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AUTHORS: Muhammed Talha NARCI

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Examining of the Relationship between Consumer Attitudes and Purchasing Behavior towards Product Placements Included in Social Media Videos¹

(Research Article)

Sosyal Medya Videolarında Yer Alan Ürün Yerleştirmelere Yönelik Tüketici Tutumları ile Satın Alma Davranışları Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi
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Muhammed Talha NARCI

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi

muhammedtalhanarci@aydin.edu.tr

Orcid No: 0000-0002-2103-4037

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Product Placement,
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This study aims to determine the effect of product placements in social media videos on purchasing behavior in Turkey. In the research, in which a mixed research method was followed, a questionnaire was chosen as the data collection technique, and in this questionnaire, there are questions about the product placement scale and the purchasing behavior scale as well as demographic expressions. The questionnaire, adapted according to the subject of the study, was applied to social media users over the age of 18 in Turkey, and 432 responses were received. The obtained data were analyzed using SPSS and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) programs according to the hypotheses created about the research model. According to the results of the research, it is understood that only the awareness dimension of product placement has a statistically significant effect on purchasing behavior. In addition, the effect of the ethics, attitude, and control sub-dimensions of the product placement scale on awareness, which is another sub-dimension, was also examined and it was understood that only the control sub-dimension had a statistically significant effect on the awareness sub-dimension.

ÖZET

Anahtar kelimeler:

Ürün Yerleştirme,
Tüketici Davranışı,
Farkındalık, Tutum

Bu çalışma, Türkiye'de sosyal medya videolarında yer alan ürün yerleştirmelerin satın alma davranışı üzerindeki etkisini belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Karma araştırma yönteminin izlendiği çalışmada veri toplama tekniği olarak anket seçilmiş ve bu ankette demografik ifadelerin yanı sıra ürün yerleştirme ölçeği ve satın alma davranışı ölçeği ile ilgili sorular yer almaktadır. Çalışmanın konusuna göre uyarlanan anket, Türkiye'de 18 yaş üstü sosyal medya kullanıcılarına uygulanmış ve 432 yanıt alınmıştır. Elde edilen veriler, araştırma modeline göre oluşturulan hipotezlere göre SPSS ve Yapısal Eşitlik Modeli (YEM) programları kullanılarak analiz

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edilmiştir. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre ürün yerleştirmenin sadece farkındalık boyutunun satın alma davranışı üzerinde istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir etkiye sahip olduğu anlaşılmaktadır. Ayrıca ürün yerleştirme ölçeğinin etik, tutum ve kontrol alt boyutlarının bir diğer alt boyut olan farkındalık üzerindeki etkisi de incelenmiş ve sadece kontrol alt boyutunun farkındalık alt boyutu üzerinde istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir etkiye sahip olduğu anlaşılmıştır.

1. INTRODUCTION

Businesses carry out intensive marketing activities to promote their products and services to consumers. Marketing activities for promotion have changed with the increase in competition between businesses, consumers being more conscious, and developing technological conditions. One of these changes shows itself in the advertising field, which is one of the promotional mixes. Although advertisements were in the form of a transition from written media to visual media in the beginning, it has gained a completely different dimension in today's conditions in interactive media tools. So much so that in some cases, the products are not advertised separately, but also by placing the product explicitly or implicitly during use. For example, while a social media influencer is advertising a product directly, he also makes a covert advertisement of another product by wearing a branded outfit.

Product placement refers to the practice of including a branded product, packaging, signage, or other trademarked product within a motion picture, television show, or music video (Brennan et al., 1999: 323). Product placement is one of the methods frequently used by companies regarding their products and services in recent years. While companies showed a cautious attitude about the effectiveness of this method in the past, today this uses for reaching consumers by technology. Although the history of product placement applications go back 100 years in the film industry, today it has become more known with movies, television programs and series, news bulletins, computer games, and Internet videos (Dundar and Coban, 2020: 793). The fact that product placement applications have such a wide range of uses helps companies to introduce their products to consumers, thus offering the opportunity to reach more consumers (Singh et al., 2012:685). On the other hand, since consumers get information in different ways thanks to product placements, they provide convenience in the purchasing process. In this study, which examines the relationship between product placement practices and purchasing behavior, product placements in social media videos are discussed. The effect of attitudes in product placement practices on purchasing behavior is another research area in the study.

2. SOCIAL MEDIA, PRODUCT PLACEMENT AND PURCHASING BEHAVIOR

The concept of media is derived from the plural of the Latin word "medium", which also means tool. Media is defined as all of the visual and audio tools that have basic functions such as informing and educating through the transfer of all kinds of information to individuals or communities (Vardarlier and Zafer, 2019: 356). Traditional media tools such as television, radio, etc. have left their place to the Internet with the transition to new media. Social media, on the other hand, are channels where information is shared with the Internet and social networks apart from traditional media tools, which allows content production to be created individually by users, unlike the content produced through traditional media tools (Narci, 2017: 281). Kaplan and Haenlein (2012: 101) defined social media as a set of Internet infrastructures that enable users to create and change content with the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and create change in the lives of institutions and individuals.

Social media tools that allow users to interact instantly as well as produce content were generally classified as Blogs, Microblogs, Wikis, Social Networking Sites, Podcasts, Forums, Photo Sharing Sites and Video Sharing Sites (Liu, 2010:101). However, with the addition of technological innovations, this classification has also changed over time, and social media tools created only in the form of photo and video sharing sites or forum sites have allowed users to share all the content they produce. For instance, the Instagram application, which was originally created as a photo sharing site, by time, has given the opportunity to share videos with the addition of new features.

In its simplest form, product placement is a way of creating some engaging content to sell what an advertiser or a company has produced. For this reason, product placement continues to be an important practice in advertising and integrated marketing activities, and advertisers try to produce more effective than ever before through product placement. Since the term *product placement* did not come into scientific or commercial use until the 1980s, it would be possible to determine the history of product placement within the mass media industry with a brief reference to the early film industry. While in the early years of the film industry, there was a structure that referred to all kinds of promotions in filmmaking, in early 1915. This form of collective reference was used in both paid advertisements and press relations in the form of animated use, related promotion of a product or service, or just simply use in the 1970s. Since 1980, product placement practices have been more comprehensive with the new media today (Newell et al., 2006:576).

Williams et al. (2011:1) defines product placement as the process of incorporating commercial content into non-commercial content for a specific purpose, that is, integrating the advertisement with the created content; Balasubramanian (1994: 31), on the other hand, defines it as a paid product message of a branded product in a television program or film to impress the audience, in a planned manner without attracting attention. Although product placement types are classified in different ways, Gupta and Lord (1998: 49) in the most general way categorized them as visual, auditory and applied together. Accordingly, in the type of visual product placement (Visual Product Placement), items that include the logo, billboard, or other visual elements of the product and that there is no expression or sound related to the product are given. In the audio product placement type (Audio Product Placement), it is essential to mention the brand or the product with auditory elements without displaying the product on the screen. Finally, in the audio-visual product placement type (Audio-Visual Product Placement), where both visual and audio elements are used together, it is essential to mention the product or brand by giving both visual and audio elements at the same time. As for the subject of this study, product placement types in social media videos can include visual, auditory or applications in which they are used together, depending on the nature of the product. There are two examples of product placement practices in social media videos that are seen below. While in the left image, the products have been placed implicitly, in the right image, the product has been placed explicitly.

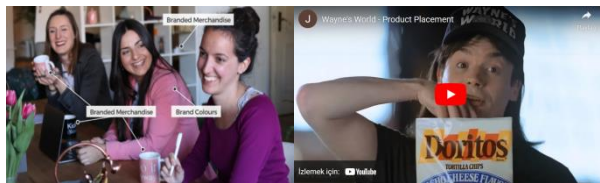


Image 1. Product Placement Examples

Source: (<https://www.arcticblue.net.au/use-product-placement-video-content/>)

Purchasing decision is a behavioral process that takes place as a result of a search for consumers' needs. Consumers, who realize their needs, determine the alternatives related to their needs and decide to buy or not to buy the most suitable one among them with the effect of psychological, sociological, personal and environmental factors and marketing efforts. The product placement practices in social media, which are the subject of the research, have been associated with the consumer's directing the purchase decision by calling on the consumer's needs. In this regard, it can be said that product placement practices are included in marketing efforts, one of the external factors that affect the consumer purchasing decision.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Product placement practices, which are defined as the way of placing (displaying) messages of a branded product in a movie or television program in a way that will not be obvious in order to influence the target audience (Balasubramanian, 1994: 31). In addition to the promotion mix it is one of the most frequently used methods which is the result of today's communication technology. Studies about product placement in the literature (Ong, 1995; Gould et al., 2000; Morton and Friedman, 2002; Balasubramanian et al., 2006; Yang and Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2007; Jin and Villegas, 2007; Kpd Balakrishnan et al., 2012; Tessitore and Geuens, 2013; Lin and Chen, 2013; Basgoze and Kazanci, 2014; Cakir and Kinit, 2014; Tekeli, 2014; Kara 2016; Alagoz and Guler, 2018; Jung and Childs, 2020; Pancaningrum and Ulani, 2020; Dundar and Coban, 2020; Basarir, 2020) have generally focused on attitudes towards product placement and the effects of these attitudes on brand recognition, brand image, perceived quality, and consumer behavior. It is understood that the studies have also focused on relationships between product placement practices and purchasing behavior.

Although past studies on product placement practices usually focus on the brand, they are also carried out on a product-specific basis. Some of these are technological products (Schwemmer and Ziewiecki, 2018), organic products (Newell et al., 2006), tourist destinations (Jung and Childs, 2020), beverages (Gupta and Gould, 1997; Yang and Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2007). In the work of the authors mentioned above, the effect of product placement on purchasing behavior, brand awareness, and perceived quality, in general, was examined. According to the results of the research, the findings that product placement practices affect consumer purchasing behavior, brand awareness and perceived quality are similar to each other.

4. METHODOLOGY

Product placement practices on social media videos and the effect of such practices on purchasing behavior have not been yet studied in Turkey. For this reason, the subject of the research was chosen to fill the gap in the field. The main purpose of the research is to determine the relationship between consumer perceptions of product placement practices in social media videos and purchase intention. The questionnaire was chosen as the data collection technique in the study. The applied questionnaire consists of three parts. In the first part, there are five questions to determine the demographic characteristics of the participants, while in the second part, there is a product placement scale consisting of 30 questions to determine the attitudes of the participants toward product placement practices in social media. The questions in the product placement scale were taken from the study written by Gupta and Gould (1997). Scale use permission was obtained from the authors that the product placement scale would be used in this study, and then ethics committee approval was also obtained. In the third part, which is the last part of the questionnaire, there are six questions about the purchase intention scale to determine the purchase intentions of consumers for product placement applications. Questions in the purchase intention scale were taken from the purchase intention scale developed by

Balakrishnan et al. (2012). Also, the purchase intention scale use permission from the author, and then ethics committee approval for the scale was also obtained. 36 questions covering the questions in the second and third parts of the questionnaire were measured with a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Undecided (3), Disagree (2), Strongly Disagree (1)). The obtained survey data were analyzed with the SPSS 26.0 statistical package program and structural equation model (SEM) by the research hypotheses.

In this study, 57,459,186 people between the ages of 15-64 living in Turkey were selected as the research population (Population Distribution by Years, Age Group and Gender - <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/>). The reason why this population was chosen as the research universe is that the population in this age interval is considered the young population in Turkey and therefore they are real people who have the potential to use social media. Convenience sampling, one of the non-random sampling methods, was chosen as the sampling method due to time and cost constraints. In this context, the prepared questionnaire was transferred to the online environment and sent to people over the age of 18 via e-mail and message between 01.11.2022 and 10.12.2022, and 432 people who responded constituted the sample of the study. Information about the participants forming the sample is given in detail in the following sections of the study. The research has limitations as it is made only for consumers over the age of 18 who are social media users living in Istanbul due to a lack of time and financial resources. Theoretically, the inability to examine product placements in other digital channels is another limitation of the research. In addition, the statistical results of the research are not fully valid, and this can be seen as a limit because the results should be tested at different times.

4.1. Research Model and Variables

The product placement scale to determine the attitudes towards product placement practices in social media videos and the purchase intention scale to determine the effect of these attitudes on purchase intention constitute the two main variables of the research.

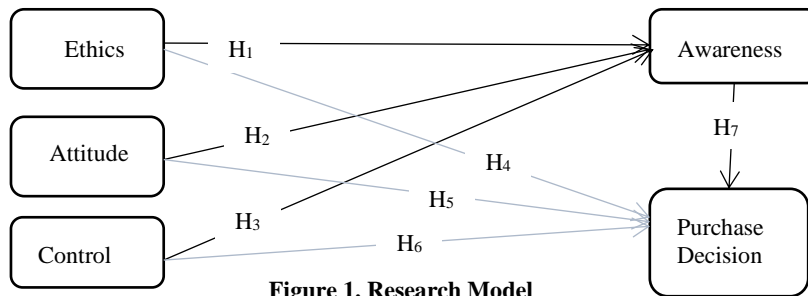


Figure 1. Research Model

In the following part of the study, as a result of the factor analysis for the product placement scale, four sub-dimensions were obtained. These four sub-dimensions are named "ethics, attitude, control, and awareness" by considering the developer of the scales study (Gupta and Gould, 1997). The research model, in which the effect of three of these sub-dimensions on the awareness sub-dimension and purchasing behavior, as well as the effect of the awareness sub-dimension on purchasing behavior, will be examined, is given in Figure 1. The hypotheses formed in accordance with the research model are as follows:

H₁: Ethical values in product placement practices have a significant effect on awareness.

H₂: Attitude towards product placement has a significant effect on awareness.

H₃: The perception of controllability in product placement practices has a significant effect on awareness.

H₄: Ethical values in product placement practices have a significant effect on purchasing behavior.

H₅: Attitude towards product placement has a significant effect on purchasing.

H₆: The perception of controllability in product placement practices has a significant effect on awareness.

H₇: Awareness in product placement practices has a significant effect on purchase intention.

4.2. Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is a multivariate statistic that aims to reveal fewer variables by collecting more than one variable that is related to each other. It is divided into two types confirmatory and exploratory factor analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis is aimed to control whether a previously applied scale, which is planned to be used in research, is suitable for the real factor structure and the degree of conformity in question (Buyukozturk, 2002: 472). In cases where it is understood that the scale with more than one variable does not fit as a result of confirmatory factor analysis, exploratory factor analysis is performed.

In confirmatory factor analysis, when a previously developed scale is planned to be used in current research, it is aimed to determine whether it is suitable for the original factor structure, and if there is, to what extent it is appropriate (Yaslioglu, 2017: 75). Since it was known that the 30-questions scale used in the research to determine the attitude towards product placement was not divided into sub-factors in the original, the scale was first included in the exploratory factor analysis. According to the results of the exploratory factor analysis, since the KMO value was 0.841 and the significance level was less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) in the Bartlett Test, it was understood that there is no doubt about doing factor analysis. Four sub-dimensions with 20 questions were obtained, with question factor loads above 0.50 in the exploratory factor analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis was applied to check the suitability of these four sub-dimensions for the research. As a result of confirmatory factor analysis, the goodness-of-fit values were expected to be within acceptable limits, even if they were not within the limits of perfect fit (Capik, 2014: 199). According to the goodness-of-fit values obtained as a result of the confirmatory factor analysis ($\chi^2/df = 3.631$, CFI = .923, GFI = .925, AGFI = .905, RMSEA = .078), it is understood that the values are in the acceptable range. In addition, it is understood that the goodness-of-fit values results of the confirmatory factor analysis for the purchasing behavior scale, which is another variable of the research are in the acceptable range ($\chi^2/df = 4.084$, CFI = .913, GFI = .921, AGFI = .815, RMSEA = .075). The goodness-of-fit values of confirmatory factor analysis are given in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Goodness-of-Fit Values

		Product Placement	Purchase Behavior	Normal Value	Acceptable Value
Chi-Square On Degree of Freedom	χ^2/df	3.631	4,084	<2	<5
Goodness of Fit Index	GFI	.925	.921	>.95	>.90
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index	AGFI	.905	.815	>.95	>.90
Comparative Fit Index	CFI	.923	.913	>.95	>.90

Root Mean Square Error of Approximation	RMSEA	.078	.075	<.05	<.08
P = .000<0.05					

After the factor analysis of the scales used in the research, reliability analysis was applied to test the internal consistency of the scale questions. It is understood that the reliability levels obtained as a result of the analysis (Cronbach's Alpha) are high for product placement ($\alpha = .896$) and purchasing behavior ($\alpha = .879$). After the reliability analysis, the normality test was applied to the scale data used to determine the analyzes required for testing the research hypotheses. Among the normality tests, which have many analytical and visual methods, Skewness and Kurtosis (analytic) measures were examined According to this analytical method, if the values obtained by dividing the Skewness and Kurtosis coefficients at a significance level of 0.05 by their standard errors fall between -1.96 and +1.96, the data is normally distributed (Yavuz, 2019: 616). According to the values obtained as a result of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for product placement and purchasing behavior scales, both the product placement scale (Skewness= -.311, Kurtosis= .722) and the purchasing behavior scale (Skewness= -.750, Kurtosis= .692), it is understood that the skewness and kurtosis values range are normally distributed. Thus, parametric tests would be applied since the data showed the normal distribution in the testing of the research hypotheses.

4.3. Descriptive Statistics

A total of five questions were asked to determine the demographic characteristics of the participants. According to Table 2 below, where demographic characteristics are given, 53.9% (233) of the participants were male, 46.1% (199) were female, 41.9% (196) were in the 18-23 age intervals, 41.4% (179) are undergraduate degree graduates and finally 30.3% (131) have a monthly household income of 10001 Turkish Lira and more.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

		Frequency	Percent			Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	233	53.9	Education Level	Elementary school	15	3.5
	Female	199	46.1		High school	53	12.3
	Total	432	100%		Undergraduate	179	41.4
Marit. St.	Married	153	35.4		Graduate	132	30.6
	Single	279	64.6		Postgraduate	53	12.3
	Total	432	100%		Total	432	100%

Table 2 (Continue). Demographic Characteristics of Participants

		Frequency	Percent			Frequency	Percent
Age	18-23	196	41.9	Household Income (Turkish Lira)	5500 TL and less	69	16.0
	24-29	54	12.5		5501-7000 TL	85	19.7
	30-35	72	16.7		7001-8500 TL	80	18.5
	36-41	38	8.8		8501-10000 TL	67	15.5
	42 and more	72	16.7		10001 TL and more	131	30.3
	Total	432	100%		Total	432	100%

4.4. Hypothesis Tests

It was understood that the scales to be used in the research and the model established after the factor analysis were significant and it was determined that the scales were reliable. The Structural Equation Model (SEM) was used in this study to test the hypotheses established with the variables in the research model. Structural equation modeling (SEM) is a collection of statistical techniques that allows examining the relationship between one or more independent variables, continuous or discrete, and one or more dependent variables, either continuous or discrete (Collier, 2020:1). Structural equation modeling (SEM) also referred as analysis of covariance structures, path analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, or casual analysis (Ullman and Bentler, 2012: 661).

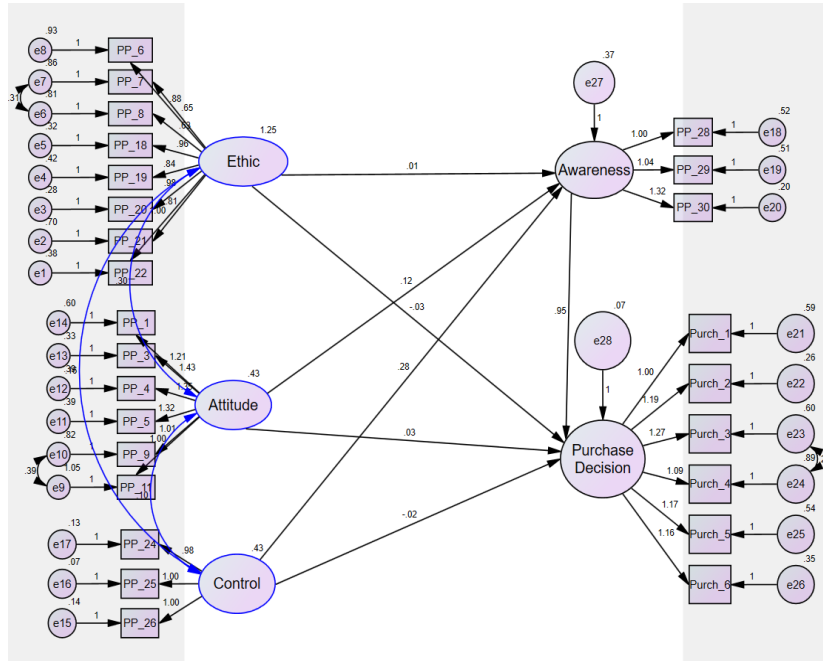


Figure 2. Path Diagram

The path diagram established between the research variables using the structural equation model is shown in Figure 2. Accordingly, the effect of ethics, attitude and control sub-dimensions of product placement scale on awareness which is another sub-dimension, and purchase intention was examined. In addition, the effect of awareness sub-dimension on purchase intention was examined. When the goodness-of-fit values for the established model are examined ($\chi^2/df = 3.681$, CFI = .907, GFI = .913, AGFI = .901, RMSEA = .079), it was understood that the values showed an acceptable level of fit. The findings of the interactions between the variables given in the path diagram are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Regression Weights

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Awareness	<---	Ethic	.014	.034	.425	.671
Awareness	<---	Attitude	.115	.061	1.894	.058
Awareness	<---	Control	.283	.057	5.001	***

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Purchase_Decision	<---	Awareness	.947	.084	11.281	***
Purchase_Decision	<---	Ethic	-.031	.023	-1.355	.175
Purchase_Decision	<---	Attitude	.030	.040	.755	.450
Purchase_Decision	<---	Control	-.017	.038	-.439	.661

The regression weights are given in Table 3, and when it is examined, it can be seen that there are two cases where the significance levels are less than .05 ($p < .05$). Thus, it can be said that there are two effects. The first of these is the statistically positive effect of control, one of the sub-dimensions of the product placement scale, on another sub-dimension, awareness (.283). Another effect is the statistically positive effect of awareness sub-dimension of product placement scale on purchase intention (.947). Considering these two effects, it was understood that the H₃ and H₇ hypotheses of the research, statistically cannot be rejected. When the other regression weights in the table are examined, it cannot be mentioned that there is any statistical effect because their significance level is more than .05 ($p > .05$). In this case, hypotheses H₁, H₂, H₄, H₅ and H₆ are rejected as they do not show a statistically significant effect.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In today's world, where the rapid and continuous change of communication and interaction is felt most, social media channels have become virtual environments where people often spend time. In today's world today, when traditional promotion mix elements are digitally embodied, the attractiveness of social media channels is increasing due to the low cost, ease of content production and the size of the target audience they can reach. The fact that most of the elements of the promotion mix, especially advertising, are included in product placement practices and social media content, creates many research areas. In this research, it is aimed to examine the effects of product placement applications in social media videos on consumers' purchasing behavior. For this purpose, in the questionnaire chosen as the data collection technique, the product placement scale questions used by Gupta and Gould (1997) and the purchasing behavior scale questions used by Balakrishnan et al. (2012) were revised according to the research topic. The revised questionnaire was applied to people over the age of 18 who live in Istanbul, and 432 responses were received. As a result of factor analysis, the purchasing behavior scale retains its original form; The product placement scale is divided into four sub-dimensions (ethics, attitude, control and awareness). The analysis of the study was carried out in a five-variable structure, four sub-dimensions obtained from the product placement scale and one dimension belonging to the purchasing behavior scale.

According to the research findings, it was seen that the controllability thoughts of the participants regarding the product placement practices in the social media videos have a positive effect on the awareness perception on the product placement. In addition, it was understood from the results that the perception of awareness in product placement practices has a statistical effect on purchasing behavior. It was understood that these two statistically significant results coincide with the results of similar studies on product placement practices in the literature (Ong, 1995; Law and Braun, 2000; Morton and Friedman, 2002; Auty and Lewis, 2004; Jin and Villegas, 2007; Lin and Chen, 2013; Basgoze and Kazanci, 2014; Tekeli, 2014; Kara 2016; Alagoz and Guler, 2018; Dundar ve Coban, 2020). According to the other data obtained as a result of the path analysis, it was found out that the ethics, attitude and controllability perceptions of the participants regarding the product placement practices included in the social media videos did not have a statistically significant effect on awareness and purchasing behavior.

The fact that the effect of product placement practices included in social media videos on purchasing behavior has been studied specifically in Turkey adds originality to the research. Considering that the number of users of social media applications continues to increase, it can be said that the interest in product placement applications, which are generally accepted as disguised advertising applications, will increase. For this reason, it is thought that the statistical findings obtained from the research will contribute to the companies that will apply to product placement applications in this field and to future research.

The research applied only to consumers over the age of 18 who are social media users living in Istanbul due to a lack of time and financial resources. For these limitations, it is suggested that future studies, consider the product placement dimensions with specific product groups and as well as consumer post-purchase behaviors to provide more comprehensive information. The statistical results of the research are not fully valid, and this can be seen as a limit because the results should be tested at different times. Therefore it is also suggested for future research, the statistical findings should be tested at different times.

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