

The Impact of Perception Related Social Media Marketing Applications on Consumers' Brand Loyalty and Purchase Intention

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Abstract

Social media offers a social interaction environment where consumers have the opportunity to communicate with brands, exchange ideas with other users, produce content and influence the masses. Brands also create various social media marketing applications by turning these opportunities in their favor. In this study, it was aimed to measure the effect of consumer perception on marketing applications of brands on Instagram pages and their impact on brand loyalty as well as purchase intention. In this context, the research model developed was tested on Beykent University students. Data obtained by the survey method were analyzed using SPSS and Amos package programs. According to research findings, the functional value, hedonic value and self-brand image congruency perceptions towards the Instagram page of the brand in question positively affected the purchase intention. The functional value, social value and self-brand image congruency perceptions towards the Instagram page of the brand in question positively affected brand loyalty, whereas the hedonic value and cocreation value perceptions were found to be unrelated to brand loyalty. Furthermore, it was observed that brand loyalty mediates the whole effect of the functional value and cocreation perceptions towards the Instagram page of the brand in question positively affected brand loyalty. Furthermore, it was observed that brand loyalty mediates the whole effect of the functional value and cocreation perceptions towards the Instagram page of the brand in question perceptions towards the Instagram page of the brand in question perceptions towards the Instagram page of the brand in question perceptions towards the Instagram page of the brand in question positively affected brand loyalty. Furthermore, it was observed that brand loyalty mediates the whole effect of the functional value and cocreation perceptions towards the Instagram page of the brand in question on purchase intention.

Keywords: Social Media, Brand Loyalty, Purchase Intention, Marketing, Instagram

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Ayben Ceyhan

I. Introduction

Along with the emergence of the Internet at the end of the 20^{th} century, the roles of businesses and consumers began to change. By the 21^{st} century, consumers began to have a say in the digital world by getting the title of "user". While businesses started to create contents for users, users started to create their own contents on various forums, media and content sharing sites and social networks, and thus they were able to share them with their friends, other users, and even the whole world.

Nowadays, the power of social media in communication between the masses has gained increasing momentum. Businesses that have realized it have begun to exist in social media with corporate or brand pages. Social media, where consumers can freely share their ideas and discuss them with other users, provides businesses with an opportunity to develop marketing applications that are different from traditional methods and that inspires consumers.

Along with these developments in the digital world, the consumer has also begun to evolve. Factors such as speed, practicality, and usability have now come to the forefront more for consumers in communication. Therefore, consumers have begun to use social media, which contains these features, more frequently; and while using social media, consumers have started to follow brand accounts that will also provide benefits for them and where there is a fast flow of information and where they can share their ideas, do brand or product research, reach positive or negative opinions about brands and get faster response to their requests and needs from brands. Consumers have even started to do shopping on them.

Among social media networks, Instagram is one of the most successful social networks that appeal to this new consumer group. Marketers are now aware of this, and therefore, they act according to the new market dynamics. In the study carried out by Crofton and Parker (2012), considering social media as an effective marketing mechanism was demonstrated to have a significant and positive impact on businesses' ability to develop customers' loyalty and purchase behaviors. Nowadays, since businesses are aware of this importance, they create and implement social media marketing plans by keeping social media within their marketing plans (Alalwan et al. 2017). However, they have limited information on consumer perception regarding their marketing applications on brand pages in social media networks and to what extent this perception affects users' brand loyalty and purchase intention.

In this study, individuals who are Instagram users, follow at least one brand and studying in Beykent University in Turkey were selected as the target group. It was attempted to statistically reveal the effects of their perceptions regarding marketing applications on brand loyalty and purchase intention. The study was based on functional value, hedonic value, social value, co-creation value and self-brand image congruency among the consumer perceptions regarding brand management, word-of-mouth marketing, and customer relationship management that are the social media marketing applications of brands.

Instagram

We live in a visual era in which an average person is more likely to watch a video or look at a photo than to read a written text. Studies indicating that 65% of the population are visual learners also support it. Therefore, web pages with visual content receive 94% more views than those without it. According to another finding, the media with visual and video content increases the rate of return by 64%. The fact that twothirds of marketers say that visual assets are critically important in the communication of their brands indicates that they have adapted to the visual era. In this context, Instagram is a valuable marketing tool for businesses that want to create loyal customers with its ability to share visual information desired by consumers (AdAge, 2019).

Instagram, a social network with visual content, reached 1.000.000 users approximately two months after being launched by the App Store in 2010. Twitter and Foursquare reached the same number of users in a year. This also shows that Instagram had a successful growth rate (Latiff and Safiee 2015). Instagram is called as the "World's Most Powerful Selling Tool" by some people, which indicates the levels of passion and loyalty shown by Instagram users (Macarthy 2014).

Facebook is the market leader among social networking sites. However, social media users interact with brands on Instagram 58 times more than on Facebook and 120 times more than on Twitter. 53% of adults ranging in age from 18 to 29 years use Instagram. Sharing an Instagram photo with a product or service for sale increases return on sales by seven times. Instagram constitutes the most powerful brand environment in the world (Lindsey-Mullikin and Borin 2017).

According to We Are Social and Hootsuite's 2019 Global Digital Report, Instagram ranks third after Facebook and YouTube among social networks with the highest number of users in the last year, and it has one billion active users per month. The total number of Instagram users based on Instagram's addressable advertising audience is 894.9 million. The users determined as over 13 years of age consisted of 50.3% women and 49.7% men, and 33% of them are in the 25-34 age range and 32% of them are in the 18-24 age range. Turkey shares the first place with Sweden with a rate of 58% in the world ranking. When the increase in

the number of users is considered, Turkey ranks fourth in the world ranking with 38 million people with a 2.7% increase compared to the previous year. These results support that, the use of Facebook has been on the decline and the use of Instagram has been on the rise in Turkey in recent years (WeAreSocial, 2019).

The studies have revealed that, the campaigns conducted by businesses on Instagram strengthen their relationship with consumers and increase the sense of trust. It is quite important that these campaigns increase interaction among users and have hedonic and social values in terms of stimulating the feelings and thoughts of consumers (Erdoğmuş 2015).

Businesses and brands also began to communicate with their customers by creating profiles on Instagram within a short time. They created hashtags with the names of their own brands, campaigns or social responsibility projects and sometimes included consumers in their campaigns, and also they sometimes created interaction with a remarkable hashtag by turning a crisis into an opportunity. The best example of this in recent times is the creative study conducted by Lipton after the access problem experienced across Instagram for several hours. Lipton expressed its satisfaction with the problem that Instagram had with the hashtag "If tea is ready #Let'sTalkNow" by turning this problem in favor of itself and sharing the phrase "Thanks, Instagram. Thanks to you, we have had the opportunity to talk face to face for two hours" in a visual format. With real-time marketing, Lipton maintained the campaign that it prepared for November 17, the World Neighbors' Day, with this hashtag on Instagram (MediaCat, 2018).

In addition to businesses that have a physical store or e-commerce site and create an account on Instagram, there are also businesses that make sales by creating their own stores on Instagram and then open their physical store or e-commerce site. In this sense, Instagram is also a quite appropriate media for entrepreneurs with low budget. Instagram has now begun to turn into a shopping site with the shopping feature that was launched to the market in 2016 and that was introduced to Turkey in 2018. Instagram, which includes 25 million businesses, has only two million advertisers. They argued that, Instagram launched this new feature to the market to increase its advertising revenues. With this feature, businesses can add tags that direct sales to their stories. Users are directed to the page containing the product details when they click the tag once, and they are directed to the website of the business when they click it for the second time. Businesses can also see the number of clicks on a shopping tag and the number of people directed to the website (Webrazzi 2018).

II. Problem Statement and Purpose

Nowadays when social media marketing is on the rise, businesses are implementing various social media marketing applications by including Instagram, which is an important social network especially preferred by young consumers, in their digital marketing plans. Businesses or brands are developing various marketing applications and spend significant resources to be able to communicate with their customers on social media in an attempt to create loyal customers and purchase intention. However, there is a limited information on how these applications affect brand loyalty and purchase intention. In this context, in the present study, it was tried to reveal the effect of perception regarding the marketing applications of businesses on Instagram accounts on the brand loyalty and purchase intention of consumers, composed of Instagram users. While the aim of the study was to examine the mediating role of the brand loyalty phenomenon in the effect of consumers' perception level regarding social media marketing applications on purchase intention, the investigation of the relationships between the effect of consumers' engagement levels towards the Instagram page on the perceptions regarding social media marketing applications was also included within the scope of the study. Considering the propose of the study, the model of the study carried out in the screening model can be visualized as in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Model

III. Theoretical Background

Social Media Marketing Applications

Businesses or brands can reach their consumers and customers, who constitute their target groups, at any time through social media marketing applications they create. They can give advertisements through social networks by determining the target groups they want to reach according to their demographic characteristics. They can take measurements of them, and they can respond to the requests and needs of their customers at any time and even make sales with the social media customer relationships management they have created.

Kim and Ko (2012) classified the features of social media marketing activities as entertainment, interaction, trend, customization, and word-of-mouth. They applied these features to luxury brands. In the study on insurance services, Sano (2015) applied interaction, trend, customization and perceived risk as four social media marketing activity components. Lee (2017) classified social media activities of businesses as communication, information provision, support to daily life, promotion and sales, social response and activity. Jo (2013) classified social media marketing activities of businesses as activities, information, and advertisements. Kim (2017) defined the features of social media marketing as information, proximity, response and access (Seo and Park 2018).

As a result of the literature review, it was observed that there was limited number of studies on this subject. According to the finding of a study on this subject, brand reliability in consumer's mind increases as the consumer's social media perception related to a brand increases, and the consumer feels closer to the brand. Furthermore, the presence of the brand in social media tools allows consumers to perceive the brand as more prestigious in their mind (Kazancı and Başgöze 2015). In another study, it was concluded that social media marketing applications had a significant effect on brand loyalty and intention to revisit hotels that were the subject of the study (Ibrahim and Aljarah 2018). In a study in which the perceived social media marketing applications were measured, it was concluded that the perceived social media marketing applications had a positive effect on purchase intention and brand equity (Yadav and Rahman 2017).

In a study examining the effects of social media marketing activities on brand equity and customer response in the airline industry, the findings indicated that the trend was the most important component of social media marketing activities and that airline social marketing activities had significant effects on brand image and brand awareness. Furthermore, the results also showed that brand awareness had a significant effect on commitment and that brand image significantly affected online word-of-mouth and commitment (Seo and Park 2018).

The results of the study carried out on 404 consumers following the Facebook pages of brands demonstrated that the co-creation value, social value, usage intensity, and perceived brand strength affected customer engagement with brand pages. It was concluded that, functional value and hedonic value positively affected the usage intensity of the Facebook pages of brands and that social value and co-creation value had no significant and positive effect on the intensity of use. According to another finding, the usage intensity had a positive effect on brand loyalty and customer engagement behaviors with Facebook brand page. Furthermore, it was concluded that, customer engagement behaviors towards the brand page and brand loyalty also affected the brand performance results (De Vries and Carlson 2014).

Functional Value

According to the consumption value theory, the functional aspect of value refers to rational and economic evaluations made by individuals that reflect the quality of using a product or service (Carlson et al. 2019). Within the context of a social media brand page, this evaluation includes a customer's ability to access a useful, helpful and practical content (Jahn and Kunz 2012). Functional value is one of the most important factors in attracting social network users to the brand page. One of the main reasons for adopting a new type of media is functionality or information satisfaction (De Vries and Carlson 2014). For a customer to be satisfied with a brand page on the social network in terms of functional value, the content of that page should be functional, helpful, useful and practical. If the customer is satisfied in this sense, he/she will probably visit the brand page more often (Jahn and Kunz 2012). Furthermore, it was determined that informative content on the social network page of a brand was one of the main factors allowing the users following the page to like the brand's shares, comment on

them, and share them on their own pages (De Vries and Carlson 2014).

Hedonic Value

Hedonic value is considered to be one of the key elements of online brand community participation. A brand page on the social network should have an amusing and exciting content to meet the customer's need for hedonic pleasure. High hedonic value perceived by the customer ensures that the customer visits the brand page more often (De Vries and Carlson 2014).

Entertainment on social media is an important component that arouses positive feelings, increases users' behaviors and causes continuous use intention. People who use social media for hedonistic reasons are considered to be those looking for fun and pleasure, and virtual communities are organized according to these interests for them (Seo and Park 2018). The findings of a study on this subject indicate that the entertainment value of social media pages positively affects the online brand community identity, which has a positive effect on brand-related social media interaction.

Furthermore, it was concluded that loyalty to the brand's social networking page and brand community identity positively affected the brand loyalty behavior (Yoshida et al. 2018). In another study, hedonic and useful search engine website features were demonstrated to have a positive effect on affective commitment. Hedonic shopping value creates long-term relations in services. Emotional pleasure is determined by the hedonic value of the service and leads to online shopping intention. In the study carried out, it was concluded that hedonic shopping value is important for loyal customers and helps to establish close emotional connections with target customers (Bilgihan and Bujisic 2015).

Social Value

Social networking websites like Instagram provide a social interaction environment for users. Customers should know that, other customers whom they perceive as similar to themselves are on the brand page and that they have the opportunity to meet and communicate with them when they need to interact, in order to fulfill their social interaction satisfaction. Therefore, the high customer's social interaction perception of the brand page on the social network may ensure that the customer visits the page more frequently and increases commitment to the brand page (De Vries and Carlson 2014). Users interact with each other by asking questions, commenting and inviting each other to the page through the competitions applied by the brand on its social network page. Furthermore, visitors to the page may ask users who have bought and experienced the product or service of the brand to convey their experience. knowledge and Through repeated conversations and exchange of ideas, some users may develop friendships that can continue at an interpersonal level. From this aspect, it can be said that brand pages on social networks are suitable media for the socialization of users (Tsimonis and Dimitriadis 2014).

Co-creation Value

The concept of co-creation is collaboration with the business or brand with which the customer can interact and communicate and which may provide better service to customers in some cases and which intends to create an offer, service, and experience (Sawhney et al. 2005). From a brand point of view, the co-creation value allows customers to contribute to brand recognition and recall and the establishment of brand awareness by integrating their own experiences into talks about the brand (De Vries and Carlson 2014). The co-creation value is the process in which the consumer and business participate together to create a sustainable value for the business and specific to the individual consumer (See-To and Ho 2014).

Co-creation is usually discussed within the context of an online brand community that creates value for individuals, brand communities and businesses in which members can play an active role as both providers and beneficiaries (Essamri et al. 2019). The emergence of Web 2.0 along with the developments on the Internet and social media has authorized the consumers. Consumers involved in social media create an added value through social interactions and cooperation and support businesses with co-creation value (Hajli 2014). The research findings on consumer behaviors and co-creation value in the literature indicate that, customers are looking for co-creation value with brands on the Facebook pages of brands and attach importance to this issue. Consumers can quickly interact with brands in real-time on social media, which enable them to make real-time co-creation with the brand via social media by providing feedback, sharing, and interacting with the brand (De Vries and Carlson 2014; Sashi 2012; Gensler et al. 2013).

Social media has transformed customers from passive into active individuals who can share their experiences and ideas easily and at any time, which has also directed marketers to the "co-creation" process. In other words, the social media encourages customers to become individuals who are actively interested in the brand (Akyüz 2013). The DART model, one of the conceptual models guiding the "co-creation" process, consists of the following concepts (Ramaswamy 2008):

- Dialogue: Businesses should develop meaningful dialogues with consumers.
- Access: Businesses should provide customers with access to each other and to the business authorities to develop such a complex dialogue.
- Risk-return relationship: Businesses should consider how to manage the risk and return relationship for both the customer and for themselves.
- Transparency: Information should be shared transparently.

Self-brand Image Congruency

Self-brand image congruency refers to the harmony between the personality of the brand perceived by the consumer and the consumer's self-concept or the harmony between the consumer's own image and brand image. When these two concepts are highly matched, brand preference and brand loyalty also increase, in addition to pre-consumption evaluations such as attitude, preference, and intention (De Vries and Carlson 2014). Brand personality is the transfer of human characteristics such as being innovative, exciting, reliable and energetic to the brand. Demographic and psychographic characteristics and the requests as well as the needs of consumers in the brand's target group should be taken into consideration while creating a brand personality. The brand personality should be built by considering the fact that, people establish close relationships with individuals who are compatible with their own personalities and look like them. When the target group meets with the brand, they should see themselves in the brand and be able to establish emotional ties. Furthermore, brand personality should be compatible with its target group as well as the values of the business in which it has emerged. The brand personality should be identified with all elements of the brand such as package, logo, and slogan (Pazarlamailetisimi.com, 2019).

The concept of brand image is widely accepted when a number of brand perceptions are reflected in the customers' memory. These associations may originate from the information obtained from the market offer or customers' direct experiences on purchasing the brand. A positive brand image may help businesses both to increase competition and to encourage customers to repeat their purchasing transaction (Nisar and Whitehead 2016).

In the studies on self-brand image congruency, it was concluded that consumers exhibited more loyalty to the product, brand loyalty, and higher brand relationship quality when they perceived a brand as compatible with their own image. The reason is that, consumers usually tend to purchase the brands that are compatible with their self-images. Thus, they can reinforce their personal identity and create their own internal self-consistency (Phua and Kim 2018). Businesses also include brand image studies for the selfbrand image congruency of consumers in their marketing applications on Instagram pages. They can do this by comprehending the personal images and preferences of their target groups via following their comments, ideas and interactions, and creating marketing applications that will enable them to identify with their brands. The result of a study on Snapchat, which is a social media application that uses augmented reality (AR) technology to place geographic filter advertisements, consumers in photos decorated with branded contents, revealed that self-brand image congruency had a positive effect on consumers' brand attitude and purchase intention after using the application (Phua and Kim 2018).

In a study on the conformity of brand personality to individuals, consumer's own image, after the data of 301 Facebook users were analyzed. It was concluded that, self-brand image congruency, in other words, the conformity of brand personality to the consumer's image had a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty and purchase intention. Furthermore, another finding is that, brand loyalty partially mediated the relationship between self-brand image congruency and purchase intention (Lee et al., 2018).

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention indicates the possibility that consumers will plan or want to purchase a certain product or service in the future. In other words, purchase intention is the basis of the exhibited purchasing behavior (Martins et al. 2019). Previous studies indicate that, the increase in purchase intention reflects the increase in the possibility of purchase. When the consumers have a positive purchase intention, this forms a positive brand commitment which propels consumers to take an actual purchase action (Wu et al. 2011).

After the literature review, it was observed that there was a limited number of studies on the effect of social media marketing applications on consumers' purchase intention. According to the result of a study on this subject, the social media perception positively affects the purchase trend. In other words, as consumers' social media marketing perception related to a brand increases positively, the trend to purchase a product of the relevant brand will also increase (Kazancı and Başgöze 2015).

According to the finding of another study, it was concluded that the trust encouraged by social media had a significant effect on purchase intention. Potential consumers' trust in both the seller and the social network through which they will purchase the product increases the possibility of purchasing that product. According to another finding of the same study, when social network users encounter a high level of system quality and information quality, the possibility of their purchasing products through social networking sites increases. Therefore, consumers' purchase intention increases as the perceived usefulness increases. Furthermore, analysis results also revealed that trust had a positive and significant effect on perceived usefulness, which emphasizes the mediating role of trust in the adoption of social commerce (Hajli 2014).

In another study, the effect of the social media marketing environment on brand loyalty and purchase intention of generation Y was examined. It was concluded that online marketing communication, especially online word-of-mouth marketing, online communities, and online advertising were effective in the development of brand loyalty and purchase intention (Balakrishnan 2014). In a study in which the factors affecting the evaluation of purchase on Instagram were analyzed with the participation of 414 people, it was observed that participants' reasons for shopping on Instagram were the inability to find the product or service needed in their cities, price affordability, saving of time, friend's recommendation and especially the excess range of products, and that they mostly purchased clothing products. It was concluded that the perceived seller optimism, other customers' positive comments on the brand page, trust in the seller, and the confidentiality of personal and financial information positively affected the evaluation of purchase by consumers (Firat 2017).

In a study in which the effect of Thai consumers on accessory purchase intention on Instagram was investigated, it was concluded that the cognitive experience status and word-of-mouth marketing intentions had a positive effect on accessory purchase intention on Instagram (Prasertsith et al., 2015). In another study carried out on Instagram users, it was concluded that trust, price, quality and perceived risk significantly affected consumer purchase decisions in online stores on Instagram. Another result is that, price is one of the absolute factors of consumer purchase behavior, within these variables (Kusumah 2015). In a study carried out to determine what encourages consumers to shop from online stores on Instagram, it was found out that perceived benevolence, perceived integrity, and opinion leader approval were the factors with a positive effect on consumer trust in the Instagram store. It was concluded that trust was a strong determinant of consumer's purchase intention from the Instagram page (Che et al. 2017).

According to the findings of another study carried out with 392 social network users, purchase intention increases positively as consumer brand resonance increases (Shang et al. 2017). In the study in which it was attempted to determine the factors affecting the purchase intention of a smartphone among 367 university students in Malaysia, it was revealed that there was a significant and positive relationship between product features and purchase intention and between social impact and purchase intention, which was consistent with the results of similar studies in the literature (Rahim et al. 2016). Along with the conducted studies, considering that Instagram users consist of young consumers, 33% of whom are in the 25-34 age range and 32% of whom are in the 18-24 age range, the study was tested on university students who are Instagram users.

Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty, which has a significant effect on consumer's purchase intention, is also another issue on which businesses focus. In addition to the contributions to the brand by a customer, who is committed to the brand, including a positive word-of-mouth and being a supporter of the brand, the consumer exhibits behavioral patterns such as purchase intention of the brand or repurchase intention in the future, low sensitivity to price change, and identification of self-image with the brand. Previous studies have shown that brand loyalty in social media has offered brands many important opportunities to create value, present interesting and real-time contents, ensure co-creation with customers, and encourage them to new ideas (Machado et al. 2019).

Brand communities consisting of customers with brand loyalty offer new ways for businesses and customers to connect with each other. While businesses aim to interact with their loyal customers, influence brand community members' perceptions regarding the brand, spread information and obtain information from them, applications performed online and offline by customers have gained value (Gummerus et al. 2012). Some studies investigating the effect of brand loyalty on purchase intention were found in the literature. In a study in which luxury brand communities in social media in South Korea were investigated, data were collected from 252 luxury brand Facebook fan page members, and it was concluded that the luxury brand attitude positively affected brand loyalty and purchase intention and that brand loyalty positively affected purchase intention (Kim and Lee, 2017).

According to the findings of a study on brand loyalty in social media, 73% of the participants followed brand pages on social media. The first reason why participants followed brand pages was to get general information about new products. In this study, it was concluded that there was a significant and positive

relationship between brands, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Based on this finding, researchers propose that brand pages can be used positively to achieve and maintain customer loyalty. Furthermore, it was concluded that users exhibited behavioral loyalty more than attitudinal loyalty and that they were more likely to purchase the products and services of the brands they follow on social media (Nisar and Whitehead 2016).

According to the findings of another study, brand communities created on social media positively affect the customer and product, customer and brand, customer and business, and customer and other customer relations, which positively affects brand trust. It was concluded that trust also had a positive effect on brand loyalty. Furthermore, brand trust plays a mediating role in transforming the effects of improved relations in the brand community into brand loyalty (Laroche et al. 2013).

The research hypotheses created in the light of all this information are presented in Table 1.

Tal	ble	1:	Research	h H	lypot	heses
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perception related to social media marketing applications. The consumers' engagement to the Instagram page of the brand has a positive effect on their
perception related to functional value.
The consumers' engagement to the Instagram page of the brand has a positive effect on their
perception related to hedonic value.
The consumers' engagement to the Instagram page of the brand has a positive effect on their
perception related to social value.
The consumers' engagement to the Instagram page of the brand has a positive effect on their
perception related to co-creation value.
The consumers' engagement to the Instagram page of the brand has a positive effect on their leve
of self-brand image congruency.
The perception level of consumers' related to social media marketing applications has a positive effect on purchase intention.
The perception level of consumers' functional value has a positive effect on purchase intention.
The perception level of consumers' hedonic value has a positive effect on purchase intention.
The perception level of consumers' social value has a positive effect on purchase intention.
The perception level of consumers' co-creation value has a positive effect on purchase intention.
The perception level of consumers' self-brand image congruency has a positive effect on
purchase intention.
The perception level of consumers' related to social media marketing applications has a positive effect on brand lovalty.
The perception level of consumers' functional value has a positive effect on brand loyalty.
The perception level of consumers' hedonic value has a positive effect on brand loyalty.
The perception level of consumers' social value has a positive effect on brand lovalty.
The perception level of consumers' co-creation value has a positive effect on brand lovalty.
The perception level of consumers' self-brand image congruency has a positive effect on brand
loyalty.
Brand loyalty has a positive effect on purchase intention.
The perception level of consumers' related to social media marketing applications on
purchase intention is mediated by brand loyalty.
The effect of the consumers' functional value on the purchase intention is mediated by brand
loyalty.
The effect of the consumers' hedonic value on the purchase intention is mediated by brand
loyalty.
The effect of the consumers' social value on the purchase intention is mediated by brand loyalty.
The effect of the consumers' co-creation value on the purchase intention is mediated by brand lovalty.

IV. Methodology

Study Design

Students studying in associate's, undergraduate and postgraduate programs in Beykent University between the years 2017 and 2018 were selected as the universe. The number of students studying in associate's, undergraduate and postgraduate programs at Beykent University between the years 2017 and 2018 was 23.618. The questionnaire form, which was prepared in accordance with the objectives of the study, consists of five parts. The first part consists of nine categorical questions prepared to collect the statistics related to the demographic and descriptive characteristics of the participants. The second part is a ready scale consisting of 23 5-point Likert-type questions designed to measure consumers' perceptions regarding social media marketing applications in five sub-dimensions. The third part is a ready scale consisting of five 5-point Likert-type

questions designed to measure consumer engagement with brand's Instagram page followed by the participants. The fourth part is a ready scale consisting of six 5-point Likert-type questions designed to measure the level of consumers' loyalty to the brand they follow. The last part is a ready scale consisting of three 5-point Likert-type questions designed to measure consumers' purchase intention of the products of the brand they follow. Scales:

- The level of perception regarding social media marketing applications

- -Functional value
- Hedonic value
- Social value
- Co-creation value
- Self-brand image congruency

- Consumer engagement with brand's Instagram page (BIP)

- Brand loyalty
- Purchase intention

In this article, the perception scale regarding marketing applications consisting of functional value, hedonic value, social value, co-creation value and selfbrand image congruency, consumer engagement and the brand loyalty scale were taken from De Vries and Carlson's article titled "Examining The Drivers and Brand Performance Implications of Customer Engagement with Brands in The Social Media Environment". In this article, the items measuring functional value, hedonic value, social value, and consumer engagement structures were adapted from Jahn and Kunz (2012). The co-creation value scale consisting of six items was adapted from O'Cass and Ngo (2011). The five-item scale of self-brand image congruency was adapted from Hohenstein et al. (2017). The criteria used to evaluate brand loyalty were adapted from Zeithaml et al. (1996) (De Vries and Carlson 2014).

The purchase intention scale was taken from the article of Shang et al. titled "Generating Consumer Resonance for Purchase Intention on Social Network Sites". In this article, the purchase intention scale was adapted from Lu et al. (2010) (Shang et al. 2017).

Sample Profile

A total of 1.103 questionnaires were completed, and there were 1.078 questionnaires available after screening. Based on this sample, 58% of respondents were female and 42% were male. The majority were in the 18-24 age group (86.3%) since the sample consisted of students, and 13.7% of them were at the age of 25 and older. While 27% of them were studying in the associate's program, 65.1% and 7.9% of them were studying in the undergraduate and postgraduate programs, respectively. Of the participants, 59.6% had an income level of 1.500 TL and below, 20.5% had an income level of 1.501-2.500 TL, and 19.9% had an income level of 2.501 TL and above. While 24% of the participants stated that they had been Instagram users for 6 years or longer, 24.9% of them stated that they had used it for 5 years. 20.9% of them stated that they had used it for 4 years, 14.2% of them stated that they had used it for 3 years, 8.9% of them stated that they had used it for 2 years, and 7.1% of them

stated that they had used it for 1 year or less. The statistics on the number of brands followed by the participants are as follows: 1 brand by 9.6%, 2-10 brands by 55.6%, 11-20 brands by 15.9%, 21-30 brands by 5.1%, 31-40 brands by 1.7%, 41-50 brands by 3.9%, and 51 brands and above by 8.3%. The brands that are most frequently followed by the participants are as follows: Zara by 10.1%, Nike by 6.1%, Adidas by 3.5%, Mavi by 3.4%, Mercedes by 3.1%, and other by 73.7%. While 65.1% of the participants stated that they had followed the relevant brand before using Instagram, 34.9% of them indicated that they had not followed the brand before Instagram.

V. Empirical Results and Findings

Within the scope of the study, the data collected were first transferred to the Microsoft Excel program and then to IBM SPSS 23.0 version with the required numerical encodings. IBM SPSS Amos 23.0 version for confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling and IBM SPSS 23.0 package program for other analyses were used in the subsequent parts of the study. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to test the hypotheses based on the examination of interscale relationships from the research hypotheses. The maximum likelihood method was adopted as an estimation technique in the structural equation modeling study. Baron and Kenny's (1986) mediation relationship principles were adopted in the analysis of hypotheses based on the examination of the mediation relationship (Baron and Kenny 1986).

H1, H2 involve the examination of direct relationships between the scale variables. In this respect, the relevant hypotheses were analyzed with a single structural equation modeling analysis. H5 involves the analysis of mediation relationship. There are 4 basic requirements for the mediating effect to be examined and tested. The first requirement is that the independent variables (perception regarding social media marketing applications) have a statistically significant predictive power on the dependent variable (purchase intention). The second requirement is that the independent variables have a statistical effect on the mediating variable (brand loyalty). The third requirement is that the mediating variable has a statistically significant effect on the dependent variable. The fourth requirement is that the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable should be statistically reduced, eliminated or should change direction when the mediating variable is included in the analysis together with the independent variables (Baron and Kenny 1986). In order to examine these requirements, a second structural equation model was established by adding the mediating variable (brand loyalty) to the first structural equation model for H5, and the findings were examined in terms of the requirements of mediation relationship. On the other hand, when the brand loyalty variable was examined, hypotheses H3 and H4 were examined in the analysis of the second structural equation model.

Table 2: Estimation Statistics of the First Structural Equation Model

Hypothesis	Dependent Variable		Independent Variable	Standardised β	S.E.	t	р	R ²
H1,a	Functional Value	÷	Consumer Engagement with the BIP	0.354	0.044	9.710	.000*	0.125
H1,b	Hedonic Value	÷	Consumer Engagement with the BIP	0.388	0.041	9.815	.000*	0.15
H1,c	Social Value	÷	Consumer Engagement with the BIP	0.364	0.076	10.266	.000*	0.132
H1,d	Co-creation Value	÷	Consumer Engagement with the BIP	0.378	0.064	10.182	.000*	0.143
H1,e	Self-brand Image Congruency	÷	Consumer Engagement with the BIP	0.557	0.038	12.440	.000*	0.31
H2,a	Purchase Intention	÷	Functional Value	0.121	0.036	3.000	.003*	0.240
Н2,b	Purchase Intention	÷	Hedonic Value	0.092	0.046	2.096	.036*	0.246
H2,c	Purchase Intention	÷	Social Value	-0.052	0.018	-1.487	0.137	0.240
H2,d	Purchase Intention	←	Co-creation Value	0.004	0.023	0.122	0.903	0.240
H2,e	Purchase Intention	÷	Self-brand Image Congruency	0.377	0.056	8.687	.000*	0.240

*Symbolizes statistical significance at 95% confidence level. S.E.: Standard Error.

Table 3: Estimation Statistics of the Second Structural Equation Model

Hypothesis	Dependent Variable		Independent Variable	Standardised ß	S.E.	t	Р	R ²
H3,e	Brand Loyalty	+	Self-brand Image Congruency	0.528	0.075	11.875	.000*	0.424
H3,d	Brand Loyalty	+	Co-creation Value	-0.004	0.027	-0.111	0.912	0.424
H3,c	Brand Loyalty	÷	Social Value	0.071	0.021	2.192	.028*	0.424
H3,b	Brand Loyalty	+	Hedonic Value	0.042	0.056	1.027	0.304	0.424
H3,a	Brand Loyalty	÷	Functional Value	0.136	0.044	3.603	.000*	0.424
H4	Purchase Intention	+	Brand Loyalty	0.587	0.033	13.761	.000*	0.447

*Symbolizes statistical significance at 95% confidence level. S.E.: Standard Error.

Table 4: Model 1 and Model 2 Findings

				Model 1					Model 2				
н	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	β	S.E.	t	p	β	S.E.	t	р			
H5,a	Purchase Intention	Functional Value	0.121	0.036	3.000	.003*	.040	.032	1.110	.267			
H5,b	Purchase Intention	Hedonic Value	0.092	0.046	2.096	.036*	.067	.041	1.712	.087			
H5,c	Purchase Intention	Social Value	-0.052	0.018	-1.487	0.137	094	.016	-2.992	.003*			
H5,d	Purchase Intention	Co-creation Value	0.004	0.023	0.122	0.903	.006	.020	.195	.845			
H5.e	Purchase Intention	Self-brand Image Congruency	0.377	0.056	8.687	.000*	.070	.056	1.594	.111			
H4	Purchase Intention	Marka Bağlılığı	-		-	•	.587	.033	13.761	.000*			
H3,a	Brand Loyalty	Functional Value		5	-		.136	.044	3.603	.000*			
H3,b	Brand Loyalty	Hedonic Value		•	-	*	.042	.056	1.027	.304			
H3.c	Brand Lovalty	Social Value			-		.071	.021	2.192	.028*			
H3,d	Brand Loyalty	Co-creation Value	-	-	-	÷	004	.027	111	.912			
H3,e	Brand Loyalty	Self-brand Image Congruency	-	-	2		.528	.075	11.875	.000*			

*Symbolizes statistical significance at 95% confidence level. S.E.: Standard Error.

The results are presented in Tables 2, 3 and 4. According to the estimation statistics of the first structural equation model, the level of engagement with the brand's Instagram page has a statistically significant and positive effect on the functional value perception, hedonic value, social value, co-creation value, and selfbrand image congruency at a confidence level of 95%. The functional value perception, hedonic value and selfbrand image congruency had a statistically significant

and positive effect on purchase intention at a confidence level of 95%. There was no statistically significant effect of the social value perception and co-creation value on purchase intention at a confidence level of 95%. When the first structural equation model was evaluated in terms of the hypotheses, hypotheses H1,a, H1,b, H1,c, H1d, H1,e, H2,a, H2,b and H2,e were accepted while hypotheses H2,c and H2,d were rejected.

According to the results in Table 3 including the estimation statistics of the second structural equation model, the functional value, social value and self-brand image congruency perception towards the brand's Instagram page has a statistically significant and positive effect on the brand loyalty in question at a confidence level of 95%. There was no statistically significant effect of the hedonic value and co-creation value perception towards the brand's Instagram page on the brand loyalty in question at a confidence level of 95%. Furthermore, brand loyalty has a statistically significant and positive effect on purchase intention at a confidence level of 95%.

According to the results in Table 4 in which hypothesis 5 was examined, when the requirements of the mediating role of brand loyalty in the effect of functional value on purchase intention are examined, it is observed that a significant effect of functional value on purchase intention, which is the first requirement, was ensured in the first model ($\beta = 0.121$, sig.<0.05). It is observed that a significant effect of functional value on brand loyalty, which is the second requirement, was ensured in the second model ($\beta = 0.136$, sig.<0.05). It is observed that the effect of brand loyalty on purchase intention, which is the third requirement, was ensured in the second model ($\beta = 0.587$, sig.<0.05).

When the fact that the effect of functional value on purchase intention in the first model after adding the brand loyalty variable to the first model slightly decreases or disappears in the second model, which is the last requirement, is examined, it is observed that the effect of functional value on purchase intention in the second model is not statistically significant at a confidence level of 95% ($\beta = 0.040$, sig.>0.05). In this case, it can be said that the four requirements of the mediation model were fulfilled. Brand loyalty mediates the effect of functional value on purchase intention. More clearly, brand loyalty mediates the whole effect of the consumers' functional value perception towards the Instagram page of the brand in question on the purchase intention. The effect of the level of self-brand image congruency on purchase intention is mediated by brand loyalty. More clearly, brand loyalty mediates the whole effect of the consumers' self-brand image congruency perception towards the Instagram page of the brand in question on the purchase intention.

When the requirements of the mediating role of brand loyalty in the effect of hedonic value on purchase intention are examined, it is observed that a significant effect of hedonic value on purchase intention exists. That is the first requirement, which was ensured in the first model ($\beta = 0.092$, sig.<0.05). It is observed that a significant effect of hedonic value on brand loyalty, which is the second requirement, was not ensured in the second model ($\beta = 0.042$, sig.>0.05). In this case, the mediating role of brand loyalty in the effect of consumers' hedonic value perception towards the Instagram page of the brand on purchase intention cannot be mentioned.

When the requirements of the mediating role of brand loyalty in the effect of social value on purchase intention are examined, it is observed that there is no significant effect of social value on purchase intention, which is the first requirement, in the first model findings ($\beta = -0.052$, sig.>0.05). In this case, it can be said that the social value perception towards the Instagram page of the brand has no effect on the purchase intention of the brand. Therefore, brand loyalty cannot mediate an effect which is not available.

When the requirements of the mediating role of brand loyalty in the effect of co-creation value on purchase intention are examined, it is observed that there is no significant effect of co-creation value on purchase intention, which is the first requirement, in the first model findings ($\beta = 0.004$, sig.>0.05). In this case, it can be said that the co-creation value perception towards the Instagram page of the brand has no effect on the purchase intention of the brand. Therefore, brand loyalty cannot mediate an effect which is not available. When mediating roles were examined in terms of the hypotheses, it was observed that hypotheses H5,a and H5,e were accepted and hypotheses H5,b, H5,c and H5,d were rejected.

VI. Discussion

In the findings obtained, it was observed that customers' perception regarding marketing applications consisting of functional value, hedonic value, social value, co-creation value and self-brand image congruency towards the Instagram page of the brand increased as their level of engagement with the Instagram page of the followed brand increased. In this context, it can be said that the fact that consumers are participatory and active members of the brand followed by them and interact with other users may increase their perception regarding marketing applications. At this point, it can be recommended for marketers to give Instagram advertisements for their target groups and to organize campaigns and lots, that may increase interaction through their Instagram pages so that their consumers become active and participatory members by visiting the Instagram page of their brand frequently.

It was observed that the consumers' purchase intention to the brand in question increased as their functional value perception, hedonic value and self-brand image congruency towards the Instagram page of the followed brand increased. According to this finding, creating the functional value perception, hedonic value and self-brand image congruency from marketing applications in customers increases purchase intention. At this point, it can be recommended for marketers and social media managers that they should create practical, useful and functional Instagram pages. They should also pay attention to the fact that Instagram pages include useful, amusing and enjoyable information and post in the future in this direction, and they should bring the shares to reflect the brand personality to the forefront for consumers to be able to identify the brand with themselves.

No statistically significant effect of social value and co-creation value on purchase intention was found. Two factors can be considered at this juncture: Firstly, the brands followed by the consumers who responded to the questionnaire may not have sufficiently developed or implemented marketing applications for social value and co-creation value. Secondly, it can be thought that the fact that consumers have the opportunity to meet and interact with new people on the Instagram page of the brand. Also, the Instagram page of the brand communicates with users to provide better service and cooperates to produce offers that will meet the needs of the consumer. This does not affect the purchase intention despite affecting other factors.

As a result of the analyses, it was observed that the functional value perception, social value and selfbrand image congruency towards the Instagram page of the brand had a significant and positive effect on the level of brand loyalty in question. Based on this result, it can be said that, marketers and social media managers must ensure their Instagram pages are functional. Also, they must make sure that form contents reflect the brand personality and create interaction between users, who follow their pages. This contributes to the formation of brand loyalty in the customer.

No significant effect of the hedonic value perception and co-creation value perception towards the Instagram page of the brand on brand loyalty was found. It cannot be said that only the co-creation value of the brand has no effect on brand loyalty and purchase intention by considering the result that the co-creation value and purchase intention, which are unrelated. It is observed that many brands in Turkey do not cooperate to create offers to meet consumers' needs through their brand's Instagram page in order to provide better service. Few brands perform applications towards the co-creation value. In a face-to-face questionnaire study, the feedback was also received from respondents in this direction. The participants, who did not have this kind of marketing application on the Instagram page of the brand, provided negative answers to the questions of the co-creation value scale.

It is another finding of the study that, brand loyalty has a significant and positive effect on purchase intention. More clearly, as consumers' loyalty to the brand they follow on Instagram increases, the purchase intention to the brand in question also increases. Previous studies in the literature support this result.

It was observed that, amusing and enjoyable content increased the consumer's purchase intention but did not affect brand loyalty. According to this finding, it can be said that purchase intention may occur in the consumer as long as there is an amusing content. However, there may not be a repeated purchase intention, since brand loyalty means that the consumer has the purchase intention of the same brand also in the future.

When the mediating effect of brand loyalty was examined, it was observed that the effect of functional value and the level of self-brand image congruency on purchase intention was mediated by brand loyalty. Based on this finding, it can be said that functional value and self-brand image congruency from the perceptions regarding marketing applications affect purchase intention of the customer whose brand loyalty has been formed previously. No mediating role of brand loyalty was observed in the effect of customers' hedonic value perception, social value and co-creation value towards the Instagram page of the brand on purchase intention. By considering the fact that the social value perception and co-creation value has no effect on purchase intention, it can be said that only the hedonic value perception directly affects purchase intention.

It was determined that, the top five most frequently followed brands were Zara, Nike, Adidas, Mavi and Mercedes. No difference was found between the most followed brand and loyalty to the brand in question and between the most followed brand and the purchase intention to the brand in question. According to this finding, it can be said that brand loyalty and purchase intention do not occur with the fact that consumers follow the Instagram page of a brand most frequently and that the marketing applications on the Instagram pages of brands are not at the level to differ from other brands.

It can be said that, the consumers who followed the brand that they had followed most frequently before Instagram had a higher level of loyalty to the brand in question. According to this finding, it can be considered that the consumer had become loyal to the brand before following its page on Instagram. This loyalty was probably strengthened with the Instagram page. Therefore, loyalty continued longer in comparison to consumers who had not followed the brand before Instagram.

According to the research findings, it can be stated that the consumers who followed the brand that they had followed most frequently before Instagram had a higher level of the purchase intention to the brand in question. Considering that brand loyalty affects purchase intention and that consumers who had followed the brand before Instagram also had their trust and loyalty to the brand previously, it can be said that hesitations in mind, while purchase intention of the brand was forming, were at a lower level compared to consumers who had not followed the brand before Instagram and purchase intention was higher. In this study, it was determined that functional value, hedonic value, and self-brand image congruency, which are the consumer perceptions regarding social media marketing applications, had a positive effect on the purchase intention of the most followed brand on Instagram. The positive effect of functional value, social value and self-brand image congruency from the perceptions in question on brand loyalty is another finding. All these findings and the demonstration of the mediating role of brand loyalty in the effect of functional value and self-brand image congruency from consumer perceptions in question on purchase intention are considered to be the direct contribution of this study to the marketing literature.

When the research results are considered, it is observed that some marketing applications do not affect brand loyalty or purchase intention. The reason for this is considered to be the fact that, some brands were successful and some were unsuccessful while creating or implementing social media marketing applications or all marketing applications of the same brand were not successful. On the other hand, it can be said that the consumer's perception regarding some marketing applications did not affect brand loyalty or purchase intention, although they were successful. For all these reasons, it is believed that this study provides a useful resource for brands to have an idea about the perceptions formed by each of social media marketing applications in customers while creating them and how these perceptions

affect brand loyalty and purchase intention, as a contribution of this study to the business world.

VII. Limitations and Further Research

Within the scope of this study, the perception regarding marketing applications in social media and the effects of this perception on brand loyalty and purchase intention were focused on. However, the comparison of the research results among Beykent University students, the fact that the opinions of students from other universities are not known, the fact that the study was carried out with a certain age, education and income group, insufficient analysis data to make an interpretation since age groups were combined, the fact that five consumers' perceptions were taken, the measurement of the effect of these perceptions only on brand loyalty and purchase intention, the fact that the perceptions and attitudes of people in professional business life on this subject are not known, and the possibility that changes may be observed in consumer attitudes and behaviors over time are important. Therefore, marketers' applications may also vary appear. This is one of the limitations of this research.

Future studies can be carried out with student groups belonging to different universities and education, age and income groups, and people who are engaged in the business life. By receiving different perceptions of consumers regarding social media marketing applications, the effects of these perceptions on brand loyalty and purchase intention can be measured or the effect of five perceptions in this study on different variables can be investigated. Furthermore, the perceptions and attitudes of businesses with regard to social media marketing applications can be investigated and compared with the findings of consumer perceptions in this study. As previously mentioned, market dynamics are also obliged to change along with the easy and quick change of the attitudes of consumers adapting to the digital age we live in. Therefore, a similar study can be carried out with this new consumer group if social media changes or brings some innovations in the next periods, or in the period during which the next generation, generation Z, will start to work.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

First Part:

Age

- o 18-24
- 25-35
 36-45
- 0 36-45
- 46 and above

Gender

- Female
- o Male

Educational Level

- o Associate's
- Undergraduate
- Postgraduate

Faculty and department

Monthly income

- o 1.500 TL or less
- o 1.501-2.500 TL
- o 2.501-3.500 TL
- o 3.501-5.000 TL
- 5.001-10.000 TL
- 10.001 TL and above

Second Part:

How many years have you been an Instagram user?

0	6	vears	and	more
0	0	years	anu	more

- o 5
- o 4
- o 3
- o 2

0

 \circ 1 year and less than one year

How many brands / businesses do you follow on Instagram?



Which brand / business' page on Instagram that you visit most frequently?

Please write your chosen brand / business.

Did you follow the brand / business before using Instagram?

- Yes
- o No

(5) Strongly agree (4) Agree, (3) Neutral, (2) Disagree, (1) Strongly disagree

	5	4	3	2	1
F1. The content of the Facebook brand page is helpful for me.					
F2. The content of the Facebook brand page is useful for me.					
F3. The content of the Facebook brand page is functional for me.					
F4. The content of the Facebook brand page is practical.					
b) Hedonic Value					
	5	4	3	2	1
H1. The content of the Facebook brand page is fun.					C
H2. The content of the Facebook brand page is exciting.					
H3. The content of the Facebook brand page is pleasant.					
H4. The content of the Facebook brand page is entertaining.					

	15	1.4	1		
Die Lessenwerden von die Minister von die Lessenwerden von die seine	-	•		-	•
SI. I can meet people like me on this Instagram brand page.					
 I can meet new people like me on Instagram brand page. 					C
S3. I can find out about people like me on this Insgtagram brand page.					C
 I can interact with people like me on this Instagram brand page. 					C
d) Co-creation Value					
	5	4	3	2	1
BY1. The Instagram brand page interacts with me to serve me better.					C
BY 2. The Instagram brand page works together with me to produce					0
offerings that better suit me. BY 3. The Instagram brand page interacts with me to design offerings that					
meet my needs.	-	-	-	-	-
BY4. The Instagram brand page provides services in conjunction with me.					
BY5. The Instagram brand page allows my involvement in providing					
services for me to get the experience that I want. BY6. The Instagram brand page provides me with services that I help creat				-	
				•	1
 self-brand Image Congruency 					
	15	4	3	2	П
MOI. This brand is a lot like me.	5	4	3	2	
	5	4	3	2	
MO1. This brand is a lot like me. MO2. This brand reflects what I am.	5	4	3		
MO1. This brand is a lot like me. MO2. This brand reflects what I am. MO3. This brand is exactly how I see myself.	5	4	3	2	
MO1. This brand is a lot like me. MO2. This brand reflects what I am. MO3. This brand is exactly how I see myself. MO4. This brand image corresponds to my self-image in many respects.			3		
MO1. This brand is a lot like me. MO2. This brand reflects what I am. MO3. This brand is exactly how I see myself. MO4. This brand image corresponds to my self-image in many respects. MO5. Through this brand, I can express what I find important in life.			3 0 0		
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MB3. I say positive things about this brand to other people.					
MB4. I intend to remain loyal to this brand in the future.					
MB5. I will not stop supporting this brand.					
MB6. I think of myself as a loyal customer / supporter of this brand.					
h) Purchase Intention	5	4	3	2	1
SN1. Given the chance, I would consider purchasing products in the future.					
SN2. It is likely that I will actually purchase products in the near future.					
SN3. Given the opportunity, I intend to purchase products.					