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A Research on Consumer Perceptions of Food and Beverage Marketing on Social Media

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Neşe Acar * - Bülent Çizmeci ** - Ayşegül Turan ***
* Doç. Dr., Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli Üniversitesi
E-Mail: neseacar@nevsehir.edu.tr   **ORCID:** 0000-0002-9830-1463
** Dr., Abdullah Gül Üniversitesi
E-Mail bulent.cizmeci@yahoo.com   **ORCID:** 0000-0002-7722-6003
***Dr. Öğretim Üyesi, Kırşehir Ahi Evran Üniversitesi
E-Mail furkanberna98@gmail.com   **ORCID:** 0000-0002-0451-8611

Abstract

The study was conducted to examine how social media affects the food and beverage industry. It was also intended to expose the impact of social media on consumer preferences for the marketing of food and beverages. In order for businesses to compete with other businesses, the importance of channels that influence purchasing decisions by changing consumers ' consumption habits is increasing day by day. One of these tools is social media. In this study, consumers' perceptions about marketing of food and beverages through social media were tried to be determined. The research was carried out by using the questionnaire technique with 403 participants using social media which was determined by Convenient Sampling Method. As a result of Explanatory Factor Analysis, 2 factors were found; "Sharing and impact" and "promotion on social media". In the Confirmatory Factor Analysis, it was found that the shares in social media affect the choices and decisions made about the food and beverage business, and consumers can prefer to share their experiences. It can be considered that consumers actively use social media related to food and beverage and they are influenced by social media sharing in the selection of food and beverage businesses.

Sosyal Medya Üzerinden Yiyecek ve İçecek Pazarlamasına Yönelik Tüketici Algıları Üzerine Bir Araştırma

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Öz

Bu çalışma, sosyal medyanın yiyecek içecek sektörünü nasıl etkilediğini incelemek ve yiyecek içeceklerin pazarlanmasına yönelik tüketici tercihlerinde sosyal medyanın etkisini ortaya koymak amacıyla yapıl-mıştır. İşletmelerin diğer işletmelerle rekabet edebilmeleri için tüketicilerin tüketim alışkanlıkları ve alış-kanlıklarını yönlendirerek satın alma kararlarını etkileyen mecraların önemi her geçen gün artmaktadır. Bunlardan biriside sosyal medyadır. Çalışmada tüketicilerin sosyal medya üzerinden yiyecek ve içecek-lerin pazarlamasına yönelik algıları tespit edilmeye çalışılmıştır. Araştırma, kolayda örneklem metodu ile belirlenen ve sosyal medya kullanan 403 katılımcı ile anket tekniği kullanılarak yapılmıştır. Yapılan açıklayıcı faktör analizi sonucunda "Paylaşım ve Etki" ve "Sosyal Medyada Tanıtım" olarak adlandırı-lan 2 faktör bulunmuştur. Doğrulayıcı faktör analizi sonucunda ise sosyal medyadaki paylaşımların yiyecek-içecek işletmesi ile ilgili seçimleri ve verilen kararları etkilediği görülmüştür. Ayrıca kişilerin kendi deneyimlerini paylaşmayı tercih edebilecekleri sonucuna varılmıştır. Bu doğrultuda işletmelerin sosyal medyayı tüketici tercihlerini belirleme ve etkileme noktasında etkili bir tutundurma aracı olarak kullanmaları önerilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Sosyal Medya, Yiyecek İçecek Pazarlaması, Tüketici, Sağlık Sektörü*

Introduction

The social media concept has been associated with a different meaning for everyone since the day it entered human life. Some consumers used these apps and sites to spend time, some to socialize, and some for business purposes.

Many different social media sites have been established since 2007 for purposes like sharing pictures, shopping, writing blogs, and making comments on events. In other words, social media has been the subject of important changes, both in terms of its contents and its form. For this reason, more up-to-date and different definitions were made on the social media concept, some of which are given below (Çizmeci, 2018, p. 74).

When the literature was reviewed, it was determined that there are many definitions on social media. According to the description of Boyd and Ellison made in 2007, social media sites are web-based services in which individuals can create open or semi-open profiles, state the other users' lists they connect to explicitly, and view and switch between the lists of other users (Boyd and Ellison, 2007, p. 211).

Toprak, Yıldırım, Aygül, Binark, Börekçi and Çomu (2009, p.28-29) defined social media as web-based services in which individuals meet other individuals in a virtual environment. According to Safko and Brake (2009, p. 6), social media means web-based applications, which are easy to create and publish multimedia themes and chat contents.

When the use of social media in the world for business purposes is considered, it is seen that many major brands are starting to pay more attention to social media users rather than classic means of media like TV, newspapers and radios.. In addition, social media also allows businesses to upload information through a single media on many issues like discounts, promotions, new movies, breaking news. Although the use of social media for producing and dissemination information is a popular aspect for conscious users, the noise and pollution caused by unconscious individuals can also cause that these platforms are considered with a certain bias (Cağıl, 2017, p.2).

Social media offers many opportunities for marketing. It is also possible to obtain opportunities with a good marketing strategy. Mc Donalds and Bradley (2011, p. 37) suggested that their social CRM (Customer Relations Man-

agement) was expanded with the broad organizational capacity of social media to create social relations for marketing goals. For example, social media is highly influential in solving the problems that stem from marketing process, and in sharing good practices and other strategic organizational uses. Social media plays an important role in the decision-making process of consumers, and promotes following pages and deep changes in consumer behaviors (Casalo, Flavian and Guinaliu, 2011, p. 630).

Participants tend to create profiles that represent their personality traits and conditions quite well in virtual environment without actually noticing (Zhao, Grasmuck and Martin, 2008, p. 1820). Li and Bernoff (2011, p. 41) developed a "Social Technograph" based on the level of social media users, classifying seven hierarchical categories (creative, critical, talkative, participant, passive, collector, audience). When individuals act comfortably in virtual environment compared to real life by displaying all their personality traits in market research, this facilitates market research. In this way, dynamic dialogues are developed and confidence is acquired for creating and listening to appropriate contents, rather than advertising messages that consumers find repulsive when they promote brands over the social media (Woodcock, Green and Starkey, 2011, p. 55). The shares on the Internet about products and companies by consumers provide access to a large number of consumers (Thorson and Rodgers, 2006, p. 34). With the help of Social Media Platforms, which are today's WOMs (Word of Mouth) it has become easy to access product information.

Important developments have been experienced in the food and beverage sector with the social media movement. Consumers have been able to access food and beverage products more easily by using digital technology and by recognizing the relations between social media and food (Holmberg, 2014, p.210).

It has become easy to access the documents about news on nutrition, and on the recommendations of institutions regarding nutrition using search engines. Easy access to the Internet is achieved with mobile devices like tablets, computers, smartphones, etc., and activities like ordering food and finding locations can be done through technological means (Oran, 2017, p. 3). Food culture holds a very important place in societies. Knowing what a society feeds on provides information about the geographical location and agricultural products of that society. There are websites, blogs and thousands of

pages in which people share recipes with each other. Recipe books are now replaced by these food blogs (Tunç and Özkanlı, 2017, p.218).

Health status and social norms are effective in the food and beverage habits of people. In our present day, however, social media can turn these habits upside down. The metaphors used by food and beverage sectors in their promotional activities over the social media cause that even consumers who have no meal plans find themselves at the door of a restaurant (Holmberg, 2014, p.210). A transformation process has begun in the eating habits of the society with the social media used both on mobile phones and computers. Contents, which are considered to be of interest by individuals, are shared, and attention is paid to make the photos shared over the social media are liked (Uluç and Yarcı, 2017, p.90).

In the study conducted by Cankül et al. (2018), it was determined that food and beverage sector businesses use social networks to reach customers and express themselves as well as for promotion purposes. Social media applications make it easier for business managers to reach customers, as well as minimizing advertising costs.

Cafes and restaurants are important travel products beyond being mere places where people meet their needs when they are hungry, and travelers expect that they enjoy a café or restaurant, and that such places are considered as travel products (Hwang and Park, 2015, p. 272). Going to a café or restaurant and socializing with friends in these places is considered as one of leisure time activities, and for this reason, young people increasingly go to these places as social behavior and spend time there (Astuti and Hanan, 2010, p.75).

In our present day, activities such as making comments on social media before going to food and beverage businesses, sharing about the food and beverage businesses, having a social media account for a cafe or restaurant, sharing experiences, photographs or videos about that business on social media, and sharing locations have become an indispensable element for young people (Binbaşıoğlu and Türk, 2018 p. 227).

Nowadays, businesses need to use social media channels where there are important opportunities to attract the attention of their customers, understand the habits of consumers in these channels and determine strategies accordingly. The study was conducted to examine how social media affects the food and beverage industry. It was also intended to expose the impact of social media on consumer preferences for the marketing of food and beverages.

In this study, consumers' perceptions about marketing of food and beverages through social media were tried to be determined.

Method

The present study was conducted to examine how social media affects the food and beverage sectors, and to show the effect of social media on consumer preferences for marketing food and beverages. The study covered the consumers who had social media accounts and actively used it in Kayseri city center. The sampling was determined with Convenient Sampling Method. The primary data that were used in the study were collected with questionnaire method. In addition, the study conducted by Battallar and Cömert was adapted to food and beverage businesses. (Battallar and Cömert, 2015). The questionnaires were conducted between July 2, 2019 and September 30, 2019. A total of 403 questionnaires were evaluated from the 420 questionnaires because 17 were empty or incorrect. Expressions about the purpose of using social media for the consumers, how often they used social media applications, and how food and dining place preferences were affected over the social media were used in the questionnaire form. It was requested that the 18 expressions about food and dining preferences were evaluated on a 5-Point Likert scale. There were 9 expressions about the purpose of using social media applications of the participants and 8 expressions about the frequency of use of social media/mobile applications in the questionnaire. Also, there were 6 questions about the demographic data of the participants in the questionnaire.

Analysis and Evaluation of the Data

The frequency and percentages of questions about the demographic characteristics of the participants, meal/nutrition and dining location preferences, social media usage purposes, and frequency of social media use were evaluated in the study. In addition, the mean values of the variables regarding the use of social media was taken in consumer preferences for marketing food and beverages. Factor Analysis was made to determine the factors that were effective in the use of social media in consumer preferences in food and beverage marketing.

Findings

Demographics of Participants

A total of 52.9% of the participants of the study were male, 64.0% were single, 63.8% were between 18-25 years old, 16.9% were between 26-35 years old, 10.7% were 36- 45 years old, 7.7% are in the age group 46 and over.

Table 1. Demographics of Participants

Income (TL)	Frequency	Percent	Profession	Frequency	Percent
1.000 – 2.000	155	38,5	Worker	46	11,4
2.001 – 3.000	91	22,6	Officer	126	31,3
3.001 – 4.000	43	10,7	Self-employed	41	10,2
4.001 – 5.000	50	12,4	Retired	31	7,7
5.001 and up	64	15,9	Housewife	29	7,2
Total	**403**	**100,0**	Another	130	32,3
Gender	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Total**	**403**	**100,0**
Male	213	52,9	**Education**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Female	190	47,1	Primary	34	8,4
Total	**403**	**100,0**	High school	110	27,3
Age	**Frequency**	**Percent**	University	172	42,7
18-25	257	63,8	Post graduate	43	10,7
26-35	68	16,9	PhD	44	10,9
36-45	43	10,7	**Total**	**403**	**100,0**
46 years and older	35	8,7	**Marital Status**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
			Married	145	36,0
			Single	258	64,0
Total	**403**	**100,0**	**Total**	**403**	**100,0**

According to the educational status, 42.7% of the participants were graduated from university, 27.3% from high school, 8.4% from primary school, and 21.6% were post-graduate students. According to income status, 38.5% had income between TL1000 and TL2000, and 22.6% between TL2001 and TL3001. It is determined that 32.3% of the participants were in "Other" professional group, and 31.3% were civil servants.

Participants' food location preferences and nutritional evaluations

The tables of the participants' evaluations about where they mostly eat and where they get information about nutrition are given below.

Table 2. Distribution of Participants According to Dining Preferences

	Frequency	Percent
At home	255	63,3
Outside	148	36,7
Total	**403**	**100,0**

According to Table 2, 36.7% of the participants said that they ate outside and 63.3% said that they ate at home. This shows that the participants have a habit of eating out.

Table 3. Distribution of participants by place where they received nutrition-related information

	Frequency	Percent
Internet	192	47,6
Book	91	22,6
Nutritionist	70	17,4
Doctor	32	7,9
Other	18	4,4
Total	**403**	**100,0**

According to Table 3, 47.6% of respondents said that they had 47.6% had access to information about nutrition online (web page and social media sites). This is followed by a book with 22.6%, a nutrition with 17.4%, a doctor with 7.9% and 4.4% other options. This means that about half of the participants have access to information about nutrition through the internet, and therefore social media has a greater impact.

Averages of the Expressions Regarding the Use of Social Media in the Participants' Choices for the Marketing of Food and Beverages

The averages of the expressions regarding the use of social media in the preferences of the participants for the marketing of food and beverage are given in Table 4.

Table 4. The averages of the expressions regarding the use of social media in the preferences of the participants for the marketing of food and beverage

Expressions	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. I will be pleased if the business I shared positively/negatively on social media recognizes me	3,87	1,25982
2. Businesses that report their location on social media are more attractive because they will facilitate my transportation	3,73	1,28711
3. I make sure it is popular on social media when I choose a food and beverage business	3,49	1,30126

4. I think that food and beverage businesses on social media offer better quality services	3,38	1,29764
5. Social media affects my habit of consuming food and drink	3,36	1,35252
6. Social media shares affect my decision in selecting food and beverage businesses	3,51	1,29743
7. I am affected by information shared by food and beverage businesses on social media	3,51	1,28202
8. I collect information about the business on social media before going to a business	3,57	1,31852
9. I am affected by videos shared by the business on social media	3,43	1,30525
10.I find the shares made by the business on social media reliable	3,34	1,31491
11. I can change my decision according to posts on social media after I choose the business	3,40	1,23876
12. Social media networks are important information sources during purchase process	3,52	1,27806
13. I share my satisfaction with the business on social media	3,29	1,34628
14. I prefer to share my taste experiences on social media because I can reach more people at the same time and in a fast way	3,27	1,38894
15. I share contents on social media during my time in a food and beverage business	3,21	1,31816
16. I share my positive experiences to support the businesses if they serve well	3,46	1,31209
17. I can contact social media before making a decision on the business, and if I can reach it, I will be positively affected	3,40	1,28373
18. When a business reaches me over the social media, it has a positive effect on me	3,45	1,26560

5- Strongly Agree, 4-Agree, 3 - Neither Agree, Nor Disagree, 2-Disagree, 1-Strongly Disagree

Looking at the average of the expressions regarding the use of social media in the preferences of the participants for the marketing of food and beverage, it is seen that the highest averages are ". I will be pleased if the business I shared positively/negatively on social media recognizes me (3,87)", "Businesses that report their location on social media are more attractive because they will facilitate my transportation. (3,73)", "I collect information about the business on social media before going to a business (3.57)", "Social media shares affect my decision in selecting food and beverage businesses" and "I am affected by information shared by food and beverage businesses on social media" (3.51).

Factors that influence participants ' preferences for food and Beverage Marketing and their assessment of variables related to social media use

Factor analysis was performed to determine which factors the participants perceived under 18 variables related to social media use in their preferences for food and beverage marketing, and the varimax method was used and 2 factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were found. These factors explain 68.55% of the total variance.

The KMO (Kaiser-Meyer - Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy) test is ,965 and sampling can be said to be sufficient (Altunışık, Coşkun and Yıldırım, 2007, p. 226). The Barlett test came out $x^2 = 6204,108$ and shows that there is a relationship between the variables in the main mass at the level of ,000 significance. Reliability analysis found that the reliability coefficient of 18 expressions (Cronbach's α) was ,964. The variables, factor loads, eigenvalues, variance percentages and Croncbach's Alpha coefficients that make up the 2 factors are given in Table 5.

Table 5. Explanatory Factor Analysis Results

Factors	Factor Loads	Eigenvalue	Described variance %	Reliability values α
1. Sharing and impact		11,216	62,310	,959
15. I share contents on social media during my time in a food and beverage business	,810			
16. I share my positive experiences to support the businesses if they serve well	,796			
17. I can contact social media before making a decision on the business, and if I can reach it, I will be positively affected	,789			
18. When a business reaches me over the social media, it has a positive effect on me	,785			
11. I can change my decision according to posts on social media after I choose the business	,770			
13. I share my satisfaction with the business on social media	,760			
14. I prefer to share my taste experiences on social media because I can reach more people at the same time and in a fast way	,757			
10. I find the shares made by the business on social media reliable	,753			
12. Social media networks are important information sources during purchase process	,716			
9. I am affected by videos shared by the business on social media	,654			
8. I collect information about the business on social media before going to a business	,650			

2. Promotion on social media		1,123	6,239	,901
3. I make sure it is popular on social media when I choose a food and beverage business	,759			
2. Businesses that report their location on social media are more attractive because they will facilitate my transportation	,737			
6. Social media shares affect my decision in selecting food and beverage businesses	,726			
7. I am affected by information shared by food and beverage businesses on social media	,679			
1. I will be pleased if the business I shared positively/negatively on social media recognizes me	,675			
4. I think that food and beverage businesses on social media offer better quality services	,674			
5. Social media affects my habit of consuming food and drink	,593			

When Table 5 is examined, it was observed that the questions numbered (15, 16, 17, 18, 11, 13, 14, 10, 12, 9, 8) were explained by the first factor and the questions (3, 2, 6, 7, 1, 4, 5) were explained by the 2nd factor.

Due to the variables (expressions) it contains, the first factor is called **"Sharing and Effect"** and it has the highest variance. These factors consist of 11 variables as follows; 15. I share contents on social media during my time in a food and beverage business, 16. I share my positive experiences to support the businesses if they serve well, 17. I can contact social media before making a decision on the business, and if I can reach it, I will be positively affected, 18. When a business reaches me over the social media, it has a positive effect on me, 11. I can change my decision according to posts on social media after I choose the business, 13. I share my satisfaction with the business on social media, 14. I prefer to share my taste experiences on social media because I can reach more people at the same time and in a fast way, 10. I find the shares made by the business on social media reliable, 12. Social media networks are important information sources during purchase process, 9. I am affected by videos shared by the business on social media, 8. I collect information about the business on social media before going to a business. In terms of factor loads, variable number 15 "I share contents on social media during my time in a food and beverage business" has the largest value (0,810). This factor explains 62.310% of the total variance.

Due to the variables (expressions) it contains, the second factor is called **"Promotion on social media".** These factors consist of 7 variables as follows; 3. I make sure it is popular on social media when I choose a food and beverage

business, 2. Businesses that report their location on social media are more attractive because they will facilitate my transportation, 6. Social media shares affect my decision in selecting food and beverage businesses, 7. I am affected by information shared by food and beverage businesses on social media, 1. I will be pleased if the business I shared positively/negatively on social media recognizes me, 4. I think that food and beverage businesses on social media offer better quality services, 5. Social media affects my habit of consuming food and drink. In terms of factor loads, variable number 5 "5. Social media affects my habit of consuming food and drink" has the largest value (0,759). This factor explains 6.239% of the total variance.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

In our study, Factor Analysis was made to determine which factors in 18 expressions were detected by consumers, and 2 factors were determined. Then, Confirmatory Factor Analysis was made in the AMOS Program to examine the factor structure. In Confirmatory Factor Analysis, which is used to examine the factor structure in a scale, it is necessary for the reliability and validity of the factor structure of the scale to fit theoretical information. When the analysis ensures the validity and reliability of the scale in different main aspects, the scale is considered standardized, and can be made available safely (Şencan, 2005).

Since inter-variable error variants are taken into account in the analyses with the AMOS Program, the measurement accuracy of these programs is considered more powerful. It is expected that the error variants in the analysis are less than 1. All error variant values were less than 1 in our analyses.

The T values were examined to be considered significant in the analysis results. According to the AMOS Program, the CFA Goodness of Fit indices are given in Table 6. The T values must be higher than at least 1.96 for all items in order for the model to be acceptable. It is considered significant at 0.05 level over 1.96, and 0.01 level over 2.56. Since the AVE and factor loads of the 13 expressions in the Confirmatory Factor Analysis were over 0.50, it was understood that it met the convergent validity and composite reliability.

Table 6. DFA compliance goodness indices according to the Amos program

Criterion	Values
X²/df	3,813
RMSEA	,084
NFI	,946
CFI	,960
RFI	,934
AGFI	,877
GFI	,913

Table 7. DFA by AMOS Program

Factors	Variable Observed	AVE	BYG	Estimated Value	SE	C.R.
	S16			0,828	0,054	20,221
	S17			0,810	0,053	19,549
	S18			0,817	0,052	19,811
Factor 1	S11			0,866	0,049	21,715
Sharing and	S13			0,845	0,054	20,875
Impact	S14			0,802	0,058	19,262
	S10			0,835	0,054	20,498
	S12			0,816	0,053	19,753
	S8			0,830	0,054	20,303
Factor 2	S4			0,810	0,055	19,215
Promotion on	S7			0,824	0,054	19,726
Social Media	S6			0,876	0,052	21,697
	S3			0,786	0,056	18,363
Factor 1		0,69	0,95			
Factor 2		0,68	0,89			

The highest influence in the first factor **"Sharing and Impact"** was in the expression "I can change my decision according to posts on social media after I choose the business" with 0.866, and the lowest effect was in the expression "I prefer to share my taste experiences on social media because I can reach more people at the same time and in a fast way" with 0.802. Based on this outcome, it might be concluded that consumers are actively using social media about foods and beverages. It can be argued that participants can share their own ideas when they pay attention to the shares in their own preferences.

The highest influence on the second factor, **"Promotion on Social Media",** was the variable "Social media shares affect my decision in choosing food and beverage businesses" with 0.876, and the lowest effect was in "I make sure it is popular on social media when I choose a food and beverage business" with 0.786. Based on this result, it can be considered that consumers are affected

by social media shares in choosing food and beverage businesses. It was found that the comments were effective rather than everybody's preference.
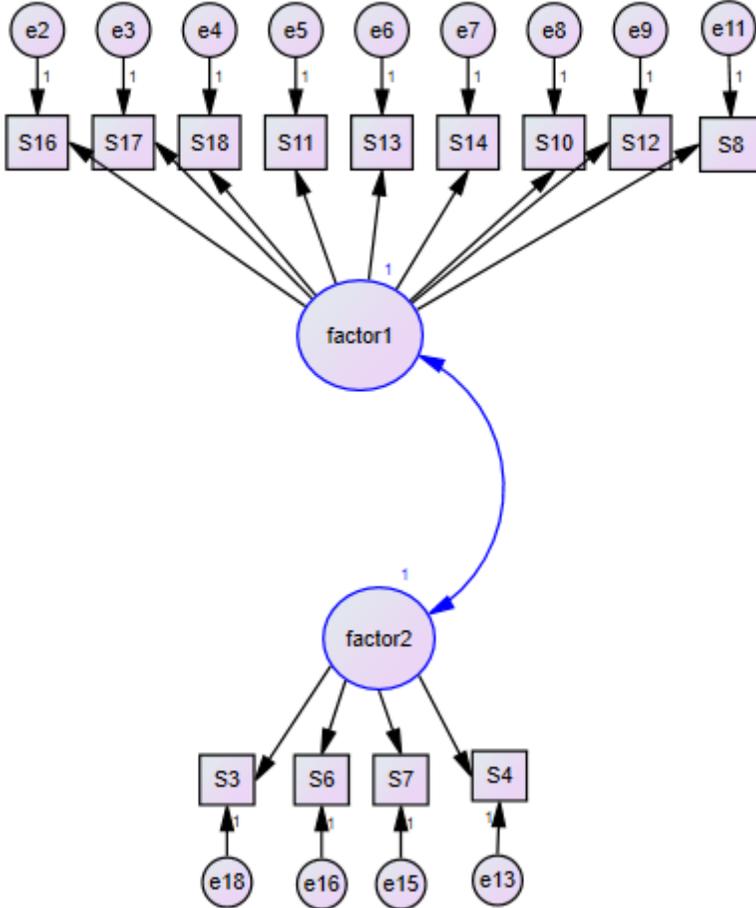

Figure 1. DFA by AMOS Program

Evaluation and Results

Social media, which can be used to spend time, socialize and use applications and sites for business, ensures that information can be accessed and spread quickly in a short time by some consumers in our present time. This study was conducted to examine how social media affects the food and beverage

industry, and to demonstrate the effects of social media on consumer preferences for marketing foods and beverages.

A total of 52.9% of the participants of the study were male, 64.0% were single, and 63.8% were in 18 and 25 age group. According to the educational status, 42.7% of the participants were graduated from university, 27.3% from high school, 8.4% from primary school, and 21.6% were post-graduate students. According to income status, 38.5% had income between TL1000 and TL2000, and 22.6% between TL2001 and TL3001. It is determined that 32.3% of the participants were in "Other" professional group, and 31.3% were civil servants. According to the study results, 36.7% of the participants said that they ate out, and 47.6% had access to information about nutrition online. In the preferences for marketing of food and beverages according to the mean values of the expressions for using social media, the highest mean values were detected in the following expressions; "I will be pleased if the business I shared positively/negatively on social media recognizes me", "Businesses that report their location on social media are more attractive because they will facilitate my transportation", "Social media networks are important information sources in purchase process", "Social media shares affect my decision in selecting food and beverage businesses" and "I am affected by information shared by food and beverage businesses on social media".

As a result of the Explanatory Factor Analysis in the study, 2 factors were determined with the titles "Sharing and Effect", "Promotion in Social Media". According to the results, consumers are actively using social media for food and beverages, and are affected by social media posts in choosing food and beverage businesses.

In addition to classical marketing, digital marketing activities on digital platforms formed as a result of developing technologies are important and of course, it is seen that the effect of the shares that the consumers will make as a result of these activities is important. Because promotions and shares on social media can reach the most people in a short time.

There are many advantages of social media to be so effective in digital marketing. These are easy access, fast spread, low cost, dimensionality, controllability and targetability

With digital marketing activities carried out on social media, it is possible to analyze how many people have been accessed, how many people viewed and clicked. In this way, it allows flexibility, such as how many people share

the promotion you have made, how much it reaches your target audience, instant changes to the content as a result of the feedback you receive, and the ability to adjust the schedule.

It can select your target audience according to the demographic characteristics of your customers, such as gender, age, educational status, as well as select the country, city, district where the activity activity will be carried out and reach a more accurate audience by targeting location-based.

In this respect, it may be recommend to businesses to use social media as an effective promotion tool in determining and affecting consumer preferences.

In addition, since it is lower cost than classic marketing, new entrepreneurs can be recommended to conduct their first promotion activities with social media tools.

The results of the study will be guiding in using social media to observe the changes in consumer preferences and to affect these preferences. In future studies, means of social media can be addressed separately and compared in terms of evaluation and use.

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