EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG SOCIAL COMMERCE INTENT AND ITS ANTECEDENTS: A RESEARCH ON INSTAGRAM USERS

Dilek TAŞKIN[457]
Çağatan TAŞKIN[458]
Ahmet Akif KARADAMAR[459]

Abstract: *Social commerce is a new form of social media-mediated commerce that allows customers to participate actively in the marketing and selling of products in online marketplaces. Social media such as Instagram provides a digital trade platform for their users. In spite of Instagram's commerce potential, because of the lack of face-to-face interactions and customers' suspicion of the truthfulness of the social commerce vendor, perceived risk of social commerce intent increases. Thus, it is important for social commerce vendors to know the relationships among the antecedents of social commerce intent. In the literature, there are few studies that explore the relationships among the antecedents of social commerce intent from vendor characteristics and platform (Instagram) perception. Thus, this study tries to contribute to this field.*

The aim of this study is to explore the relationships among social commerce intent and its antecedents (product differentiation, reputation, perceived ease of use, habit and trust) on Instagram users. Instagram has great commerce potential for vendors. In spite of this, it has a limited market share in Turkish digital economy. This study intends to help Instagram vendors develop more effective digital marketing strategies.

The research sample consists of Instagram users who bought anything from Instagram in the last three months. Data were collected in the months of December of 2017 and January of 2018. A total of 289 survey responses from participants, were collected. Based on the initial screening of the collected questionnaires, 31

Dilek Taşkın, born in 1985, completed her secondary education in 2002 in Balıkesir. Then she started his higher education at Uludağ University and got her bachelor degree from Uludağ University in 2008. She completed her master studies in 2014 at Bilecik Şeyh Edebali University. After that, she started to work as a lecturer at Uludağ University in 2017. Her research fields are management and organization, human resources management.

Çağatan Taşkın was born in 1977. He graduated from Industrial Engineering Department, Uludağ University in 1999. He completed his master's degree in production management and marketing and his PhD degree in Business Administration in the years of 2003 and 2008, respectively. Çağatan Taşkın currently works at the Department of Business Administration (Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences), Uludağ University. He does research in Quantitative Social Research. His research fields are branding, social media and digital economy, economic development and tourism.

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[457] Uludağ University, Orhaneli, Bursa, Turkey
[458] Uludağ University, Görükle Campus, Bursa, Turkey
[459] Uludağ University, Görükle Campus, Bursa, Turkey

of them were excluded as they were inappropriate. PLS-Sem method was used to test the research model. The scale of Yahia et al. (2018) was adapted for the antecedents of social commerce intent.

The findings of the research showed that all of the dimensions except habit were found to have statistically significant influence on social commerce intent of Instagram users. In addition, trust dimension had the highest influence on social commerce intent and reputation dimension was found to have the highest influence on trust. According to the modelling results several digital marketing strategies were proposed. This study provides useful implications for both academics and practitioners in digital economy. It is so important for online vendors or companies to know the most important antecedents of social commerce intent in order to allocate their resources effectively and develop goal-oriented marketing strategies.

Ahmet Akif Karadamar, born in 1984, completed his secondary education in 2002 in Diyarbakır. Then he started his higher education at Uludag University and got his bachelor degree from Uludağ University in 2012. After that, he started to work as a research assistant at Artvin Çoruh University in 2013 and then he joined Uludağ University in 2014. Since then, he has been working as a research assistant at the same university. He completed his master studies in 2016 and now he is continuing his PhD. His research fields are branding, destination branding and tourism.

Key words: *Digital economy, Instagram, marketing strategies, social commerce intent, trust, PLS-Sem*