

# **Social Media as an Advertising Tool: Reaching and Persuading Audience Through Instagram**

**Aytan Ahmadova**

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Approval of the Institute of Graduate Studies and Research

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Prof. Dr. Serhan Çiftçiođlu  
Acting Director

I certify that this thesis specifies the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Communication and Media Studies.

---

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ümit İnatçı  
Chair, Department of Communication and Media Studies

We certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate in scope and quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Communication and Media Studies.

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Assoc. Prof. Dr. Agah Gümüş  
Supervisor

---

Examining Committee

1. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Agah Gümüş

---

2. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ümit İnatçı

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3. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Bahire Özad

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## **ABSTRACT**

Social media is a new kind of media that day by day becomes more important and takes irreplaceable place in peoples' everyday lives. As time passes usage purposes of social media gets wider and covers many different purposes. One of those purposes is being used by companies as advertising tool, as companies can advertise their products/services directly to their target audiences. Today while surfing in his/her homepages, one can see many advertisements directly targeted on his/her, and even not understanding advertising content of that post.

This thesis focuses on one of the recent but at the same time very popular and widely used Social Media channel, Instagram. The study evaluates effectiveness and credibility of Instagram advertisements, people's approaches about Instagram advertisements, tactics used in Instagram advertisements in attracting audiences and generally effectiveness of Social Media advertisements.

The total number of the participants attended in this study is 300 (F=166). The main characteristic needed from participants was to be Social Media and Instagram user. Participants were distributed questionnaires which included 30 questions, in different parts of Eastern Mediterranean University campus and Famagusta city of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The results of the study indicate that people accept Instagram advertisements as credible, they like seeing advertisement contented posts by celebrities and are willing to purchase products that advertised in Instagram and Social Media advertisements have persuasive effects on audience.

**Keywords:** Social Media (SM), Social Media advertisement, Instagram advertisement, Uses and Gratification, Persuasion

## ÖZ

Sosyal Medya insanların günlük hayatında günden güne daha da önemli ve vazgeçilmez bir yer kaplayan yeni bir medya türüdür. Zaman geçtikçe sosyal medya kullanım amaçları daha geniş yelpazeye sahip olarak daha çok kullanım amacını kendinde birleştiriyor. Bu amaçlardan bir tanesi de sosyal medyanın şirketler tarafından reklam aracı olarak kullanılmasıdır ki, şirketler kendi ürün ve servislerini reklamlarını doğrudan hedef kitlelerine ilete biliyorlar. Günümüzde ana sayfasında gezinirken kişi, reklam olduğunu anlamadan doğrudan kendisine yöneltilmiş birçok reklamla karşılaşabilir.

Bu çalışma yeni ama aynı zamanda çok ünlü ve geniş kullanıcı yelpazesine sahip sosyal medya ağı olan Instagram üzerine odaklanıyor. Çalışma, Instagram reklamlarının etkililiğini ve güvenilirliğini, insanların Instagram reklamlarına yaklaşımlarını, insanları etkilemek için Instagram reklamlarında kullanılan taktikleri ve genel olarak sosyal medya reklamlarının etkililiğini değerlendiriyor.

Çalışmaya katılan toplam katılımcı sayısı 300 kişidir (Kadın=166). Katılımcılardan istenen özellik sosyal medya ve Instagram kullanıcısı olmalarıydı. Katılımcılara Doğu Akdeniz Üniversitesi Kampüsünde ve Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyetinin şehri olan Gazimağusa'nın farklı bölgelerinde 30 soru içeren anketler dağıtıldı. Çalışmanın sonuçlarına göre, insanlar Instagram reklamlarının güvenilir olarak kabul ediyor, ünlüler tarafından reklam içerikli paylaşımlar görmeyi seviyor ve Instagram'da reklam edilen ürünleri almaya isteklidir. Ayrıca, çalışma sonuçlarına göre sosyal medya reklamlarının insanlar üzerinde pozitif ikna edici etkisi bulunuyor.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sosyal Medya (SM), Sosyal Medya reklamları, Instagram reklamları, Kullanımlar ve Doyumlar, İkna

**TO MY FAMILY**

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# Chapter1

## INTRODUCTION

Introduction of the World Wide Web (WWW) in 1989 played an important role in the global usage of the Internet. The 21<sup>st</sup> century tend to be named as Information Age (also known as Computer Age, Digital Age and New Media Age), as it introduced people new opportunities and new way of communication, learning and socializing. With the help of this new “era”, the societies started to be more knowledge based and it gave people the opportunity to create, consume and share different contended information immediately through Internet. According to the statistics by worldwidewebsite.com (that shows daily estimated size of web), the indexed web holds approximately 4.69 billion pages with different contents from all over the world (worldwidewebsite.com, April 27, 2015). With the help of this global “world” now people can easily connect throughout the world and communicate within a few seconds.

With the evolution and development of the internet through the years, concept of “distance” and “time” has changed dramatically. In other words, now with the help of the technology and internet people can contact with each other no matter in which part of the world they are; they can talk to each other; make video calls; socialize; search and get all kinds of the information they need in a few seconds; do shopping without going out and spending hours in stores and many other facilities through

internet. Today in the internet there are billions of pages that serve to different target audiences with wide variety of the services.

Probably one of the most widely used and beneficial features of the Internet is Social Media. Today, it is nearly impossible to find person that don't use at least one social media channel. There are plenty of definitions about what social media is and dozens of academic articles and books about its usages, its effects and the purposes of its usage, written by scholars from all over the world. Beyond being the platform for people to socialize and share different contended posts with each other, social media also became as new advertising tool for companies. As it offers billions of audience (addicted, active and non active) that are segmented that share their interests, hobbies and characteristics in their profiles, social media is now considered as one of the most effective advertising tool of marketing mix.

### **1.1 Aims of the Study**

This study aims to highlight the importance of the Social Media (SM) as advertising tool, and its role in peoples' purchasing behaviors. This thesis seeks to evaluate the tactics used by the companies and businesses (regardless the scope) in Social Network Sites (SNS), how they attract and persuade their target audiences (followers), if people get persuaded and purchase services/products advertised through social media. The thesis will also try to evaluate if people trust SNS advertisements and accept it as effective or not. This thesis will concentrate on fashion and health industry; also the thesis will focus on one of the most popular and widely used SNS, Instagram.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Due to the globalization and constantly evolving technology, in order to be successful, companies and businesses need to always be up to date to changes and trends of media tools and change their tactics according to the needs and preferences of their target audiences. One of the most influential and effective media channels of the modern world is Internet, to be more specific, SNS. According to the statistics there are millions of active users of SNS, which means segmented potential customers for companies. Now it is fact that SNS has the irreplaceable place on people's everyday lives and people spend most of their times in SNS. So in order to turn this usage into benefit, companies use SNS as a part of their advertising campaigns. In other words, now, SNS contains millions of different contented advertisings, directly and indirectly targeted on audience.

Since the Instagram is one of the biggest Social Network Sites (300.000.000. active users), it is also used by companies as advertising tool. So, this study tries to evaluate and understand the credibility of the advertisements in Instagram, the tactics used in order to attract and persuade audiences and the effectiveness of Instagram advertisements.

## **1.3 Importance of the Study**

There are dozens of studies and academic articles about Social Network Sites by different scholars in all over the world. However, Instagram, which is fast developing and trendy SNS, there is almost no study referring Instagram as advertising tool, Instagram advertisements and their effectiveness. So, this thesis is going to be one of the first studies that examines Instagram as an advertising tool, evaluates tactics used in Instagram advertisements and their effectiveness.

## 1.4 Motivation for the Study

There are plenty of worldly known SNS in our daily lives. According to the research done by PEW Research Center, mostly used SNS by adults is as follows:

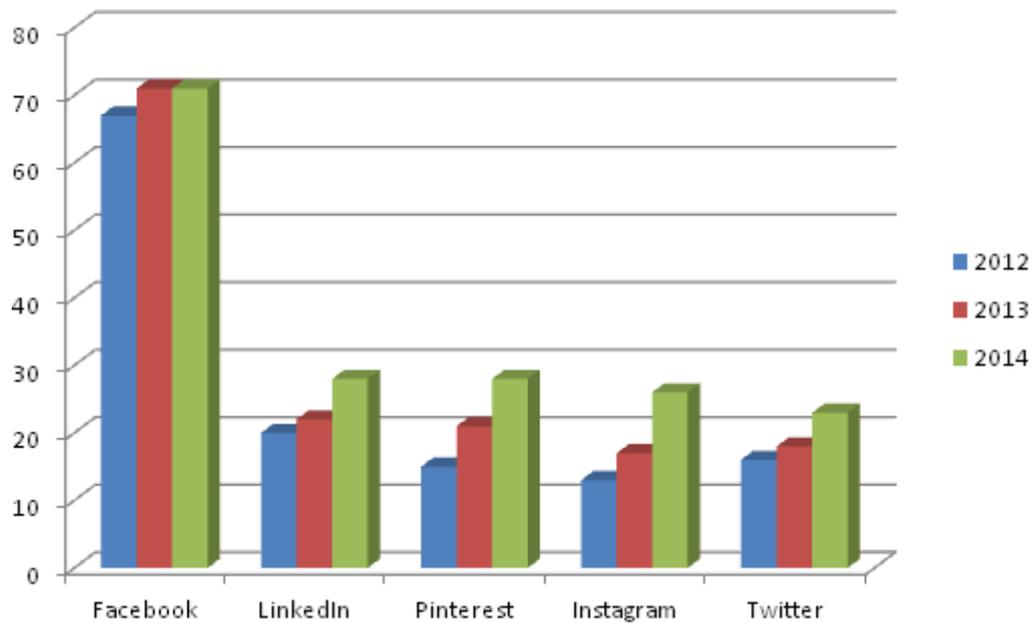


Figure 1. Mostly used Social Network Sites by adults 2012-2014  
Pew Research Center, 2014

<http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/01/09/social-media-update-2014/>

According to the research results, Facebook continues to be the mostly used SNS. The results indicate that 52% of the adults use two or more SNS and approximately half (53%) of the young adults (between the ages 18-29) use Instagram and 49% of the users use Instagram daily. Also according to the results, usage of LinkedIn reached 50%, and in the case of another SNS that is Pinterest women are dominant with 42%.

As SNS usage gets more popular day by day and number of the users increase, the purposes of their usage also changes. The great example for this can be Facebook (2004), that was only for Harvard University students when it was first created but

now it is the most popular and the most widely used social network site in all over the world. Besides allowing its users to construct a public or semi-public profile, give opportunity to list of users to share connections, to socialize with other users from all over the world freely and many other features. SNS is now considered as “The New Hybrid Element of the Promotion Mix (boyd & Ellison, 2008; Mangold & Faulds, 2009). In other words, SNS now is a new advertising strategy for companies and businesses that allows and offers them segmented automatically millions of potential customers. So, the main motivation of this study is to look at one of the most popular SNS, Instagram’s usage as advertising tool.

## **1.5 Research Questions and Hypotheses**

RQ1: Beside using famous people as persuasive element which other tactics used by advertisers to get attention and persuade audiences in Instagram?

RQ2 (a): Do the comments of other users below the advertised posts in Instagram have any purchase effects on audience?

RQ2 (b): Is there any significant difference between female and male participants’ purchase decisions from comments below the advertised product in Instagram?

RQ3: Does the positive comments of bloggers about products in Instagram convinces audience to purchase that product?

H1: Social Media advertising has persuasive effect on audience.

H2: Social Media advertisements are more effective than TV advertisements.

H3: Instagram advertisements’ purchase effects differ between genders.

H4: There is difference between genders in Instagram advertisements credibility.

H5: Audience accepts the celebrity comments as credible about promoted product in Instagram and it convince them to purchase that product.

H6: Comments below the advertisement contended posts in Instagram are important for adopting approaches toward products.

## **1.6 Limitations of the Study**

As the aim of this study is to highlight the importance of SNS specifically Instagram, as advertising tool, to evaluate its importance on peoples' purchasing behaviors and persuasion tactics used in Instagram advertisements. This study is limited to 300 participants that use Social Media, especially Instagram. This study is done in Famagusta city of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, with the international students of Eastern Mediterranean University from different faculties and ordinary citizens of Famagusta city, between the months of May and June in 2015, in Spring Semester of 2014-2015 Academic Year.

## **Chapter 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This following chapter presents the review of the literature related to the present study under the nine subtitles: Internet Communication, Social Cognitive Theory, Uses and Gratifications Theory, Definition of Social Media, Social Media as an Advertising Tool, Celebrity Endorsement in Advertisings, Persuasion Theories, Definition and Features of Instagram (including information like, user demographics of Instagram, photo uploads and filters, hastag- Throwback Thursday, Instagram and Facebook union, Instagram videos, Instagram direct) and Word-of-Mouth Marketing.

#### **2.1 Internet Communication**

Internet- the word that has dramatically changed traditional triad, (print, television and radio), simplified lives and now captured the irreplaceable part in people's everyday lives. The purpose of the invention of the internet was totally different than how it is used in present time. The origins of the internet go back to the Cold War period, and it is in a way the "product" of the competition between United States of America (USA) and Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). After the USSR launches the Sputnik into the space (1957), in order to be the leading force in implementing science and technology in military, USA launches the Defense Advanced Research Project (ARPANET) with the combined efforts of United Kingdom and France (Arisoy, 2009). It is mentioned that the very first internet connection was created in California, in 1969 (Arisoy, 2009).

Although the first intent of internet was for military purposes, and used just for emailing, after 1970's with the development of technology and establishment of World Wide Web (WWW) in 1991 by Tim Barnes Lee, it gradually started to diffuse for the use of people from all over the world, for many different purposes. Internet interfered as a huge Bulletin Board System (BBS) allowing users to exchange software, data, messages and news with each other (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009).

According to the statistics, today about 40% of the population has connection to the internet, which in 1995 was just 1%. The years from 1999-2013 can be considered as a “boom” of internet users, as it increased tenfold ([www.internetlivestats.com](http://www.internetlivestats.com)). According to [www.internetlivestats.com](http://www.internetlivestats.com), the site that shows live statistics of internet usage, there are 3,128,077,300 internet users in the world (the number changes every second). The most simple and useful definition of the Internet can be considered as follows:

“A world-wide computer network that can be accessed via a computer, mobile telephone, PDA, games machine, digital TV, etc. The Internet access service can be provided through a fixed (wired) or mobile network: analogue dial-up modem via standard telephone line, ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network), DSL (Digital Subscriber Line) or ADSL, Cable modem, High speed leased lines, Fiber, Powerline, Satellite broadband network, WiMAX, Fixed CDMA, Mobile broadband network (3G, e.g. UMTS) via a handset or card, Integrated SIM card in a computer, or USB modem” (<http://www.internetlivestats.com/>).

Today almost in every house there is an internet connection through different devices (such as PCs, laptops, mobile phones, iPads, TVs). Internet gives easiest access to different contended information from all over the world. According to the statistics of 2014, there are 968,882,453 websites serving different contents

(internetlivestats.com). The regional division of internet users can be seen from the chart below:

### Internet Users by World Regions (2014)

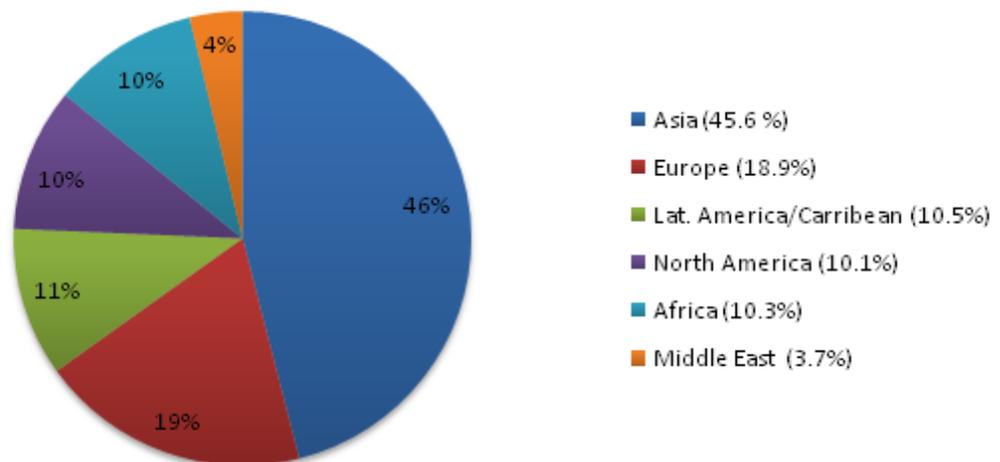


Figure 2. Internet Users in the World by Geographic Regions, 2014  
(<http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>)

## 2.2 Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

It is not a secret that mass media (TV, Radio, Newspapers, Internet and now Social Media) that bombards audiences with dozens of messages every day, has deep impact on people’s lives. The messages sent from media channels to audiences, consciously or unconsciously, influence people’s thoughts, beliefs, attitudes and actions. Based on these issues, social “cognitive theory provides an agentic conceptual framework within which to examine the determinants and mechanisms of such effects” (Bryant & Zillmann, 2002, p121).

According to the theory, behavior is shaped and controlled by environmental influences or by internal dispositions, and social cognitive theory explains this with

“triadic reciprocal causation” (Bandura, 1986). The following scheme by Bandura shows the triadic reciprocal causation model briefly:

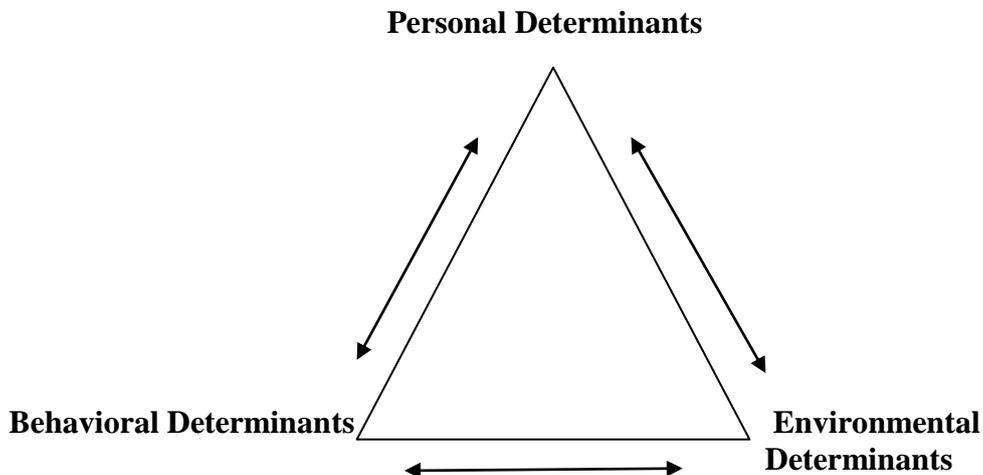


Figure 3. Schematization of Triadic Reciprocal Causation in the Causal Model of Social Cognitive Theory (Bryant & Zillmann, 2002, p122).

According to the theory and as described in the scheme, personal factors in the form of cognitive effect, behavioral patterns and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants that affect and influence each other (Bryant & Zillmann, 2002).

As chart demonstrates, social cognitive theory deals with the determinants of thoughts, feelings and behaviors, in identifying reciprocal causation among personal factors, behavioral patterns and environmental events (Bandura, 2002 a, 2002b). As these three determinants influence each other, individuals start to retain, change or solidify their thoughts and actions that is composes principal human nature, that also known as “plasticity” (Bandura, 2002a, 2002b). Plasticity is neurophysiologic mechanisms and structures evolving over the time that process, retain and use coded information (Bryant & Zillmann, 2002). There are four distinctive abilities that

created by four human capabilities: symbolization, self-regulation, self-reflection and vicarious capability (Khang, Han & Ki, 2014, p 49). **Symbolization-** the capacity of an individual to symbolize (create symbols) pertaining to his/her experiences with external environment through cognitive process. According to Bandura (2002a, 2002b) this capability is associated with people's capability to realize world and regulate external events. **Self-regulatory capability-** is individuals' reacting to external sanction and demands, and capacity to steer oneself to influence the process. **Self-reflective capability-** is individuals' evaluation of past experiences like, thoughts and behaviors, through assessment with indicators of reality. Bandura (2002a, 2002b) specifies that, by four, enactive, vicarious, social and logical modes, individual identifies and verifies thoughts by examining themselves. The thought of individual is validated by the experiences, social norms and interferences based on existing knowledge. **Vicarious capability-** this ability suggest that learning is not only possible with direct experiences but also with indirect experiences provided by mass media tools, such as TV, radio, newspaper, Internet, social media. These mass media tools presents millions contented information regarding life values, moral standards and behavioral patterns. Thus, all kinds of learning (cognitive, affective and behavioral) can be attained vicariously by observation of peoples' actions and consequences of those actions that mass media portrays. The scholars Khang, Han & Ki (2014, p49) state that according to Bandura (2002a, 2002b) "individuals' perceptions of social reality are largely influenced by their indirect experiences".

Bandura (2002 a, 2002 b) states that, predictable outcomes of possible actions influence people's actual behaviors, and expectation of possible action built on direct, indirect and collective experiences. Thus, this theory organizes factors that

affect behavior of individual, which are self-efficacy, deficient self regulation and habit strength (Khang, Han & Ki, 2014, p 49).

*The self-efficacy* refers individuals' self-appraisal of ability to design and achieve goals, and this determinant is one of the important determinants for individuals' motivation, affect and behavior (Bandura, 1997). According to this determinant, one's self-efficacy affects his/her activity selection that associates with goal of ultimate success (Khang, Han & Ki, 2014, p 49). This determinant applied to the media selection of people, and many studies done about the issue. For example, the study done by LaRose, Mastro and Eastin (2001), showed that self-efficacy is important predictor of internet usage, also, study done by Gunn (2008) indicated that people with low self-efficacy shows the Internet addiction like symptoms (Khang, Han & Ki, 2014, p 49).

People are creatures that can control their choices, feelings and behaviors with their monitoring processes (Bandura, 1986), however sometimes people might feel lack on *self-regulatory capabilities*, and this is what is deficient self-regulation stands for. When one practices lack of self- regulation, this causes to problematic behaviors, such as, addictions (Bandura (2002a, 2002b) states that, predictable outcomes of possible actions influence people's actual behaviors, and expectation of possible action built on direct, indirect and collective experiences (Khang, Han & Ki, 2014, p 49).

And the last determinant, *habit strength*, referred as representation of one's behavioral models that influence their present and future behaviors (LaRose & Eastin, 2004).

Importance and popularity of Internet and social media usage have been briefly discussed in previous chapter. Unlike the traditional media, social media is interactive and two-way communication that fosters users to be active and have control. The huge number in usage of social media attracted attention of many scholars and became subject to many studies that aimed to find out effective factors that affect media usage so broadly. Scholars, Khang, Han and Ki (2014) conducted research in order to explore and examine the relationship between social cognitive determinants and social media usage. Their result indicated that habit strength is statistically important preceding determinant in media usage. According to their research, usage of social media is habitual manner, and deficient self-regulation, previous experiences, social outcomes and activities have impact on habitual mind set in social media use, and hence influences habitual social media use (Khang, Han & Ki, 2014, p 53). They indicate that, habit strength is the best predictor of social media use and mainly relies in automaticity (checking mails, games, checking SNS profiles and etc.), which is turning to be principal determinant in media use. Also according to their research, deficient self-regulation and past experiences in social media usage defines habit strengths. The results demonstrate that general beliefs that are related to self-efficacy are straightly connected with the outcomes of social media usage, also, most of the anticipated outcomes demonstrated positive relationships with deficient self-regulation (Khang, Han & Ki, 2014, p 54).

### **2.3 Uses and Gratification Theory**

Uses and gratification theory is one of the most widely used and compatible media effect theory about media usage. The uses and gratification theory is a psychological communication perspective (Fisher, 1978) that shifted the influence of media from passive and isolated individuals to active audience members selecting and using the

media (Rubin, 2009, p 148). As can be understood, the main emphasis of the theory is changing the belief that audience is passive and shifted the belief from “what media does to audience” to “what do people do with media?” (Katz, 1959, p 2). According to Katz (1959), if people have no intention for any kind of media, or its message, even the powerful media usually cannot influence audience, because people values, interests and social roles are strong and they want to see and hear things according to their interests (Katz, 1959, p 3). Bauer (1963) also mentioned that “it is important to take into consideration what kind of information audience wants to get, and what does not”. Rubin (2009) defines uses and gratification theory as follows:

“People select and use communication vehicles to satisfy their felt needs or desires. Social and psychological factors generate expectations and desires about communication settings, partners, and media, and are important factors to address in the process. These individual differences filter behavior and socially and psychologically constrain mediated communication. We need to understand motives and individual differences to explain media effects” (p149).

There are some assumptions that support uses and gratification theory by different scholars in the field. Shortly assumptions indicate that, communication behavior is purposive and motivated, audience is active who select media and content, psychological characteristics, societal structure, social groups and relationships, personal involvement mediate communication behavior and its effects, media “fights” with choices in order to get attention of audience, and finally, people are more efficient than the media in the media effects process (Rubin, 2009, p 148).

To put it briefly, according to social cognitive theory usage of social media is habitual, in lack of a self regulatory people can be addicted to social media. According to another theory, that is uses and gratification theory, audience is active,

according to their beliefs, social norms, actions and etc. they choose the right media tool for themselves and they decide what to watch/read/listen and what don't. So it is important for advertisers to choose advertising medium carefully in order to reach target audience with the right strategy and tool. Considering that Social Media is widely used heterogeneous user contended media tool, it also important to choose right social media, strategies and tactics in Social Media advertisings too in order to reach marketing objectives.

## **2.4 Definition of Social Media**

Creation and development of the Internet brought many convenience to people's lives in many aspects and one of them is Social Media. In this chapter the definition, history and features of the Social Media (SM) will be briefly described.

The roots of social networking relies to an old times, as it is instinctual need for all living species that needs to communicate, share thoughts, feelings and etc. about everyday lives and the only thing that changes is the communication tool (Safko, 2010). Depending on the time people live, tools for communicating also changes. The very first communication tool was cave paintings, and by technological developments, books, newspapers, letters, telegraph, telephone, radio, television, mobile phones, Internet and then Social Media discovered one by one (Safko,2010).

Today there are +100 Social Media Sites that have millions of active users checking their profiles daily through different devices such as mobile phones, PCs, iPads and etc. The popularity and usage of the SM became so wide that, it even caused diseases like addiction, Social Media Anxiety Disorder and etc. that became subject to many

studies. According to Safko (2010), although there are millions of users of SM, people can't define what the social media is.

There are lots of definitions of what SM is by different scholars and specialists from all over the world, but the following definition presented by Lievrouw and Livingstone can be considered as more accurate and descriptive:

Social Media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. Furthermore, social media depends on mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share, concentrate, discuss and modify user-generated content. It introduces substantial and pervasive changes to communication between organizations, communities and individuals (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2010).

There are thousands of social network sites with diverse technologies that serve different people around the world with different interests and requirements. So, SNS can be considered as one of the most popular and widely used channel, feature of the Internet.

SNS helps to connect people from all over the world based on their interests, political views, religions, activities, language, nationalities, sexual and racial identities (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). People using SNS are able to find, follow and add as friend their friends, relatives, parents, co workers, acquaintances even celebrities and share their photos, videos, their beliefs and thoughts, read news and other kinds of information from their SNS profiles. Patton described SNS's features by saying, "social media presents tremendous opportunities for networking, collaborating, sharing best practices, communicating and connecting to a nearly unlimited pool of people with similar needs and wants" (Patton, 2009).

The very first SNS is considered to be Sixdegrees.com, which launched in 1997 (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). In 1998 SixDegrees was the first site that combined the features of different SNS in one and gave opportunity to its audience to create profiles, find friends and surf the friend list, send and receive messages. Although in a short period of time the site gained millions of users, however, the site closed in 2000 (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

As internet got popular and useful year by year, the number of people that use internet and the number of the SNS also increased year by year. The following chart shows the major SNS launch dates:

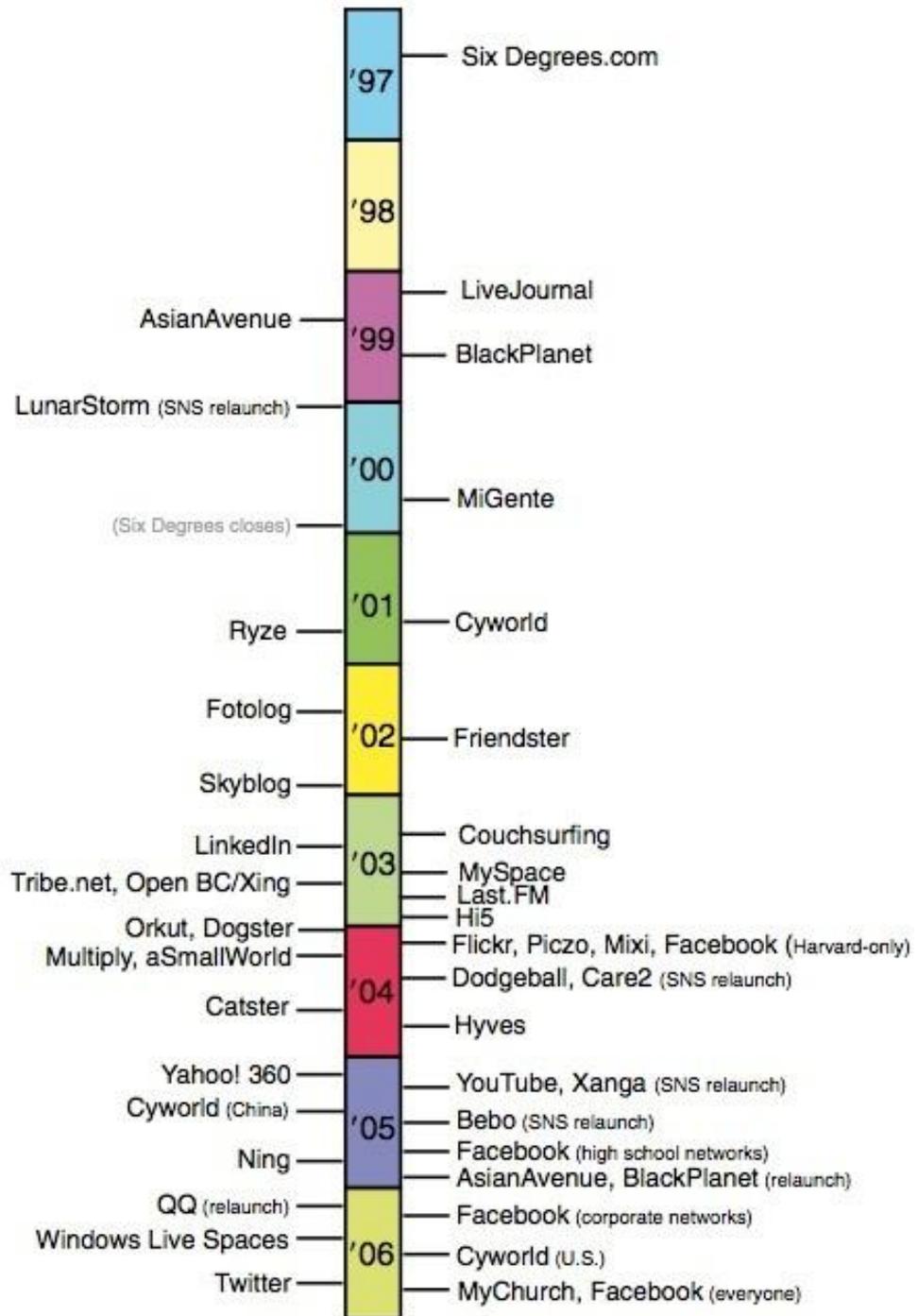


Figure 4. Launch Dated of Major Social Network Sites by D.M. Boyd and N.B.Ellison, 2007, p.212

As can be seen from the chart there are lots of SNS with different contents since 1997. According to the Kaplan and Haenlein, in January 2009, more than 175 million active users registered to Facebook, which is less than the population of Brazil (190

million) and two times more than Germany's population (80million). Also, as they mention, in every minute, 10 hours contented video uploaded to YouTube, meanwhile, Flickr provides over 3 billion pictures which in comparison to the worldly known museum Louvre Museum (300.000) means a lot (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009). One of the recent but at the same time widely used popular SNS is Instagram, which is video and photo sharing site. October 6<sup>th</sup> 2010 is launch date of Instagram, but in a five years of duration Instagram defeated Twitter and became one of the top (1<sup>st</sup> one is Facebook, 1billion users) widely used SNS with 300.000.000 active users. The detailed information about Instagram will be distributed in following chapters. In order to understand the importance of Social Media usage it would be good to have a look at a short statistical analysis presented by S. Abbas and S.K. Singh (2014):

- If Facebook was a country—it would have the third largest population in the world today after China and India and have twice the population of the United States!
- 72% of all internet users are now active on social media
- 18-29 year olds have an 89% usage The 30-49 bracket sits at 72%
- 60 percent of 50 to 60 year olds are active on social media, 45% of Facebook users are over 65.
- Time spent on Facebook per hour: USA citizens spend 16 minutes, followed by Australians at 14 minutes and the Brits at 13 minutes.
- 71% of users access social media from a mobile device. (According to Social Media Analyst Jeff Bullas) (p149).

## **2.5 Social Media as an Advertising Tool**

Living in a world that gets globalized year by year requires being elaborative and always following the technological innovations, progress and opportunities for companies regardless their scope of the business. By development of technology companies get the chance to be one step closer to their audiences that are their potential customers. Throughout the history companies reached the masses with different types of media tools, such as, newspapers, magazines, radio, TV channels

and etc. with different tactics. In order to be successful in communicating with their target audiences, companies need to follow Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) that coordinates and controls diverse kinds of promotional mix (advertisement, personal selling, public relations, publicity, direct marketing, and sales promotion) in order to give customers right message in the right time with right a channel and achieve organizational objectives (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

It is crucial for companies to follow the trends of media and successfully use them. One of the most recent and effective advertising tools of promotion mix is turned to be Internet, Social Media and the most recent one SNS. As internet, especially SNS became popular and beat the records in numbers of active users, the attention of companies' turns to SNS users and start to make benefits from this situation. Lon Safko defines Social Media's importance as advertising tool as follows:

Social Media is only a new set of tools, new technology that allows us to more efficiently connect and build relationships with our customers, and prospects. It is doing what the telephone, direct mail, print advertising, radio, television and billboards did for us up until now. But social media is exponentially more effective. (Safko. 2010, p5)

Social media is a world that communicates thousands, even millions of people that enable them to attend, exchange opinions, ideas, knowledge and images; also give information to companies of already prepared segmented audiences (Berger, 2008).

What does it mean already prepared segmented audiences? Jay Stevens, vice-president of MySpace answers this question in his reportage, as "one of the best things about social media is that users submit a great deal of information about themselves at the registration process. The ultimate promise of social media is the ability to leverage the data freely submitted on the pages to deliver much more

targeted advertising based on interests and hobbies” (Hayley, 2007). In other words, the very first step in order to sign up to SNS is to give the basic information about the user, such as, name, surname, gender, email and birth date. After this step user gradually starts to give more information about him/her by uploading picture, current city, hometown, political views, religion, relationship status, education, work, mobile number, address. And then this step follows to the more information that companies need, likes and interests parts in which users starts to mention his/her favorite books, films, music, activities, movies, shows, and brands (Barbu, 2014). And Barbu (2014) summarizes this situation as, “when an individual sets up a user profile on social network the information supplied is collected, stored and then used by promoters for easier reach to more and more specialized segments of the target audience” (p45).

In advertising campaign it is crucial to understand which media channel is influential for targeted audience’s response. Using social media as advertising tool help advertisers to reach thousands and millions of people and effectively attract their attention in as easiest way possible. This advertising tool provides advertisers to reach the exact target audience that they need, and unlike traditional media, their advertisements reach more people with the help of word-of-mouth marketing, which is one of the beneficial features of Social Media.

Researchers Voorveld and Noort (2014) conducted a research in order to examine the effectiveness of social media advertisements and compared TV advertisements’ and social media advertisements’ effectiveness. In their article they listed four differences between TV and SNS advertisements, and in a way listed benefits of SNS advertisements:

- 1) Unless as in TV advertisements, social media advertisements people are not exposed to watch advertisements that they are not interested in, thus, people can accept advertisements that they control (SNS advertisements) as less intrusive and this can cause more positive consumer responses.
- 2) In SNS advertisements people are more interactive, they can actively browse information, interact with advertisement, and this can end up with positive influence towards effectiveness of advertisement campaign.
- 3) TV advertisements are old, thus people can feel overwhelmed, irritated and annoyed by TV advertisements, and however, as SNS advertisements are new in a field.
- 4) Unlike TV advertisements that are embedded in commercial context, SNS advertisements embedded in social context, and people are always in contact with their friends, relatives and etc. (Voorveld & Noort,2014,p 255)

According to the results of their research, as social media users forward the advertisement contented messages to their friends on social media, the advertisement diffuse in social media, and receiving campaigns by close friends causes to positive persuasive intent towards the campaign. Their research indicates that TV campaigns have more affective responses, however, in SNS only campaigns cognitive and behavioral responses are more favorable. And overall conclusion of the study is that social media is effective way for advertisement campaigns, because, “on the one hand, because they lead to enhanced buying intentions and cognitive responses; and on the other hand, because consumers are not, or at least, less aware of the persuasive nature of campaigns on SNSs. Therefore, for advertisers, such campaigns are interesting supplement to traditional advertising campaigns”(Voorveld &Noort, 2014, p 263).

The literature suggests that SNS advertisements is less obvious and because they are forwarded by loved or trusted ones, such as, families, friends, the advertisement accepted as less obvious and increases persuasive effects (Voorveld &Noort, 2014).

Based on earlier studies this thesis argues that Social Media advertising has persuasive intent on audience, therefore the following hypotheses formulated:

H1: Social Media advertising has persuasive effect on audience

H2: Social Media advertisements are more effective than TV advertisements.

## **2.6 Celebrity Endorsement in Advertisings**

In order to make advertisements more effective, persuasive and credible lots of tactics been used by advertisers throughout the years. One of the essential musts of advertising a product or service is to carefully prepare a strategy and tactics that will help to attract and persuade target audience.

One of the effective tactics that always used by advertisers is using celebrities in advertisement campaigns. According to the statistics given by Shipm (2000) nearly 25% of US advertisers use celebrities in advertising companies, and according to various studies (that will be discussed in following paragraphs) using celebrities is effective tactic and endorses positive purchasing effects on audience (Amos, Holmes & Strutton, 2008, p209).

Using celebrities as advertising endorsement is not a recent tactic that used by advertisers (Kaikati, 1987). The origins of celebrity endorsement in advertising goes back to the late nineteenth century, and usage of Queen Victoria in the advertisement of Cadbury Cocoa can be the first examples to the celebrity endorsement in advertising (Sherman 1985). As Erdogan (1999) remarks, the leading inducement of celebrity endorsement in advertising was emergence of cinema and the popularity of it came with the growth of radio commercials (1930s) and TV commercials (1950s) (McDonough, 1995).

As McCracken (1989) defines, using celebrity endorsement is “ubiquitous feature of modern marketing. In other words, there are hundreds of examples of celebrity endorsement advertisings all over the world, for example, approximately 70% of Japanese advertisements feature celebrities (Kilburn, 1998). Advertisers accept celebrities as effective spokespersons for their brands/products, considering that they are already symbolic icons in the culture and they transfer their symbolic meaning to the advertised product/service. This cycle described as a Meaning Transfer (or Movement) Model by McCracken:

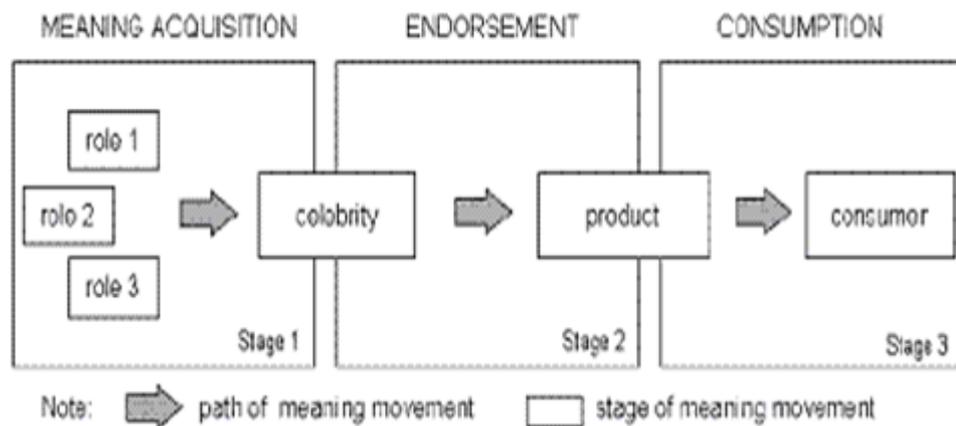


Figure 5. Meaning Movement and Endorsement Process by McCracken, 1989 (Erdogan, 1999, p306)

This model suggests that unlike the unknown people used in advertisements, celebrities become a character through the roles they play in society (singers, actresses, actors, athletes and etc.) and as they portrayed in media. Culturally formed people/society add meanings, role modeling to celebrities and when celebrities endorse an advertisement advertisers think that society start to integrate the meaning developed to a celebrity to the advertised product/service (Amos, Holmes & Strutton, 2008).

As McCracken (1989) argues, when people purchase an advertised product/service endorsed by celebrity, s/he hopes to claim some of the transferred meanings of celebrities for their own lives. Some people accept celebrities as inspirational figures, some people create imaginary relationship with celebrities because of their appearances in mass media, and especially young consumers accept celebrities even as their role models (Choi & Rifon, 2007). Thus, celebrities' popularity motivates their audiences, people start to find qualities and characteristics that is more or less same with their favorite celebrities, and this motivate people to pursue their favorite celebrities' personalities, lifestyles, appearances, behaviors, products/services that they use and etc. (Hsu & McDonald, 2002).

Besides utilizing the factors mentioned, and use celebrities as endorses in advertisements, another aspect that advertisers tries to be careful is choosing the right celebrity for advertisement that can give people credibility and trustworthiness. Trustworthiness by endorser is important aspect for the effectiveness of the message (Erdogan, 1999). This means that, endorsers that is used by advertisers must be celebrities that are accepted by audience as honest, believable and dependable (Shimp, 1997). Otherwise audience doesn't get interested or affected by the advertisements. There are lots of examples about this issue, such as Michael Jackson (that accused by child molestation) and Madonna (her album called Like a Prayer) (Erdogan, 1999).

Amos, Holmes and Strutton (2008) presented eight key predictors for successful advertisements with celebrity endorsement:

- 1) **Celebrity performance**- level of achievement a celebrity attains at any given time in their chosen profession

- 2) **Negative information-** the negative information about the endorsed celebrity can negatively affect the advertisement campaign
- 3) **Celebrity credibility- 3a:** The source credibility model- endorsers' positive characteristics that affect the receivers' acceptance of the message. **3b:** The source attractiveness- posits that the attractiveness of any source is determined by the communication receiver's perceptions of the source's similarity, familiarity, and likeability. Essentially, if consumers perceive a celebrity endorser as similar to them and they are familiar with and like the celebrity, they will tend to find the celebrity more attractive
- 4) **Celebrity expertise-** "the extent to which a communicator is perceived to be a source of valid assertions" (Erdogan, 1999).
- 5) **Celebrity trustworthiness-** "..Favorable disposition, acceptance, psychological safety, and perceived supportive climate as favorable consequences of trust" (Griffin, 1967). The positive effect of trustworthiness on effectiveness.
- 6) **Celebrity attractiveness-** as literature review indicates, attractive endorsers have more positive impact on endorsed product than less attractive endorsers
- 7) **Celebrity familiarity and likeability-** "knowledge of the source through exposure and affection for the source as a result of the source's physical appearance and behavior" (Erdogan 1999, p. 299)
- 8) **Celebrity/Product fit-** the celebrity/product fit, also called the 'match-up hypothesis', refers to the harmony of the match between the celebrity endorser and the product being endorsed (Till & Busler 2000). (Amos, Holmes & Stratton, 2008, p213-217)

In order to make successful advertising campaign it is essential always to be aware of the trends of media tools that can get attention of target audience and effectively persuade them to buy advertised product/service by that medium. As mentioned above one of the widely used media tool that used by millions of people in all over the world, is social media. As in traditional media, in social media also advertisers need to create effective advertisement campaign that will address the target audience in an effective way. Again as in the traditional media, in social media also, one of the most effective tactics used by advertisers is to convince target audience by using celebrities as endorsers of the advertisements. This thesis focuses on using celebrities as endorses in advertisements for social media advertisings, more specifically in Instagram. Based on earlier studies this thesis argues that Social Media advertising has persuasive intent on audience, therefore the following hypotheses formulated:

RQ1: Beside using famous people as persuasive element which other tactics used by advertisers to get attention and persuade audiences in Instagram?

## **2.7 Persuasion Theories**

Persuasion has been an effective tool for human beings for centuries. The word persuasion comes from ancient Greek language, and equivalent of the word in Latin is *Suada*, who described as persuasion, bribery and rapist goddess in Greek Mythology (Gümüş, 2014). According to Aristo, for effective message there are three elements that needed to be used in the message, that are Ethos, Logos and Pathos. Aristo argued that while using these three elements the persuasion can be happened, while he also added that for sending effective message it is also important to meet persuader and convinced people in the common ground (Gümüş, 2014). Ethos explained as ethics in the message, Logos explained as logic of people in evaluating the persuasive message and finally Pathos is related to the feelings and sense of people towards the persuasive message (Gümüş, 2014). As Gümüş (2014) mentions in his book, persuasion is defined as a combination of an art and science and explained this as follows:

- Persuasion is an art: if it has a strong native power to build confidence and establish strong communication, these will be used in persuasion process.
- Persuasion is a science: because the tactics of the persuasion can be learned (Gümüş, 2014).

He also mentions that for reaching more effective results in short period of time it would be good to use these two elements at the same time.

So as can be understood persuasion is not a new notion for people, rather its roots goes back to very ancient times. Even it was argued that the whole world is settled on the notion of persuasion (Hogan, 2006). For instance, companies, politics, advertisers, or even ordinary people use persuasion to persuade other people or each other, in order to achieve their goals, which can be selling product, elections, or persuading other to do something. Persuading was also described as change of attitude after getting affected by information of other people (Olson & Zanna, 1993).

### **2.7.1 Persuasive Communication Model**

Communication is described as process of sending the message through verbal way and through signs to influence the attitudes of people by another person (Hovland, 1953). Persuasive Communication Model was explained as persuasion and attitude change model that also explained as learning and “reinforcement” (Severin & Tankard, 1997).

Investgations concluded that the effectiveness of communication depends on the nature and content of sent stimulant on structural features and detection process of receiver (Gökçe, 2003). Agah (2014) quotes in his book that this model is mainly based on causation and this model is receiver- based one way communication that occurs between sender and receiver.

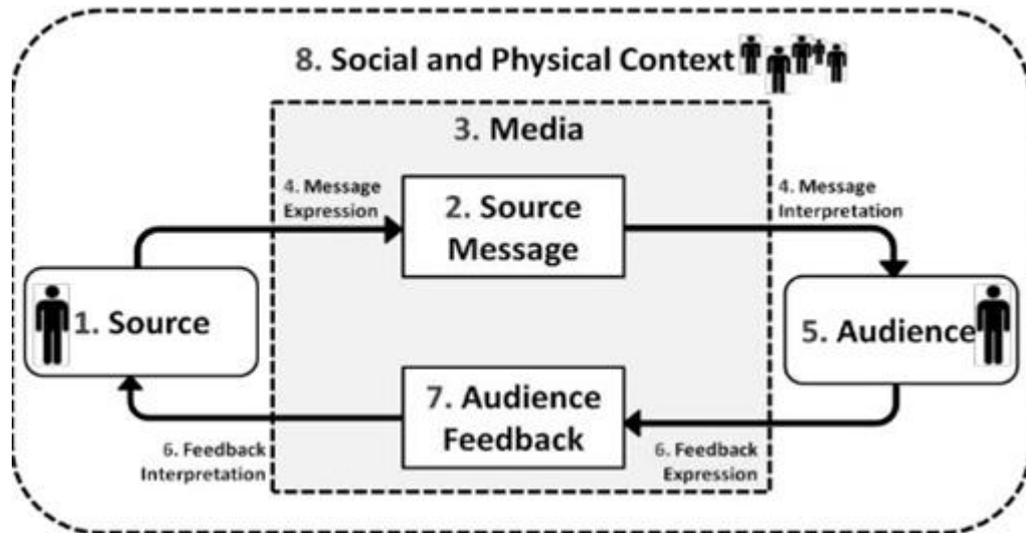


Figure 6. Persuasive Communication Model (Brian Cugelman, 2013)

### 2.7.2 Persuasion Techniques

As persuasion is an important element for people, lots of persuasion techniques are used daily to persuade others both by media tools and by ordinary people. Besides having lots of techniques to persuade others, there are also different steps that need to be followed for more effective persuasive attitudes. Some of these steps are, arranging the information and evidences, and being careful with appearance, way of speaking and body language as well as considering important factors related to communication (Gümüş, 2014).

Besides using the steps mentioned above it is also crucial to use techniques that fit to message and would be effective on audiences. Demirtaş presents few widely used techniques that are:

- Foot in the Door technique
- Door in the Face technique
- Low-ball technique
- “Yes, Yes!” technique

- Ask question with a question
- “I Owe You” technique

### **Foot in the Door technique**

It is been argued that the most widely studied and questioned technique among other techniques is Foot in the Door Technique. This technique was firstly introduced in 1966, by Freedman and Fraser. In this technique source asks the small request that receiver can't deny, then moves on to the big requests (Gümüş, 2014).

### **Door in the Face technique**

In this technique source firstly introduces the big request that has high probability of denial by receiver and then slows the expectations and introduces the request that receiver would not ignore (Gümüş, 2014). According to Demirtaş this technique is one of the effective techniques in persuasion and it is mentioned that one of the reasons of effectiveness is that receiver worries that after ignoring first request ignoring the second one can damage his/her reputation (Gümüş, 2014).

### **Low-ball technique**

In this technique source firstly introduces acceptable offer and after getting positive reaction source starts giving more and more offers until receiver accepts the offer (Demirtaş, 2004). This technique can be seen in different advertisements, that can be bank, car, mobile operator advertisements.

### **“Yes, Yes!” technique**

In this technique source asks questions that have high possibilities to be answered as “yes” by receiver and then at the end source asks the main requests. Demirtaş (2004) explains this as pattern that generated in the mind of target, meaning this pattern leads receiver to feel need toward the requested offer in the period of questioning and in a way persuading oneself to purchase that offer.

### **Ask question with a question technique**

This technique is explained as time gaining for the source in “blockage” situations during persuasion process, and asking questions is effective method in this situation (Gümüő, 2014). This situation is explained as effective way to change the direction of communication to the favor of source by turning to listener from responder (Gümüő, 2014).

### **“I owe you” technique**

This technique is explained as making target feel as debtor, and do voluntarily what the source want from them in order to pay their “debts” (Gümüő, 2014). Cialdini (1975) explains this by reciprocity principle by mentioning that, “person that doing something by spending effort for us make us feel owed towards that person and we start to be willing to do whatever that will help us to recover this situation” (Gümüő, 2014).

## **2.8 Definition and Features of Instagram**

As it is obvious in a modern world there are some sorts of technological things that are having an irreplaceable place in people’s everyday lives. One of them is the mobile phones that has lots of features easing peoples’ lives and entertain with applications (such as games, e-books, news applications, SNS and many other applications.) in it. As mentioned above SNS have important place on peoples’ lives that even causes to the addiction, including many other diseases. Probably the most widely examined SNS by researchers and academicians in different fields, is Facebook. This thesis focuses on one of the recent but very famous and widely used SNS, Instagram.

Instagram is a photo sharing SNS that enables its users to follow their friends, celebrities, bloggers and many other people, capture, filter and share their instant pictures with followers by using hashtags (ex: #pictureoftheday, #tbt, #throwbackthursday) that in a way sorts shared pictures in themes and sending pictures and messages with followers through direct messaging features.

“Instagram is a fun and quirky way to share your life with friends through a series of pictures. Snap a photo with your mobile phone, and then choose a filter to transform the image into a memory to keep around forever. We're building Instagram to allow you to experience moments in your friends' lives through pictures as they happen. We imagine a world more connected through photos” (Instagram.com).

Instagram launched on 6<sup>th</sup> October, 2010. When it was first launched, the application was only available for iPhone, but then in April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2012 it became available for Android users too. The definition of the name Instagram is described by its creators as “When we were kids we loved playing around with cameras. We loved how different types of old cameras marketed themselves as "instant" - something we take for granted today. We also felt that the snapshots people were taking were kind of like telegrams in that they got sent over the wire to others - so we figured why not combine the two?” in the official site of the Instagram (<https://instagram.com/about/faq/>). According to the statistics by the site, Instagram in its first two months of launch reached 1 million users (12 October, 2010). In September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011, Instagram reached 10 million users, in July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012 the number increased to 80 million, in February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013 the number of users reached to 100 million users and in September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013 Instagram reached 150 million active monthly users (<https://instagram.com/press/>). According to the updated statistics by the official site, now (July, 2015) Instagram has 300 million active users and the 70% of them is outside of the U.S (<https://instagram.com/press/>).

The official site informs the idea behind the creation of Instagram by saying, as in old times it was hard to take pictures because it required huge cameras and art schools, however as by the development of mobile phone cameras, the creators of Instagram say that they decided to chance this assumption and they created Instagram aiming to solve three simple problems:

1. Mobile photos always come out looking mediocre. Our awesome looking filters transform your photos into professional-looking snapshots.
2. Sharing on multiple platforms is a pain - we help you take a picture once, and then share it (instantly) on multiple services.
3. Most uploading experiences are clumsy and take forever - we've optimized the experience to be fast and efficient.

[\(https://instagram.com/about/faq/\)](https://instagram.com/about/faq/)

### **2.8.1 User Demographics of Instagram**

As mentioned above Instagram currently has 300 million users and 70% of them are living out of the U.S. According to the statistics mostly users of Instagram are from Middle East and Africa, Latin America and North America. To be more specific, 34% of users are from Middle East and Africa, 33% are from Latin America and 25% of users are from North America ([www.digitalinformationworld.com](http://www.digitalinformationworld.com)). Also according to the statistics the dominant age group of the Instagram is 16-24 years old people that constitutes 41% of users, and then comes the people between the ages 25-35, that constitutes 35% of users ([www.digitalinformationworld.com](http://www.digitalinformationworld.com)).

As Instagram is picture sharing SNS and considering that females love taking pictures more than males it is not surprising that 68% of the Instagram users are female ([businessinsider.com](http://businessinsider.com)).

The following chart presented by Pew Research Center (2014) also indicated the user demographics of Instagram:

<b>Instagram users</b>		
<i>Among online adults, the % who use Instagram</i>		
	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
All internet users	17%	26%*
Men	15	22*
Women	20	29*
White, Non-Hispanic	12	21*
Black, Non-Hispanic	34	38
Hispanic	23	34*
18-29	37	53*
30-49	18	25*
50-64	6	11*
65+	1	6*
High school grad or less	16	23*
Some college	21	31*
College+ (n= 685)	15	24*
Less than \$30,000/yr	18	28*
\$30,000-\$49,999	20	23
\$50,000-\$74,999	15	26*
\$75,000+	16	26*
Urban	22	28
Suburban	18	26*
Rural	6	19*

Figure 7. Pew Research Center, 2014

([http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/01/09/social-media-update-2014/pi\\_2015-01-09\\_social-media-new\\_02/](http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/01/09/social-media-update-2014/pi_2015-01-09_social-media-new_02/))

After getting famous and used in all over the world, in 21<sup>st</sup> December 2012 Instagram became available in 25 languages with the help of v3.4.1 (<https://instagram.com/press/>).

### 2.8.2 Photo Uploads and Filters

Instagram's initial features is sharing photo with the followers. The photos can be captured instantly or can be chosen from gallery of the device. Instagram allows users to share their photos not only on Instagram but also in other SNS like

Facebook, Tumblr, Flickr, Twitter and Foursquare. There are two preferences about the privacy of the Instagram profile, if user wants to share his/her photo only with his/her followers then s/he can make his/her profile available only for his/her followers. However, if user wants to share his/her photo with other people in Instagram, then s/he can make public profile, that mostly celebrities and bloggers always use this option. According to the statistics presented by Instagram, in one year, to be exact, in August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011, 150 million photos uploaded to Instagram (<https://instagram.com/press/>). Statistics show that, there are 30+ billion photos uploaded to Instagram by users, there are 70 million average photos uploaded per day and 2.5 billion likes goes to uploaded photos in Instagram (<https://instagram.com/press/>).

After choosing which photo user wants to share with followers Instagram offers another feature, which is filtering picture. In its first years Instagram offered only 11 filters to users, and in 21<sup>st</sup> November 2011 Instagram launched four new filters for its users. However now it offers 22 filters option, plus one “normal” option, which is sharing picture without any filter, to its users. Filter is an option that makes photos different with various shade options starting from retro to futuristic shades and make photos to look better. One of the tricks of having more followers in Instagram is always share qualified pictures with the right effect to attract attention of followers.

### **2.8.3 Hashtag- Throwback Thursday (#TBT)**

Hashtag is a label that is written with the hash character (#) in front of the words in a social network sites like Instagram and Twitter by users, in order to specify photos under a certain theme. In order words, when someone uploads a picture of nature to SNS, and writes for example #nature, with this Hashtag s/he categorizes his/her

picture, and makes it easy for people to find the nature themed pictures easily by clicking in stated Hashtag. Hashtags used by users for many purposes, and one of the mostly used reasons of hashtags is for creating awareness, activisms, and social media campaigns, protests, for political opinions, important events happening in that day, supporting someone and etc. Instagram made available hashtags for its users from November 21<sup>st</sup> 2011.

After seeing popularity and worldwide usage of hashtags, businesses and brands also started using hashtags as part of their social media marketing in order to reach broad audiences. Today, by clicking on certain brand's Hashtag one can get tones of pictures of that brands' products. Also, sometimes people that also use hashtags of that brand write their experience about the product of that brand that helps people to have ideas about that brand and its products. Most of the time when brands launch new products, services or new campaigns for their products they use this strategy. Hashtags also used by TV series, TV shows, advertisements and etc. as strategy to reach people, make them comment on content, share ideas, and communicate. Hashtags is one of the widely used necessities by the companies, brands and businesses as part of the advertising campaigns.

One of the famous features of hashtags is #throwbackthursday (also known as #tbt, #throwback) that is weekly trend that social media users use. Throwback Thursday refers to uploading an old photo on Thursdays, and sharing that old photo of a user with the stated Hashtag in order to share it with other users.

#### **2.8.4 Instagram and Facebook Union**

After getting famous and being one of the most downloaded application, in April 9<sup>th</sup> 2012 news appeared that Facebook bought Instagram for 1 billion dollar. As Instagram became the number one downloaded application in 24 hours after its launch, and then became the iPhone application of the year in 9<sup>th</sup> of October, 2011 (<https://instagram.com/press/>), it was obvious that it is going to be the competitor for Facebook. In one of his interviews CEO of Facebook Mark Zuckerberg explained their purpose of buying Instagram as follows: “Providing the best photo sharing experience is one reason why so many people love Facebook and we knew it would be worth bringing these two companies together,” (forbes.com, 2012). After getting united with Facebook, Instagram made some changes in their system, like, making available connecting Facebook and Instagram pages, and sharing photos in two of them at the same time, redesigned photo pages for Web (June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012), rolled out profiles for Web (November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012) (<https://instagram.com/press/>).

#### **2.8.5 Instagram Videos**

In 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2013 Instagram launched a new feature for its users, which was video sharing (<https://instagram.com/press/>). With these feature users now able to record a video from 3 to 15 seconds and as in photos, edit videos with filters and share their videos on Instagram. Also, as they can do in picture sharing, users can share their videos in Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and in Foursquare. This option also used by companies, brands, and bloggers to make short advertisements for products.

#### **2.8.6 Instagram Direct**

The latest feature of Instagram is Instagram Direct that launched in 12<sup>th</sup> of December, 2013 (<https://instagram.com/press/>). This feature enables users to share

videos and pictures with followers, like and write comments. With this feature users can send videos of pictures maximum to 15 people.

Based on the brief literature review and previous findings by different scholars: about internet communication, theories related to media usage and suggestions by scholars, social media advertising, celebrities as advertising endorsement and brief information about new but as famous and widely used as old Social Media tools, that is Instagram, this thesis formulates the following hypotheses:

H3: Instagram advertisements' purchase effects differs between genders

H4: There is difference between genders in Instagram advertisements credibility

H5: Audience accepts the celebrity comments in Instagram as credible about promoted product and it convince them to purchase that product

## **2.9 Word-of-Mouth Marketing (eWOM)**

As mentioned above launching advertising in Social Media requires being heedful in order to be successful. The importance and abilities of Social Media is to reach millions of people in very short period of time made advertisers to take the advantage of this issue. McKinsey (2007) states that, 61 % of companies that use social media as business tool are somewhat satisfied with the results and returns to the investments. It might be easy and low cost to create an advertisement campaign through different tactics in social media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), however it is very important to be careful in formulating a plan, because otherwise unsuccessful ad campaign may fail to result any gains, even can damage the image of the company (Fouriner & Avery, 2001).

Today in order to get information about any product or service, potential consumers choose to use Internet, especially Social Media, discussion forums and blogs to get information about the wanted product or service or get feedbacks from people that already used that product/service. This is what is Word-of Mouth Marketing (WOMM) is. There are two types of WOM that is, offline traditional WOM and e-WOM (also known as online WOM) that occurs in online circumstances (Internet, Social Media, Blogs, discussion forums and etc) (Steffens & Burgee, 2008). The WOM marketing is not a new concept for advertisers, as if the roots of this marketing type go to old years. Since old times people preferred and believed their friends, family members of “opinion leaders” (in our case celebrities, bloggers and etc) rather than salesman or advertisers. Murray (1991) states that, the reason why people believe WOM is that they think that, WOM reduces potential risks from uncertainty in purchasing decisions. Also, according to Goldsmith & Horowitz, (2006) people trust more to the other consumers’ communication more than they do to marketers. Steffens and Burgee (2008) list three differences between traditional WOM and eWOM:

- 1) Traditional WOM is intimate immediate conversation, however eWOM is a way of communication that sender and receiver of information are separate in space and time
- 2) Traditional WOM occurs between small group or parties, however eWOM with the benefits of Internet reaches millions of people in a short period of time
- 3) In traditional WOM sender of information is known to receiver however in eWOM as it reaches millions of people, eliminates the ability to critic credibility of the message or a sender.

Arndt (1967) defined WOM as “communication between a receiver and a communicator whom receiver perceives as noncommercial, regarding a brand, a product or a service”. In social media aspect, WOM helps and encourages people to

go online and search for comments, feedbacks, advices or guidance of people about product. Alon, Brunel and Foriner (2014) state that “if communication and marketing professionals want to influence or be part of online conversations, while avoiding alienating participants in the process, we need to understand how ordinary consumers talk and influence each others’ talk” (p43). Based on the proposals above the following hypothesis is formulated:

H6: Comments below the advertisement contended posts in Instagram are important for adopting approaches toward products

According to Mangold, Miller and Brockway (1999) WOM has three types of information, quality, price and value about product/service. Richins and Root Shaffer (1988) also indicate that there are four types of WOM comments that are, positive personal experience, advice giving, product news and negative WOM. And Dobele and Ward (2002) adds that there are five “referrer styles for accounting services WOM”, opinion leader, passive mercenary, helpful friend, reciprocator and closed mouth (Alon, Brunel & Fouriner, 2014).

There were several studies done by different researchers about WOM and SNS advertisements in Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU). However none of the studies done in this area covered Instagram and its effectiveness on audience. Thus having this deficiency in mind, this thesis focuses on Instagram advertisements effectiveness and aims to find answer to the following research questions:

RQ2 (a): Do the comments of others users below the advertised posts in Instagram have any purchase effects on audience?

RQ2 (b): Is there any significant difference between female and male participants' purchase decisions from comments below the advertised product in Instagram?

RQ3: Does the positive comments of bloggers about products in Instagram convinces audience to purchase that product?

To sum it up, WOM is one of the effective issues in traditional and online advertisements. It occurs between media users and online users and helps people to get information, advice and guidance before buying product/service. However as Kozinets (2010) argue, people can suppose that in social media circumstances WOMS occur in its organic stems, however it is not secret that eWOM also occur by and results of firms' actions.

## Chapter 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter gives brief information about the research methodology, research design, research sample and population, research procedure and research instruments of subjected study that aims to find out people's approach towards Social Media, their usage of Social Media and Instagram, approaches to Instagram advertisements and if they think Social Media advertisements are effective or not.

#### 3.1 Research Methodology

The major aim of this study is to understand the effectiveness of Instagram advertisements and peoples' approach to it. In order to get reliable statistical results that will guide the study, quantitative research methodology was used in this study.

Gall and Borg (1999) explains quantitative research method as “an approach to scientific inquiry in education whose characteristics are epistemological beliefs in an objective reality, the analysis of reality into measurable variable, the study of samples that represent a defined population, and a reliance on statistical methods to analyze data”(p.120).

The survey was used as a major tool for the research, which contained 30 questions about the study that helped to make conclusions about the research hypotheses and research questions. The surveys were prepared in both Turkish language and in English language and distributed to international and Turkish participants.

## **3.2 Research Design**

As mentioned above the survey method was used in this study. The questionnaire contained 30 questions that can be divided into three sections. The first section included the demographic questions that will help to have ideas about participants. In first part there were three questions about gender, age and educational level of participants.

The second part of the questionnaire helped to find out the information about Social Media usage frequencies of participants. There were two questions in the second part, in order to understand the Social Media usage habits of participants. The questionnaire included questions that reports how many hours participants spend on Social Media, and which Social Media do they use mostly.

In the third part of the questionnaire there were total 25 questions that were questioning information about participants' Instagram usage, which pages they are following in Instagram, their approach towards Social Media advertisements, effectiveness of Instagram advertisements, behavioral questions about Instagram advertisements and other specific questions that leads to the purpose of the study.

The first four questions of the third part was a test designed questions that asked questions about how many hours participants spend on Instagram, which kinds of pages participants follow in Instagram, if they are following pages related to fashion and health industry and if they are following any celebrities in Instagram.

Besides having test question types, the second part of the survey also included 21 questions in five level Likert Scale questions. These questions helped researcher to

get brief information about what participants think about Social Media advertisements in general, what they think about advertisements in Instagram, if they find those kinds of advertisements credible and effective, and their approaches to advertisements shared by celebrities. The last two questions (28<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>) questions aimed to understand if participants think Social Media advertisements are persuasive than TV advertisements or not, and if this kinds of advertisements is good tactic or not.

### **3.3 Research Population and Sampling Technique**

This study is about Instagram users' approaches towards Instagram advertisements and their thoughts about credibility of those advertisements. Thus, purposive sampling method was applied for this study.

The study was done with total 300 (and plus 25 participants were in pilot study) participants that use social media, especially Instagram. The participants of the study were both international students of Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) and ordinary citizens of Famagusta city, of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. As the main quality that needed from participants was to be social media, especially Instagram users, researcher decided to use both students and ordinary citizens as targeted participants for research. In order to reach as much people as possible, ordinary citizens of Famagusta city and EMU students were chosen as sample.

The survey part of the research lasted approximately for one and half months, between May and June, 2015, in Spring Semester of 2014-2015 Academic Years. Participants were given questionnaires that contained 30 questions about participants' demographic information (gender, age, education level), social media usage questions about approaches of participants to Instagram advertisements.

As research was done with students and ordinary citizens of Famagusta, the surveys were distributed to participants in different places. The researcher distributed surveys to participants in different parts of campus of EMU, and in different parts of Famagusta (ex. in front of cafes, shopping centers and etc.) that were crowded population to distribute surveys. The researcher also distributed questionnaires through Facebook by sending participants attachment of surveys to the people that use Instagram.

### **3.4 Research Procedures**

Before doing the main study, researcher did the pilot study for the research. The pilot study considered as “a small scale version or trial run in preparation for a majority study” (Polit, Beck & Hungler, 2001, p. 467). Baker (1994) stated that, pilot study is a pre-test of research instrument, that even 10-20% of the sample size can help to enroll the pilot (p182-183).

After a pilot study of the study the researcher did a major study with participants in online (sending survey attachment through Facebook to contacts that use Instagram) and direct circumstances in different parts of Famagusta, including EMU campus.

### **3.5 Data Collection Instrument**

The instrument of this study is a questionnaire that participants filled in order to reach the goals of the study. Questionnaires were distributed both in online circumstances, that researcher sent questionnaires as attachment through Facebook and in direct way in different parts of Famagusta.

### **3.6 Validity and Reliability of Data Collection Instrument**

In order to understand validity, comprehensibleness and wording of the results researcher did a pilot study with 25 participants before the major study, which was

done with total 300 participants. In pilot study 25 students of Communication Faculty was used as participants and they were distributed questionnaires in the faculty to fill, in April, 2015. Approximately 6% people that researcher approached to distribute questionnaires pointed out that they don't use Instagram. As the aim of the pilot study was to test questionnaire that will help to reach the goal of the study by examining hypotheses and finding out answers to research question in major study, the pilot study's results indicated acceptable and effective results for major study. In order to have specific answer one of the questions (question number 5- changed from: "all above" to "other\_\_\_ (please specify)) was changed in major study. The detailed results of the pilot study will be distributed in the next chapter.

For the reliability of the questions factor analysis was done for Likert Scale type questions, which contained 21 questions. According to the results, alpha coefficient of reliability level is 0.864. Considering that reliability coefficient that is above 0.70 is accepted as satisfactory in research studies, it can be said that, 0.864 indicated perfect reliability of data collection instrument.

## **Chapter 4**

### **FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS**

This chapter provides the findings of the two studies; first study that was pilot study with 25 participants with Communication and Media Studies students of Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) and the major study that was done with 300 participants with international students of EMU and ordinary citizens of Famagusta city of TRNC. Then the chapter analyses the hypotheses and research questions presented by the study through the analysis of the findings.

#### **4.1 Survey Pilot Study Findings and Analyses**

The pilot study conducted with 25 participants that were international students of Communication and Media Studies Faculty of the EMU. The pilot study conducted during the April, 2015 in the faculty. The aim for doing the pilot study before the major study was to test comprehensibility, wording, reliability and validity of the questions presented in the survey.

As in the study, in pilot study participants were distributed questionnaire containing 30 questions about participants' demographic backgrounds, social media (SM) utilization, Instagram usages and their approach to social media advertisements, especially towards Instagram advertisements.

According to the output of the pilot study, the demographic background of the participants is as follows. 68% of the participants were female and 32% of the

participants were males. The majority (40%) of the participants were between the ages 22-25, 32% were between the ages 17-21, 16% were between the ages 26-29 and lastly 12% mentioned their age as 30+. 88% of the participants were university students, 8% were master student and 4% were PHD students.

According to the results of the pilot study, 48% of participants spend 5-6 hours in SM daily. To the question which SM channels do you use 32% of participants answered as all of them (meaning Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), interestingly Facebook (28) and Instagram (28) got the same percentage, whereas Twitter mentioned by 12% participants. In order to get specific answer about mostly used SM, researcher changed this question (question number 5) for major study as “Which Social Media channels mostly do you use?” and changed the option “d” (that was all of them) of the stated question to “d) other \_\_\_ (please specify)”.

Study found out that majority of participants spends less than 1 hour (40%) and 1-2 hours (32%) in Instagram daily. According to the results, and 44% of participants mostly follow different kinds of pages and majority of the participants (40%) are interested in different kinds of posts in Instagram (on friends’, celebrities’ and bloggers’ posts). The results indicate that 80% of participants follow celebrities in Instagram, they see advertisement contended posts by celebrities in Instagram (52%), they like seeing this kind of posts by celebrities (40%) and 40% of participants mentioned that they feel curious about the products that their favorite celebrities use.

To the questions about the credibility of Instagram advertisements, 40% of participants mentioned that they trust credibility of Instagram advertisements (32% Undecided), 36% mentioned that they accept celebrity comments about products as

credible and it can convince them to buy that advertised product, 44% mentioned that they would buy products celebrities that they follow promote on Instagram, and 32% mentioned that they already purchased product advertised by celebrity in Instagram.

Participants were asked several questions about comments of other users' below the posts in order to understand effectiveness of the comments on purchasing behaviors. According to the results, participants read (52%) and post (32%) comments below advertisement contended posts in Instagram. According to results, comments below the posts about advertised product in Instagram helps participants (52%) to adopt approach about the product and has effects on participants' purchase decisions (32%). Also, 60% of participants stated that they post their experiences as comments below the advertised product in Instagram, if they already purchased the advertised product.

One of the mostly used and effective advertising tactics used in Instagram, is using bloggers and promote pages through popular pages that have thousands of users. In order to have participants' approach about bloggers, effectiveness their comments and page promoting, the questionnaire also included questions about this issue. Thus, according to pilot survey results, 60% follow bloggers in Instagram, and their positive comments about products can convince participants (40%) to purchase advertised product. Also according to the results, 40% of participants feel curious and check the pages that the people they follow promote in Instagram.

One of the main aims of this study is to examine the effectiveness of SM advertisements, especially Instagram advertisements. Thus, there were some questions related to the issue on pilot survey. 32% of participants are undecided

about the liking seeing advertisements in SM; however, 40% indicated that SM advertisements attract them. Majority of the participants (60%) mentioned that they think SM advertisements are effective because they can read feedback of users about advertised product. Also pilot study indicated that, 40% think that SM advertisements can convince audience better than TV advertisements and accept SM as the best way for companies to communicate with their target audience (56%).

## **4.2 Survey Study**

As mentioned in previous chapter, the main study done with 300 participants that were international students of Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) and ordinary citizens of Famagusta city of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), between the months May and June, 2015, in Spring Semester of 2014-2015 Academic Year.

### **4.2.1 Analysis of Demographic Background of Participants**

The total number of participants is 300, that 166 of them were female (55.3%) and 134 of them were male (44.7%) participants. The majority of participants belong to 22-25 (40%) age group, and followed with 79 participants belonging to 26-29 age group (26.3%). 57 participants belong to 30+ age group with 19% and following with 44 participants that belong to 17-21 age group with 14.7%.

As the survey conducted in EMU campus and different parts of Famagusta city, the education level of participants contains variations. According to statistics, majority of participants has university education (66.7%). 48 participants mentioned their education level as in master level (16%), and 40 participants mentioned their education level as high school (13.3%). Only 12 people of overall participants were represented PHD level (4%).

#### **4.2.2 Social Media Utilization Analysis**

Since this study is based on social media and social media advertisements effects, it is important to know the social media utilization behaviors of participants. Thus, results indicate that, most of the participants 29.3% spend 1-2 hours, 28.3 % of participants spend 5-6 hours and 25.3% spend 3-4 hours in social media. Only 17% of participants spend 7+ hours in social media daily.

The results point out that Facebook is still widely used SM with 44%. Interestingly, according to the results Twitter (28%) and Instagram (28%) has the same user percentage.

#### **4.2.3 Instagram Utilization Analysis**

Questionnaires contained questions about Instagram utilization, in order to get information about Instagram usage behaviors and interest of users on Instagram. Results show that 41% of participants spend no more than 1 hour, and 33% use 1-2 hours in Instagram daily. 21.7% indicated spending 3-4 hours, whereas only 4.3% spend 5-6 hours daily in Instagram.

To the question about what users mostly interested in Instagram, 41% mentioned the answer “all above” which indicates that they are interested on friends’, on celebrities’ and on bloggers’ posts. Importantly, 35.7% mentioned that they only interested on friends’ posts. Moreover, according to results, 16.3% interested on celebrities’ posts and 7% interested on bloggers posts.

There are different kinds of pages for users on Instagram that serves to different interests. However pages that are related to fashion and health industry are one of the mostly followed and faced pages in Instagram. In order to have information about

this issue, researcher asked question to get answer if users follow pages that are related to fashion and health industry or not. The results signifies that majority of participants' mostly follow the pages that are related to fashion and health industry (35.7%). The another majority constituting group of participants mentioned that they have all kinds of pages in their following list, containing, their friends, funny pages, as well as fashion and health related pages (30.3%). 18.7% mentioned that they follow only their friends' and funny pages, whereas only 15.3% prefer following only their friends on Instagram.

#### **4.2.4 Instagram Advertising Analysis**

As discussed in previous chapters celebrities are one of the effective tactics used to attract and convince target audiences. In order to understand if celebrity endorsements can be considered as effective persuasive endorsement in Instagram advertisements, researcher asked several questions that lead to have conclusions about the issue. Thus, 85% of users follow celebrities in Instagram, while only 15% do not follow celebrities on Instagram.

Since this thesis focuses on and examines celebrity endorsement effects in Instagram advertisements, participants were asked several questions about the issue that will lead researcher to find out the conclusions. So, according to research results, 48% of participants agreed, similarly, 40.3% strongly agreed that they see advertisement contented posts by celebrities in Instagram. 8.3% answered as undecided, whereas, 3% disagreed, and only 1 person (0, 3%) mentioned strongly disagree.

Questionnaire also included question that queries audiences' appreciation of advertisement contented posts by celebrities, which is important subject to have

information about. Therefore, according to results, 45.7% agreed and 26.3 % strongly agreed that they like seeing advertisement contented posts by celebrities in Instagram, whereas, 20.7% defined as undecided. Only, 5% disagreed and 2.3% strongly disagreed, which means they don't like seeing advertisement contented posts in Instagram.

One of the important data needed to obtain from the results is to understand the credibility of Instagram advertisements. The results indicate that, majority of people, 34.7% agreed and 21.7% strongly agreed, signifying, they trust the credibility of advertisements in Instagram. Importantly, 29.7% mentioned undecided, while, 11% disagreed, and 3% strongly disagreed, meaning they don't trust the credibility of Instagram advertisings.

The success of advertisement campaign can be understood by purchase behaviors of target audience. That is to say, if target get persuaded and buy products, or have intention to buy product, this means that the advertiser choose right way to communicate with target audience. Thus, in order to question the effectiveness and persuasive effects of Instagram advertisements, researcher asked questions that will help to find out if people would buy or already bought a product advertised on Instagram by celebrity. And results conclude that, 43% agreed and 11.7% strongly agreed that they would buy products promoted by celebrities in Instagram, while, 13.3% disagreed and 1% strongly disagreed about the issue. Also, 31% remained as undecided.

The question that aimed to question that if participants' already purchased product advertised in Instagram, 46% agreed (and 17.7%) that they already purchased

product advertised by celebrity in Instagram. 18.7% disagreed as well as 5.3% strongly disagreed, meaning they didn't purchase any product. 37 participants (12.3%) remained undecided.

Curiosity can be considered as one of the effective element of effective advertisement. Thus, in order to understand if people feel curios about the products that their favorite celebrities use (that leads them to purchase the same product) participants were asked a specific question about the issue. The results show that, 47.7% agree and 18% strongly agree that they feel curious about the products that their favorite celebrities use. 16.7% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed with this statement, whereas, 13.7% preferred to answer as undecided.

The main aim of advertisings no matter where it has been presented is to attract the attention of target, inform, persuade and make them to purchase advertised product or service. Each of these stages is important, while one of the most important stages can be considered as "the source" of the message. Gumus (2014) states in his book that, person that is a respected professional, or generally accepted reliable person, can increase the credibility of the advertisement if these kinds of people used as sources in the advertisements (p33). Also according to Elden (2009) using a professional or a famous person that accepted by community as credible can be effective item in terms of acceptance of the message credibility of advertisements (Gumus, 2014, p.33). So, in order to examine the credibility of the Instagram advertisements participants were asked a specific question about the issue. Results show that majority of participants (52%) accept celebrity comments about particular product in Instagram as credible and it can even convince them to buy that product.

17% of participants strongly agreed with this idea, while, 13.3% disagreed, 3.3% strongly disagreed, and 14.3% defined as undecided. Results show that majority of participants (52%) accept celebrity comments about particular product in Instagram as credible and it can even convince them to buy that product. 17% of participants strongly agreed with this idea, while, 13.3% disagreed, 3.3% strongly disagreed, and 14.3% defined as undecided.

Comments can be considered as one of the useful features of the social media advertisements that make audience able to write or read feedbacks of other people about the product. In order to question this statement, participants were asked to answer some questions related to this subject. 41.7% of overall participants specified that they agree with the idea that, social media advertisements are more effective because it enables them to read comments (feedback) of other users about advertised product. Similarly, 22.3% also strongly agreed with the subject, however, 11.7% disagreed, 3.7 % strongly disagreed. Only 20.7% defined themselves as undecided about the subject. There were some more specific questions about the issue, in questionnaire that lead researcher to more specific answers. Thus, according to results, 42.3% of overall participants read comments below the advertised posts in Instagram (17% strongly agreed, 20.7% undecided, 12.7% disagreed, 7.3% strongly disagreed), but only 31% of them post comments below advertised products (8.3% strongly agreed, 17.7% undecided, 24% disagreed, 19% strongly disagreed). In the case of people who already bought any advertised product in Instagram, only 29% post their experience below the advertised product, where 38% prefer to be undecided (7.3% agree, 20.3% disagree, and 5.3% strongly disagree).

For the purpose of finding out if the comments below advertised products have any effects on peoples' purchase decisions or not, participants were asked two questions about the issue. So, according to majority of attendants that are 41% (123) comments below advertised product in Instagram helps people adopt approach about advertised product. Also, 19.7% people strongly agreed with this idea, whereas, 23.7% remained as undecided. Only, 8% of attendants disagreed and 7.7% strongly disagreed with the statement.

Also, to the question about if comments have any purchase decision effects on people or not, majority of participants answered either agree (40%) or strongly agree (23.3%). Surprisingly, "undecided" option constituted the same percentage with the strongly agree option that is, 23.3% (70). Only 8.3% of participants disagreed with statement, whereas 5% answered as strongly disagree.

#### **4.2.5 Bloggers**

One of the purposes of this study is to explore the other persuasive tactics, besides using celebrities as persuasive element, used in Instagram advertisings. It is not secret that, nowadays bloggers own unique place in marketing, and the reason for this is that, people themselves choose which blogger to follow, to trust and adopt their suggestions. In Instagram also bloggers take active part by promoting or suggesting different kinds of products or services serving to different interests. The dictionary definition of blogger specified as "a website containing a writer's or group of writers' own experiences, observations, opinions, etc. and often having images and links to other websites" (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/blogger>).

In order to explore the importance of bloggers in Instagram advertisements participants asked to fill particular questions about the subject. Thus, according to results, majority of participants follow bloggers in Instagram (46.7%). The question that explores if the positive comments of bloggers on Instagram about products can convince audience to purchase advertised products or not, majority of participants agreed that they can be convinced by bloggers' comments and buy advertised product (45.7%). Also, 21.7% strongly agreed, whereas 24.7% mentioned as undecided. Only 7.7% disagreed and 0.3% (1) strongly disagreed with question.

As described in the definition of the word blogger, most of time bloggers that introduce any product or service in their pages by giving information or their own experiences, they promote a page of that particular company. Thus promoting pages of a brand or a company is another tactic used in Instagram advertisements. So, participants answered a particular question about this issue. The results show that, most of the participants (57.3%) agree and 14.7% strongly agree that they feel curious and check the pages that people they follow promote in Instagram. Also, 11.3% chose undecided option for this question. Surprisingly the percentage of people who disagreed (11%) with this question showed the same percentage with people who preferred undecided option. Only 5.3% strongly disagreed, meaning they don't feel curious about the pages that people they follow promote in Instagram.

#### **4.2.6 Social Media Advertising Analysis**

While doing social media advertising based study, it is crucial to obtain information about people's approach about SM and Instagram advertisements. To the question if SM advertisements attract audience, 40.7% of participants answered as agree (17.3%

strongly agree), meaning, SM advertisements attract them. 26% remained as undecided, while, 9.3% disagreed, and 6% strongly disagreed.

One of the important questions of questionnaire was, if people like see advertisements in SM or not. To this question, 33.3% answered as disagree (following 15.7% strongly disagree) with the idea that they don't like seeing advertisements in SM (meaning they like seeing ads in SM), where 23.7% mentioned as undecided, also, 17.7% agreed that they don't like seeing advertisements in SM (9.7% strongly disagreed).

To the question if advertisements that appear in newsfeed of Instagram irritates participants, majority of the participants (43%) disagreed and 12% strongly disagreed, meaning the advertisements that appear in the newsfeed of their Instagram page doesn't irritate them. 43% of participants reported their approach as undecided. Also, 12.7% agreed and only 7.3% strongly agreed that they feel irritated by the advertisements in their newsfeed of Instagram page.

As discussed in previous chapter (Chapter2), social media advertising is now considered as a new hybrid for marketing mix, which means that SM is also "official" tool for advertising. In this case, it is important to have notions of audience about what they think about SM advertisings in comparing it to traditional TV advertisements. According to results, great majority of the participants (36.3% agree, 28% strongly agree) agree that SM advertisings convince audience better than TV advertisements. Only 23% of participants expressed themselves as undecided, while 8% disagreed and 4.7% strongly disagreed about SM advertisements' convenience of people better than TV advertisements.

The last question of survey was about; if people agree or disagree that SM is the best way for companies to communicate with the target audience. The results constitute important outcomes. Thus, great majority of participants (49.3% agreed and 27.7% strongly agreed) agreed that SM is best way for companies in communicating with target audience. 18.7% expressed themselves as undecided about the issue, while very few percentage (2.7% disagree, 1.7% strongly disagree) disagreed with statement, meaning they don't think SM can be considered as the best way for companies to reach target audiences.

### **4.3 Findings**

Results of the study helped researcher to examine and find answers for the research questions and hypotheses argued by researcher. This section examines and evaluates the research questions and hypotheses results derived from the survey results that compared by T-Test. The values attached to the choices of Likert Scale type of questions is as follows: 1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree, 3-Undecided, 4-Disagree and finally 5-Strongly Disagree. Balci's (2004) suggestions were used in scale division of five points Likert Scale questions for this study: 1-1.79 Strongly Agree, 1.80-2.59 Agree, 2.60-3.39 Undecided, 3.40-4.19 Disagree and finally, 4.20-5.0 Strongly Disagree.

**RQ1:** Beside using famous people as persuasive element which other tactics used by advertisers to get attention and persuade audiences in Instagram?

As mentioned in previous chapters there are lots of different tactics to make advertisings more attractive and persuasive depending on the channel that advertisement appears. In case of Instagram obviously the most effective tactic to persuade audience is to use celebrities as advertising endorsers. As the results

indicate, 85% of participants follow celebrities in Instagram, 48% (plus 40.3% strongly agree) see advertisement contented posts by celebrities in Instagram and 45.7% like seeing advertisement contented posts by the celebrities they follow in Instagram, because, people feel curious the products that their favorite celebrities use (47.7%).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of participants who follow celebrities in Instagram

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percen	Cumulative Percent
Yes	255	85.0	85.0	85.0
No	45	15.0	15.0	100.0
Total	300	100.0	100.0	

Table 2. Means of participnats who follow celebrities in Instagram

Statement	Mean	Attitude
Do you follow celebrities in Instagram?	1.15	SA

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of users who face advertisement contented posts by celebrities in Instagram

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	121	40.3	40.3	40.3
Agree	144	48.0	48.0	88.3
Undecided	25	8.3	8.3	96.7
Disagree	9	3.0	3.0	99.7
Strongly Disagree	1	.3	.3	100.0
Total	300	100.0	100.0	

Table 4. Means of the participants who face advertisement contented posts by celebrities in Instagram

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Attitude</b>
I see advertisement contented posts posted by celebrities in Instagram.	1.75	SA

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of users who like seeing advertisement contented posts by celebrities in Instagram

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	79	26.3	26.3	26.3
Agree	137	45.7	45.7	72.0
Undecided	62	20.7	20.7	92.7
Disagree	15	5.0	5.0	97.7
Strongly Disagree	7	2.3	2.3	100.0
Total	300	100.0	100.0	

Table 6. Means of the users who like seeing advertisement contented posts by celebrities they follow in Instagram

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Attitude</b>
I like seeing advertisement contented posts by the celebrities that I follow in Instagram.	2.11	A

Tables above prove that people like following celebrities in Instagram, they see and like seeing advertisement contented posts by the celebrities that they follow in Instagram.

This study wants to reveal what are the other advertisement tactics used in Instagram to attract and persuade audiences. The results of the study specify that one of the other effective tactics used by advertisers in Instagram is using bloggers. Results indicate that majority of the participants that is 45.7% (140) follow bloggers in Instagram. The question that examines the effectiveness of the comments of bloggers about product in audiences' purchase behaviors, indicate important results. That is to say, 45.7% agree and 21.7% strongly agree that positive comments of bloggers can convince participants to purchase the advertised product.

Table 7. Effectiveness of positive comments of bloggers on participants' purchase behaviors

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	65	21.7	21.7	21.7
Agree	137	45.7	45.7	67.3
Undecided	74	24.7	24.7	92.0
Disagree	23	7.7	7.7	99.7
Strongly Disagree	1	.3	.3	100.0
Total	300	100.0	100.0	

Table 8. Means of effectiveness of positive comments of bloggers on participants' purchase behaviors

Statement	Mean	Attitude
Positive comments of the bloggers on Instagram about products can convince me to purchase advertised products.	2.19	A

As can be seen from the Table 8, means of effectiveness of positive comments of bloggers on participants' purchase behaviors is defined as M= 2.19, which proves that positive comments of bloggers have persuasive effects on audience, that

majority of the participants agreed with the statement. Thus it can be concluded that using bloggers to persuade audiences in Instagram is useful tactic.

Also the other effective tactic that used in Instagram is sharing the pages of a particular brand to promote through the pages that have mass followers. Questionnaire included a question that helped to examine the effectiveness of this tactic. Thus, results show that, majority of the participants feel curious about the pages that the people they follow promote, and check that pages:

Table 9. Descriptive statistics of users who feel curious and check the pages that people they follow promote in Instagram

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	44	14.7	14.7	14.7
Agree	172	57.3	57.3	72.0
Undecided	34	11.3	11.3	83.3
Disagree	34	11.3	11.3	94.7
Strongly Disagree	16	5.3	5.3	100.0
Total	300	100.0	100.0	

Table 10. Means of users who feel curious and check the pages that people they follow promote in Instagram

Statement	Mean	Attitude
I feel curious and check the pages that people I follow promote in Instagram.	2.35	A

Table 10 indicates that means of users who feel curious and check the pages that people they follow promote in Instagram is  $M=2.35$ , thus it could be concluded that,

sharing pages is another effective tactic in getting attention and persuading audiences.

So, as the results of the study indicate, besides using celebrities as persuasive tactic in Instagram advertisements, using bloggers is also effective tactic that convinces audiences to purchase product. Also, sharing the page of a particular brand (relatively for small scope businesses) through the pages that have mass followers creates curiosity and awareness among followers that causes to checking and following the promoted page.

**RQ2 (a):** Do the comments of other users below the advertised posts in Instagram have any purchase effects on audience?

Features of Instagram are to share photos or 15 second videos with followers, and like or comment on the posted photos or videos. In order to understand participants' approaches to comments and effects of comments below the advertised products on participants' purchase decisions, researcher asked several questions. According to research results, most of the participants read comments below the advertisement contented posts (42.3%), posts comments below the posts (31%) and agree that comments about the advertised product helps them to adopt approach about the product (41%). As can be understood from the results, comments below advertisement contented posts are important for participants, because comments help them to adopt approach about the product. Also, in one question (question number 12) that questioned can social media advertisements be accepted as more effective because of the comments that enables users to get feedback of other users that already purchased advertised product, majority of the participants, 41.7% agreed

(17.3% strongly agreed) that causes of social media advertisements effectiveness can be comment option that enables them to read feedback of other users about the advertised product. In the case of our research question, as the table below shows, important percentage of participants (40% agree, 23.3% strongly agree) agree that comments in Instagram has positive effects on their purchase decisions. Thus, considering all the statistical results of the participants above, researcher conclude that, yes comments below the advertisement posts have purchase effects on audience.

**RQ2 (b):** Is there any significant difference between female and male participants' purchase decisions from comments below advertised product in Instagram?

In order to get answer to this research question, Independent Sample T-Test was used. The results of the T-Test are as follows:

Table 11. Independent Sample T-Test Statistics of effectiveness of comments on participants' purchase decisions in terms of gender

Specify your gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	
Comments below the posts in Instagram has positive effects on my purchase decisions about the advertised product	Female	166	2,1084	1,02113	,07926
	Male	134	2,5746	1,08563	,09378

Table 12. Independent Sample T-Test Statistics of effectiveness of comments on participants' purchase decisions in terms of gender

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variance assumed	2,685	,102	-3,822	298	,000	-,46619	,12199	-,70626	-,22613
Equal variance not assumed			-3,797	276,945	,000	-,46619	,12279	-,70791	-,22448

As can be seen from the table 4.7, there is significant difference in participants' gender  $F=2.10$   $SD=1.02$  and  $M=2.57$   $SD=1.08$ . As can be understood from the table,  $p>05$  ( $0,10>05$ ) was observed, which means that there are significant difference between female and male participants' purchase decisions from comments below advertised product.

**RQ3:** Does the positive comments of bloggers about products in Instagram convinces audience to purchase that product?

Questionnaire included specific question that leads researcher to find answer to this research question. Thus according to the results, 45.7% of overall participants agree, also following 21.7% strongly agree that positive comments of bloggers can convince them to purchase advertised product. Also as results indicate, 7.7 % disagree while 0.3% strongly disagree with the statement. 24.7% of participants neither agreed nor disagreed with statement by preferring mention undecided option.

Table 13. Convincing effects of positive comments of bloggers about the product on participants

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	65	21.7	21.7	21.7
Agree	137	45.7	45.7	67.3
Undecided	74	24.7	24.7	92.3
Disagree	23	7.7	7.7	99.7
Strongly Disagree	1	.3	3.3	100.0
Total	300	100.0	100.0	

Table 14. Means of convincing effects of positive comments of bloggers about the product on participants

Statement	Mean	Attitude
Positive comments of the bloggers on Instagram about products can convince me to purchase advertised products.	2.19	A

Thus, as results conclude, majority of the participants agreed that positive comments of bloggers about the product can convince them to purchase that product (M=2.19), researcher comes to the conclusion that the answer for research question 3 is yes, positive comments of bloggers about the product in Instagram can convince audience to purchase that product.

**H1:** Social Media advertising has persuasive effect on audience

For establishing if there is any persuasive effect on audience, participants filled some questions that will help to examine hypothesis. After evaluating data, researcher deduced that according to participants, social media is the best way for companies to communicate with the target audience (49.3%), and social media advertisements attract their attention (41.7%).

Table 15. Participants' approach if social media is the best way for companies to communicate with their target audience

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	83	27.7	27.7	27.7
Agree	148	49.3	49.3	77.0
Undecided	56	18.7	18.7	95.7
Disagree	8	2.7	2.7	98.3
Strongly Disagree	5	1.7	1.7	100.0
Total	300	100.0	100.0	

Table 16. Means of participants' approach if social media is the best way for companies to communicate with their target audience

Statement	Mean	Attitude
I think Social Media is the best way for companies to communicate with their target audience.	2.01	A

Table 17. Social Media advertisements' attraction of participants

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	67	22.3	22.3	22.3
Agree	125	41.7	41.7	64.0
Undecided	62	20.7	20.7	84.7
Disagree	35	11.7	11.7	96.7
Strongly Disagree	11	3.7	3.7	100.0
Total	300	100.0	100.0	

Table 18. Means of Social Media advertisements' attraction of participants

Statement	Mean	Attitude
Social media advertisements attract me.	2.46	A

After carefully evaluating the results that mentioned above, Table 16, M=2.01 and Table 18, M=2.46, researcher concludes that, H1 is supported; meaning, Social Media advertising has persuasive effect on audience.

**H2: Social Media advertisements are more effective than TV advertisements**

It is one of the aims of the study is to reveal audiences' approach about SM and TV advertisements. Thus, participants were asked a question, examining if they agree that SM advertisements can convince audience better than TV advertisements. Results of the study show that, great majority of the participants agree with this statement. In other words, 36.3% agree and 28% strongly agree that SM advertisements convince audience better than TV advertisements. However, very small portion of the participants, 8% disagree and 4.7% strongly disagree with this statement. At the same time 23% defined themselves as undecided.

Table 19. Participants' approach toward the notion that convincing effects of SM is better than TV advertisements

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	84	28.0	28.0	28.0
Agree	109	36.3	36.3	64.3
Undecided	69	23.0	23.0	87.3
Disagree	24	8.0	8.0	95.7
Strongly Disagree	14	4.7	4.7	100.0
Total	300	100.0	100.0	

Table 20. Means of participants' approach toward the notion that convincing effects of SM is better than TV advertisements

Statement	Mean	Attitude
Social media advertisings can convince audience better than TV advertisements.	2.25	A

So, as can be understood from the charts given above, majority of the participants agreed with the statement that social media advertisements can convince audience better than TV advertisements (M= 2.25). This result allows researcher conclude that H2 is supported. In other words, results showed that, participants think that Social Media advertisements are more effective than TV advertisements.

**H3:** Instagram advertisements' purchase effects differs between genders

After establishing that SM advertisements have persuasive effects on audience, researcher wanted to understand if these effects differ from gender to gender. Thus in order to examine these effects between genders cross-tabulation was used.

Table 21. Independent Sample T-Test Statistics of product purchase willingness in terms of gender

Specify your gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	
I would buy products Promoted by the celebrities that I follow in Instagram	Female	166	2,5120	,89941	,06981
	Male	134	2,4627	,90659	,07832

Table 22. Independent Sample T-Test Statistics of product purchase willingness in terms of gender

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means								
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Equal variance assumed	,187	,666	,471	298	,638	,04936	,10482	-.15693	-,25565	
Equal variance not assumed			,470	283,800	,638	,04936	,10491	-,15714	-,25587	

As can be seen from the Table 4.12, there is significant difference in participants' gender  $F=2.51$   $SD=0.89$  and  $M=2.46$   $SD=0.90$ . Table indicates that,  $p>05$  was observed. Thus according to the results of Independent T-Test, significant difference between genders in terms of purchase effects towards the products promoted by celebrities was observed. The results indicate that Instagram advertisements' purchase effects differ between genders.

**H4:** There is difference between genders in Instagram advertisements credibility

In order to get the percentages of differences between genders in accepting Instagram as credible Independent Sample T-Test method was used. Table 4.15 indicates that, there is difference in participants' gender,  $M=2.32$   $SD=0.89$  and  $M=2.47$   $SD=1, 18$ . The results indicate that, there is significant difference in genders in Instagram credibility. Thus, H4 is supported.

Table 23. Independent Sample T-Test statistics of participants' credibility of advertisements in Instagram in terms of gender

Specify your gender		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
I trust the credibility of The advertisements In Instagram	Female	166	2,3253	,89590	,06953
	Male	134	2,4701	1,18696	,10254

Table 24. Independent Sample T-Test statistics of participants' credibility of advertisements in Instagram in terms of gender

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means								
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Equal variance assumed	28,257	,000	-1,204	298	,230	-,14485	,12031	-,38161	-,09191	
Equal variance not assumed			-1,169	242,171	,243	-,14485	,12389	-,38889	-,09919	

**H5:** Audience accepts the celebrity comments in Instagram as credible about promoted product and it convince them to purchase that product

Results helped researcher to understand that 52% of participants agree and 17% strongly agree that they accept celebrity comments as credible that convinces them to purchase advertised product. At the same time 13.3% disagreed following 3.3% that strongly disagreed with issue, meaning that positive comments of celebrities doesn't convince them to buy product. Also, 14.3% neither agreed nor disagreed with statement and expressed themselves as undecided.

Table 25. Celebrity comments' effectiveness in convincing participants to purchase advertised product

	Frequenct	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	51	17.0	17.0	17.0
Agree	156	52.0	52.0	69.0
Undecided	43	14.3	14.3	82.3
Disagree	40	13.3	13.3	96.7
Strongly Disagree	10	3.3	3.3	100.0
Total	300	100.0	100.0	

Table 26. Means of celebrity comments' effectiveness in convincing participants to purchase advertised product

Statement	Mean	Attitude
I accept the celebrity comments in Instagram about product as credible and it can convince me to buy advertised product.	2.34	A

As can be understood from the results that is  $M=2.34$ ,  $H_5$  is supported, meaning, celebrity comments accepted by participants as credible and it convinces them to purchase advertised product.

**H6:** Comments below the advertisement contended posts in Instagram are important for adopting approaches toward products

Results indicate that majority of participants (41%) agree that comments below the posts in Instagram helps them to adopt approach about product. Like majority of the participants, 19.7% strongly agree that comments are important for adopting approach about product. Meanwhile, 8% disagreed and 7.7% strongly disagreed with the statement, whereas 23.7% classified themselves as undecided.

Table 27. Effectiveness of comments' about adopting approach toward products in Instagram

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	59	19.7	19.7	19.7
Agree	123	41.0	41.0	60.7
Undecided	71	23.7	23.0	84.3
Disagree	24	8.0	8.0	92.3
Strongly Disagree	23	7.7	7.7	100.0
Total	300	100.0	100.0	

Table 28. Means of effectiveness of comments' about adopting approach toward products in Instagram

Statement	Mean	Attitude
Comments in Instagram about the advertised products help me to adopt approach about the product.	2.43	A

According to results that examine hypothesis 6, majority of the participants (M=2.43) agree with the idea that comments below the posts in Instagram have positive effects on their purchase decisions about the advertised product.

Table 29. Effectiveness of comments in Instagram about purchase decisions of participants

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	70	23.3	23.3	23.3
Agree	120	40.0	40.0	63.3
Undecided	70	23.3	23.3	86.7
Disagree	25	8.3	8.3	95.0
Strongly Disagree	15	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	300	100.0	100.0	

Table 30. Means of Effectiveness of comments in Instagram about purchase decisions of participants

Statement	Mean	Attitude
Comments below the posts in Instagram have positive effects on my purchase decisions about the advertised product.	2.31	A

As the results indicate (Table 28, M=2.43 and Table 30, M=2.31), researcher concludes that H6 is supported, meaning, comments below the advertisement contented posts in Instagram have positive effects in adopting approach and purchase decisions of audience.

## **Chapter 5**

### **CONCLUSION**

This chapter contains three parts. The first part includes the summary of the entire study. The second part includes conclusion drawn from the study and research questions and hypotheses. The third part contains interpretations of the study. And finally the last part contains recommendations of researcher for further research.

#### **5.1 Summary of the Study**

This study aimed to highlight the importance of SM, especially Instagram as advertising tool, its role in peoples' purchasing behaviors, tactics that been used in order to persuade people in SM advertisements and people's approaches towards advertisement contented posts by celebrities.

For this study quantitative research method was used. Participants were distributed questionnaire that included 30 questions that helped to understand demographic background of the participants, Social media usage frequencies of participants, Instagram usage habits and participants' approaches towards SM advertisements. Questionnaire included 21 Likert Scale questions.

As this study aimed to analyze Instagram users' approaches towards Instagram advertisements and their thoughts about the credibility of those advertisements, for this study purposive sampling method was used. Totally 300 participants participated in this study. Participants of the study were both international students of Eastern

Mediterranean University (EMU) and ordinary citizen of Famagusta city of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC).

The questionnaires distributed to participants in both different parts of EMU campus and in different parts of Famagusta city. Also, researcher reached some participants through Facebook by attaching and sending the surveys to people that use Instagram. The surveys were distributed to participants between the dates May and June 2015, in Spring Semester of 2014-2015 Academic Year.

As mentioned above researcher did a pilot study with 25 participants in order to examine the wording, reliability and validity of results before major study that was done with 300 participants. The pilot study's results indicated acceptable and effective results for major study. In order to have specific answer one of the questions (question number 5- changed from: "all above" to "other\_\_\_ (please specify)) was changed in major study.

## **5.2 Conclusions Drawn From the Study**

For this study quantitative method was used. 300 participants were distributed questionnaires containing 30 questions. So, the conclusion of the study is as follows:

The data showed that majority of the participants were females with 55.3%. Males constituted only 44.7%. Majority of the participants belonged to 22-25 age group, followed by 26-29 age group. 30+ age group represented by 19%, whereas only 14.7% of participants belonged to 17-21 age groups. Education level of the majority of participants has university level education (66.7%).

Results concluded that, majority of the participants (29.3%) spend 1-2 hours in a day in social media, following 28.3 % spend 5-6 hours and 25.3% spend 3-4 hours daily in social media. Only 17% of overall participants spend 7+ hours in social media daily. The research show that 44% of participants use Facebook mostly, where as Twitter and Instagram got the same percentage that is 28% for each one.

About the Instagram utilization habits of participants, 41% mentioned that they spend no more than 1 hour in Instagram daily. Another majority, 33% mentioned that they spend 1-2 hours in a day in Instagram; following 21.7% mentioned spending 3-4 hours daily in Instagram. 4.3% defined themselves using Instagram as 5-6 hours in a day.

The research revealed that people mostly interested in all kinds of pages in Instagram, including friends' posts, celebrities' posts and bloggers' posts (41%). 35,7% of participants seemed to be interested on friends' posts, 16.3% interested on celebrities posts and only 7% interested on bloggers' posts. Researcher asked participants if they follow any pages related to fashion and health industry and 35.7% of participants said that most of the pages that they follow are related to fashion and health industry.

One of the purposes of the study was to reveal the effectiveness of celebrities' advertisement contented posts, thus, participants were asked several questions that led study to examine the hypotheses and research questions. So, the results show that 85% of participants follow celebrities in Instagram, 48% agreed (40.3% strongly agreed) that they see advertisement contented posts by celebrities in Instagram. Researcher asked if they like this kind of advertisements or not, majority of

participants agreed that they like seeing advertisement contented posts by celebrities in Instagram (45.7% agreed and 26.3% strongly agreed) and they feel curious about the products that their favorite celebrities use (47.7% agreed and 18% strongly agreed).

To have idea if the advertisements posted by celebrities can convince participants to purchase it, question that applied this, concluded that, 43% of participants agree that they would buy product promoted by celebrity in Instagram. In order to have concrete information if participants already purchased any product advertised in Instagram by celebrity or not, researcher asked question and got the answer that 46% of participants already purchased a product advertised by celebrity in Instagram.

The research shows that, participants believe credibility of Instagram advertisements, and like seeing advertisements in social media. To the question if social media advertisements attract them or not majority of the participants agreed that social media advertisements attract them (40.7%). To the question if advertisements that appear on newsfeed of participants irritates them or not, majority of participants answered that they don't feel irritated.

Also, research indicates that majority of participants think that social media advertisings can convince audience better than TV advertisements (36.3%). Researcher deduced from the results that participants think that social media is the best for companies to communicate with their target audience (49.3%).

In order to understand why participants think social advertisements are more effective than other channels, results showed that participants think that because of

the ability of reading feedback of other users about advertised product they agree that social media advertisements are effective. Also, results of other questions conclude that comments are important for adopting approach about advertised product.

Thus, according to the results, majority of the participants (42.3%) read comments and post comments below the advertisement contented posts in Instagram (31%). To the question if participants write their experience if they already purchased any advertised product below the posts, surprisingly most of the participants defined themselves as undecided (38%).

Questionnaire also included question that helps to conclude if comments have any positive effects on purchase decisions of participants or not, results show that, comments about the advertised post helps participants to adopt approach about the product and also comments have positive effects on participants' purchase decisions about the advertised product. Results also show that, participants accept celebrity comments about the product as credible and comments of celebrities can convince them to purchase the advertised product.

One of the purposes of the study was to reveal the tactics used in Instagram advertisements besides using celebrities. Results indicate that, majority of the participants follow bloggers in Instagram (46.7%). Also, according to the results, positive comments of the bloggers about the product can convince them to purchase the advertised product (52%). While scrolling down in Instagram it possible to face the advertisement contented pages promoted by another pages that has mass followers. This tactic mostly used by small scope businesses. In order to understand the effectiveness of this tactic, researcher asked question about the issue, and found

out that, majority of participants (57.3%) feel curious about the pages that people they follow promote and check that pages.

So as can be understood, results indicate that besides using celebrities as persuasive element, another effective tactic used in Instagram is using bloggers and promoting pages through the pages that have mass followers.

### **5.3 Interpretation of the Findings**

From overall results it could be understood that, SM advertisements especially Instagram advertisements are effective for people, and they have power to attract and persuade audiences better than traditional TV advertisements. Also it can be understood that, audience like following celebrities in Instagram and feel curious to know which products the celebrities they follow use. This curiosity leads advertisers to promote their products through celebrities in less “advertising” sense, pretending that it is the ordinary post of celebrity with their followers. Majority of the participants of study agreed that they see this kind of posts by the celebrities that they follow and they like seeing these kinds of posts in Instagram. It can be concluded that people trust the credibility of the advertisements in Instagram and they are willing to purchase products that celebrities they follow promote in Instagram.

Another important factor that study concluded is comments. It can be said that, comments below the posts by other users or comments of bloggers and celebrities also play important role in people’s purchase decisions. Even, participants agreed that the factor that makes SM advertisements more effective is because they can read feedback of other users about advertised product in SM. It is important to mention

that people accept the comments of celebrities and bloggers as credible and it has affective impact on their purchase decisions.

To sum up, conclusions drawn from the analysis for examining hypotheses and research questions show that, Social Media advertisements have persuasive effects on audience. Results indicate that Instagram advertisements have more persuasive effects on male users than on female users. Audience accepts Social Media advertisements as more effective than TV advertisements. Female users accept Instagram advertisements are more credible than male users. Research revealed that comments below the advertisement contented posts have purchase effects on audience and comments below the advertisement contented posts are important for adopting approaches toward products. Research also showed that there significant difference between male and female users purchase decisions from comments below the advertised product. Audience accepts celebrity comments as credible about promoted product and this convince them to purchase that product. Research also concluded that beside using celebrities as persuasive element, using bloggers and promoting pages through pages that have mass followers (relatively for brands with small scope) are another tactics used by companies.

#### **5.4 Recommendations for Further Research**

There is no doubt that importance of technology gets an irreplaceable place in people's everyday lives, as it gets serving different features that facilitates lots of things for people. One of the widely used and world-acclaimed features of technology is Internet, which introduced lots of features that changed everyday habits (habits like shopping, communicating, education and etc.) of people in all over the world. Probably among the features of Internet, Social Media can be considered

as more indispensable element that people get involved and get “addicted” day by day. Beyond being communication and entertainment tool for users, Social Media also started being used as advertising tool by advertisers that is as effective (and even more effective as this study showed) as traditional advertising tools.

As it gets popular, lots of new social media networks start to appear in Internet, that some of them vanish in the competition in the industry and some of them reach millions of users in short period of time. One of the successful social media networks that reached millions of users in a very short period of time is Instagram, which is getting being in the center of interest of scholars, advertisers, companies and etc.

In terms of communication and advertising, Instagram is getting to be one of the effective tools for advertisers to reach their target audience, as the target audience uses it continuously and enjoyably. Thus, as this research suggests it is important to examine Instagram from advertising and communication tool perspective, using quantitative and qualitative methods to reveal different information in terms of its effectiveness. The information that could be revealed can be, is there any difference in advertisement effectiveness or credibility of Instagram in different countries of the world. Or if people would prefer to see advertisements in traditional media channels rather than in Instagram according to diverse countries of the world. Or it can be found out companies approach to social media advertisements, especially Instagram advertisements, which companies use Instagram advertisements and which tactics they use using observational analysis.

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## **APPENDICES**

## **Appendix A: English Version of the Survey**

**This research survey is part of the master thesis of the student of Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, aiming to understand the effectiveness of the social media advertisements on social media users.**

**1. Specify your gender**

- a) Female                      b) Male

**2. Specify your age**

- a) 17-21              b) 22-25              c) 26-29              d) 30+

**3. Your education level**

- a) Secondary school      b) High school              c) University      d) Masters      e) PHD

***❖ If you are using social media channels, please answer the questions below***

**4. How many hours do you spend daily in social media?**

- a) 1-2      b) 3-4              c) 5-6              d) 7+

**5. Which social media channels mostly do you use?**

- a) Facebook      b) Twitter      c) Instagram      d) other (please specify\_\_\_\_\_)

***❖ If you are you using Instagram, please answer the following questions***

**6. How many hours do you spend in Instagram daily?**

- a) Not more than 1 hour      b) 1-2      c) 3-4              d) 5-6              e) 7+

**7. What are you mostly interested in Instagram?**

- a) On friends' posts  
b) On celebrities' posts  
c) On bloggers' posts  
d) All above

**8.** Do you follow any pages that are related to fashion and health industry on Instagram?

a) Yes, most of the pages that I follow are related to fashion and health industry

b) No, I prefer following my friends' posts only

c) I follow only my friends' posts and funny pages

d) I have all kinds of pages in my following list

**9.** Do you follow celebrities on Instagram?

a) Yes

b) No

Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>10.</b> I don't like seeing advertisements in social media					
<b>11.</b> Social media advertisements attract me					
<b>12.</b> I think social media ads are more effective, because I can read feedback of the users about the advertised product					
<b>13.</b> I see advertisement contented posts posted by celebrities in Instagram					
<b>14.</b> I like seeing advertisement contented posts by the celebrities that I follow in Instagram					
<b>15.</b> I trust the credibility of the advertisements in Instagram					
<b>16.</b> I would buy products promoted by the celebrities that I follow in Instagram					
<b>17.</b> I read the comments posted below the advertisement contented posts in Instagram					
<b>18.</b> I post comments below the advertised contented posts in Instagram					
<b>19.</b> Comments in Instagram about the advertised products helps me to adopt approach about the product					
<b>20.</b> Comments below the posts in Instagram has positive effects on my purchase decisions about the advertised product					
Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>21.</b> I purchased product advertised by the celebrity in Instagram					

<b>22.</b> I feel curious about the products that my favorite celebrities use					
<b>23.</b> I feel curious and check the pages that people I follow promote in Instagram					
<b>24.</b> I Follow bloggers on Instagram					
<b>25.</b> Positive comments of the bloggers on Instagram about products can convince me to purchase advertised products					
<b>26.</b> I accept the celebrity comments in Instagram about product as credible and it can convince me to buy advertised product					
<b>27.</b> Advertisements that appears on newsfeed of my Instagram account irritates me					
<b>28.</b> Social media advertisings can convince audience better than TV advertisements					
<b>29.</b> If I already purchased a product I comment my experience below the advertised post in Instagram					
<b>30.</b> I think Social Media is the best way for companies to communicate with their target audience					

## Appendix B: Turkish Version of the Survey

**Bu araştırma İletişim ve Medya Çalışmaları bölümü yüksek lisans öğrencisi tarafından yapıp, sosyal medya reklamlarının sosyal medya kullanıcıları üzerindeki etkilerini öğrenmeyi amaçlamaktadır.**

1. Cinsiyetinizi belirtiniz

- a) Kadın                      B) Erkek

2. Yaşınızı belirtiniz

- a) 17-21                      b) 22-25                      c) 26-29                      d) 30+

3. Eğitim durumunuz

- a) Ortaokul                      b) Lise                      c) Üniversite                      d) Yüksek lisans                      e) Doktora

❖ **Sosyal Medya ağlarını kullanıyorsanız aşağıdaki sorulara cevap veriniz**

4. Sosyal Medyada günlük kaç saatinizi harcıyorsunuz?

- a) 1-2                      b) 3-4                      c) 5-6                      d) 7+

5. Hangi sosyal medya ağlarını kullanıyorsunuz?

- a) Facebook                      b) Twitter                      c) Instagram                      d) Başka (lütfen belirtiniz \_\_\_\_)

❖ **Sosyal Medya ağlarından Instagram' ı kullanıyorsanız aşağıdaki soruları cevaplayınız**

6. Instagram' da günlük kaç saatinizi harcıyorsunuz?

- a) 1 saatten az                      b) 1-2                      c) 3-4                      d) 5-6                      e) 7+

7. Instagram' da en çok ne ile ilgileniyorsunuz?

- a) Arkadaşlarımın paylaşımlarıyla  
b) ünlülerin paylaşımlarıyla  
c) Blogger' lerin paylaşımlarıyla  
d) Yukarıdakilerin hepsi

8. Instagram' da moda ve ya sağlıkla ilgili herhangi bir sayfa takip ediyor musunuz?

- a) Evet, takip ettiğim sayfaların çoğu moda ve sağlıkla ilgili

- b) Hayır, sadece arkadaşlarımın paylaştıklarını takip etmeyi tercih ediyorum
- c) Ben sadece arkadaşlarımın ve komik sayfaların paylaşımlarını takip ediyorum
- d) Çeşitli türlü sayfayı takip ediyorum

9. Instagram’ da ünlüleri takip ediyor musunuz?

- a) Evet    b) Hayır

Sorular	Kesinlikle katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Kararsız	Katılmıyorum	Kesinlikle katılmıyorum
10. Sosyal medya reklam görmeyi sevmiyorum					
11. Sosyal medya reklamları ilgimi çekiyor					
12. Sosyal medya reklamlarının daha etkili olduğunu düşünüyorum, çünkü kullanıcıların reklamı yapılan ürün hakkındaki geri bildirimlerini okuya biliyorum					
13. Instagram’ da ünlüler tarafından paylaşılan reklamlar görüyorum					
14. Instagram’ da takip ettiğim ünlüler tarafından reklam içerikli paylaşımlar görmeyi seviyorum					
15. Instagram’ daki reklamların güvenilirliğine inanıyorum					
16. Instagram’ da takip ettiğim ünlülerin reklamını yaptığı ürünleri ala bilirim					
17. Instagram’ da reklam içerikli paylaşımların altındaki yorumları okuyorum					
18. Instagram’ da reklam içerikli paylaşımların altına yorum yazıyorum					
19. Instagram’ da reklam yapılan ürün hakkında yazılan yorumlar, ürün hakkında fikir edinmemde yardımcı oluyor					
20. Instagram’ da reklam yapılan ürün hakkında yazılan yorumların ürünü satın almamda olumlu etkisi vardır					
21. Instagram’ da ünlü tarafından reklam yapılan herhangi ürün satın aldım					
Sorular	Kesinlikle katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Kararsız	Katılmıyorum	Kesinlikle

					katılmıy orum
22. Sevdiğim ünlülerin kullandığı ürünleri merak ediyorum					
23. Instagram’ da takip ettiğim insanların reklamlarını yaptıkları sayfaları merak edip kontrol ediyorum					
24. Instagram’ da blog yazarlarını takip ediyorum					
25. Blog yazarlarının Instagram’ da ürünler hakkında yaptıkları olumlu yorumlar beni reklamı yapılan ürünü almaya ikna edebilir					
26. Instagram’ da ünlülerin ürünler hakkında yaptıkları yorumları güvenilir olarak algılıyorum ve bu ürünü satın almam için beni ikna edebilir					
27. Instagram’ da ana sayfamdaki reklamlar beni kızdırıyor					
28. Sosyal medya reklamlarının televizyon reklamlarından daha ikna edici olduğunu düşünüyorum					
29. Reklam yapılan ürünlerden almışsam reklam yapılan paylaşıma deneyimimi Instagram’ da yorum olarak yazıyorum					
30. Sosyal medyanın şirketlerin hedef kitlelerine ulaşmaları için en iyi araç olduğunu düşünüyorum					