

## Skepticism Towards Videos Shared On Social Media<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

Internet usage resulted in alternative communication channels, and it did not take too much for the advertisers to use social media as an advertisement medium. It is a well-known fact that consumers do not believe in advertisements shown on TV, advertising claims are found to be exaggerated if not considered as misleading, untruthful or lie. However, we need advertisement in order to increase marketing efficiency. Although the study researches the skepticism levels of consumers towards the videos shared on social media in general, it is important to determine whether consumers believe in videos shared on social media or they are skeptical about them if social media is planned to be used as an advertisement medium. If which consumers are skeptical towards videos shared on social media can be understood, advertisers and marketers may develop alternative strategies to increase marketing communication efficiency. The study operationalized and adopted version of skepticism towards advertisements on TV scale, data is collected with online questionnaire. The study tests a consumer skepticism towards videos on social media scale for reliability and validity. The results suggest that Turkish consumers are skeptical towards videos shared on social media. The results of the study can be used for marketers, advertiser as well as political issues.

**Keywords:** Scepticism, Social Media, Videos

Atf: Özer D, Mehmet. (2018) Skepticism Towards Videos Shared On Social Media.  
Akdeniz Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Dergisi, (AKİL) Kasım (30) s. 257-269

1 Bu çalışma, 1-3 Kasım 2018 tarihleri arasında Akdeniz Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi tarafından düzenlenen 3. Uluslararası Medya Çalışmaları Sempozyumunda sözlü bildiri olarak sunulmuştur.

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## Sosyal Medyada Paylaşılan Videolara Karşı Şüphencilik

### Öz

İnternetle birlikte iletişim kanallarına bir alternatif eklenmiştir ve reklamcıların sosyal medyayı yeni bir reklam platformuna dönüştürmeleri uzun sürmemiştir. Tüketicilerin televizyon reklamlarına inanmadıkları bilinen bir gerçektir, televizyon reklamları kandırıcı, yalan veya yanlış olarak kabul edilmese bile abartılıdır. Ancak, pazarlama etkinliğini arttırabilmek için reklamlara ihtiyaç vardır. Her ne kadar çalışmada tüketicilerin sosyal medyada paylaşılan videolara karşı şüphencilik seviyeleri genel olarak araştırılmış olsa da, eğer sosyal medya bir reklam mecrası olarak kullanılacaksa tüketicilerin sosyal medyada paylaşılan videolara inanıp inanmadıklarının bilinmesi önemlidir. Eğer hangi tüketicilerin sosyal medyada paylaşılan videolara karşı şüphenci oldukları anlaşılabilirse, reklamcıların ve pazarlamacıların pazarlama iletişim etkinliğini arttırabilmeleri için alternatif stratejiler geliştirmeleri mümkün olacaktır. Çalışmada televizyon reklamlarına karşı şüphencilik ölçeği uyarlanmış ve test edilmiştir. Veriler online anket ile toplanmıştır. Çalışmada tüketicilerin sosyal medyada paylaşılan videolara karşı şüphencilik ölçeğinin geçerlilik ve güvenilirlik analizleri yapılmıştır. Araştırma bulguları Türk tüketicilerin sosyal medyada paylaşılan videolara karşı şüphenci olduklarını göstermektedir. Çalışma bulguları pazarlamacılar, reklamcılar ve politik amaçlarla kullanılabilir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Şüphencilik, Sosyal Medya, Video

## Introduction

**S**ocial media usage has created lots of speculations on how this new media should be used. One of the ways of using social media is sharing videos which can be professionally designed or amateur. Whether professional or amateur, every video shared on social media has an aim, in most cases a desired change in the attitude or the behavior of the audience. Social media users are bombarded with videos shared. However, it is not known whether followers are believers or sceptics towards these videos shared on social media.

Literature supports evidence that personality traits, product type, advertisement structure, and execution factors, intelligence, self-esteem, age, education and occupation determine skeptical attitudes (Chen & Leu, 2011; Ergeç, 2009). According to Obermiller and Spangenberg (2000), sceptic attitudes originate to the socialization in the family and the associations diminishes with age. Şahin, Yönet, and Suher (2016) found that the children's skeptical levels vary in accordance with the socialization with the parents. Deneçli (2015) researched the effects of personality traits on sceptic attitudes, and stated that the Openness to Experience, Extraversion and Conscientiousness dimensions among the five personality characteristics have an impact on the levels of skepticism in consumers' approach to advertisements.

Turkish Consumers are found to be sceptic towards the advertisements (Ergeç, 2009) and Turkish consumer's perception of ads fall between negative and neutral regardless of the demographic factors such as age, education and socioeconomic status, all groups demonstrate the same attitude toward advertising (Bir, Süher, & Şener, 2015). There are several studies on skepticism levels of advertisements on TV however no study has been conducted on videos shared on social media. Thus this paper tries to fill the gap in the existing literature on skepticism on videos shared on social media in Turkish context. Furthermore, the study aims to test the reliability and validity of a skepticism towards videos shared on social media.

## Skepticism

Skepticism (or Scepticism) is the process of applying reason and critical thinking to determine validity, it is questioning and doubting claims and assertions (Borgo, 2005). Although skepticism has nothing to do with doubt, disbelief or negativity, in marketing it is referred as a negative attitude, as having an attitude of doubt, doubtful about a particular thing or showing doubt. Obermiller and Spangenberg (1998; p.159) defines skepticism toward advertising is the general tendency of disbelief of advertising claims. Consumers are skeptical because of the perceived value of the information, the appropriateness of advertising for specific audiences, the motives of the advertisers, and the truth of claims (Ford, Smith, & Swasy, 1990). Skeptical consumers tend to dislike ads, disbelieve ad claims, and consider ads as less informative, and doubt about ads have a negative effect on brand attitude and purchasing intention and will disrupt product involvement (Chen & Leu, 2011).

Although, in order to increase marketing efficiency, the ads should engender a positive attitude among consumers and shape consumers' perceptions of products, but advertising has been viewed as the least believable product information source and consumers are skeptical towards marketer-controlled sources of information (Obermiller & Spangenberg, 2000). If consumers are skeptical about the advertisements, marketing communication's intended message will not be delivered, or misinterpreted at least. According to Hardesty, Carlson, and Bearden (2002), consumers' skepticism toward advertising moderate the effects of advertised price claims, consumers high in skepticism toward advertising are positively influenced by a high invoice price when brand familiarity is high but not when brand familiarity is low and consumers low in skepticism toward advertising are positively influenced by a high invoice price. In the same manner, the more environmentally concerned an individual is, the more sceptic he or she will be toward green claims exhibited on packages or featured in ads (do Paço & Reis, 2012) and although green consumers trust in green ads they are highly aroused by the emotional green images that are commonly used in green ad campaigns, they do not use their emotions as indicators for the trustworthiness of green ads (Matthes & Wonneberger, 2014).

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### **Social Media As New Medium**

The Web 2.0 has created new ways to communicate, collaborate and share content. Social media changed the way business runs in three primary ways: it shifted the locus of activity from the desktop to the web (meaning greater accessibility); a shift in locus of value production from the firm to the consumer (deriving from increased interaction/interactivity); and a shift in the locus of power away from the firm to the consumer (Berthon, Pitt, Plangger, & Shapiro, 2012; p.262; Okazaki & Taylor, 2013; p. 57).

Persuasive power shifted from companies to consumers, as the social media have led to a dramatic shift from mass communication to interactive digital communication.

Every consumer became an information source by presenting diverse viewpoints, generating and spreading popular rumors, and influencing public opinions on issues, events, and public figures. The social media comprises text, pictures, videos, and networks and the increasing usage of social media for sharing various forms of user-generated content have gained incremental attention among scholars studying advertising, communication, marketing, and public relations (Khang, Ki, & Ye, 2012). Advertisers and marketers recognized the potential of social media early and begin to use social media for conveying their campaign strategies. According to Michaelidou, Siamagka, and Christodoulides (2011) over a quarter of B2B SMEs in the UK are currently using social media to achieve their brand objectives, the most popular of which is to attract new customers.

Advertising on social media has been a heavily researched topic (Felix, Rauschnabel, & Hinsch, 2017; Okazaki & Taylor, 2013), however, skepticism towards videos shared on social media is deficient. The role of social media in the context of marketing is critical for both researchers and managers, thus, the aim of the study is to research the sceptic attitude levels of consumers.

For instance, Shin (2010) researched children's skepticism toward online advertising associated with their online behaviors and parental factors and stated that children high on online ad skepticism are less likely to disclose personal information on the web and spend less time and money on commercial websites. Also, active parental mediation was found to have a positive and significant predictor of children's online ad skepticism.

## Method

The videos shared on social media are a new source of information which challenges traditional mass media. Although, it is widely used by marketers, no reliable and valid scale is available for measuring skepticism levels toward videos shared on social media. The aim of the study is to test an adopted version of skepticism towards videos shared on social media for reliability and validity within Turkish context.

## Data Collection Tool

Data collection tool is an adapted version of consumer skepticism towards advertisements scale developed by Obermiller and Spangenberg (1998). The skepticism towards advertisement scale captures general tendency of a consumer's attitude towards advertisements, there is no distinction between TV, radio, press etc. advertisements, thus, it is evaluated as a suitable scale to measure skepticism towards videos shared on social media.

Obermiller and Spangenberg (1998) developed the consumer skepticism towards advertisements scale based on literature review, brainstorming, and consulting with marketing academics and collected 124 statements. According to the expert

opinions number of items are reduced to 31, and item-to-total correlations and factor analysis tests calculated for reliability and validity resulted in 9 item questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha coefficient calculated are 0,85 and 0,86 (Obermiller & Spangenberg, 1998; p.171), average variance extracted is 0,33 and 0,35, and scale is reported for discriminant and predictive validity. Consumer skepticism towards advertisements scale is a unidimensional scale which consists of nine items operationalized using a 5-point Likert type questions ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. *Item scores are* summed in order to obtain a general skepticism level for each participant, with higher scores representing higher skepticism, minimum 9 maximum 45. Mean scores for students' average is reported as 28.0, 27.7 for secondary students, 27.9 for undergraduates, and 29.4 for MBAs.

### Data Collection Process

In this study consumer skepticism towards advertisement scale developed by Obermiller and Spangenberg (1998) adapted to measure skepticism toward videos shared on social media on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*), and 8 demographics items asking age, gender, monthly average income, and daily average time spend on TV, social media, internet, radio and newspaper. Data is collected online, questionnaire is announced in a web page for one month on October 2017, approximately 30.000 clicks captured during the data collection period and a total of 764 participants participated in the study, 12 questionnaires are dismissed due to missing data remaining 752 usable cases.

### Analysis

#### Demographics

Participants average age is calculated as 25,06, minimum 10 and maximum 90. Participants are %60,2 male and %39,2 female. Average monthly house-hold income is 6.913,57 TL (1828,98\$, exchange rate TL/\$=3,78, date 27/10/2017). Participants watch TV 2,985 hours, 4,231 hours follow social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.), 4,145 hours spend on internet, 2,777 hours listening radio and 2,770 hours reading newspapers daily average.

#### Reliability and Validity Tests

In order to test reliability and validity of the scale, Cronbach's alpha coefficient is calculated and exploratory factor analysis is operationalized. Cronbach' alpha coefficient is calculated as 0,970 stating a reliable scale (Table 1). Consumer skepticism towards advertisement scale is reported a unidimensional scale.

**Table 1:** Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,970	9

In order to ensure data collected for factor analysis, KMO and Bartlett's sphericity tests are conducted (Table 2). KMO sampling adequacy test coefficient is calculated as 0,961, values closer 1 suggests adequate sampling. Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant at 0,001 level.

KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity suggest that data is suitable for factor analysis.

**Table 2:** KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,961	
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	8034,774	
	Df	36	
	Sig.	,000	

Factor analysis using principle component method with varimax rotation is operationalized. Factor analysis results support a unidimensional scale where variance extracted is calculated as 80,687, all the items are collected under one dimension, thus rotation matrix is not calculated, but component matrix (Table 3). One dimension is extracted and factor loadings for all the items are higher than 0,50.

**Table 3:** Component Matrix

	Component
	1
We can depend on getting the truth in most videos shared on social media.	,845
Videos shared on social media aims to inform the consumer.	,886
I believe videos shared on social media are informative.	,907
Videos shared on social media are generally truthful.	,909
Videos shared on social media are a reliable source of information about the quality and performance of products.	,907
Videos shared on social media is truth well told.	,920
In general, videos shared on social media presents a picture of the truth.	,906

I feel I've been accurately informed after viewing most videos shared on social media.	,899
Most videos shared on social media provide consumers with essential information.	,905

Cronbach's alpha coefficient calculated and exploratory factor analysis results suggest a reliable and valid unidimensional scale which is congruent with the literature.

In order to measure the skepticism levels of the participants, items scores are summed and an index percent value is calculated in order to ease of understanding where 0 suggests low skepticism and 100 suggests high skepticism towards videos shared on social media. Formula used for data computation is:

Average skepticism index calculated for consumers' skepticism towards videos shared on social media suggest an average skepticism level where 0 suggests the lowest and 100 suggests the highest and 50 suggests the moderate level, skepticism index calculated is 52,9846 over 100. Percentiles suggest that the first %25 of the respondents' skepticism level is 27,7778, the second percentile is 46,2963 and the third percentile is 72,2222. In other words, trust level towards videos shared on social media is 52,9846, the first percentile level is 27,7778, the second percentile is 53,7037 and the third percentile is 83,333. Considering 25 and 75 index values as cut points for high and low skepticism (trust) breaking points, %23,5 of the respondents trust in videos shared on social media and approximately %30 of the respondents are skeptical towards the videos shared on social media. Results suggest that, although Turkish consumers are on the skeptical side compared to trusting side, still a majority of the respondents consider videos shared on social media as a reliable information source.

### **The Relationships Between Demographics and Skepticism Gender Differences on Skepticism Towards Videos Shared on Social Media**

In order to test whether skepticism levels differ based on gender, independent samples t-test is conducted. Independent samples t-test results suggest that male participants (mean skepticism index=50,8866) is significantly differentiate from female participants (mean skepticism index=56,2187), female participants are more sceptic towards videos shared on social media (df=741, p<0,05).

**Table 4:** Independent Samples t-test for Male vs Female, Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Skepticism	Male	447	50,8866	35,31797	1,67048
	Female	296	56,2187	31,33956	1,82157



Table 5: Independent Samples t-test for Male vs Female, Significance Levels

t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
-2,106	741	,036	-5,33215	2,53213

### Age Differences on Skepticism Towards Videos Shared on Social Media

In order to research the relationship between age and skepticism levels of the participants, Pearson Correlation coefficient is calculated (Table 8). Age and skepticism index are input as scale measures. Correlation analysis suggests a statistically significant weak relationship between age and skepticism levels, as the age increases skepticism levels increases ( $r= 0,093$ ,  $p<0,05$ ).

Table 6: Relationship Between Age and Skepticism Levels.

Correlations			
		Age	Skepticism Index
Age	Pearson Correlation	1	,093
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,016
	N	675	675
Skepticism Index	Pearson Correlation	,093	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,016	
	N	675	752

### Income Differences on Skepticism Towards Videos Shared on Social Media

In order to research the relationship between average monthly household income and skepticism levels, Pearson Correlation coefficient is calculated. Income and skepticism index are input as scale measures. Relationship between average monthly household income and skepticism levels is statistically not significant ( $p>0,05$ ).

**Table 7:** Relationship Income and Skepticism Levels.

Correlations			
		Income	Skepticism Index
Income	Pearson Correlation	1	-,040
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,412
	N	432	432
Skepticism Index	Pearson Correlation	-,040	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,412	
	N	432	752

### Exposure Time Differences on Skepticism Towards Videos Shared on Social Media

In order to research the relationship between hours spend on TV, social media, internet, radio listening and newspaper reading and the skepticism levels of the participants, Pearson Correlation coefficient is calculated. Correlation analysis suggest a statistically significant relationship between hours spend on TV [ $r = (-) 0,400$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ], social media [ $r = (-) 0,411$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ], internet [ $r = (-) 0,393$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ], radio listening [ $r = (-) 0,389$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ], and newspaper reading [ $r = (-) 0,380$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ], and the skepticism levels of the participants. As the hours spend on TV, social media, internet, radio listening and newspaper reading increases, skepticism levels decreases.

**Table 8:** Relationship Exposure of Time and Skepticism Levels.

		TV	Social Media	Internet	Radio	Newspaper
Skepticism	Pearson Correlation	-,400**	-,411**	-,393**	-,389**	-,380**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
	N	752	752	751	752	752

### Conclusion and Discussion

Social media has significant impact on the way business runs. Before social media, marketing communication is one-way communication, from the companies to the consumers. Developments in information technologies open new opportunities for companies as well as consumers by increasing ease of communication and decreasing costs of communication. Today, social media is challenging traditional marketing communication channels, and every consumer itself is a source of information. Social media enables consumers share information, opinions, thoughts and experiences in text, picture, and voice or movie format. Videos shared on social media are one way of sharing information on social media. Although it is widely used in practice, the skepticism levels of consumers towards videos shared on social media is not researched. Thus, the study aims to research the skepticism levels of consumers.

In the study, a consumer skepticism towards videos shared on social media scale is proposed based on Obermiller and Spangenberg (1998) consumer skepticism towards advertisement scale and proposed scale is tested for reliability and validity.

A consumer skepticism towards videos shared on social media index is calculated and relationships between skepticism levels and gender, age, income and hours spend on TV, social media, internet, radio listening and newspaper reading are researched. The findings suggest a reliable and valid scale to capture consumer skepticism towards videos shared on social media. One of the studies contribution to the current literature is that, it has tested consumer skepticism towards videos shared on social media scale for reliability and validity within Turkish context. For future studies, whether the study aims to research skepticism or trust, the scale tested in this study is offered as a reliable and valid scale within Turkish context.

Consumer skepticism towards videos shared on social media index suggest that Turkish consumers are on the sceptic side. However, the analysis also suggests that nearly half of the participants trust in videos shared on social media which is still very high. This finding suggests that videos shared on social media are perceived as a reliable information source, which offers new communication opportunities for marketers and advertisers.

Female are found to be more sceptic compared to male, and skepticism levels increase as the age increases, but no statistically significant relationship is found between average monthly household income and the skepticism levels. Findings suggest that male and young consumers tend to trust in videos shared on social media more, offering a target group for marketers and advertisers.

Findings on hours spend on TV, social media, internet, radio listening and newspaper reading suggest statistically significant and negative relationships, as the time spend on TV, social media, internet, radio listening and newspaper reading increases, skepticism levels decreases. Although all the correlations are significant, daily hours spend on social media has the highest negative correlation with skepticism level, suggesting that as the time spend on social media increases, skepticism levels decreases. This finding suggest that the more consumers are into social media exposure, the more they trust in information offered by videos shared in social media. However, the same pattern is also true for TV watchers, internet surfers, radio listeners and newspaper reader. It should be noted that it is also available to watch TV online, as well as some TV models offer internet connection and social media, consumers can listen radio online and newspapers online. Moreover, online TV, Internet, radio and newspaper web pages also support social media accounts. Thus, as long as consumers are online they are exposed to videos shared on social media accounts which may the reason that all the correlations between daily average hours spend on TV, social media, Internet, radio and newspaper are negatively correlated with skepticism levels.

## Limitation and Implications for Future Studies

The aim of the study was to research skepticism levels of consumers towards videos shared on social media. The study offers a reliable and valid scale for skepticism towards videos shared on social media in Turkish context, which can be of use for future studies. However, study is limited to participants visited the web page where questionnaire is announced. The findings are limited to the participants visiting to the page. Offline consumers are not represented in the study which in future studies may be concerned. For detailed consumer profile more demographics should be included for the aim of the study, and in order to research skepticism levels of consumers towards videos shared on social media more variables can be included in the study.

### Appendix:

Skepticism Towards Videos Shared on Social Media Scale in Turkish

- 1- Sosyal medyada paylaşılan videolardan doğru bilgi aldığımıza güvenebiliriz.
- 2- Sosyal medyada paylaşılan videoların amacı tüketiciye bilgi vermektir.
- 3- Sosyal medyada paylaşılan videoların bilgilendirici olduğuna inanıyorum
- 4- Sosyal medyada paylaşılan videolar genelde doğrudur.
- 5- Sosyal medyada paylaşılan videolar ürünlerin performansı ve kalitesi hakkında bilgi veren güvenilir bir kaynaktır.
- 6- Sosyal medyada paylaşılan videolar iyi anlatılmış doğrulardır.
- 7- Genellikle, sosyal medyada paylaşılan videolar gerçeğin bir resmini ortaya koyar.
- 8- Sosyal medyada paylaşılan videoları izledikten sonra doğru bilgilendirilmiş olduğumu hissediyorum.
- 9- Birçok sosyal medyada paylaşılan videolar tüketiciye bilmesi gereken yeterli temel bilgiyi verir.

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