consumers' need for something new and they are likely to buy a new fashionable product after seeing it in the SM ads but they don't burden themselves with searching for a great deal of information.

The mean rank for high *Ads Marionette consumers* is significantly higher than for the rest of the groups, indicating that participants who are persuaded easily tend to be impacted by e-WOM more since consumers with this characteristic are simply trusting what other consumers or influencers say about products, and based on their pieces of advice they are likely to buy the

product. Influence marketing is a powerful tool for promoting a product. Influencers are paid for presenting a product natively in their blogs and thus manipulate consumers' preferences in favor of certain products.

The mean rank for high *Perfectionist consumers* is significantly higher than that of medium and low mean rank. It illustrates that people with a perfectionist shopping orientation give more importance to e-WOM since it is natural for them to compare products and search for the best value for their money.

The mean rank for high *Impulsive consumers* is significantly higher for e-WOM than that of medium and low mean rank. It means that consumers who make impulsive purchases are more presumably do it after they read some consumers' reviews on a product or listen to an influencer's advice on some product. Impulsive consumers, who make careless purchases, and whose mean rank is high, probably make a purchase after being exposed to SM ads as well since the significant value is very close to p-value ($p = .062$). This means that consumers of impulsive shopping orientation are also more emotionally sensitive to SM ads, and they may buy quickly as soon as they have seen an attractive digital ad on SM.

The mean rank for high *Confused by Overchoice consumers* is significantly higher for e-WOM than that of medium and low mean rank. The main reason behind this is that the more consumers search for and listen to various information about the products or services the more they become confused.

The mean rank for *secondary school graduate consumers* is significantly higher ($p = .055$) than of the rest of the education levels. This means that consumers who completed secondary school are more likely to believe other people's opinions about the product and this group is easily impacted by strategies of influence marketing which is e-WOM.

Table 4.20. Hypotheses Tests Turkey

	e-WOM	SM ADS
	Asymp. Sig.	Asymp. Sig.
Novelty fashion consumer	.000*	.027*
Ads Marionette consumer	.000*	.654
Perfectionist consumer	.000*	.486
Impulsive consumer	.000*	.062**
Confused by Overchoice consumer	.000*	.893
Gender	.744	.829
Age	.730	.616
Education	.055**	.110
Income	.602	.221
Occupation	.064	.106
Household size	.259	.068
Time spent	.289	.106

*<p-value (p =0.05) ** close to p-value

As indicated in Table 4.21. hypothesis tests for Russia, among the five decision-making styles, all of the variables have a significant impact on e-WOM (p = .000) and SM Ads (p = .000).

The mean rank for high *Ads Marionette consumers* group is significantly high for e-WOM dependent variable while the mean rank for low *Ads Marionette consumers* group is high for SM Ads dependent variable. This means that consumers with high *Ads Marionette* characteristics tend to blindly obey someone else's will and, consequently, they are strongly impacted by e-WOM. However, consumers with fewer *Ads Marionette* features tend to purchase products after they have seen them on SM ads.

The mean rank for high *Price-conscious consumers* group is significantly high for e-WOM dependent variable while the mean rank for low *Price-conscious consumers* group is high for SM Ads dependent variable. This indicates that consumers who score high on price-consciousness are more likely to do research about the product by reading others' consumer reviews and listening to opinion leaders or experts' opinions regarding the product. Nevertheless, consumers who score low on price-conscious are presumably buying products after they have seen a promotion of it in SM ads.

The mean rank for high *Novelty-fashion consumers* group is significantly high for e-WOM dependent variable while the mean rank for low *Novelty-fashion consumers* group is high for SM Ads dependent variable. This illustrates that those consumers who have high novelty-

fashion characteristics are more likely to be impacted by e-WOM since influencers and experts usually present the best, the latest, and trendy products, and it is natural for this group to follow these opinion leaders on SM.

The mean rank for high *Impulsive consumers* group is significantly high for e-WOM dependent variable while the mean rank for low Impulsive consumers group is high for SM Ads dependent variable. This shows that consumers whose score is high on impulsive shopping, do shopping more carelessly when they are exposed to e-WOM. But those consumers who score low on impulsive shopping, buy products after they have been exposed to SM Ads.

The mean rank for medium *Perfectionist consumers* group is significantly high for e-WOM dependent variable while the mean rank for low Perfectionist consumers group is high for SM ads dependent variable. This indicates that consumers whose score is medium on perfectionist characteristics are more likely to be impacted by e-WOM since they may rely on other people's opinions about the qualities of the products without doing long research easily.

The mean rank for *26-30 years old consumers* is significantly higher ($p = .009$) than that for the rest of the age groups regarding e-WOM. This results from the fact that this age group is more frequently uses SM platforms in comparison to others. For this reason, they are more likely to be impacted by e-WOM.

The mean rank for *consumers whose income between 685 \$ - 958 \$* is significantly higher ($p = .013$) than that for the rest of the income groups regarding e-WOM. This might be the reason that products or services that usually promote influential people are usually pricey, that's why only people whose income is high can afford them.

The mean rank for *retired consumers* is significantly higher ($p = .024$) than that for the rest of the income groups regarding SM Ads. It is natural since retired people have lots of free time for using SM. In addition, this situation with the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted retired people and they prefer to order products online than going to the offline store.

The mean rank for *consumers who spent less than one hour* on SM is significantly higher ($p = .033$) than that for the rest of the time groups regarding SM Ads. This results from the fact that people who spent more than one hour on SM platforms can experience the phenomenon of ad

blindness. Resnick and Albert (2014), describe the phenomenon of banner blindness which occurs when users don't notice the presence of an ad banner on the web page. They also add that it occurs because of the fact that users know where on-page the ad is usually located and they don't choose to view it purposefully since they don't expect to get useful information there. Therefore, users who spend more time online are getting used to the location of the ads more quickly and, for this reason, ignore them.

Table 4.21. Hypotheses Tests Russia

	e-WOM	SM ADS
	Asymp. Sig.	Asymp. Sig.
Ads Marionette consumer	.000*	.005*
Price conscious consumer	.000*	.000*
Novelty fashion consumer	.000*	.000*
Impulsive consumer	.000*	.000*
Perfectionist consumer	.000*	.003*
Gender	.339	.584
Age	.009*	.984
Education	.599	.869
Income	.013*	.436
Occupation	.680	.024*
Household size	.960	.220
Time spent	.145	.033*

*<p-value (p =0.05)

The difference between Turkish and Russian consumers regarding SM Ads and e-WOM is significant (p = .018 and p = .000). It indicates that, in general, Russian consumers are impacted more by e-WOM since the mean rate is higher for Russia (283.18) than for Turkey (256.11). It means that e-WOM marketing strategy is the most influential on SM in Russia. However, Turkish consumers are impacted more by SM Ads since the mean rate is higher for Turkey (324.67) than for Russia (216.50). For this reason, it would be reasonable to launch SM ads campaigns more on SM for businesses and organizations in Turkey (Table 4.22).

Table 4. 22. Hypotheses Tests Nationalities

	e-WOM	SM ADS
	Asymp. Sig.	Asymp. Sig.
Nationalities	.018	.000



V. CONCLUSION

Nowadays, the share of technology is very high in the new age where consumption is rapidly globalizing, and consumerism is accompanied by it. A better understanding of the similarities and differences in cross-national consumerism, which is a large and unlimited market, helps global businesses make decisions and increase consumer satisfaction. Global demand is increasing and international research is gaining popularity because comparing and revealing consumer preferences in different cultures are meaningful ways to provide new insights into consumer behavior (Nathan et al., 2021).

This study is derived from consumer behavior surveys in Turkish and Russian to show how consumption-related SM use and the growing importance of SM ads play a role in consumption. It also aims at exploring CB on SM platforms in Turkey and Russia. The findings of the study show that there is no significant difference between countries regarding the use of the Internet since 53% of users spent more than 5 hours per day in both countries. Besides, the main reason to use the Internet was with the purpose of SM usage with 81.3% and 75.2% for Turkey and Russia, respectively. The majority of Turkish participants (37%) spend between 1-3 hours a day and these findings are in line with those of Russian consumers (40.8%). The most popular SM platforms are Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook in Turkey while Vkontakte, Telegram, and Instagram are in Russia. Bearing all these in mind, it is clearly understood that organizations, decision-makers, and businesses should give more importance to digital marketing since people spend most of their daily time using SM platforms. In addition, they should consider cross-cultural differences. Therefore, the biggest investments for the promotion of products and services should be concentrated, especially, on SM platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook in Turkey whereas Vkontakte, Telegram, and Instagram in Russia.

The period of the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the usual order of things in the life of every person. Many organizations that couldn't run their business online went bankrupt. But those who could perform an online existence managed to stay afloat in those difficult times. Moreover, for some organizations period of social distance served as a booster to the acceleration of their online influence and many companies become more successful thanks to their online performance since people buy products and services online during quarantine. Online shopping has become increasingly popular due to the changes that were brought by

Covid-19. In 2019, the average popularity index of online shopping behavior for all types of products was 45% in Russia. In 2020, this percentage rose up to 63%. This increase has impacted all types of products equally, and it is higher than in the previous year (15–20%) (“Deloitte”, 2020). Besides, improved online products or services impacted people living in remote areas positively since they were able to buy products and services online which they couldn’t buy before the pandemic. In Turkey, the number of e-trade commerce organizations increased to 275% (from 68.457 to 256.861) from 2019 to 2021 (“Eticaret”, 2021). This is a huge increase in e-trade commerce and online shopping behavior. Thus, the findings of the study show that 74.0% of respondents in Turkey stated that their SM usage increased during the pandemic. However, these results are slightly different from those of Russian users. The participants on the whole demonstrated that their SM behavior during the pandemic didn't change and it stayed at the same rate (58.4%). For this reason, considering the international scope of the study, it would be wise to focus on an online presence on SM for organizations in Turkey in particular.

Participants, on the whole, talked about their tendency to search for information through search engines such as Google, Yahoo, Yandex with 79.7% and 74.4% for Turkey and Russia. Therefore, advertisements on websites through search engines also shouldn’t be ignored by the companies in both countries.

There are many ways to present product ads on SM, but it is not always clear what the most efficient kinds of ads to be chosen for companies' advertising campaigns are. Thus, this study found that Story ads are among the most popular types of advertisements on SM since 31.3% of consumers click on them in Turkey and 33.6% in Russia. Ads in the news stream or native ads are the most popular category (34.8%) in Russia, however, it is not that popular in Turkey (15%). But banner ads occurred to be an inefficient and bad investment in both countries since only 8.4 % of Russians and 7% of Turks click on them. Therefore, organizations should focus on these popular kinds of ads when launching their ad campaigns first.

SM advertising is a powerful tool in reaching a necessary audience for companies and organizations so that consumers reported having purchased some products during a month after exposure to these ads 60.7% in Turkey and 56.4% in Russian. Clothing or underwear 27.3%, personal care or cosmetics category 19.7%, and shoes or bags 17.3% are categories of products that were purchased through SM platforms in Turkey whereas clothing 30.4%, shoes and bags

18.4%, and accessory 16.8% in Russia. Hence, organizations that run businesses in the mentioned products categories should focus more on advertising campaigns on SM platforms.

This study also aims at revealing the influence of two factors such as e-WOM and SM Ads on gender, age, education level, income occupation, household size, and time spent on SM. Influence marketing, which is a part of e-WOM, is of great importance to marketers. The findings of this study indicate that Russian consumers rely on influencers' suggestions about the products more (51.2%) than Turkish consumers (34%). Moreover, online product reviews of other users are extremely important for consumers in both countries. However, the rate of confidence about online reviews is higher in Turkey than in Russia. Besides, consumers don't rush to buy extremely popular products that go viral in both countries.

Consumers who completed secondary school are more likely to read other people's reviews and trust their opinions about the product since the significance value of this group is high ($p = .055$) regarding e-WOM in Turkey.

In Russia, 26-30 years old consumers use SM platforms more frequently in comparison to other age groups. For this reason, consumers in this age group are more likely to be impacted by e-WOM with a high significant value ($p = .009$). Furthermore, consumers whose income is between 685 \$ - 958 \$ have high significant value ($p = .013$) regarding e-WOM. This might be the reason that products or services that usually promote influential people on SM are usually pricey, that's why only people whose income is high can afford them. Moreover, the significant value of retired consumers was found high ($p = .024$) regarding SM Ads. It is natural because retired people have lots of free time for using SM. In addition, this situation with the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted retired people and they prefer to order products online rather than going to the offline stores which are so-called brick and mortar shops. Besides, the significant value of consumers who spent less than one hour on SM is high ($p = .033$) regarding SM Ads. This results from the fact that people who spent more than one hour on SM platforms can experience the phenomenon of ad blindness.

Another important aim of this study is to understand the influence of e-WOM and SM ads on decision-making styles. Adopting the well-established CSI to profile consumer shopping orientation on SM, this study identified five main decision-making styles of Turkish consumers:

Novelty-Fashion Consumer, Ads Marionette consumer, Perfectionistic, High-Quality Conscious Consumer, Impulsive, Careless Consumer, and Confused by Overchoice Consumer. The factor of Novelty-fashion consumer occurred to be a dominant factor with an explained variance of the scale which is 39,059 %. Moreover, the significant value of Novelty fashion consumers is high ($p = .000$) regarding e-WOM and ($p = .027\%$) SM ads. For this reason, organizations should focus on Novelty-fashion shopping orientation at most in Turkey. The ad creators should emphasize the newness and the trendiness of products in their ad campaigns in order to attract the attention of this group.

In addition, this study identified five main decision-making styles of Russian consumers: Ads Marionette consumer, Price-conscious consumer, Novelty-Fashion Consumer, Impulsive, Careless Consumer, and Perfectionistic, High-Quality Conscious Consumer. Out of five factors, Ads Marionette occurred to be a dominant one with an explained variance of the scale is 39,242%. Moreover, the significant value of Ads Marionette consumers is high ($p = .000$) regarding e-WOM and ($p = .005\%$) regarding SM ads. Thus, companies should create persuasive ads and implement retargeted ad strategies to influence their audience efficiently.

5.1. Limitations

The researcher faced ample limitations while conducting the research. The major accessibility problems have been experienced during the collection of the primary data because of COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. It was not possible to distribute questionnaires in public places. For this reason, the online questionnaires were sent to the participants but it was difficult to convince the respondents to fill in those questionnaires. Nevertheless, the issues have been resolved by the researcher by assuring the respondents that their responses are of a high priority and they can contribute to the marketing science greatly.

5.2 Recommendations for Future Research

The study has many implications for marketers. It shows that SM is one of the main channels to reach potential customers and to keep current customers. Besides, consumers trust e-WOM and read other users' recommendations about the products since they believe that information referring to various brands and products found on SM has great credibility, especially in Russia. Hence, organizations should focus on promoting products through influence marketing strategy in Russia as e-WOM is the most influential factor. Moreover, e-vendors, businesses should

enhance the quality of their SM pages and SM ads since it impacts consumers greatly and they spend most of their daily time using SM in both countries. This study also shows that the most effective ads are the ones that users click on most and recommended SM platforms. Besides, Turkish consumers are impacted by SM more than Russians so that organizations should invest in SM ad campaigns more in Turkey. In addition, the study identifies what product categories are the best selling on SM for Russia and Turkey.

Considering the scope of this study, some theories related to the thesis were covered in general perspective in order to provide a big picture for readers. Hence, in-depth studies may be conducted for further investigations. Firstly, the influence of SM ads on consumers should be investigated. More research should be done to unravel their content and what type of ads are the most influential. Especially, the various group categories of products, which are sold the most because of SM, should be explored. Moreover, the impact of SM ads on different socio-demographic factors should also be examined. Secondly, this is the first study that scrutinizes the effects of decision-making styles on SM platforms. For these reasons, further studies should be conducted to understand what shopping orientation is the dominant one and what type of consumers shop the most on SM as the results would affect marketers' SM strategies. Thirdly, taking an international scope into account, Turkey has close commercial and political relations with Russia. Thus, other countries that have close commercial and political relationships with Turkey should be investigated in further research.



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APPENDICES

Appendix 2. Consumer Style Inventory and Buying intention of Turkish and Russian consumers

Consumer Style Inventory and Buying intention of Turkish and Russian consumers

	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Always	
	Russian	Turkish	Russian	Turkish	Russian	Turkish	Russian	Turkish	Russian	Turkish
<i>I would like to try this product/service</i>	10.8	11.0	20.4	21.7	27.2	44.0	24.8	14.7	16.8	2.7
<i>I would buy this product when I would see it in the store or online"</i>	13.6	8.7	27.2	33.0	32.0	46.7	18.4	8.0	8.8	3.7
<i>I would actively seek out this product in the store or online in order to purchase it</i>	22.8	9.3	28.4	28.0	23.2	35.7	15.6	19.7	10.0	7.3
<i>I feel the advertisements in SM pushing me to buy something</i>	21.6	26.7	31.2	26.0	17.6	27.0	16.8	15.7	12.8	4.7
<i>Ads in SM are so personalized that they whet my appetite to buy the product / service</i>	27.2	33.0	26.0	29.7	27.6	25.0	12.0	10.3	7.2	2.0
<i>Ads in SM like a magician always know what I want</i>	26.0	23.7	24.8	24.3	28.8	20.7	12.8	19.7	7.6	11.7
<i>Searching for products or services in SM is intriguing</i>	15.6	24.7	28.8	25.7	38.0	32.0	11.6	11.7	6.0	6.0
<i>I always have a chance to find an interesting product or service in SM</i>	10.8	17.7	25.2	25.3	36.4	27.3	19.6	22.3	8.0	7.3
<i>SM is like a slot machine since it is not clear which product or service will come across there</i>	21.6	25.0	26.0	34.0	28.4	21.7	15.6	10.7	8.4	8.7
<i>SM helps me evaluate all options regarding products / services</i>	14.0	19.3	26.8	29.7	36.0	28.0	15.2	18.3	8.0	4.7
<i>I try to find as much information as possible about products / services / brands in SM</i>	13.2	19.3	25.2	22.0	31.6	29.0	18.0	22.3	12.0	7.3
<i>I like to discover new brands in SM</i>	21.2	24.3	24.4	25.0	30.4	26.7	13.6	18	10.4	6
<i>I use SM to find the latest fashion products / services / brands</i>	28.0	25.7	24.0	24.3	26.8	31.0	10.4	12	10.8	7
<i>I try to stay up-to-date by following the products / services / brands in SM</i>	26.0	24.0	24.8	33.0	26.4	22.7	12.4	16	10.4	4.3
<i>I take advantage of special product or service offers / discounts in SM</i>	26.0	22.3	20.8	24.3	27.2	23	16.0	22	10.0	8.3
<i>Product / service prices in SM are more reasonable</i>	16.8	18.3	31.2	27.7	31.2	33	14.4	15.7	6.4	5.3

<i>I usually choose lower priced products</i>	22.0	13.7	26.0	22.3	28.0	32	17.6	24.7	6.4	7.3
<i>If there is a product or brand I like, I won't change it easily</i>	22.8	16.3	28.4	35	30.4	18.3	12.8	18.3	5.6	12
<i>I go to the same stores every time I go shopping</i>	14.0	10.3	22.0	19	31.6	26.3	22.4	36.3	10.0	8
<i>I change the brands I buy regularly</i>	18.8	25.7	33.2	50	34.0	17.0	8.4	4.7	5.6	2.7
<i>"SM'da ürünler hakkında ne kadar fazla bilgi edinirsem en iyi seçimi yapmak o kadar zor olur"</i>	26.0	20.7	25.2	30.7	30.4	30.3	13.2	15.3	5.2	3
<i>"I'm confused by all the information I get about different products in SM"</i>	31.6	28.7	25.6	29.3	28.8	32.3	10.0	6.0	4.0	3.7
<i>"Shopping at SM is not a pleasant activity for me"</i>	31.2	25.7	25.6	33.3	28.8	25.0	8.4	8.7	6.0	7.3
<i>"Going shopping is one of the most enjoyable activities of my life"</i>	17.2	17.7	21.6	26.3	33.6	28.3	14.0	15.0	13.6	12.7
<i>"Shopping in stores is wasting my time"</i>	28.4	17.7	34.4	30.3	22.4	26	8.0	18.3	6.8	7.7
<i>"Usually, I regret careless shopping"</i>	34.0	17.3	34.0	30.3	22.8	25.0	5.2	14	4.0	13.3
<i>"I take the time to shop carefully to find the best product"</i>	15.2	10.7	27.2	21	33.2	28.7	14.0	23.7	10.4	16
<i>"When I see an attractive product / service in SM, I buy it quickly"</i>	30.4	30	28.0	40	32.8	18.3	5.6	9.3	3.2	2.3
<i>"My standards and expectations for the products I buy are very high"</i>	17.6	9.3	23.6	25.3	32.0	30.3	16.8	23	10.0	12
<i>"A product doesn't have to be perfect or the best to satisfy me"</i>	13.6	17.7	34.0	30.3	29.6	26.0	16.8	18.3	6.0	7.7
<i>"SM helps make the perfect choice regarding a product or service"</i>	15.6	17.7	27.6	29.3	30.8	32.7	18.0	14.7	8.0	5.7
Reliability Statistics Turkey										
Cronbach's Alpha	.906	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items					.909	N of Items		31
Reliability Statistics Russia										
Cronbach's Alpha	.920	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items					.920	N of Items		31

Appendix 3: How social media platforms affect consumer behavior: a cross-national study (Survey Form)

Dear participant, this survey has been prepared as a data collection tool for a research aiming to measure the effects on the purchasing behavior of customers on social media platforms. Although there is no personal information in this survey, your answers will be kept confidential. Complete and correct answers to the survey questions will ensure the reliability of the information to be obtained.

Thank you for your participation and your time.

Anastasia IŞIK

1. Which electronic means do you connect to the Internet more?

☐ Mobile phone/Tablet ☐ PC/Laptop ☐ All

2. How many hours a day do you use the Internet?

☐ Less than 1 hour ☐ 1-3 hours ☐ 3-5 hours ☐ 5-7 hours ☐ More than 7 hours

3. For what purpose do you use the Internet the most? (you can mark up to 3 of them)

☐ Work / Career ☐ Reading newspapers and news ☐ Using social media ☐ Shopping
☐ Watching movies and TV shows / listening to music ☐ Following Bloggers ☐ Education ☐
Other.....

4. Do you have a social media account?

(If you have a Social Media account; please continue with the questions below. If you do not have a social media account, please end our survey with this question. Thank you for your participation)

☐ YES ☐ NO

5. Which of the social platforms listed below do you use?

☐ YouTube ☐ Instagram ☐ WhatsApp ☐ Facebook ☐ Twitter ☐ FB messenger ☐ Pinterest
☐ LinkedIn ☐ Snapchat ☐ TikTok ☐ Skype ☐ Telegram ☐ Twitch ☐ Viber
☐ Tumblr ☐ Reddit ☐ WeChat ☐ Zoom ☐ VKontakte ☐ Odnoklassniki ☐ Others...

6. Which of the above-mentioned Social Platforms do you use the most in your daily life?

7. How much time do you spend in total per day on the Social Platforms?

☐ Less than 1 hour ☐ 1-3 hours ☐ 3-5 hours ☐ 5-7 hours ☐ More than 7 hours

8. Which content do you follow most on social media platforms? (you can mark up to 3 of them)

☐ Career/job ☐ Education ☐ Personal care/beauty/aesthetics ☐ Fashion

☐ Health ☐ Art ☐ Comedy ☐ News ☐ Other.....

9. Social media usage compared to before the Covid-19 pandemic?

☐ Increased ☐ Decreased ☐ Unchanged

10. Considering the Covid-19 March-June period (1st wave), your use of social media?

☐ Increased ☐ Decreased ☐ Unchanged

11. Which of the websites listed below do you use to get information before shopping? (1-yes, 2-sometimes, 3-no).

	YES	SOMETIMES	NO
Search engines (Google, Yahoo, Yandex)			
Social networks (Facebook, Instagram)			
Microblogs (Twitter; Pinterest)			
Blog (WordPress, Blogger, Tumblr, Forums)			
Photo/video sharing sites (YouTube, Instagram)			
Ratings and reviews (Yelp; TripAdvisor, Amazon Reviews)			

12. Which type of ad do you click on the most?

☐ Banner ☐ Pop-up/unauthorized advertising ☐ Advertising in the news feed ☐ Video advertising ☐ Story ads ☐ Product Collection and Catalog ads ☐ Carousel style advertising ☐ Tracking ads ☐ Game ads ☐ None

13. Which ad content do you look at the most? (You can mark up to 3 of them)

☐ Clothing/Shoes/Bags ☐ Personal care/Cosmetics ☐ Electronics ☐ Sports/Diet/Nutrition ☐ Education
☐ Health ☐ Jewelry / Accessories ☐ Furniture / Decoration ☐ Children's products ☐ Household products (furniture, white goods, home textiles) ☐ None ☐ Others.....

14. Have you bought a product after being exposed to ads for a month?

☐ YES ☐ NO

15. What did you buy?

☐ I did not buy ☐ Electronics ☐ Clothing/ Underwear ☐ Shoes/Bags ☐ Furniture ☐ Personal care/Cosmetics
☐ Accessories ☐ Home textiles ☐ White goods ☐ Children's products ☐ Cleaning/Disinfectant products
☐ Book ☐ Education/Online education ☐ Kitchen utensils ☐ Sports goods ☐ Food
☐ Others.....

16. Would you recommend shopping from online stores on Social Media Platforms to people around you?

☐ YES ☐ NO

17. Regarding user reviews, which of the following statements is true for you? (1-never, 2-rarely, 3-sometimes, 4-often, 5-always)

	1	2	3	4	5
1. I consider the product/service suggestions of the phenomenon/influencers I follow					
2. I take into consideration the product/service suggestions of the experts/experts I follow.					
3. Reading the online reviews of consumers about the products makes me feel confident when purchasing the product.					
4. I often read online reviews from other consumers to make sure I'm buying the right product/service					
5. I may not be sure of my decision when I buy a product without researching online					
6. I am happy when others read my reviews and decide to buy					
7. I make an effort to buy a product that goes viral on Social Media					
8. I often read other consumers' online product reviews to know which products/brands make a good impression on others					

18. How do you act when you see a product/service you like on Social Media? (1-never, 2-rarely, 3-sometimes, 4-often, 5-always).

	1	2	3	4	5
1. I would like to try this product/service					
2. I buy this product/service when I see it in store or online					
3. I actively search in-store or online to purchase this product/service					

19. Which of the following are your thoughts on the products and advertisements on Social Media? (1-never, 2-rarely, 3-sometimes, 4-often, 5-always).

	1	2	3	4	5
1. I feel that the ads in SM are pushing me to buy something					
2. Ads on SM are so personalized that it whets my appetite to buy the product/service					
3. Ads in SM always know what I want like a magician					
4. Searching for products or services on SM makes me curious					
5. I always have a chance to find an interesting product or service in SM					
6. It's like a slot machine since you don't know what product or service you will encounter on SM.					
7. SM helps me evaluate all product/service-related options					
8. I try to find as much information as possible about products/services/brands on SM					
9. I like to explore new brands in SM					
10. I use SM to find trendy products/services/brands					
11. I try to stay up to date by following products/services/brands on SM					
12. I benefit from special product or service offers/discounts on SM					
13. Prices for products/services at SM are more reasonable					

14. I usually choose lower priced items					
15. If there is a product that I like, I will not give up the brand of that product.					
16. I go to the same stores every time I go shopping					
17. I change the brands I buy regularly					
18. The more I learn about products in SM, the harder it is to make the best choice					
19. If you have read this question, please tick 2					
20. I am confused by all the information I get about different products in SM					
21. Shopping at SM is not a pleasant activity for me.					
22. Going shopping is one of the most enjoyable activities of my life					
23. Shopping in stores is wasting my time.					
24. I usually regret after a careless purchase					
25. I take the time to shop carefully for the best purchases.					
26. When I see an attractive product/service in SM, I buy it quickly					
27. I have very high standards and expectations for the products I buy.					
28. A product doesn't have to be perfect or the best to satisfy me.					
29. SM helps make the perfect choice for a product or service					

20. Please indicate your gender.

☐ Female ☐ Male

21. Please indicate your age.

☐ Less than 18 ☐ 18-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41-50 ☐ 51 and so on

22. Please indicate your educational status.

☐ Primary School Graduate ☐ Secondary School Graduate ☐ High School

☐ University Graduate ☐ Master's Degree and above

23. Please indicate your marital status.

☐ Married ☐ Single

24. Which of the following ranges is your personal monthly income in?

☐ 3000 TL and below ☐ 3001-5000 TL ☐ 5001-7000 TL ☐ 7001-10.000 TL ☐ 10,001 TL and above

25. What do you do?

☐ White-collar senior manager ☐ White-collar middle-level manager. ☐ Own business ☐ Retired

☐ Blue-collar (public and private sector worker). ☐ Unemployed ☐ Student

26. How many people live in your family? (Including you)

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ more than 6

Thank you for completing the survey completely and correctly.