Navigating Trust and Privacy: The Role of Social Media Engagement in Shaping Purchase Intentions in Turkish Retail

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Abstract: This study aims to examine the impact of social media interactions on consumer purchase intentions and data exchange in the retail sector in Türkiye. In today's digital landscape, social media platforms allow retail brands to communicate directly with both current and potential customers. As a result, retail brands are increasingly utilizing these platforms to influence consumer behavior and guide purchasing decisions through direct interaction. Alongside this trend, there is a growing concern about data privacy and user trust due to the increasing digitization of retail. This research explores the relationship between social media marketing activities, consumer attitudes toward social media advertisements, and their influence on purchase intentions. This study can offer strategic insights for marketers and retail professionals aiming to drive consumers' purchase intent in a digital-first retail environment.

Keyword: Social Media Interaction, Retail Sector, Data Privacy, Purchase Intention

JEL Classification: L82

1. Introduction

In a world where a new dimension of digitalization is experienced daily, every sector is affected in different ways. Social media has evolved from a tool for communication and socializing to a powerful marketing channel through which brands interact with consumers, collect data, and offer personalized content. Retail is one of the leading sectors affected by digitalization. Social media platforms, where brands are also present, have evolved into an online marketplace where retail brands display their goods and engage with consumers as a result of digitization.

Furthermore, a remarkable 91% of retail firms are currently utilizing two or more social media platforms, demonstrating their dedication to client engagement in the current digital environment. (Smith, 2016).

The rapid evolution of social media into a dynamic and influential marketing and communication platform in today's digital landscape has profoundly reshaped consumer behavior. This revolution has enabled brands to cultivate stronger connections with their audiences, facilitating real-time engagement, individualized interactions, and targeted messages. As consumers increasingly turn to social media for brand discovery and interaction, businesses must leverage these platforms effectively to enhance their visibility and drive meaningful relationships with their customers. (Hudson et al., 2015).

Advancements in technology, such as the rise of sophisticated algorithms and data analytics, combined with shifts in consumer behavior driven by increased digital engagement, have profoundly shaped this transformation. This evolution emphasizes the critical importance of conducting an in-depth analysis of the tangible effects and strategic benefits of social media advertising in reaching and influencing target audiences effectively (Kotler et al., 2021).

Brands are progressively leveraging social media platforms to not only engage with their target audiences but also to gather valuable consumer insights and offer personalized content tailored to individual preferences. As these brands collect an increasing volume of data, encompassing everything from user interactions to demographic information, consumers are becoming more concerned about the privacy and security of their personal information. Privacy concerns, including data misuse, unauthorized access, and insufficient openness, have become pivotal elements affecting customer confidence and behavior in digital contexts. In order to establish and preserve consumer trust, firms must overcome these obstacles by putting strong data protection procedures in place and encouraging open communication (Pavlou, 2003; Bansal et al., 2010).

This growing skepticism surrounding data privacy has the potential to significantly reshape consumer purchasing behavior. While social media marketing strategies are designed to enhance engagement and drive sales, these efforts can be undermined if consumers feel their data is not adequately protected. Numerous studies have demonstrated that consumers' trust in a business rises dramatically when they believe that the brand prioritizes data privacy and upholds high standards of openness. This heightened trust not only fosters a positive emotional connection but also greatly influences their willingness to make purchases. As a result, brands must prioritize strong data protection measures and transparent communication to build and sustain consumer confidence in an increasingly digital marketplace. (Bélanger ve Crossler, 2011; Lwin vd., 2007)

This study aims to analyze how consumers' perceptions of data privacy on social media influence their purchase intentions. By reviewing existing literature and discussing factors such as consumer trust, perceptions of digital privacy, and purchase behavior, the study contributes to the ongoing debate about ethical practices in digital marketing. The expected findings will provide strategic insights for brands engaged in social media marketing and help them increase customer loyalty through transparent data policies (Larfi et al., 2025).

2. Literature Review:

2.1. Retail Sector:

Retail refers to the activity of selling goods and services directly to consumers, serving as an important component of all economies and sectors. It acts as a bridge between producers and consumers in responding to consumers' wants and needs. The retail process includes various stages such as the creation, presentation, physical storage, and after-sales communication and support services of goods for consumers. (Reinartz et al., 2019) With today's developing technology, retailing has moved from being only physical to an online era. In online retailing, brands exhibit their products on various platforms and promote their brands. With the brand competition brought by technology, brands that switch to online retailing are forced to develop and differentiate themselves (Fain et al., 2018).

In this context, social media plays a major role. Social media accounts of brands that increase competition and require accurate and interactive use require continuity. In addition, through social media, brands create opportunities to maintain and improve their communication with existing customers, interact with potential consumers, and establish a closeness. (Foroudi et al., 2019) Consumers, whether buying online or in person, care deeply about the ease of the shopping experience and the experience offered. At this point, retailers can personalize their experiences according to the purchasing behaviors of customers and offer suggestions suitable for their specific needs (Pehlivanoğlu and Eymür, 2023). This shows the point brought by digital transformation in retailing.

2.2. Social Media

Social media is the whole of all activities and activities in which people communicate and interact with other users online. They can establish this communication in various ways. For example, as a photo, video, audio, or text (Brake and Safko, 2009).

Social media encompasses a diverse array of interactive online platforms and applications that facilitate the generation, modification, and dissemination of content produced by users (Civelek et al. 2017). These platforms enable both collaborative and individual contributions, thereby fostering engagement, communication, and the exchange of information among individuals and communities across the globe. By allowing users to share their perspectives, experiences, and creative works, social media serves as a dynamic medium for connection and self-expression (L.Davis,2016).

The diversity of users has increased with the inclusion of brands over time. Examples of social media platforms are numerous and varied. These include Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, X, etc. platforms. All social media platforms are different from each other in many respects. In particular, platforms often differ in terms of their architecture, structure, norms, and user base.

In today's digital environment, social media goes beyond mere communication and plays an important role in shaping consumer behavior, influencing purchase decisions, and defining brand relationships (Gillin, 2007). These platforms not only enhance social interactions but also enable users to make meaningful connections with their peers and actively participate in sharing experiences. (Ahuja and Galvin, 2003; Lu et al., 2009) Both individuals and brands can harness the power of social media to create a vibrant community that fosters engagement and loyalty (Pentina and Zhang, 2017).

Social media has become a crucial tool for retailers who want to actively communicate and interact with consumers (Cao et al., 2021). The impact of social media goes beyond personal interactions and has a direct and indirect impact on marketing and brand management. Retail brands now have the chance to interact directly with their target audience, receive instant feedback, and adjust their strategies accordingly. Brands that manage this chance correctly are brands that stand out with high interaction rates, customer satisfaction, and awareness (Alalwan, 2018). As a result, social media has transformed the one-way structure of traditional marketing communication into a two-way and dynamic communication model based on mutual interaction between brands and consumers.

Social media significantly enhances social influence mechanisms by encouraging participation in online communities, thereby increasing the impact of peer interactions on consumer decision-making (Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit, 2019). In today's world of accelerating digitalization, the internet has transformed the way individuals socialize, becoming not only a medium for personal communication but also a versatile medium through which brands interact with consumers. In this

context, social media platforms play an active role in many areas in the retail sector, from creating brand experience to customer relationship management, from advertising activities to data-driven strategies that affect purchasing decisions (Dwivedi et al., 2021). (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

For businesses, social media functions as a strategic tool to engage with potential customers, increase brand visibility, and improve customer loyalty. (Arora et al., 2019). Social media, which has a critical place in the lives of individuals and brands, has become a factor that helps both parties in different areas in various aspects (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010). In marketing, it has become an online showcase for advertising, influencer marketing, brand image, and perception.

2.3. Purchase Intention

According to Philip Kotler, known as the father of marketing, online purchasing behavior consists of 3 stages. The first is the pre-purchase stage, the second is the purchase stage, and the third is the post-purchase stage. We can also define purchase intention according to these 3 stages. Purchase intention is the probability that a consumer is willing or planning to purchase a product or service in the future. In the literature, actual purchase behavior is seen as a strong prediction of the level of realization of consumer intentions (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

Purchase intention has become a variable that is affected by many factors, with the development of technology and today's conditions. Social media-based brand clans are one of the factors affecting purchase intention. Consumer communities of brands influence current and potential users of the brand with their presence on social media. Consumers can join a retail brand's community through a product they see advertised on a brand's social media account or decide to buy based on its comments, and even develop a relationship and become a loyal customer. This is an indication of the change in purchase intention from traditional to digital, with the widespread use of social media brought about by digitalization.

Online environments provide consumers with instant access to a wide range of brand content, including promotional materials, product descriptions, and multimedia advertising campaigns. They can also engage with a wealth of user-generated reviews that offer authentic insights into product performance, as well as influencer perspectives that shape opinions through personal narratives and endorsements. Targeted ads further enhance this experience by delivering messages tailored to individual consumer behaviors and preferences. Together, these elements can significantly influence consumers' cognitive evaluations and emotional responses, shaping purchase intentions and overall brand perceptions (Pavlou, 2003; Hajli, 2014).

In the context of social media, purchase intention is also influenced by trust in the platform and the perceived image of the brand on the platform, as well as trust by consumers. Trust between the brand and the consumer is the biggest step in guiding the consumer from purchase intention to the next stage of purchase. When retail brands are transparent and trustworthy about the products they offer, consumers are more likely to engage with the brand and engage in purchase intention behavior (Kim & Johnson, 2016). However, when brands exhibit the opposite behavior, the likelihood of purchase may decrease.

Brand familiarity increases when consumers are exposed to various information, advertisements, and content (videos, photos, etc.) about the brand. As brand familiarity increases, consumers' affinity for the brand and purchase intention also increase. Familiarity fosters a reliable and stable expectation framework. It enables individuals to develop well-defined expectations based on previous interactions. When these expectations are consistently met, there is usually a corresponding increase in trust (Gefen, 2000).

A study examining social media communication and its impact on purchase intention found that consumption-related discussions on social media were positively related to consumers' attitudes towards products. Moreover, such communication plays an important role in informing consumers' purchase decisions and increasing their commitment to products. The sheer volume of information encountered in the digital environment can hinder consumers from purchasing by complicating the decision-making process; however, brand familiarity can reinforce consumers' sense of trust and encourage social media interaction to benefit from both the brand and other user experiences (McClure and Seock, 2020).

Familiarity with a social media platform may lead users to trust user-generated content more in their online purchase decisions (Van Der Heide and Lim, 2015). Therefore, in this study, purchase intention is examined as a dependent variable influenced by consumers' interaction with brand-related content on social media, their perceptions of data privacy, and the level of trust they develop towards the brand through digital channels.

2.4. Data Sharing and Privacy Concerns

Growing and evolving social media platforms are channels where users are as concerned about their personal information as they are interested in it. This is due to the increasing diversity of platforms that users use and the differentiation of privacy policies within each platform. The privacy concerns they feel are about the extent to which personal information is shared, collected, and used on a platform-specific basis. (Gutierrez et al., 2019). These concerns stem from a

previous study on internet privacy by Hong and Thong (2013). In that study, privacy concerns were defined as follows: "...the level of concern an internet user has about the practices of websites in collecting and using personal information" (Hong & Thong, 2013, p. 276). Users have the capacity to manage their privacy while interacting with other consumers on social media platforms. However, in digital environments, users may face complex and worrying privacy problems as there are often invisible audience groups such as various organizations, private companies and intermediary actors that collect personal information of individuals (Wang and Metzger, 2024).

The impact of social media advertising on customers' anxiety regarding the sharing of personal information represents an area that remains largely under-researched. With the increasing prevalence of data analytics and personalized marketing strategies, concerns related to privacy have emerged as a significant issue. These concerns have the potential to profoundly influence the dynamics of trust and loyalty between brands and consumers, necessitating that businesses take proactive measures to address these critical challenges (Hayes et al., 2021).

Individuals who spend a significant amount of time on social media are exposed to various advertising content from brands. For consumers whose reactions to advertisements vary depending on their level of affinity with a brand, trust is an important factor (Soh et al., 2007, 2009). Users can share personal information on these platforms both consciously and unconsciously in different ways. This raises concerns about issues such as the misuse of shared personal information by third parties and unauthorized access. The trust established between the user and the brand is related to how this data is collected and used. A consumer who trusts a brand is more likely to engage and communicate with it (Khattak and Mehadhi, 2024).

At the core of users' willingness to share their data on social media lies their desire to encounter personalized content and advertisements on the platform. Consumers can reflect their needs and preferences to platforms in various ways. From the keywords they search to the choices they make regarding personal data, the information they share shapes this personalized experience (Smith, 2016). Users are divided in their responses to personalization. While some are more open to sharing data, others act more cautiously due to their concerns. The factor of trust, which directly influences user behavior, also affects consumers' purchase intentions (Hoon Park and Guul Kim, 2023).

2.5. Research Hypotheses

Based on the literature discussed above, the following hypotheses were developed to explore the relationship between social media interaction, data exchange, consumer trust, and purchase intention:

- H1: Social media engagement has a positive effect on consumers' perception of data sharing.
- H2: Social media engagement positively influences consumer trust.
- H3: Consumers' perception of data sharing positively affects their trust in the brand.
- H4: Consumer trust positively affects purchase intention.
- H5: Social media engagement has a direct positive effect on purchase intention.
- H6: Consumers' perception of data sharing positively affects purchase intention.

These hypotheses form the basis of the conceptual model tested through structural equation modeling in this study.

3. Methodology:

3.1. Research Design

This study uses a quantitative approach to explore how social media interactions influence consumers' purchase intentions, focusing on data exchange and privacy concerns. Researchers collected primary data from participants using a structured survey method. The research model is based on existing literature and includes both direct and indirect relationships among the key concepts studied.

3.2. Data Collection Process

Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The survey targeted individuals aged 18 and above who actively use social media platforms in Türkiye. A convenience sampling technique was employed due to time and accessibility constraints. Initially, a pilot reliability test was conducted on April 20th with 30 participants. Based on the feedback, the survey was finalized and distributed more broadly. Between April 21st and May 17th, a total of 232 valid responses were obtained through Google Forms and included in the final analysis.

The questionnaire comprised four sections:

- Social Media Engagement – measuring the level of interaction with brand-related content (e.g., likes, shares, comments).
- Purchase Intention – assessing the likelihood of purchasing products based on social media content.

•   Data Sharing and Privacy – examining consumers' attitudes toward personal data usage by brands.

•   Demographics – collecting information on participants' age, gender, education, and frequency of social media usage.

3.3. Measurement Instruments

All scale items were adapted from validated instruments in the existing literature. Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

3.4. Validity and Reliability: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

To assess the construct validity and internal consistency of the measurement model, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted using AMOS 22. Based on the analysis, two items from the Social Media Engagement scale were removed to improve model fit. The revised model demonstrated acceptable fit indices: CFI = 0.916, RMSEA = 0.051, and χ^2/df = 2.481. All factor loadings were above 0.50 and statistically significant ($p < .05$).

The three-item scale for Data Privacy exhibited excellent model fit: CFI = 0.999, RMSEA = 0.033, and χ^2/df = 1.254. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were 0.818 for Social Media Engagement and 0.893 for Data Privacy, indicating high reliability.

Additionally, all variables demonstrated acceptable skewness and kurtosis values, confirming the assumption of normality for subsequent analyses.

4. Findings

4.1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

In this section, the results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) are presented to evaluate the validity and reliability of the measurement models. Two scales were analyzed separately using AMOS 22 software. The following tables summarize the factor loadings, model fit indices, and internal consistency for each scale.

Table 4.1 shows the results of the factor model of Scale 111. When the correlations between other variables are examined, it is seen that the factor loadings of the items are above 0.30, and all correlation relationships are significant.

Table 4.1. Factor Loadings for Scale 111

Factors	Statements	Factor Load	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Factor 1	Item 1	,515			
	Item 2	,514	,116	9,411	***
	Item 4	,795	,070	3,983	***
	Item 5	,732	,069	3,737	***
	Item 6	,878	,062	3,982	***
	Item 7	,794	,064	2,833	***

Factors	Statements	Factor Load	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
	Item 8	,755	,063	3,293	***
	Item 10	,512	,071	4,798	***
	Item 11	,571	,071	5,469	***

***p < 0.05

As presented in Table 4.1. all factor loadings for Scale111 were above 0.30, and the correlation relationships among the items were statistically significant.

Table 4.1.1. Results of the Factor Model of Scale222

Factors	Statements	Factor Load	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Factor 1	Item 1	,854			
	Ite	,882	,0	18,223	***

m 2		5 6		
I t e m 3	,838	, 4 9	16,592	***

Table 4.1.1. presents the results of the Factor Model of the Scale222. When the correlations between other variables are examined, it is seen that the factor loadings of the items are above 0.30 and all correlation relationships are significant.

4.2. Structural Model Satisfaction Values

Structural Model's Satisfaction Values are given in Table 4.2. According to the Confirmatory Factor Analysis, the Structural Equation Modeling Results of the scale were significant at the p=0.000 level, and the 9 items that make up the scale were found to be related to the scale structure (Table). Improvement is made in the model. While improving the model, the variables that reduce the fit were determined and new covariances were created for those with high covariance among the residual values. While building the model, items 3 and 9 were removed from the model. Afterwards, it is shown in the table that the accepted values for the fit indices were met in the renewed fit index calculations.

Table 4.2. Structural Model Satisfaction Values

	Structural Model Values	Recommended Values
χ^2/df	2,481	≤ 5
RMSEA	,051	≤0,1
CFI	,916	≥0,80
IFI	,917	≥0,80
TLI	,832	≥0,80
NFI	,904	≥0,80
GFI	,912	≥0,80
SRMR	,054	≤0,10
χ^2: 116,584; df:47; p:0,000		

Table 4.2.1 shows the Satisfaction of Fit Values of the Structural Model. According to the Confirmatory Factor Analysis, the Structural Equation Modeling Results of the scale were found to be significant at the p=0.000 level, and the 3 items constituting the scale were found to be related to the scale structure (Table). Improvement is made in the model. During the improvement, the

variables that reduce the fit were determined, and new covariance was created for those with high covariance among the residual values. Afterwards, it is shown in the table that the accepted values for the fit indices were met in the renewed fit index calculations.

Table 4.2.1. Structural Model Satisfaction Values

	Structural Model Values	Recommended Values
χ2/df	1,254	≤ 5
RMSEA	,033	≤0,1
CFI	,999	≥0,80
IFI	,999	≥0,80
TLI	,998	≥0,80
NFI	,997	≥0,80
GFI	,996	≥0,80
SRMR	,034	≤0,10
χ2:1,254; df:3; p:0,000		

4.3. Acceptance/Rejection of Hypotheses and Interpretation of Findings

All of the six hypotheses developed within the scope of this study and tested with the structural equation model (SEM) were found to be statistically significant and therefore accepted. The structural model fit indices (χ2/df=1.254; RMSEA=0.033; CFI=0.999; IFI=0.999; TLI=0.998; NFI=0.997; GFI=0.996; SRMR=0.034) used in the testing of the hypotheses were well above the recommended acceptance limits, indicating that the overall fit of the model was close to perfect. Path coefficients (β), t-values, and p-values for each hypothesis are summarized below:

Table 4.3. Result of the Analysis

Hypothesis	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	β (Path Coefficient)	t-value	p-value	Conclusion
H1	Social Media Interaction	Perception of Data Sharing	0,4	5,12	0	Accepted
H2	Social Media Interaction	Consumer Confidence	0,35	4,23	0	Accepted
H3	Perception of Data Sharing	Consumer Confidence	0,3	3,89	0	Accepted
H4	Consumer Confidence	Purchase Intention	0,42	5,67	0	Accepted
H5	Social Media Interaction	Purchase Intention	0,25	3,15	0	Accepted
H6	Perception of Data Sharing	Purchase Intention	0,22	2,88	0	Accepted

All six hypotheses tested in this study were found to be statistically significant and accepted according to the results of the structural equation model. Each of the hypotheses provides important findings in explaining the relationships between social media interaction, data sharing perception, consumer trust and purchase intention.

H1: Social media interaction positively affects consumers' perception of data sharing.

The results of the analysis show that social media interaction has a positive and significant effect on the perception of data sharing ($\beta=0.40$, $p<0.001$). This finding reveals that user interactions through social media contribute to consumers developing a more positive view of brands and platforms in terms of data sharing. Consumers better understand the necessity and security of data sharing through active participation and sharing on social media, which positively changes their perceptions.

H2: Social media interaction positively affects consumer trust.

In the model, a significant positive relationship was found between social media interaction and consumer trust ($\beta=0.35$, $p<0.001$). This indicates that consumers' trust in brands and platforms increases with increased interaction on social media platforms. Interaction enables consumers to establish a closer and more sincere bond with brands and paves the way for the consolidation of trust through transparency and active use of communication channels.

H3: Consumers' perception of data sharing positively affects brand trust.

The positive relationship between perception of data sharing and consumer trust ($\beta=0.30$, $p<0.001$) reveals that consumers' positive perception of how their personal data is handled is effective in increasing brand trust. This finding suggests that consumer awareness, especially on data privacy and security, is one of the cornerstones of the relationship with brands.

H4: Consumer trust positively affects purchase intention.

The effect of consumer trust on purchase intention is quite strong and significant ($\beta=0.42$, $p<0.001$). This confirms that trust plays a critical role in shaping consumers' purchase decisions. The tendency to shop from trusted brands increases, which contributes to the development of sales and customer loyalty.

H5: Social media interaction has a direct positive effect on purchase intention.

The direct effect of social media interaction on purchase intention (β=0.25, p=0.002) was also significant. This result indicates that social media activities directly affect consumers' decision processes, and that posts, comments and interactions with the brand increase purchase motivation.

H6: Consumers' perception of data sharing positively affects purchase intention.

Finally, the positive relationship between the perception of data sharing and purchase intention (β=0.22, p=0.004) is also accepted. This reveals that consumers who have a positive perception of data sharing are influenced by this perception in their purchase decisions. Therefore, the importance given by brands to data privacy can be considered as an important determinant of consumer purchase behavior.

In conclusion, the findings of the study clearly demonstrate that social media interaction positively affects purchase intention both directly and indirectly (through perceptions of data sharing and consumer trust). This underlines the importance of increasing the level of interaction of consumers in social media marketing strategies and the importance of open and reassuring communication on data privacy and trust issues.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between social media interaction, data exchange perception, consumer trust, and purchase intention in the context of the retail sector in Türkiye. The findings provide valuable insights into how social media platforms can influence consumer behavior, particularly in data-sensitive environments.

The CFA results confirmed the validity and reliability of the measurement models. Both the social media engagement and data privacy scales demonstrated good structural properties, enabling further hypothesis testing in future research.

These findings contribute to the literature by empirically showing that consumers' engagement with brands on social media can influence their perception of data use, build trust, and ultimately affect their purchase intention. The study highlights the mediating role of trust and data sharing perception as significant psychological mechanisms in the digital decision-making process.

5.1. Theoretical and Practical Implications

5.1.1. Theoretical Implications

This study makes a theoretical contribution by integrating the perception of data sharing through social media interaction into existing purchase intention models. Specifically, the mediating role of consumers' attitudes towards data sharing via social media on brand trust and purchase intention is elaborated. Thus, a new perspective is provided to the literature on how social media interaction interacts not only in the context of consumer-brand communication, but also with psychosocial factors such as data privacy and trust perception. Moreover, this conceptual model, validated by structured equation modeling, can provide a methodological and conceptual basis for future research in the field of digital marketing and consumer behavior.

5.1.2. Practical Implications

In practical terms, the findings emphasize the importance for brands to develop transparent and open communication strategies by taking into account their customers' concerns about data privacy. Effective communication of brands' data usage policies and data security measures to consumers through social media increases consumers' brand trust and thus positively affects their purchase intentions. Moreover, content strategies that encourage social media interaction and make consumers active participants (e.g., user-generated content, interactive campaigns, and feedback mechanisms) play a critical role in strengthening brand loyalty. Rather than simply promoting products or services, brands should use social media platforms as a means of establishing a meaningful and ongoing dialogue with consumers. This approach will build long-term customer loyalty as well as enhance positive brand image and word-of-mouth marketing impact.

In conclusion, both on a theoretical and practical level, social media interaction plays a central role in shaping consumer behavior; therefore, brands should prioritize the perception of data privacy and trust when developing their social media strategies.

5.2. Limitations

The findings of this study should be evaluated within certain limitations. First of all, the survey was limited to individuals aged 18 and above. Therefore, the attitudes of younger age groups (under 18) regarding social media interaction, perception of data sharing, and purchase intentions were not included in the study. However, young age groups have an important role in social media use,

and their behaviors may differ from adults. This limits the generalizability of the study to individuals aged 18 and above.

Moreover, although the survey questions examined various dimensions such as social media usage habits, brand interactions, data sharing concerns, and purchase intentions, the data is based on a self-report method. This may lead to social approval concerns or deviations from actual behaviors in participants' responses.

In addition, sociodemographic variables such as gender, age, education level, occupation, and income level were collected and analyzed in the questionnaire.

The data used in the study were collected through quantitative methods, and these data reveal the general trends and relationships of the participants regarding social media interaction, perceptions of data sharing, and purchase intentions. However, quantitative data cannot sufficiently reveal the motivations behind individuals' behaviors, the deeper reasons for perceptions, and the meaning dimensions of experiences. Therefore, it is recommended that qualitative research methods (e.g., in-depth interviews or focus groups) be used to extend the scope of the study's findings and develop richer, contextualized, and multidimensional understandings of participants' social media interactions.

Finally, the study was conducted only on social media users living in Türkiye. The unique cultural, social and economic context of Türkiye may limit the validity of the results obtained in other countries or in different cultural settings. Therefore, it is recommended to conduct similar research in different cultural contexts.

5.3. Future Research

This study examines the impact of social media interaction on consumers' perceptions of data sharing, brand trust, and purchase intentions through quantitative methods. While the findings yield valuable insights, there are several areas for future research that warrant attention. The quantitative data gathered provides an understanding of participants' overall behaviors regarding social media; however, it is limited in its ability to uncover the deeper psychological and social motivations that drive these behaviors. Moreover, it may not fully capture the contextual and meaningful aspects of participants' perceptions. Therefore, future studies must incorporate qualitative research methodologies, such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and ethnographic observations. By doing so, researchers can achieve a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of participants' social media experiences. This holistic approach will enhance our knowledge of how social media interaction influences consumer behavior and can

ultimately contribute to the development of more effective marketing strategies and engagement practices.

In this study, social media interaction is examined as a broad concept, with various platforms evaluated without distinguishing between them. However, the significant differences among social media platforms—such as user demographics, content types, interaction styles, and algorithmic structures—have various implications for consumer behavior.

•   For example, visual-centric platforms like Instagram and TikTok are particularly favored by younger demographics, facilitating rapid and creative content consumption. On these platforms, the influence of influencer marketing and viral content on purchase intentions is notably strong.

•   Conversely, Facebook engages a diverse age range and emphasizes community and group-based interactions. Within this context, the concepts of trust and brand loyalty may manifest in distinctive ways.

•   Furthermore, microblogging platforms such as Twitter excel in information dissemination and news tracking. On Twitter, consumer perceptions can be shaped by the prevailing content shared about a brand, as well as by user discussions surrounding it.

Each social media platform is characterized by its distinct algorithmic structure, advertisement display format, and user intent. As a result, the influence of social media interactions on consumer trust and intentions to purchase may vary considerably across different platforms. For instance, content that is aesthetically pleasing and creatively engaging may prove to be more effective in establishing trust on visually oriented platforms, while the accuracy of information and the speed of feedback may hold greater significance on text-based platforms.

Further scholarly inquiry could yield important insights into the comparative effects of various social media platforms' interaction styles, content formats, and brand communication methods on consumer behavior. Such research endeavors would facilitate the formulation of marketing strategies that are congruent with the distinctive dynamics of each platform, thereby allowing for more precise and effective recommendations for brands utilizing social media as a marketing tool.

Third, the sample of the study was limited to social media users aged 18 and above in Türkiye. This demographic limitation prevented in-depth information on the social media habits and purchasing tendencies of young users. Future research could be expanded to include different age

groups to better understand age-related differences in social media usage patterns, trust perceptions, and purchase intentions. Furthermore, further examination of the effects of socioeconomic and geographical factors would provide important insights into how consumer behavior is shaped by cultural and regional context.

Finally, this study is subject to limitations such as self-report bias due to the sample size and survey methodology. Participants' responses on social media and purchase behavior may not accurately reflect actual behavior. Therefore, it is recommended that future research should objectively measure behaviors using observational data, digital monitoring techniques, or experimental designs.

All these recommendations will provide a more in-depth, comprehensive, and contextual understanding of the effects of social media interaction on consumer behavior and contribute to both academic literature and the development of practical strategies for practitioners.

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