TURKISH USERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS FACEBOOK ADVERTISEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to determine the effects of different factors on the formation of users' attitudes towards advertisements on Facebook, the current leading social networking site. For this purpose, Pollay and Mittal's scale aimed at measuring the public opinion towards advertisements was modified and used. Data obtained from 101 participants was evaluated. The model of the survey tries to determine the existence and the nature of the relationships between societal effects and personal uses of Facebook advertisements and the attitudes of the site's users' towards those advertisements. According to the results, perceived personal usage factors of Facebook advertisements, along with certain perceived societal effects contribute to the formation of attitudes towards Facebook advertisements.

Keywords: Consumer Attitudes, Social Media, Facebook

INTRODUCTION

The end of the 20th century saw the invention of the Internet, and the way of daily life has started to change. First, getting information and communication became easier, and as a result, consumers' needs started changing, which, in turn, led to businesses starting to abandon conventional models of business and started shifting towards e-commerce.

One of the steps many businesses have taken to answer the changing consumer needs is to establish a presence on social media sites. Social media sites allow businesses and customers to interact instantaneous – much like the telephone- but, the interaction most often can be viewed and, in a sense, overseen by other customers. A presence on social networking sites also allows businesses to track their customers' interests closely by letting them friend or follow the customers, and thus letting them follow what the customers like, what events the customers attend, and what the customers share about themselves.

Facebook is currently the leading social network site in the world. In Turkey, the majority of people with online access are members of the Facebook. Due to the popularity of Facebook among Turkish users, this paper focuses on the attitudes of Facebook's Turkish users' attitudes toward advertisements on Facebook.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

Social Media And Consumer Attitudes

Weber (2007) defines social media as "The social media is the online place where people with a common interest can gather to share thoughts, comments, and opinions". According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) social media is "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content". Social media is being widely used around the globe even by the companies. Despite their volume and sizes, they have started using social media and its tools to advertise and promote their products and their companies (Saravanakumar and Lakshimi, 2012: 4445).

The etymological stem of the word "attitude" is the Latin "aptus", which equals to "joined, fitted" in modern English. In 17th century, the term "attitude" was used as a technical term to denote the posture of a figure in a statue or painting. Later in the 18th century, the meaning of the word was generalized to "a posture of the body supposed to imply some mental state". Only in the mid-19th century have the connotations of "settled

behavior reflecting feeling or opinion" started to be attached to the word (http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term_=attitude, retrieved on 13th of March, 2014).

Although the meaning of the term has been redefined countless times in the past century, Thurstone's definition of it as "the amount of affect or feeling for or against a stimuli" captures the widest area on its current usage. The definition of attitudes as "evaluations of a concept or object, such as an issue, person, group, brand or service that expresses a degree of favor or disfavor" is more relevant to the topic of consumer behavior. Consumers form these evaluations by integrating knowledge, meanings or beliefs about the attitude object – the entity that gets evaluated. Attitudes are both concrete and protean, in the sense that once one about an object is formed, consumers activate the said attitude from memory and incorporate their interpretation of new information into it, instead of forming a new attitude each time they come upon a new bit of information (Peter & Olson, 1999). This implies that an attitude toward an object might differ in different points in time. The changes an attitude might undergo depend on three characteristics: Attitude availability, attitude accessibility and attitude strength (Arnould, Price & Zinkhan, 2004).

Attitudes about most objects are an amalgam of numerous feelings, thoughts and experiences of both positive and negative nature. In addition, attitudes are not necessarily always verging on the extremes. Neutral evaluations are not uncommon, especially towards relatively un-important concepts that do not require high levels of involvement (Peter & Olson, 2005).

DEVELOPMENT OF HYPOTHESES

Pollay and Mittal (1993) posit that seven effects that might be yielded by advertising and can affect formation of attitudes toward advertising. They divide those seven effects into two main categories, namely: Personal Uses and Societal Effects. The seven effects determined by Pollay and Mittal are as follows:

Personal Uses:

- Product Information: Some arguments advocating usefulness of advertising are based upon its role as a provider of information. The information obtained from advertising might increase market efficiency by more accurately matching customers' needs and producers' offerings.

- Social Role and Image: Most advertising provide lifestyle imagery, aimed at association of the product with status and prestige. Many consumers agree to pay premium prices for effectively branded products.

- Hedonic / Pleasure: The experience of looking at or remembering an advert itself can be a pleasurable.

Societal Effects:

- Good for the Economy: Arguments advocating adverts claim that advertisement can speed up the acceptance of new products by the costumers, ultimately fostering full employment, lower production expenses, and similar larger-scale results.

- Materialism: Critics of advertising claim that the display of countless products in an attractive manner preoccupies consumers with commercial concerns and divert them from social, political and philosophical concerns.

- Value Corruption: Advertisements are built upon premises of values. Values portrayed and promised, critics of adverts claim, reinforce tendencies towards the "seven deadly sins" (greed, lust, gluttony, envy, sloth, pride, and anger) more than they do the "seven cardinal virtues" (prudence, temperance, justice, fortitude, faith, hope, and charity).

- Falsity / No Sense: Advertising in general has been accused of being purposefully misleading or not fully informing. In such cases, the personal usefulness of adverts as information sources diminishes. Furthermore, such ads can damage communities they are served to by promoting half-truths as truths.

Global Attitudes: Specific beliefs listed above are claimed to be in accordance with more generalized attitudes that exist at another cognitive abstraction (Pollay & Mittal, 1993).

All the statements used were modified and reworded for measurement of attitude formation toward Facebook advertisements.

H1: Evaluation of Product Information factor influences Attitude toward Facebook advertisements positively.

H2: Evaluation of Social Role and Image factor influences Attitude toward Facebook advertisements positively.

H3: Evaluation of "Hedonic / Pleasure" factor influences Attitude toward Facebook advertisements positively.

H4: Evaluation of "Good for the Economy" factor influences Attitude toward Facebook advertisements positively.

H5: Evaluation of "Falsity / No Sense" factor influences Attitude toward Facebook advertisements negatively.

H6: Evaluation of "Corrupts Values" factor influences Attitude toward Facebook advertisements negatively.

H7: Evaluation of "Materialism" factor influences Attitude toward Facebook advertisements negatively.

METHODOLOGY

Research Goal

The purpose of this survey is to determine the effects of different factors on the formation of users' attitudes towards advertisements on Facebook, the current leading social networking site. For this purpose, Pollay and Mittal's scale aimed at measuring the public opinion towards advertisements was modified and used. In addition to the factors adapted from Pollay and Mittal's model, the existence of relationships between demographic characteristics of the participants and their attitudes towards the Facebook advertisements was also tried to be determined.

Sample and Data Collection

Data obtained in this survey was computerized in Microsoft Excel and SPSS 18.0 programs. In this study, 7 questions about participants' demographic characteristics and 39 statements each were compiled into a survey and the resulting survey was published online to determine participants' attitudes towards Facebook advertisements in accordance with seven attribute model adapted from Pollay and Mittal. Participants were asked to state to what extent they agree with the statements on a scale of 1 to 5. Agreement degrees for 39 attribute statements were designed as 1-Strongly disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree. Each attribute assessment was then scored on the scale of 100 to calculate importance weights of each quality dimension.

Analyses and Results

Reliability is an important concept for research findings. Gegez (2010) explained that reliability indicates whether or not the same results are going to be obtained when a research is repeated and whether respondents would give same answers in case of no change of their state. For reliability analysis of this survey Cronbach's alpha model was used. Cronbach's alpha model, in the words of George and Mallery (2001, p.209), is an indicator of to what extent all the items in a scale can successfully measure any dimension.

Reliability analysis comes to the front to gauge inter-closeness degree of questions when calculation is made by summating the values of answers to certain numbers of questions. This is also called as internal consistency. Most preferred method for reliability analysis is Cronbach Alpha model. This model calculates the coefficient alpha. Coefficient is obtained by comparing overall variations of question to general variation in a scale. Alpha is a standard change mean and varies between 0 and 1. According to Nakip's explanation; in social research, an alpha value of 0,70 is accepted as 'adequate' for reliability (Nakip, 2013).

Demographic Features

46% of total participants were female and 53% were male, while 18.8% of the participants were married, 80.2% were single, and 1% were divorced or widowed. 24 to 29 age bracket was the largest group among the participants with 56.4%, followed by 18 to 23 groups with 30.7%, 30 to 34 groups with 8.9%, and 35 to 39 groups with only 4%.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Gender	N	%	Income	N	%
Female	47	46	<1000 TL	32	31.7
Male	54	53	1001-1500 TL	10	9.9
Age	**N**	**%**	1501-2000 TL	18	17.8
18-23	31	30.7	2001-2500 TL	10	9.9
24-29	57	56.4	2501-5000 TL	22	21.8
30-34	9	8.9	5001+ TL	5	5.0
35-39	4	4.0	**Occupation**	**N**	**%**
Marital Status	**N**	**%**	Academician	5	5.0
Single	81	80.2	Engineer	2	2.0
Married	19	18.8	Lawyer	3	3.0
Divorced/Widowed	1	1.0	Other	3	3.0
Education	**N**	**%**	Private Sector	28	27.7
Postgraduate	27	26.7	Public Employee	2	2.0
Undergraduate	63	62.4	Self-Employed	10	9.9
Associate's	2	2.0	Student	48	47.5
High School	8	7.9	**Have Children**	**N**	**%**
Literate	1	1.0	Yes	14	13.9
			No	87	86.1

The monthly personal income of 31.7% of the participants was less than 1000TL. This group was followed by 21.8% of the participants with an income between 2501 and 5000 TL, 17.8% between 1501 and 2000TL, 9.9% with both between 1001 and 1501TL, and between 2001 and 2500TL, and, the smallest group, 5% with more than 5001TL of monthly personal income.

As to the occupation of the participants: With 47.5%, almost half of the participants were students, while 27.7% were employed in private sector. 9% of the participants were self-employed. Academicians, lawyers, engineers, public sector employees and those who were working in branches other than the options given in the survey made up 5%, 2%, 3%, 2% and 3% of the participants, respectively.

62.4% of the participants either had or were working towards an undergraduate degree. 26.7% of the participants were post-graduates. Those of the participants who had an associate's degree made up 2% of the total number of participants. High school graduates made up 7.9% percent of the participants, while only 1% of the participants' education level was literate –meaning they have not completed any high school level education.

Evaluation of Participants' Answers

"Global attitudes" factor consists of 4 variables in the survey. Factor weight of each variable can be found on the 3rd column of the table. Explained variation percentage is %66,52, which means that the aforementioned four variables account for %66.52 of the "global attitudes" factor. KMO test, performed to ascertain whether the sample was adequate for factor analysis, needed to be 0,7 or higher. For "Global Attitudes" factor, the KMO test result was adequate. Bartlett test is used to ascertain whether the variables could be used for factor analysis. Values lower than 0,05 mean that the variable can be used for factor analysis.

"Product Information" factor consists of 3 variables in the survey. Explained variation percentage for this factor was %67,01. KMO test resulted in a value of 0,657 for this factor. Bartlett value for this factor was also below 0,05.

"Social Role and Image Formation" factor consists of 3 variables in the survey. Explained variation percentage for this factor was %64,74. KMO test resulted in a value of 0,658 for this factor. Bartlett value for this factor was also below 0,05.

"Hedonic / Pleasure" factor consists of 3 variables in the survey. Explained variation percentage for this factor was %65,98. KMO test resulted in a value of 0,652 for this factor. Bartlett value for this factor was also below 0,05.

"Good for the Economy" factor consists of 5 variables in the survey. Explained variation percentage for this factor was %67,01. KMO test resulted in a value of 0,721 for this factor. Bartlett value for this factor was also below 0,05.

"Materialism" factor consists of 4 variables in the survey. Explained variation percentage for this factor was %57,6. KMO test resulted in a value of 0,694 for this factor. Bartlett value for this factor was also below 0,05.

For "Falsity/No Sense" and "Value Corruption" factors, the KMO values were not adequate, and thus these factors have been omitted from the analysis.

Table 2: Results of the Reliability Tests

Factors	Variables	Factor Weight	Explained Variation (%)	KMO	Bartlett	Cronbach Alpha
Global Attitudes	Facebook advertisements are essential.	0,809	66,52	0,758	0,000	0,883
	Overall, I consider Facebook advertisements a good thing.	0,837				
	My general opinion of Facebook advertisements is unfavourable.	0,737				
	I do like Facebook advertisements.	0,874				
Product Information	Courses, in large part, should be practice-oriented (e.g. case study)	0,787	67,01	0,657	0,000	
	Students should be prompted to group works in practice oriented parts of courses	0,872				
	Facebook advertisements help me keep up to date about products/ services available in the marketplace.	0,793				
Social Role and Image Formation	From Facebook advertisements I learn about fashions and about what to buy to impress others.	0,847	64,74	0,658	0,000	
	Facebook advertisements tell me what people with lifestyles similar to mine are buying and using.	0,741				
	Facebook advertisements help me know which products will or will not reflect the sort of person I am.	0,821				
Hedonic/ Pleasure	Facebook advertisements are quite often amusing.	0,854	65,98	0,652	0,000	
	Sometimes I take pleasure in thinking about what I saw or heard or read in Facebook advertisements.	0,727				
	Sometimes Facebook advertisements are even more enjoyable than other media contents.	0,850				
Good for the Economy	Facebook advertisements help raise our standard of living.	0,799	50,45	0,721	0,000	
	In general, Facebook advertisements result in lower prices.	0,704				
	In general, Facebook advertisements help our nation's economy.	0,767				
	Mostly, Facebook advertisements are wasteful of economic resources.	0,360				
	In general, Facebook advertisements promote competition, which benefits the customer.	0,818				
Materialism	Faculty members should help students and give advices on their career planning	0,843	57,60	0,694	0,000	
	Advisers should help students complete the program smoothly	0,791				
	Facebook advertisements make people live in a world of fantasy.	0,661				
	Because of Facebook advertisements, people buy a lot of things they do not really need.	0,728				
Falsity/No Sense	In general, Facebook advertisements are misleading.	0,746	53,81	0,562	0,000	
	Most Facebook advertisements insult the intelligence of the average consumer.	0,830				
	In general, Facebook advertisements present a true picture of the product advertised.	0,606				
Value Corruption	Facebook advertisements promote undesirable values in our society.	0,776	51,54	0,467	0,000	
	Most Facebook advertisements distort the values of our youth.	0,874				
	There is too much sex in Facebook advertisements today.	0,424				

Analysis also showed in-group differences in four demographic characteristics. Those characteristics are listed below:

- Education
- Age
- Marital Status
- Children

Table 3: Comparison of Effects Measured by Education Level

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Global Attitudes	Between Groups	3,883	4	0,971	3,044	0,021
	Within Groups	30,617	96	0,319		
	Total	34,500	100			
Product Information	Between Groups	10,771	4	2,693	3,27	0,015
	Within Groups	79,066	96	0,824		
	Total	89,837	100			
Hedonic/Pleasure	Between Groups	6,330	4	1,582	2,575	0,042
	Within Groups	58,997	96	0,615		
	Total	65,327	100			
Good for the Economy	Between Groups	5,409	4	1,352	2,849	0,028
	Within Groups	45,554	96	0,475		
	Total	50,962	100			

Deduced from the data is that for the factors included in the table above, participants' education level did show some statistical difference, but, since a post-hoc test was not performed, the exact differences between educational status is not clear.

Table 4: Comparison of "Hedonic / Pleasure" Effect by Age

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Hedonic/Pleasure	Between Groups	5,726	3	1,909	3,106	0,03
	Within Groups	59,601	97	0,614		
	Total	65,327	100			

Hedonic/Pleasure factor shows fluctuations relative to the age of participants. When mean values are analyzed, it can be seen that the highest Hedonic / Pleasure score belongs to the 35-39 age group. It was also seen that Hedonic / Pleasure score increased as the age of the participants did.

Table 5: Comparison of Effects Measured by Marital Status

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Global Attitudes	Between Groups	4,395	2	2,197	7,153	0,001
	Within Groups	30,105	98	0,307		
	Total	34,500	100			
Product Information	Between Groups	7,553	2	3,777	4,498	0,014
	Within Groups	82,284	98	0,84		
	Total	89,837	100			
Hedonic /Pleasure	Between Groups	5,968	2	2,984	4,926	0,009
	Within Groups	59,359	98	0,606		
	Total	65,327	100			

As it was the case with the education level, participants' marital status did show some statistical difference for the factors listed in the table above, but, since a post-hoc test was not performed, the exact differences between marital status is not clear.

Table 6: Comparison of "Hedonic / Pleasure" Effect by Having Children

Group Statistics					
	Children	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Hedonic/Pleasure	Yes	14	2,50	0,994	0,266
	No	87	1,77	0,732	0,078
Independent Samples Test					
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means	
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Hedonic / Pleasure	Equal variances assumed	2,165	0,144	3,286	99	0,001
	Equal variances not assumed			2,636	15,352	0,018

When the relationship between participants' having children or not and the "hedonic / pleasure" factor was viewed, it was seen that the participants with children had a higher value across the "hedonic / pleasure" factor than those who did not have children.

Table 7: Correlation Analysis

		Global Attitudes	Product Information	Social Role and Image Formation	Hedonic/Pleasure	Good for the Economy	Materialism	Value Corruption
Global Attitudes	Pearson Cor.	1	,626**	,435**	,592**	,582**	,201*	0,123
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0	0	0	0	0,044	0,222
	N	101	101	101	101	101	101	101
Product Information	Pearson Cor.	,626**	1	,647**	,566**	,574**	0,177	0,192
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0		0	0	0	0,077	0,055
	N	101	101	101	101	101	101	101
Social Role and Image Formation	Pearson Cor.	,435**	,647**	1	,525**	,553**	,229*	0,157
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0		0	0	0,021	0,117
	N	101	101	101	101	101	101	101
Hedonic / Pleasure	Pearson Cor.	,592**	,566**	,525**	1	,631**	0,145	0,126
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0	0		0	0,149	0,209
	N	101	101	101	101	101	101	101
Good for the Economy	Pearson Cor.	,582**	,574**	,553**	,631**	1	,489**	,439**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0	0	0		0	0
	N	101	101	101	101	101	101	101
Materialism	Pearson Cor.	,201*	0,177	,229*	0,145	,489**	1	,530**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,044	0,077	0,021	0,149	0		0
	N	101	101	101	101	101	101	101
Value Corruption	Pearson Cor.	0,123	0,192	0,157	0,126	,439**	,530**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,222	0,055	0,117	0,209	0	0	
	N	101	101	101	101	101	101	101

Between "Global Attitudes" and "Product Information" lies a significance value of 0, which indicates that there is a significant relationship between them. Pearson correlation value is 0,626, which indicates that the relationship between these two factors is a positive one. According to these values, it can be said that Hypothesis 1 can be accepted.

Between "Global Attitudes" and "Social Role and Image Formation" lies a significance value of 0, which indicates that there is a significant relationship between them. Pearson correlation value is 0,435, which indicates that the relationship between these two factors is a positive one. According to these values, it can be said that Hypothesis 2 can be accepted.

Between "Global Attitudes" and "Hedonic / Pleasure" lies a significance value of 0, which indicates that there is a significant relationship between them. Pearson correlation value is 0,592, which indicates that the relationship between these two factors is a positive one. According to these values, it can be said that Hypothesis 3 can be accepted.

Between "Global Attitudes" and "Good for the Economy" lies a significance value of 0, which indicates that there is a significant relationship between them. Pearson correlation value is 0,582, which indicates that the relationship between these two factors is a positive one. According to these values, it can be said that Hypothesis 4 can be accepted.

Between "Global Attitudes" and "Materialism" lies a significance value of 0,044 , which indicates that there is a significant relationship between them. Pearson correlation value is 0,123, which indicates that the relationship between these two factors is a positive one. According to these values, it can be said that Hypothesis 7 can be accepted.

Between "Global Attitudes" and "Value Corruption" lies a significance value of 0,222 , which indicates that there is a significant relationship between them. Pearson correlation value is 0,123, which indicates that the relationship between these two factors is a positive one. According to these values, it can be said that Hypothesis 6 can be accepted. Analysis returned inconclusive results on Hypotheses 5.

CONCLUSION

With the advent of Internet technologies, many businesses started to spill their functions over to the cyber world to provide more ease and speed to their customers. As the social media sites started to become widely accepted and used, companies started using those sites to strengthen and improve their relationships with the customers, as well as to reach new customers. As the companies started establishing themselves on social networking sites and become more easily reachable, advertisements for businesses started finding their way into these sites too.

To determine the attitude of Turkish Facebook users' attitude towards advertisements on Facebook, a survey was prepared and 101 answer sets were collected. Analysis of the data collected indicates that there is a positive relationship between participants' evaluation of the "Product Information", "Social Role and Image Formation", "Hedonic / Pleasure", "Good for the Economy", "Materialism", and "Value Corruption" factors and participants' global attitudes towards Facebook advertisements. The effect of "Falsity / No Sense" factor on Facebook advertisements could not be determined due to these factors' variables turning out to be unreliable.

In light of these results, it can be said that companies considering foraying into the social media arena should put the focus in the advertisements they are going to use in Facebook on the adverts' being informing and picturing the social image it is trying to foster as clearly as possible. The advertisement used should be prepared in accordance with the culture of the target base it will be used for, for the results show -just like the old-media ads- Facebook advertisements too can be deemed as corrupting the values of the population they are exposed to. Undertones that might foster materialistic tendencies will also meet resistance from the customers, and have a negative effect on customers' general attitude towards the advertisement.

Further research with a larger sample might shed more light between users' evaluation of the effects included in the model and their overall attitude towards Facebook advertisements. In addition, research about users' attitude towards advertisements on social media outlets other than Facebook might be used to determine different attitudes and cross-site trends.

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