



The Role of Trust on Social Media Purchase Behavior: A Study on Young Consumers in the Context of the Technology Acceptance Model¹

Leslly Saurelle TEBONCHOUÉ¹ Müjde AKSOY²

Abstract

In today's dynamic market conditions, it has become a critical competitive element for businesses to use social media platforms in their marketing activities in order to raise awareness about their products and services, improve their brand image, make their relations with existing customers sustainable, and reach new customer groups. Social media platforms, whose number of users is increasing day by day, have caused a great transformation not only in the daily lives of individuals but also in their businesses, especially in their marketing activities. The purpose of this research is to evaluate the impact of social media marketing activities on young consumers within the framework of the technology acceptance model. In the research, the perception of trust in the social media purchasing behaviors of young consumers was emphasized, and trust in social media was adapted to the Technology Acceptance Model as an external factor. In this context, a research model was established as a result of examining the relations between the related theoretical and applied research and the related variables, and the research was designed quantitatively based on the cause-and-effect relationship in order to test the hypotheses put forward in the conceptual framework. Survey data collected from young consumers in Turkey was analyzed with PLS-SEM. The findings of the research show that young consumers' perception of trust in social media shows that the perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness of social media use positively affect and are an important determinant of purchasing behavior. In addition, it is among the research findings that the social media purchasing behaviors of young consumers are positively affected by perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness, two important factors of the technology acceptance model.

Keywords: Social Media, Trust, Technology Acceptance Model, Young Consumers

Jel Codes: L82, M31, M39

Öz

Günümüz dinamik pazar şartlarında, işletmelerin ürün ve hizmetlerine yönelik farkındalık yaratmak, marka imajlarını geliştirmek, mevcut müşteriler ile ilişkilerini sürdürülebilir kılmak ve yeni müşteri kitlelerine ulaşabilmek amacıyla pazarlama faaliyetlerinde sosyal medya platformlarını kullanmaları kritik bir rekabet unsuru haline gelmiştir. Her geçen gün kullanıcı sayıları hızla artan sosyal medya platformları, sadece bireylerin günlük hayatlarında değil, işletmelerinde özellikle pazarlama faaliyetlerinde büyük bir dönüşüme neden olmuştur. Bu araştırmanın amacı, sosyal medya pazarlama faaliyetlerinin genç tüketiciler üzerindeki etkisini teknoloji kabul modeli çerçevesinde değerlendirmektir. Araştırmada genç tüketicilerin sosyal medya satın alma davranışlarında güven algısı üzerinde durulmuş ve sosyal medyaya duyulan güven dışsal bir faktör olarak Teknoloji Kabul Modeline uyarlanmıştır. Bu kapsamda ilgili teorik ve uygulamalı araştırmalar ile ilgili değişkenlerin arasındaki ilişkilerin incelenmesi sonucunda araştırma modeli kurularak, araştırma kavramsal çerçevede ileri sürülen hipotezlerin test edilmesi amacıyla neden sonuç ilişkisine dayalı olarak nicel şekilde tasarlanmıştır. Türkiye'deki genç tüketicilerden toplanan anket verileri PLS-SEM ile analiz edildi. Araştırmada elde edilen bulgular genç tüketicilerin sosyal medyaya duydukları güven algısının; sosyal medya kullanımına yönelik algılanan kullanım kolaylığını ve algılanan kullanılabilirliğini olumlu yönde etkilediğini ve satın alma davranışının da önemli bir belirleyicisi göstermektedir. Ayrıca genç tüketicilerin sosyal medya satın alma davranışlarının da, teknoloji kabul modelinin iki önemli faktörü olarak algılanan kullanım kolaylığı ve algılanan faydadan olumlu yönde etkilendiği araştırma bulguları arasında yer almaktadır.

Keywords: Sosyal Medya, Güven, Teknoloji Kabul Modeli, Genç Tüketiciler

Jel Codes: L82, M31, M39

¹ Leslly Saurelle TEBONCHOUÉ
Student in Master degree in Faculty of
Social Sciences, Department of
Business Administration and
Specialize in Leadership and Global
Entrepreneurship

Bandırma Onyedli Eylül University, ,
Balıkesir, Turkey,
lesllysaurelle@gmail.com

ORCID: 0009-0006-5850-3032

² Asst. Prof Müjde AKSOY, Bandırma
Onyedli Eylül University, Department
of Property Protection and Security,
Balıkesir, Turkey,
maksoy@bandirma.edu.tr

ORCID: 0000-0002-2995-0371

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Introduction

In parallel with the developments in information and communication technologies, the number of users of social media, which is defined as "social interaction tools that use highly accessible and scalable communication techniques such as web-based and mobile technologies to transform communication into interactive dialogue" (Coulson, 2013) and which has become an indispensable area of the internet today, is increasing day by day. The number of social media users reaching 4.74 billion among 5.16 billion internet users in 2023 corresponds to approximately 59% of the world's population. Among the social media platforms where a person spends an average of 2 hours and 27 minutes a day, Facebook is the most used social media platform with 2.96 billion active users. While YouTube follows Facebook with 2.5 billion users, WhatsApp is the third most used social media platform worldwide with 2 billion users. While the most important reason for 47% of global internet users to use social media is to stay in touch with their family and friends, 52 million people use LinkedIn, which is seen as the most reliable social network in the USA, to search for a job on a weekly basis (statista.com, 2023). In this context, social media platforms, which have become an important part of people's daily lives, have turned into dynamic markets where businesses can interact with the masses more easily and perform their marketing activities. Important user bases and social media platforms, each with unique interaction models and demographic characteristics, offer brands a great competitive advantage in the field of digital marketing in order to create awareness, maintain relationships with existing customers, and reach new customer bases (Wawrowski and Otola, 2020).

According to the latest report by We Are Social, while social platforms have an increasing share of the world's search activity, consumers between the ages of 16 and 34 are visiting a social network more than using a search engine when searching for information about brands. While the majority of consumers (50%) follow 1 to 4 brands on social media channels, 26% follow 5 to 9 brands, and 22% follow 10 or more brands (Lead Generation Statistics for 2023). Social media offers businesses a significant competitive advantage in generating leads, as 62% of customers share opportunities with their friends through word-of-mouth marketing (www.oberlo.com). In Instagram, which offers more opportunities for businesses to interact with their customers through social media platforms, 44% of Instagram users shop for products on a weekly basis, while 28% of these shopping activities are planned in advance. The United States has a dominant position as the primary global market for social media advertising, having allocated a total expenditure of 72.3 billion US dollars in 2023. China and the United Kingdom follow suit, with respective expenditures of 71 billion and nine billion US dollars, respectively. As of January 2023, Facebook emerged as the predominant platform utilized by marketers, as indicated by 89 percent of global marketers acknowledging their utilization of Facebook. Instagram and LinkedIn were the preferred platforms for marketers, with TikTok being utilized for advertising by a quarter of them. Furthermore, a significant majority of industry professionals, specifically 86 percent, indicated that the primary advantage of utilizing social media as a marketing strategy is the heightened level of exposure. Additionally, 76 percent of these professionals identified higher traffic as the most prominent benefit derived from such usage. 93% of US marketers use Instagram as an effective marketing tool (www.statista.com).

Actually, businesses have started to use social media platforms intensively in their marketing activities in order to benefit from the potential of social media marketing to reach target audiences and communicate with and interact with them. Today, while social media marketing offers businesses the opportunity to promote their products and services much more effectively than traditional media marketing, it has also become an indispensable communication channel for brands (Keski and Baş, 2015; Shareef et al., 2019). When the relevant literature is examined, the marketing activities carried out by the enterprises through social media platforms, depending on various factors, affect brand awareness and brand value perception (Barreda et al., 2015; Stojanovic et al., 2018), purchasing decisions (Goodrich and Mooij, 2014; Elwalda and Lu, 2016; Seo and Park, 2018) and that it positively affects brand loyalty (Haudi et al., 2022; Ibrahim, 2022).

The objective of this study is to assess the influence of social media marketing activities, which have significant importance in the current dynamic market environment, on young customers within the framework of the technology acceptance model. In this context, the perception of trust in the social media purchasing behavior of young consumers is focused, and trust in social media is adapted to the Technology Acceptance Model as an external factor. As a matter of fact, researches say that one of the biggest obstacles to consumers purchasing behavior on social media is trust (www.accenture.com). In light of all these, the main purpose of this study is to determine the effect of young consumers' social media trust, who are a generation that grows up in the digital world and spends the most time in online environments, on their purchasing behavior and also on their perceived ease of use and

perceived usefulness as two main variables of the technology acceptance model. The study starts with a theoretical background, and then the hypotheses in the research model developed by examining the relevant literature are tested. Afterwards, the findings obtained from the analysis results are discussed, and suggestions for future research and applications are presented.

Conceptual framework

Social media

Social media platforms that emerged in parallel with the developments in information and communication technologies are a series of internet-based applications based on Web 2.0 technology and enabling unlimited sharing with fast information flow. Social media platforms, which are based on the Use-Net application, which allowed public messages to be published on a discussion platform for the first time in 1979, were constantly updated with the participation and cooperation of their users, accelerating the exchange of information and content (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Ghani et al., 2019). Representing the first years of the Internet, Web 1.0 has undertaken the function of communicating and providing information to visitors, just like traditional media tools, and while doing this, it has used the Internet as a communication medium, with the only difference from traditional media (Cormode and Krishnamurthy, 2008; Genc, 2010). Web 2.0, on the other hand, paved the way for many innovations both politically, economically, and socially by providing users with a mutual communication and interaction area where they can exchange ideas, create content, and criticize with social media channels (Wang, 2014; Lomborg, 2017; Yilmaz, 2018).

The concept of social network was first used by Barnes in 1954 to describe the relationships of individuals in society with each other. Social media is a phenomenon that has developed with the spread of the internet. The first social media platforms emerged in the late 1990s and early 2000s. In this era, platforms often allowed users to create profiles, message, and share content. By the 2000s, platforms had begun to grow rapidly. With the spread of mobile internet, the use of social media has increased even more. People could now easily access and share social media platforms from their smartphones. This contributed to the popularization of social media (Evans, 2008). Open Diary was founded in 1998 as the first blog, after SixDegress, the first social networking site to create personal profiles and make friends in 1997. Social media platforms grew gradually with the establishment of LinkedIn in 2003, MySpace and Facebook in 2004, YouTube in 2005, and Twitter in 2006 (Erarslan, 2016), and as of the end of 2022, the number of social media users had reached 4.76 billion, which is approximately 60% of the world's population (wearesocial.com). However, the historical development of social media continues rapidly, and how it will evolve in the future remains a matter of curiosity. The historical development of social media platforms is presented in Table 1.

Table1: Development Processes for Social Media Platforms

Development Processes for Social Media Platforms			
1971	Sending first e-mail	2003	XING, a business-oriented social media site, went live.
1973	TALKOMATIC, the first real-time chat system, has been developed.	2003	Myspace, a social media page, has been launched.
1978	The "Computerized Bulletin Board System", has been developed.	2003	Skype, an instant video, written, and audio communication platform, went live.
1984	The e-mail management service FidoNet has launched.	2004	The social media platform Facebook has launched.
1988	"Internet Relay Chat", a chat platform, emerged.	2004	The popular e-mail service Gmail has launched.
1996	CQ, a chat program, has launched.	2005	The video-sharing site YouTube has started broadcasting.
1996	The Hotmail e-mail system has started to broadcast.	2006	Twitter, a microblogging site, has been established.
1996	The social media and video site Bolt.com has launched.	2007	The microblogging network Tumblr went live.
1997	Sixdegrees.com, one of the first social media sites, has been established.	2009	WhatsApp, an instant messaging application, has been established.
1997	Instant Messenger (AOL) has started to be used.	2010	The social bookmarking site Pinterest has been established.
1998	Open Diary has been founded as the first social blogging network.	2010	Instagram, a photo and short video sharing application, has been established.
1999	Yahoo Messenger has launched during these years.	2011	The Snapchat application, which allows instant video and photo sharing, has been launched.
1999	Messenger (Microsoft Network, MSN) has launched.	2011	Google+ has started broadcasting as a social network.
1999	The social media and blogging program	2013	Vine, the application where instant short video sharing can

	LiveJournal has emerged.		be made, has been launched.
2001	Wikipedia has established as an online open dictionary.	2013	The instant voice, written, and video communication network Google Hangouts has been established.
2002	Friendster's social media and game platform was published.	2015	Periscope, which allows live video broadcasting, has emerged.
2003	LinkedIn, a business-oriented social media site, went live.	2017	TikTok, which was established as a short, fun video application, went live.

Reference: Bostancı, M. (2019). Sosyal Medya: Dün, Bugün, Yarın. Palet Yayınları.

Although there are many definitions when the relevant literature is examined, it is defined by Kaplan and Mazurek (2018) as "a group of Internet-based applications based on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allowing the creation and exchange of user-generated content as well as interactive discussion". Social media is defined by Coulson (2013) as "social interaction tools that use highly accessible and scalable communication techniques such as web-based and mobile technologies to transform communication into interactive dialogue". Social media are platforms that contain social networks such as links, videos, audio recordings, photos, blogs, vlogs on social networking sites and shared by users (Eley and Tilley, 2009; Sütüoğlu, 2015) and these platforms are video, photo and story sharing, chat or discussion forums, location notification, social directories, social reputation networks, social bookmarking, blogs, weblogs, wikis, podcasts, videocasts, social networking services (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Pinterest, Youtube, WhatsApp, FB Messenger, WeChat, QQ, Qzone, Sina Weibo, Reddit, Skype, BaiduTieba, Viber, LinkedIn, SnapChat, Line, Telegram, Tumblr) (Eröz and Doğdubay, 2012; Kircova and Enginkaya, 2015; Orel and Arık, 2020).

The basis of the word "social", which constitutes the first part of the concept of social media, lies in meeting social needs such as belonging, love, acceptance, and interaction with other people as one of the basic needs of human beings. In this context, they are natural and sincere online platforms built on the mutual interactions and experiences of social media users, formed by people coming together around common interests (Evans, 2008; Gretzel and Yoo, 2014; Yılmaz, 2018). The word "media", which constitutes the second part of the concept of social media, refers to all the channels that enable users to interact using network technologies and convey ideas or information (Safko, 2010; Aydın, 2017). Social media, which provides information production and simultaneous sharing through interpersonal interaction, has become one of the indispensable elements of social life as a platform that emphasizes individuality (Correa et al., 2010; Duffett, 2017). While providing social media users the opportunity to create personal profiles containing information such as their age, location, feelings, thoughts, and interests (Yılmaz, 2018), it also allows users to connect with each other and create virtual communities. It allows users to share various content and interact with each other through features such as commenting, liking, and tagging (Öze, 2017). While social media platforms, which offer various privacy settings that allow users to control who can see their content and profile information, provide users with access from anywhere with the mobile access they offer, they also have built-in messaging systems that allow users to communicate with each other privately and simultaneously (Mayfield, 2006; Yegen, 2013; Kılıç, 2015; Guzel and Yukselen, 2020).

The increasing importance of social media in people's daily lives, which is considered the whole of the concepts of community, communication, cooperation, interpretation, and contribution, has begun to affect people's attitudes and behaviors beyond bringing different people together (Yılmaz, 2018). Today, social media platforms with billions of users (Tankovska, 2021) have caused their businesses to remain indifferent to such a large audience. Again, social media has provided businesses with more comfortable access to information on consumers' expectations, needs, lifestyles, and hobbies (Gensler et al., 2013; Appel et al., 2019; Orel and Arık, 2020). In this context, social media has been used by businesses for various purposes such as creating brand awareness, creating consumer demand, providing information, increasing the number of visitors, managing customer relations, creating brand loyalty, creating campaigns, and increasing sales (Stokes, 2013; Alalwan, 2018; Yıldırım, 2018), as well as the concept of social media marketing, which is defined as direct or indirect marketing activities that enable individuals or businesses to deliver their products and services to huge masses using social media technologies, channels, and programs (Mutlu, 2017).

Social media marketing concept and features

In today's dynamic market conditions, it has become a critical competitive element for businesses to use social media platforms in their marketing activities in order to raise awareness of their products and services, improve their brand image, maintain relations with existing customers, and reach new customer groups (Ismail, 2017; Yıldırım, 2018; Wawrowski and Otola, 2020). Social media platforms, whose number of users is increasing day by day, have caused a great transformation not only in the

daily lives of individuals but also in their businesses, especially in their marketing activities. Social media, which functions as a new platform where marketing activities are applied, has become a very important platform where social media businesses can implement their marketing activities, especially when compared to traditional media, which has the disadvantages of one-way communication, direct communication opportunity, easy measurement, and a cost advantage (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Shankar and Li, 2013; Lamberton and Stephen, 2016). For example, research shows that as a social media platform, only Facebook's total advertising revenue reached 113 billion dollars in 2022, and the expected revenue in 2023 will be much higher than this figure.

Social media marketing, which transforms customers from passive information buyers to active information users and distributors, is the marketing activity of businesses using social media technologies (Park and Oh, 2012; Dahnil et al., 2014; Gedik, 2022). According to another definition, social media marketing is the use of social media technologies, channels, and software to create, communicate, deliver, and exchange offers that have value for an organization's stakeholders (Tuten and Solomon, 2017; Tafesse and Wien, 2017; Gaber et al., 2019; Guzel ve Yukselen, 2020). In social media marketing, which is defined as an interdisciplinary and inter-functional concept that uses social media to achieve organizational goals by Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch (2017), the market perspective is to create a community in the market in a more flexible way instead of dominating the market in a control-oriented manner in traditional media. In social media marketing, instead of pushing the products and services in the traditional media towards the customer, attracting the target audience to the products and services with messages or stories is adopted as a promotion strategy, while the advertisement as the main promotional tool in the traditional media has been replaced by word-of-mouth communication (Yılmaz, 2018). In this context, thanks to social media marketing, businesses gain flexibility, which is one of the basic elements of competition, by adapting their marketing activities, which are focused on meeting customer expectations and needs, to changing consumer trends with technological infrastructure.

One of the most distinctive features of social media marketing, which consists of multi-dimensional dialogues, is the interaction feature. The interaction feature is both the two-way communication between businesses and consumers as well as the ability of consumers to comment on products and services with each other and create communities (Akar and Topcu, 2011). In this context, social media marketing allows brands to communicate and interact with customers, customers with brands, and, most importantly, create brand communities where customers can share their experiences, information, and ideas with each other (Muntinga et al., 2011; Kotler and Armstrong, 2016; Godey et al., 2016). Personalization is another important feature of social media marketing is that businesses can send special messages to individuals or masses in order to strengthen their communication and interaction with consumers (Podobnik et al., 2012; Yang et al., 2020). In social media marketing, the transfer of information about the product and service and the experiences of other customers is expressed in the form of knowledge as another important feature that affects the purchasing process (Clemons, 2009; Khan et al., 2019), while the trend feature is the most up-to-date information about a product or service among consumers (Seo and Park, 2018), and word-of-mouth communication is the ability of consumers to quickly transfer their knowledge and experiences about products and services (Chakraborty and Bhat, 2018).

Social media marketing strategies

In social media marketing, which is based on social interaction, an effective strategic approach should be adopted, as in all other business functions, in order to create and publish successful content and to create a target audience by analyzing the interactions obtained. Social media strategy: these are the plans and policies developed to seize new opportunities, reduce risks, and monitor results by determining a successful strategy in line with business objectives on social media platforms (Effing, 2013; Easa, 2023). In order to create a successful social media marketing strategy, first of all, the target audience must be very well determined to make sure that time and resources are invested in the right social media channels. For this, an observation is made and a selection is made according to the appropriate customer groups. customer map. Evaluations should be made to determine the best social media tools suitable for marketing goals by determining the community members to be reached according to the customer map prepared. As a result of these evaluations, the community should be drawn into communication with the contents prepared according to the habits of the target audience on social media; the necessary measurements should be made for participation in the communication; and the promotion of the business should be done in a way that enables it to differentiate from other communities. As the last step, in the development phase, users should be listened to and revisions should be made in line with their expectations and needs (Weber, 2009; Can, 2021).

One of the strategies that businesses can use in their social media marketing activities is content creation. Content marketing focuses on sharing expertise and knowledge in order to attract potential customers and establish long-term relationships with them, and it aims to create customer loyalty by telling the story of the brand rather than product-based messages (Myllys, 2015; Ansari et al., 2019; Gedik, 2020). With the content created, it is tried to create motivations that will enable customers to share content about a brand (Clow and Baack, 2016; Saritaş, 2018). In addition to financial motivations such as giving coupons and raffles while creating content, providing reliable information, ideas, or an innovation can also create a motivation that will enable customers to interact with the brand securely and share it with others (Smirnova, 2019). Studies show that content marketing positively affects brand reliability and online purchasing behavior (Ngo, 2015; Handley and Chapman, 2019; Gedik, 2020).

Another strategy that can be applied to social media marketing is real-time marketing, which is an important digital marketing communication strategy that enables the brand and the consumer to meet actively through social media. Real-time marketing is the creation and implementation of an instant marketing message by simultaneously intervening in a real event (Clow and Baack, 2016). Social media, which has the ability to share information simultaneously, offers businesses the opportunity to react to their products and services in real-time in an acceptable way (Hakansson and Bengtsson, 2015). The most widely used platform for real-time marketing, which aims to instantly produce content on the subject that people talk about in social media and share this content with the target audience instantly through social media channels, is Twitter because it can transfer its actuality to the consumer more instantly (O'Connor, 2015; Bazarıcı and Mutlu, 2017).

The use of "influencers", who can influence the masses with their knowledge, authority, status, and relationships and especially affect the purchasing preferences of consumers, for the purpose of promoting products and services on social platforms, is another preferred marketing strategy in social media (Arslan, 2018). The fact that people who actively use social networks have a large number of followers and that the followers trust these people or that businesses work with these people to reach the masses who follow celebrities with confidence, promote their products, and provide information about their products, directing consumers towards this product (Veirman et al., 2017; Clow and Baack, 2016). While one of the social media strategies preferred by businesses is to provide information about the product and increase brand awareness by placing advertisements in the middle of the video, with the viral marketing strategy, consumers are provided with the opportunity to inform each other about products by using virtual environments (Zhang and Huang, 2022).

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses Development

Technology acceptance model

The word technology, which consists of the combination of the words "techne", which means mastery in Greek, and "logy", which means knowledge, is defined as a rational discipline designed by human beings to gain superiority over nature by making use of science (Balkul, 2015). Today, the use and acceptance of technological developments, which are effective in all areas of human life, by end users has become a more researched subject, especially in parallel with the developments in the field of information technologies (Zeren, 2014; Al-Emran et al., 2018). In this context, many theories have been developed and used by different disciplines in the literature to determine the answers to questions such as the attitudes and behaviors of the users towards the technology offered, the reasons for refusing or accepting the technology, and whether they will continue to use it in the future (Aktas, 2007). One of the most common uses of these theories to explain the use of information technologies by individuals and consumers is the Technology Acceptance Model (TKM). The technology acceptance model is a model developed by Davis in 1989 based on the theory of reasoned behavior to explain people's beliefs, attitudes, intentions, and behaviors towards technology use and information systems. While the theory of reasoned behavior examines all human behaviors, the technology acceptance model was initially developed to examine the use of computers and then the acceptance of technological products (Zeren, 2014; Tekeli and Şahin, 2018).

Technology usage by model persons is based on two beliefs: attitude and intention as internal variables, and perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness as external variables (Koul and Eydgahi, 2017; Vuković et al., 2019). When individuals and society encounter a new technology, they decide about these innovations in terms of ease of use and expectations. According to Davis, it is perceived usefulness that determines our behavior. Perceived usefulness is the degree of belief of the user that using technological development will increase his performance, while perceived ease of use is the belief that the new technology or application that he will accept is easy enough that it will not

require much effort (Davis, 1989). These variables, together, influence attitude. At the same time, perceived ease of use has an impact on perceived usefulness. Attitude and perceived usefulness influence behavioral intentions. Behavioral intent also has an impact on actual use (Davis et al., 1989). In addition to these two main determinants, different external factors in TAM were added to the model considering that they would have significant effects on users' adoption of the system (Kalyoncuoğlu, 2018: 197). In many studies on the subject (Nair and Das, 2011; Tarhini et al., 2015), the higher the consumers' perceived benefits and ease of use from new technologies, the higher their rate of acceptance and use of the relevant technology.

When the relevant literature is examined, it is seen that the Technology Acceptance Model, which explains how people or society accept a technology as an information systems theory in its simplest form, is also used in explaining consumer behavior in many studies (Doğan et al., 2015; Kalyoncuoğlu, 2018; Yılmaz, 2018; Lee et al., 2019; Orel and Arık, 2020; Vahdat et al., 2021; Min et al., 2021; Azizah et al., 2022). In this research, which examines the purchasing behavior of young consumers on social media, the technology acceptance model is also taken as a basis. In determining the research model and hypotheses, the relevant theoretical and applied studies in the domestic and foreign literature were examined, and the Technology Acceptance Model 1, which was put forward by Davis in 1989, was deemed appropriate due to the more complex structure of other acceptance models. The model was expanded by adding trust in social media as an external factor.

Social media trust

The concept of trust, which is emphasized by many disciplines from communication to marketing, from sociology to psychology, and even economics (Cowles, 1997; Gong et al., 2015; Yıldırım, 2016), is one of the most important factors that determine the online shopping behaviors of consumers (Jarvenpaa et al., 2000; Cheunkamon et al., 2020). The concept of trust, which is defined as the delivery of the service at the specified time and conditions (Aksoy and Sever, 2012), gains even more importance in social media marketing activities, especially due to the concern for payment and the operating system (Nazir et al., 2012; Kim, 2012). Trust is often a tool for social media users' relationships, concerns, and privacy (Ayaburi et al., 2020). When the relevant literature is examined, it is seen that the concept of trust, which expresses the reliability of individuals' positive expectations about the behavior of others based on their past interactions, has been added to the model in various studies based on the Technology Acceptance Model (Ayeh, 2015; Yılmaz and Tümtürk, 2015; Agag and El-Masry, 2016; Mariani et al., 2019).

Trust is related to people's beliefs about honesty and consistent behavior towards other people (Zafar et al., 2020) and forms the basis of social relations within a group, society, or organization. In this context, trust, which facilitates overcoming uncertainties and risks on social media platforms based on interpersonal relations, plays a very important role, especially in online transactions or other activities (Hajli, 2014; Ventre et al., 2020). Individuals who perceive a level of trust continue to use them and continue their interaction and shopping behaviors (Zafar et al., 2020). In short, the impact of social media browsing and usage depends on trust. The main reason why most consumers do not prefer online shopping is that they hear about security (Gültaş & Yıldırım, 2016). Factors such as the prejudice that the product ordered and the product delivered will not be the same and the risk perception of consumers that their identity and credit card information may be captured by others are among the factors that prevent the consumer from shopping online (Mariani et al., 2019).

Perceived ease of use

One of the basic variables required for the technology acceptance model to function is perceived ease of use (Cakar, 2018). Perceived ease of use is defined as the ability of individuals to use systems without requiring effort or the degree of difficulty associated with use (Davis, 1989). Individuals tend to accept technologies that make their lives easier, both in their working lives and in their personal lives. According to an analysis of the relevant literature, Susanto and Aljoza (2015), Kusuma (2019); and Keni (2020), the ease of use that people perceive in relation to the relevant technology is quite effective in fostering adoption of the technology.

Perceived ease of use is a concept used to explain consumer behavior as well as technology acceptance. Perceived ease of use for consumers is closely related to the consumption experience that develops on digital platforms such as social media. Opportunities such as easy access to detailed information, fast shopping, and alternative diversity within the scope of the experience that digital platforms provide to consumers affect the trust levels of consumers positively. The effort required to monitor the proper functioning of the system also decreases, positively affecting the perceived ease of use (Cho and Sagynov, 2015; Birgün ve Ulu, 2021). Again, the fact that trust in digital platforms also

reduces risk perception during interaction increases the perceived ease of use (Schnall et al., 2015). In this context, considering that the trust of young consumers towards social media positively affects their perceived ease of use, the following hypothesis has been formulated:

H1: Young Consumers' trust in Social Media positively affects perceived ease of use.

Perceived usefulness

The concept of perceived usefulness is another important variable in the technology acceptance model. It is the positive or negative ideas of those who use technology products about these products ability to increase performance in their work (Kalyoncuoğlu, 2018). Perceived usefulness is defined by Davis (1989) as the level of belief that an individual uses a technological product to increase work performance (Herrero and Martín, 2017; Yılmaz, 2018). Studies show that the benefit that individuals want to obtain by using a technology is one of the most influential variables in their decision to use it (Jan, 2011; Huang et al., 2019).

Perceived usefulness is a concept used in explaining consumer behavior as well as technology acceptance, just like perceived ease of use. Trust, one of the most important precursors of online shopping on digital platforms such as social media (Nunkoo et al., 2017), causes consumers to think that they will benefit more from online shopping (Gao and Bai, 2014; Ayeh, 2015; Agag and El-Masry, 2016). In this context, considering that the trust of young consumers towards social media positively affects the perceived benefit, the following hypothesis has been formulated:

H2: Young Consumers' trust in Social Media positively affects perceived usefulness

Purchase behavior

Purchasing is the acquisition of products and services that individuals need at optimum cost and from reliable sources. Consumers need to take action by making a number of decisions during the purchasing process, which starts with being motivated primarily by a need or a desire. The purchasing decision process starts with the emergence of the need and consists of the stages of identifying alternatives, evaluating these alternatives, making a selection, and making a purchasing decision (Kotler and Armstrong, 20016). However, as a result of the developments in the use of the internet and digital technology in recent years, traditional buying behavior has quickly given way to online buying behavior. According to Evans (2008), the purchasing process starts with the consumers, who use social media as an online platform, seeing the product on social media and continues with the evaluation process of the product. After the evaluation process, in which other consumer comments are effective, purchasing behavior emerges (Uyar, 2019).

Trust is one of the most important factors that determine the online purchasing behavior of consumers (Jarvenpaa et al., 2000: 46). In addition to being preferred because of the benefits it provides, online purchasing is also a risk that should be seen and avoided by consumers. Trust, as the perception that users create against the marketing activities they encounter on social media, is as important in social media marketing as it is in other marketing areas. Confidence, which occurs with small steps and generally over a long period of time, reduces the perception of risk, especially in online purchasing behavior (Yapraklı and Gül, 2021). Studies show that the comments made on social media, the information produced, and the relationships established increase consumers' perceived trust towards products and services (Pan and Chiou, 2011; Wang et al., 2014; Hajli, 2014). In this context, the following hypothesis has been formulated, considering that the feeling of trust created by the consumers positively affects their purchase action without coming into contact with the product over the internet:

H3: Young Consumers' trust in Social Media positively affects purchase behavior.

In addition, within the framework of the technology acceptance model in the research, the following hypotheses have been formulated, considering that the perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness of young consumers during their shopping on social media platforms will also positively affect their purchasing behavior:

H4: The ease of use perceived by young consumers in their social media shopping positively affects their purchasing behavior.

H5: The usefulness of perceived by young consumers in their social media shopping positively affects their purchasing behavior.

In this context, the research was designed quantitatively based on cause-and-effect relationships in order to test the hypotheses that have been formulated in the conceptual framework. The research

model presented in Figure 1 was created by examining the relationships between the relevant theoretical and applied research and the components that make up the model.

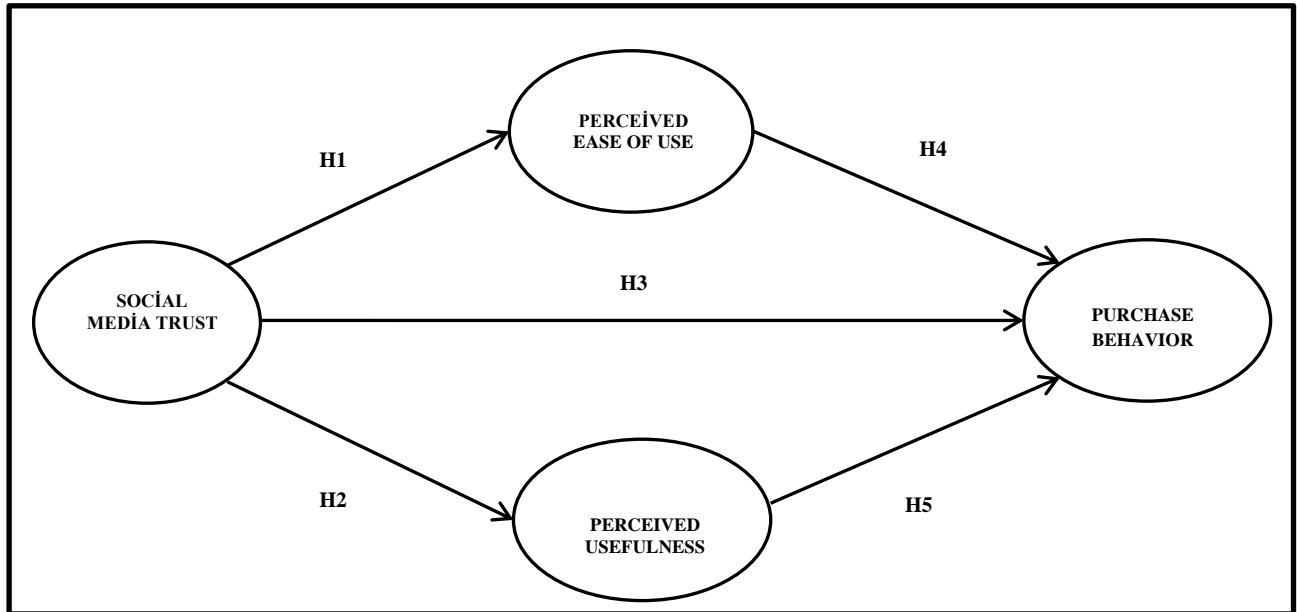


Fig.1. Research Model

Method

Sample and data collection

The population of the study consisted of young consumers have shopped on social media in Turkey. Although different age groups have been defined for young consumers in the literature, the widely accepted opinion suggests that young consumers are those who are between the ages of 18-30 (Marina et al., 2014: 441). Since the size of the population could not be determined exactly, "convenience sampling from non-probability sampling methods" was employed in data collection. In order to determine the appropriate sample size, several methods were evaluated. According to Sekaran (1983), more than 30 and fewer than 500 samples are acceptable for a many studies. In addition, Anderson and Gerbing (1988) recommended that the sample size should be at least 150 in analyses using Structural Equation Modeling. Another approach used to determine the sample size is to consider the number of observed variables in the model established for Structural Equation Modeling. It states that the number determined by including 10 participants in the study for each observed variable is the sample volume on which a general consensus is reached (Schreiber et al., 2006). According to this approach, the sample size of the research should consist of at least 380 participants. In this context between 20 April 2023 and 18 May 2023, a total of 427 online questionnaires were collected from 18- to 30-year-old consumers. Out of a total of 427 surveys, as 19 of them were excluded due to missing or inadequate data, the research continued on 408 questionnaires. Information on demographic characteristics such as age, gender, education level, income level, and social media usage habits of the 408 young consumers who participated in the research is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Gender	n	%	Daily Internet Use	n	%	Reasons to Follow a Brand on Social Media	n	%
Femele	216	52	1 hour or less	52	13	To have information	388	30
Male	192	48	1-2 hours	186	46	To be notified of discounts	322	25
Total	408	100	2-5 hours	102	25	To communicate with enterprises.	221	17
Age	n	%	more than 5 hours	68	17	Because my friends are following the page	158	12
18-20 year	112	27	Total	408	100	Other....	225	17
21-23 Year	136	33	Daily Social Media Use					
24-26 Year	104	26	1 hour or less	46	11	The most effective advertisingl in purchasing decision	n	%
27-29 Year	56	14	1-2 hours	239	59	Television advertisements	24	6
Total	408	100	2-5 hours	93	23	radio advertisements	10	2
Education Status	n	%	more than 5 hours	30	7	socia media advertisements	217	53
Primary education	22	5,4	Total	408	100	Internet advertisements outside of social media	110	27

High school	65	15,9	<i>Reason To Use Social Media</i>			Magazine advertisements	32	
Associate degree	120	29,4		To get inform about various topics.	365	14	Newspaper ads	7
Licence	155	38,0	To get news	378	15	Outdoor advertisements (billboards, etc.)	8	2
Master/PhD	46	11,3	For fun.	400	16	<i>Total</i>	408	
<i>Total</i>	408	100	To share photo, video, music etc.	399	16			
<i>Use of Social Media</i>	n	%	To connect and communicate with institutions	320	12,6	<i>Monthly Income</i>	n	%
Facebook	312	16	To follow the brands of commercial enterprises.	289	11,3	2000 TL and less	22	5
Instagram	378	20	To get inform about various topics.	396	15,5	2001-4500 TL	110	27
Tiktok	216	11				4501-7000 TL	205	50
LinkedIn	302	16	<i>Following a Brand on Social Media</i>	n	%	7001-9500 TL	46	11
Twitter	145	8		<i>Yes</i>	396	98	9501-12.000 TL	21
YouTube	395	21	<i>No</i>	12	2	More than 12.000 TL	4	1
Other...	127	8	<i>Total</i>	408	100	<i>Total</i>	408	100

Measures

In this research, survey method was used for data collection. The survey consists of two sections. The Section 1 contains the scales previously developed by various researchers to measure social media trust, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness and purchase behavior as variables in the research model. The Second Section contains questions about the demographic information from respondents including gender, age, education status, income level and social media usage habits. All the scale items used in this research were evaluated on a five point Likert-type scale ranging from "strongly disagree (1)" to "strongly agree (5)".

In the present research, the 16-item trust dimension of the "Social Media Marketing Scale" developed by Chi (2011) and adapted into Turkish by Elbaşı (2015) was used to measure the trust levels of the participants in social media marketing. While in order to measure the perception of participants' to the ease of use (4 item) and usefulness (5 item) of the social media marketing, the scales developed by Noh et al., (2013) and adapted into Turkish by Yılmaz (2018) were used, to determine the purchasing behavior levels of the participants, the "Social Media Consumer Purchasing Scale" developed by İşlek (2012) was used.

Data analysis and results

Preparation of data and analysis method selection

In this research, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to test the research model and the hypotheses proposed within the conceptual framework. Structural equation modeling is a multivariate analysis method consisting of a combination of factor analysis and regression analysis, used to test the validity of a measurement model and to determine causal relationships between variables (Gürbüz, 2019). In this context, before testing the research model, missing values, extreme values and sample distribution that may affect the analysis results were examined (Carter, 2006). At this stage firstly, since Structural Equation Modeling requires full data, the missing data in the data set was determined and completed with the Expectation Maximization (EM) method using the SPSS 23 package program. After the data set used in the research was cleared of missing data, it was analyzed to detect outliers that deviated significantly from the values in the data set and did not conform to the data set's characteristics (Esen ve Timor, 2019). As a result the data set was subjected to Mahalanobis Distance (MD) analysis to determine the extreme values. The analysis revealed that the data from 19 out of 427 respondents contained "multivariate extreme values" at the 0.99 significance level.

Another important criterion for the analysis to be selected in SEM is the sample distribution. When the kurtosis and skewness values of the distribution of the data set were examined, it was determined that the values for all variables were above the critical value in the context of z scores. In this case, it was concluded that the data set did not show a unit-based normal distribution. Similarly, it was determined that the data did not meet the multivariate normality criteria. In this context of the research, since the data did not provide both unit-based and multiple normality and the research model was an exploratory structure that hadn't been studied before, It was decided to use the "Structural Equation Modeling Based on Partial Least Squares Method (PLS SEM)" approach.

Model tests

PLS-SEM is a path analysis technique that generalizes and integrates the results of principal component analysis and multiple regression. PLS-SEM is a useful estimator of structural equations, particularly when the sample size is small, and it makes no assumptions about data distribution (Wong, 2013; Ringle et al., 2015). PLS-SEM, whose primary objective is to maximize the explained variance of the dependent variable and minimize error variances, employs the least squares method, such as regression, as an estimation technique (Hair et al., 2014; Doğan, 2019). PLS-SEM basically consists of two stages: the measurement model and the model test. In the measurement model stage, where the reliability and validity tests of the scales are performed, it is explained how each construct is measured with the relevant expressions. If all variables meet the reliability and validity criteria at the measurement model stage, structural models and hypotheses are tested to show how latent variables are related to each other (Alshibly, 2015).

The measurement model

At the measurement model stage, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used with the SmartPLS 3.2.8 statistical package program to determine whether the theoretically suggested factors overlap with the observed situation in the data (Hair et al., 2010). After the confirmatory factor analysis, the internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were evaluated with the statements obtained regarding the measurement model. For internal consistency reliability and convergent validity, the item loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), composite reliability (CR), Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α), and rho_A were critically analyzed (Hair et al., 2014; Henseler et al., 2016). Table 3 illustrates the results regarding the internal consistency reliability and convergent validity of the constructs in the study.

Table 3: Results of the measurement model.

Variable	Item	Factor Loading	AVE	CR	Cronbach's α	rho_A
Social Media Trust	Marketing activities on social media are lovely.	0.714	0.512	0.920	0.905	0.908
	Marketing activities on social media are fun.	0.742				
	Marketing activities in social media are positive.	0.726				
	Social media marketing is advantageous.	0.713				
	Social media marketing is good.	0.792				
	Social media marketing can be trust.	0.719				
	Social media marketing activities are clear and understandable.	0.681				
	I can recommend products or services proposed on social media to my friends or family.	0.690				
	Social media marketing is credible.	0.667				
	Social medya marketing is realistic.	0.683				
Perceived Ease of Use	I can make important purchasing decisions based on information provided in social media.	0.735	0.596	0.854	0.774	0.798
	I can easily find the things I want in the online shopping sites.	0.789				
	Online shopping sites are easy to use.	0.833				
	It is easy for me to learn how to use online shopping sites.	0.807				
Perceived Usefulness	Interaction with online shopping sites is clear and understandable.	0.645	0.567	0.867	0.809	0.809
	Online shopping sites make purchases easier for me.	0.750				
	Online shopping sites increase my productivity.	0.742				
	Online shopping sites are useful for me.	0.699				
	Using online shopping sites i developed my purchase experience.	0.768				

	I improve my shopping experience using online shopping sites.	0.803				
	I prefer to buy products from companies/brands I like and follow on social media	0.667				
	When a company/brand communicates with me on social media, it influences me positively in terms of purchase.	0.705				
Purchase Behavior	Social media sites are a suitable place for consumers to communicate with the company/brand.	0.789	0.514	0.864	0.810	0.811
	I trust consumer reviews on social media when I want to buy a product/service.	0.698				
	For my purchases, i prefer products/services that number of followers on social media is considerably high.	0.696				
	I think I can get reliable information about the product/service I wish to buy on social media.	0.740				

[Note: all *t* values are $p < 0.05$; CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted]

In PLS-SEM-based analysis methodologies, factor loads should be above 0.700 (Hair et al., 2014); however, factor loads above 0.600 are also acceptable (Doğan, 2019:80). Moreover, Hair et al. (2014) suggest that expressions with factor loadings between 0.40 and 0.70 should be excluded from the model if AVE or CR values increase. In this context, all indicators with factor loadings below 0.600 were removed from the model, and the steps of confirmatory factor analysis were repeated. As a result of confirmatory factor analysis, 5 indicators (SMT4, SMT10, SMT14, SMT15, SMT16) for Social Media Trust, and 4 indicators (PCB1, PCB3, PCB9, PCB10) for Purchase Behavior were removed from the model since their factor loadings were below 0.60 and they were not used in subsequent analyses.

For internal consistency reliability, Cronbach's Alpha (α), composite reliability (CR), and rho_A values are expected to be ≥ 0.70 (Hair et al., 2018; Ringle et al., 2018). When the relevant values presented in Table 1 are examined, it is seen that the structures provide internal consistency reliability. For convergent validity, factor loads are expected to be ≥ 0.70 and the average variance extracted (AVE) to be ≥ 0.50 (Hair et al., 2010; Hair et al., 2014). Nine indicators with a factor load between 0.60 and 0.70 were not removed from the scale because their AVE and CR values were above the threshold value. When the relevant values presented in Table 1 are examined, it is seen that the structures also provide convergent validity. The criteria proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981) and the HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio) criteria proposed by Henseler et al. (2015) were used to determine discriminant validity. Table 4 presents the analysis results regarding the Fornell and Larckell Criteria. When the values in the table are examined, the square root of the AVE values of the relevant variable is greater than the correlation coefficients in the same column. Similarly, HTMT values were found to be below the critical value of 0.90. In this context, it can be stated that the structures provide discriminant validity.

Table 4: Discriminant validity for the measurement model. (Fornell and Larcker criterion)

	Perceived Benefit	Perceived Ease of Use	Purchasing Behavior	Social media Trust
Perceived Usefulness	0.753			
Perceived Ease of Use	0.536	0.772		
Purchasing Behavior	0.499	0.415	0.717	
Social media Trust	0.482	0.361	0.660	0.715

According to these results, since all variables met the reliability and validity criteria for measurement model analysis, assessment of the structural model analysis was started to examine the hypotheses.

The structural model

The structural equation model created to test the research hypotheses is shown in Figure 2.

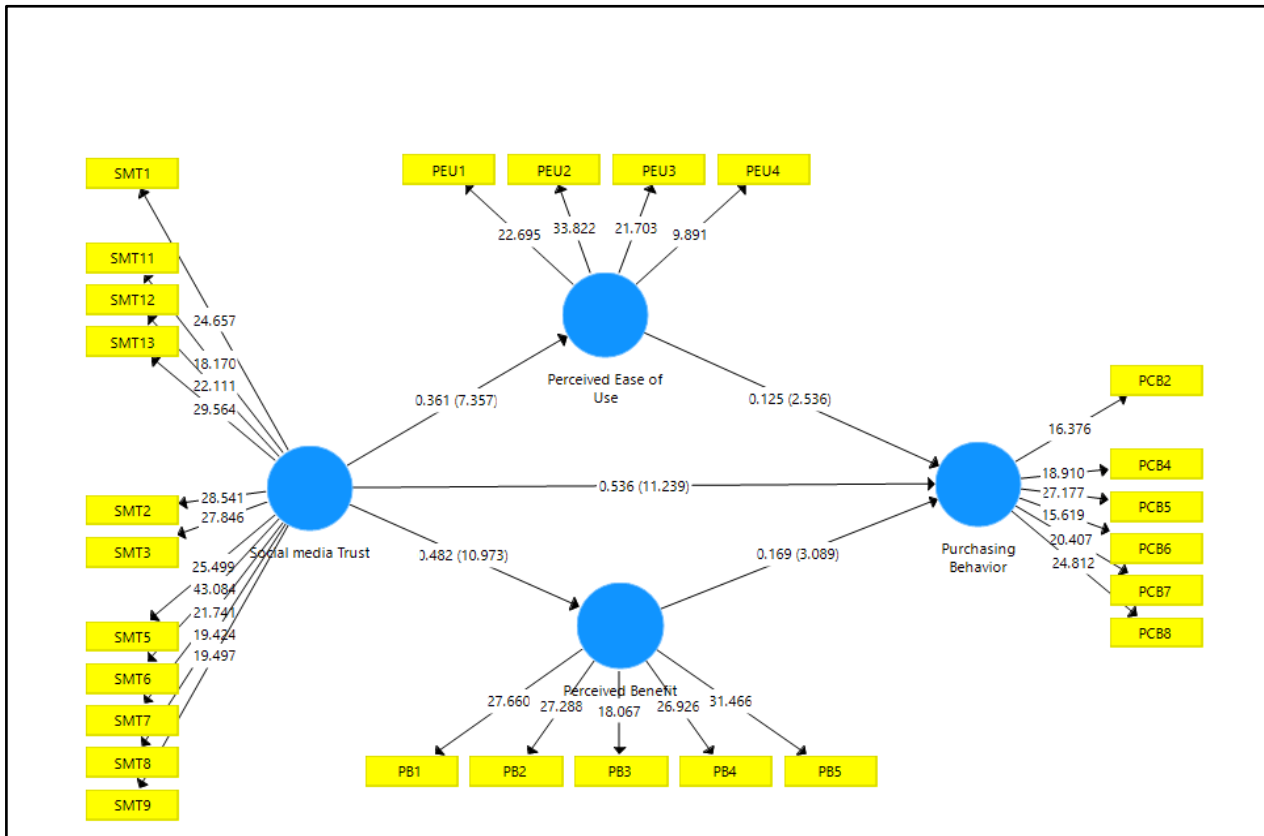


Fig.2. PLS structural model.

The research model was analyzed using the PLS-SEM algorithm and the SmartPLS 3.2.8 statistical program. The PLS algorithm was run to calculate the linearity, path coefficients, R², and effect size (f²) of the model. In order to evaluate the significance of the PLS path coefficients, t-values were calculated by taking 5000 subsamples with bootstrapping (Hair et al., 2014; Ringle et al., 2015). Blindfolding analysis was also run to calculate the predictive power (Q²) of the model. VIF, R², f², and Q² values related to the research results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Research model coefficients (total effect).

Constructs		VIF	R ²	f ²	Q ²
Social media Trust	→ Perceived Ease of Use	1.000	0.130	0.151	0.072
Social media Trust	→ Perceived Usefulness	1.000	0.232	0.303	0.127
Social media Trust	→ Purchasing Behavior	1.328		0.425	
Perceived Ease of Use	→ Purchasing Behavior	1.431	0.490	0.021	0.246
Perceived Usefulness	→ Purchasing Behavior	1.621		0.035	

As seen in Table 5, It was concluded that there was no linearity problem since the VIF values between the variables were below the threshold value of 5 (Hair et al., 2014; Henseler et al., 2015). When the model coefficients are analyzed in terms of R² values, it is seen that perceived ease of use is explained by 13%, perceived usefulness by 23%, and purchasing behavior by 49%. Having an effect size coefficient (f²) of 0.02 and above is low; 0.15 and above is medium; 0.35 and above is considered high (Cohen, 1988). In this context, when the model coefficients are examined in terms of f², it is seen that social media trust has a medium effect on perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness, and a high effect on purchasing behavior, while perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness have a low effect on purchasing behavior. Stone-Geisser's test (Q²) is another assessment of the structural model's predictive ability. Since Q² values are greater than zero, the research model has the ability to predict the variables of perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness and purchasing behavior (Hair et al., 2014). Table 4 presents the direct effect coefficients of the research model.

Table 6 illustrates the hypotheses' conclusions. The effect of Social Media Trust on Perceived Ease of Use ($\beta = 0.361$, $p < 0.01$), Perceived Usefulness ($\beta = 0.482$, $p < 0.01$) and Purchasing behavior ($\beta = 0.536$,

$p < 0.01$) is positive and statistically significant. Also, the effects of Perceived Ease of Use ($\beta = 0.361$, $p < 0.05$) and Perceived Usefulness ($\beta = 0.125$, $p < 0.05$) on Purchasing Behavior are positive and statistically significant. In accordance with these findings, the research's hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H4, and H5 are supported. Accordingly, a one-unit increase in Social Media Trust increases perceived ease of use by 0.361%, perceived usefulness by 0.482%, and Purchasing Behavior by 0.536%. Also, a one-unit increase in perceived ease of use increases Purchasing Behavior by 0.361%, and a one-unit increase in perceived usefulness increases Purchasing Behavior by 0.169%.

Table 6: Structural model result.

Hypothesis		β	SE	t-Statistic	p-Value
Social media Trust	→ Perceived Ease of Use	0.361	0.049	7.357	0.000
Social media Trust	→ Perceived Usefulness	0.482	0.044	10.973	0.000
Social media Trust	→ Purchasing Behavior	0.536	0.048	11.239	0.000
Perceived Ease of Use	→ Purchasing Behavior	0.125	0.049	2.536	0.012
Perceived Usefulness	→ Purchasing Behavior	0.169	0.055	3.089	0.002

Discussion

As a result of the revolution in information and communication technologies, social media, which has become a part of people's daily lives, has become an increasingly important issue in consumer behavior and marketing activities. In today's conditions, where more than half of the world's population actively uses social media, the placement of social media platforms in the communication focus of consumers has made it a critical competitive element for businesses to use social media platforms in their marketing activities. Social media marketing, defined as communicating and interacting with customers through social media platforms, is the use of social media technologies, channels, and software by an organization to create, communicate, present, and share offers that have value for its stakeholders (Tuten and Solomon, 2017). Social media, which has become an indispensable communication channel for brands today, offers businesses the opportunity to promote their products and services much more effectively than traditional media marketing. Social media and social media marketing activities are of great importance for both marketing literature and businesses in dynamic market conditions. In this context, the aim of the research is to examine the effect of social media marketing activities on the purchasing behavior of young consumers in the context of the technology acceptance model. In the research, the trust of young consumers in social media was adapted to the Technology Acceptance Model as an external factor.

The population of the research consists of young consumers who shop on social media in Turkey. Since the size of the population could not be determined exactly, "convenience sampling from non-probability sampling methods" was used in data collection. In the study, in which the questionnaire method was used for data collection, 427 online questionnaires were collected, 19 were excluded due to missing or insufficient data, and the research was continued through 408 questionnaires. The relationships between the variables in the model were measured by "Structural Equation Modeling Based on Partial Least Squares Method". In the measurement model stage, which explains how each construct is measured with related statements, the scales were subjected to reliability and validity tests, and all variables in the measurement model met the reliability and validity criteria. In the second stage, in the structural model analysis, the structural models and hypotheses used to show the connections of latent variables with each other were tested. According to the findings, social media trust's perceived ease of use ($\beta = 0.361$, $p < 0.01$), perceived benefit ($\beta = 0.482$, $p < 0.01$), and purchase behavior ($\beta = 0.536$, $p < 0.01$) have a positive and statistically significant effect. In addition, the effects of perceived ease of use ($\beta = 0.361$, $p < 0.05$) and perceived benefit ($\beta = 0.125$, $p < 0.05$) on purchasing behavior were positive and statistically significant. In line with these findings, the H1, H2, H3, H4, and H5 hypotheses of the research are supported. Accordingly, a one-unit increase in social media trust increases perceived ease of use by 0.361%, perceived usefulness by 0.482%, and buying behavior by 0.536%. Also, a unit increase in perceived ease of use increases buying behavior by 0.361%, while a unit increase in perceived usefulness increases buying behavior by 0.169%.

In the research, it was first tried to determine the effect of the perception of trust that young consumers have in social media on the perceived ease of use within the framework of the Technology Acceptance Model. Trust plays a very important role on social media platforms, especially in online

transactions or other activities, as it facilitates the overcoming of uncertainties and risks (Ventre et al., 2020). The main reason why most consumers do not prefer online shopping is because of security concerns. Perceived ease of use, which is closely related to the consumption experience developing on digital platforms such as social media in addition to technology acceptance, is the ability of individuals to use systems effortlessly or the level of difficulty associated with use. Findings obtained as a result of the research show that young consumers' trust in social media positively affects their perceived ease of use. Since trust in social media will reduce anxiety and effort regarding the operation of the system, the perceived ease of use of the system will also increase. This result obtained in the research supports the research findings of Cho and Sagynov (2015), and Schnall et al. (2015), who determined that trust in social media has a positive effect on perceived ease of use. In the conducted study, it was determined that there exists a positive correlation between the trust of young consumers in social media and their perception of its usefulness. Trust, being a crucial precursor to consumer behavior, engenders a perception among individuals that online shopping would yield more benefits. This result supports the research results of Gao and Bai (2014), Ayeh (2015), Agag and El-Masry (2016) and Isik (2019).

Another finding obtained in the research is that the trust of young consumers in social media positively affects their purchasing behavior. Trust in social media platforms, which provide consumers with the opportunity to obtain information about products and services and to examine shared consumer experiences and comments, is an important factor affecting the purchasing decision. Especially in online purchasing behavior, the high probability of spreading fraud and misleading information will increase the risk perceived by consumers, while trust-creating factors such as the reputation of brands, user comments, and verification of social media accounts will reduce the risk perception and also positively affect the purchasing behavior. In this context, the research result supports the previous literature that shows that the trust of young consumers in social media positively affects their purchasing behavior (Yılmaz and Tümtürk, 2015; Orel and Arık, 2020; Seyhun and Kurtuldu, 2020). As a result of the statistical analyses carried out within the scope of the research, it is determined that the perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness within the framework of the technology acceptance model positively affect the purchasing behavior of young consumers. Perceived ease of use refers to how easy a technology product is to use and how quickly the user can adopt it. If consumers think a product is easy to use, they are more likely to purchase it. Perceived usefulness refers to the benefits that a technology product provides to users. Practicality, efficiency, entertainment, or other advantages that a product will offer to users can be evaluated as perceived usefulness. Users make a purchase decision by evaluating the benefits they will derive from a product. Similarly, there are results in the related literature showing that the perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness of young consumers regarding the use of social media positively affect their purchasing behavior (Ayeh, 2015; Hua et al., 2017).

Theoretical Implications

Theoretically, this research examined the factors underlying young consumers' social media purchasing behavior within the framework of the technology acceptance model. The technology acceptance model, which aims to determine the process of people's adoption and use of a new technology and the factors affecting this process, appears to be a very good model for explaining a technology such as social media, which is rapidly adopted and widely used. This model examines why and how social media platforms are used, including the psychological, social, and economic interactions in the adoption process of social media use, and is widely included in the social media marketing literature. In the technology acceptance model used in many studies on consumers' use of technology, technology acceptance model 2 is formed by adding subjective norm, image, suitability for work, and output quality as determinants of "perceived usefulness", which are internal factors, and computer self-efficacy and external control to "perceived ease of use". Technology Model 3 was developed by adding perceptions, computer anxiety, computer fun, perceived fun, and objective usability. Again, as a result of adding different variables to the original technology acceptance model for the purpose of the research, an expanded technology acceptance model was created. In this research, which is based on the Technology Acceptance Model, trust in social media was added to the model as an external factor within the scope of examining the social media purchasing behavior of young consumers.

This study has numerous theoretical implications for the field of consumer behavior research. First, the importance of integrating trust as an exogenous variable into the technology acceptance model as an important antecedent of human behavior is emphasized. Considering that the main reason why most consumers do not prefer online shopping is the high level of risk perception they feel about

security, integrating trust into this model can provide marketers and policymakers with a comprehensive understanding of the importance of trust perception in their social media marketing activities and consumers' purchasing behavior. It also provides theoretical foundations for the development of effective strategies and interventions to increase trust in social media platforms, as it emphasizes the importance of consumers' perceived trust in purchasing behavior on social media.

Managerial Implications

The findings of this study have important managerial implications for companies that want to encourage the social media buying behavior of young consumers in emerging markets such as Turkey. Young people constitute an important target group for marketing practitioners, especially in a country like Turkey where the young population is dense. According to the United Nations, when the rates of youth population in the 15–24 age group as a percentage of the total population of countries are analyzed in 2022, the global average rate of youth population was 15.5. It was observed that the youth population rate in Turkey was 15.2, just below the global average (www.tuik.gov.tr). Research results show that trust in social media is an important determinant of young consumers' purchasing behavior on social media.

In this context, it is important for marketing managers to share the right information about their products and services at the right time in social media marketing activities in order to increase the level of trust of consumers on social media. Again, transparent marketing communication to be established with the target audience by using informative, entertaining, and inspiring content, especially for young consumers, will positively affect the level of trust. Again, businesses should actively interact with consumers on social media and respond quickly and effectively to questions, complaints, or requests within the scope of a successful customer relationship management strategy they will design. Influencer collaborations are another strategy that businesses can use in order to increase the trust perceptions of young consumers on social media platforms. Businesses can communicate positive messages about their brand to consumers by collaborating with reliable and reputable influencers. However, care should be taken in the selection of influencers, and people who appeal to the right target audience should be preferred. One of the most important factors for trust in social media is taking appropriate measures to protect the privacy and security of consumers data in a way that reduces their perception of risk. Taking strong security measures against data breaches and protecting users' personal information will reduce the perception of risk and positively affect the perception of trust. In addition, it should be prepared against negative comments or crises that may occur on social media, and loss of trust should be prevented by managing negative situations with effective reputation management strategies.

Strategic marketing planning is of great importance for businesses to be successful in social media marketing activities as well as in all marketing activities. In this context, for a successful social media strategy, the target audience of the business should be determined and analyzed very well in order to increase brand awareness, sales, and customer interactions, and original and impressive content should be created, especially suitable for the interests of young consumers. Metrics such as the number of followers, interaction rates, and conversions should be monitored regularly by monitoring the social media performance, and the strategy should be revised according to the changing conditions, if necessary, according to the results of these measurements. In addition to organizing advertising campaigns, discounts, and special campaigns that will attract the attention of young consumers, providing links that facilitate shopping processes or integrated purchasing features will cause young consumers to prefer social media in order to purchase products quickly and without any problems. Thanks to these recommendations to businesses and especially to marketing managers, it is thought that young consumers, who are of great importance in terms of social media marketing activities, will increase their perception of trust, perceived ease of use, and perceived usefulness towards social media marketing activities of businesses, which will positively affect their purchasing behavior.

Conclusion and directions for future researches

This study aimed to examine the effect of trust perceived by young consumers on purchasing behavior in social media marketing within the framework of the technology acceptance model. In the research, it has been determined that trust in social media positively affects the perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness of young consumers for social media use, and it has been concluded that it is also an important determinant of purchasing behavior. In addition, it is among the research findings that the social media purchasing behaviors of young consumers are positively affected by perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness, two important factors of the technology acceptance model.

As in many studies, there are several limitations to this one. This research is limited to the available literature in terms of a theoretical framework. The use of convenience sampling is also one of the limitations of the research. Due to the limitations of the available possibilities, a small sample was studied. Therefore, it is difficult to make broad generalizations from the research. In order to generalize the results, it is thought that the subject should be studied extensively with a larger sample size. Since this study is a cross-sectional study, it provides limited information in terms of explaining the causal relationships between the variables. In order to understand the causal relationships between the variables more clearly, it is recommended that future researchers test a similar longitudinal study. The study, which is carried out quantitatively by using the questionnaire technique, can also be studied with qualitative and mixed support. Again, in future studies, the concept of trust can be examined in terms of its dimensions.

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