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Research Article

The New Opinion Leaders of Digital Marketing Era: Social Media Influencers

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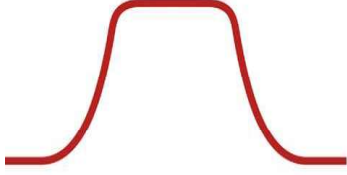
Abstract

The study examines the meaning of social media and social media influencers, penetration of social media platforms and the positioning of Instagram as a digital marketing tool. In this study, the growth of Instagram and influencer marketing are reviewed, how social media influencers and celebrities collaborate with brands and endorse them in social media platforms are approached. As a case study, digital marketing activities of four of the most preferred e-commerce platforms in Turkey have been examined during Black Friday; *Trendyol*, *HepsiBurada*, *GittiGidiyor* and *Amazon*. The reason why Black Friday, which is globally known as the opening day of shopping season, has been chosen as a case study is that retailers increase their digital marketing activities and market their sales on such special days. In this regard, the official Instagram accounts of the four noted e-commerce platforms have been analysed and Instagram posts with social media influencers and celebrity endorsement during Black Friday period have been studied. The study aims to contribute the literature by implying the usage of influencers by e-commerce platforms in terms of marketing perspective.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Social Media Influencers, Influencer Marketing, E-Commerce Marketing, Black Friday

JEL Codes: L81, L82, M00, M31, M37

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Arastırma Makalesi

Dijital Pazarlama Çağının Yeni Fikir Liderleri: Sosyal Medya Etkileyicileri

Ecem Taneri ¹

Öz

Bu çalışma, sosyal medya ve sosyal medya etkileyicilerinin anlamı, sosyal medya platformlarının etki alanı ve Instagram'ın dijital pazarlama aracı olarak konumlandırılmasını incelemektedir. Çalışmada, Instagram'ın ve etkileyici pazarlamanın büyümesi ele alınmakta, sosyal medya etkileyicilerinin ve ünlülerin markalarla nasıl işbirliği yaptığı, sosyal medya platformlarında nasıl destekledikleri incelenmektedir. Vaka incelemesi olarak Kara Cuma döneminde Türkiye'nin en fazla tercih edilen dört e-ticaret platformunun dijital pazarlama aktiviteleri üzerine çalışılmıştır; *Trendyol*, *HepsiBurada*, *GittiGidiyor* ve *Amazon*. Küresel olarak alışveriş sezonunun açılışının ilk günü kabul edilen Kara Cuma'nın inceleme alanı olarak belirlenmesinin nedeni, perakendecilerin Kara Cuma gibi özel günlerde dijital pazarlama aktivitelerini arttırmaları ve indirimlerini pazarlamalarıdır. Bu bağlamda, belirlenen dört e-ticaret platformunun resmi Instagram hesapları analiz edilmiş ve Kara Cuma döneminde sosyal medya etkileyicileri ve ünlüler ile yaptıkları sponsorlu içerikler çalışılmıştır. Bu çalışma, e-ticaret platformlarının etkileyicileri pazarlama bakış açısı çerçevesinde kullanımlarını değerlendirerek literatüre katkı sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal Medya Pazarlama, Sosyal Medya Etkileyicileri, Etkileyici Pazarlama, E-Ticaret Pazarlama, Kara Cuma

JEL Kodlar: L81, L82, M00, M31, M37

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1. Introduction

Communication has dated back to the history of human being, and has always been one of the fundamental needs, because we are all social creatures. Social interaction helps us have a healthy mind and life. In the modern world, social media is one of the most popular channels which satisfy human beings' need for communication. In such a world, whose population is around 7.90 billion people, *We are Social July 2021* report states that the number of active social media users is 4.48 billion; which equals to 56,7% of the worldwide population (Kemp, 2021b). The number of active social media¹ users increased in the ratio of 13% in 2020 when compared with the same period of previous year in which the number was reported as 3.96 billion (Kemp, 2020).

With the penetrative and permeative impact on daily lives, social media has provided marketing sector with a new perspective, and as alternative media. According to *December 2020 E-commerce Trend Report of Inveon*, Facebook user survey shows that 54% of the participants say that they made either instant or after seeing a product or service on Instagram ("The Top 7 E-commerce Trend Forecasts For 2021", 2020) The brands that find places in the digitalisation world, in which Instagram has a crucial positioning as new marketing tool, need influencers helping to express and promote themselves, extend to the market as well. Thus, the notion of social media influencer² is introduced not only in our lives, but also both in marketing and academic literature.

As the alternative media, social media is being used actively not only in the rest of the world, but also in Turkey. As a matter of the fact that, *We are Social Report 2020* implies that social media penetration in Turkey has reached 64%, while it is 49% in total population. Besides, according to *We are Social January 2021 Report*, the ratio of 16-64 aged internet users who visit an online retail site or store is 89,5% in Turkey (Kemp, 2021a). In this regard, this study mainly concentrates on the digital marketing activities of Turkey's most favoured and preferred e-commerce platforms which collaborate with social media influencers during the period of Black Friday 2021 which covers specifically the period of 1-26 November. The reason why Black Friday has been chosen as a case study is that the brands and companies have been expected to increase digital marketing activities during such specific periods, especially if they actively use their official social media accounts. The study aims to show whether the subjected e-commerce platforms have benefited from social media and influencers, likewise.

2. Instagram as Digital Marketing Tool

Today, people spend most of their times on social media in order to be socialized and keep in touch with others. According to *We are Social Report* released on July 2021, the number of current active social media users has reached 4.48 billion, which covers 56,7% of worldwide population and 93% of internet users, that equals to 4.80 billion people. *We are Social* expresses that the daily social media time spending of active users between the ages of 16-64 is approximately 2.24 hours and their time spending by using the Internet in any device is 6.55 hours (Kemp, 2021b). It is unsurprising that social media has penetrated into our lives with such

¹ Social media not only includes platforms sharing photograph or contacting with friends, but also consists of sending e-mail, watching video and following agenda channels.

² In this study, the notion of influencer represents a person or thing that influences somebody/something, especially a person with the ability to influence potential buyers of a product or service by recommending it on social media ("Influencer", n.d.).

a significant priority due to providing instant accessibility to information and annihilating borders of discovery.

Statista November 2021 Report lists Facebook as number one social media platform with 2.90 billion users (Statista Research Department, 2021a). Indeed, Facebook Messenger, that Facebook provides its members with direct messaging, is used by 1.3 billion. It is so obvious that the impact of Facebook is non-negligible if we consider that even Whatsapp has two billion users worldwide in the third rank. YouTube has gained second prize after Facebook, with 2.29 billion audience.

The fourth place is honoured with Instagram which has been used as one of them most challenging marketing tool in digitalisation. It offers users to express themselves visually thanks to photographing, editing and sharing features. Besides, Instagram might be evaluated as the combination of favoured social media platforms; Facebook, YouTube and Whatsapp, since it gives opportunity of socialisation, photograph and video sharing needs as Facebook, direct messaging and chatting as Whatsapp, video uploading and watching like YouTube, with IGTV (that is, Instagram TV). Furthermore, instant story sharing which vanishes in 24 hours (like Snapchat) and self-crafted and edited Reel videos (as Tiktok does) chances are also included in its features.

After being launched on October 6, 2010 and downloaded by 25.000 people in the first attempt, Instagram boosted its user number within two months by reaching one million people and welcome 150 million uploaded photos in one year. *Statista* marks that Instagram which is listed as the fourth most used social media platform, has 1.39 billion active users as of October 2021. Furthermore, *Statista* indicates that Turkey has been the sixth leading country in terms of the number of Instagram users as of October 2021 (Statista Research Department, 2021b). Likewise, Instagram is the second most penetrated social media platform amongst active social media users with 89.5% ratio after 94.5% of Facebook in the country (Kemp, 2021a).

As of 2021, 31% of social media users have been active in Instagram in order to take and share photographs and videos, express themselves visually, keep in touch with friends and followers, get financial benefits thanks to collaborations with brands. It signs that the popularity of Instagram will increase over years. Such that, having one billion users in 2020, Instagram has boosted its number to 1.39 billion users as of October 2021, which means that it grew 39% in one year in total population.

The definition of Instagram and how it positions itself have also been discussed in the literature. Instagram is described by Hu, Manikonda and Kambhampati (2014) as a relatively new form of communication where users can easily share their updates by taking photos as well as by tweaking and photo-shopping them through filters.

Users consume photos and videos mostly by viewing a core page stream of current feeds from their friends, listed according to the interaction rate (the more you interact with a specific page, the sooner you are exposed to the content of that page, regardless of the chronological order). These posts can also be liked, commented on, or added to a collection. Such actions will appear in the referenced user's "updates" page so that users can keep track of "likes" and comments about their posts. Given these functions, we can regard Instagram as a kind of "social awareness stream" (Namaan et al., 2010).

3. The Trend Celebrities of Social Media: Social Media Influencers

Blogs, conceptual sites, digitalized interests, and instant circulations shift the channel of celebrity creation from mainstream media to user-generated content. Instant content access and out-of-rating concerns breakdown the traditional understanding about celebrity since each user who has a satisfactory follower tier is accepted as a “celebrity” today. In fact, Instagram is said to breed a new micro-celebrity community (Senft, 2008). The members of this community are not celebrities as such, but their lifestyles and daily habits are different from those of ordinary people. They differentiate themselves with their families, social relationships, pets, diets, sports, fashion styles, or travels. They are one of us; they share the same contents as we do, but they usually conceptualize and construct their pages with a focus on specific areas of interests. These are the new celebrities of our digital world: social media influencers.

Cauberghe, Hudders, and Veirman (2017) mention that social media influencers are those who have built a sizeable social network of people following them. In addition, they are seen as trusted tastemakers in one or several niches.

Although these social media users are invariably described as “bloggers,” “YouTubers” or “Instagrammers,” Abidin (2015) classifies them under the general category of “social media influencer” regardless of which digital platform(s) they are active in. She also states that social media influencers are ordinary Internet users who accumulate a relatively large following on blogs and social media through the textual and visual narration of their personal lives and lifestyles, who engage with their followers in digital and physical spaces, and who financially benefit from their following by integrating advertorials into their blogs or social media posts.

Influencers are content creators who have accumulated a solid base of followers. Through creating content on Instagram, they provide their followers with clues to their personality, everyday lives, experiences, and opinions. By involving influencers in their activities (for instance, by offering them a product for testing, by organizing an exclusive event and inviting them to it, or simply by paying them), brands aim to stimulate influencers to endorse their products, which helps to build up their images among influencers’ pretty huge base of followers, a practice which is called influencer marketing (Abidin, 2016). Unlike conventional commercials, which audiences largely tend to skip either in digital platforms or on television, the effect of influencer marketing could be maximized by selecting a particular influencer for a specific target market in that followers are eager to learn what the followed and admired influencer does.

4. Influencer Marketing

As brands recognize the power of intimacy which is created by social media influencers, they benefit from them in promoting their products or services on various formal and informal events. Formal events are those that are hosted by an influencer but organized and financed by a brand. Such events are mainly organized for the launch or re-launch of a new product or service.

On the other hand, informal events are mostly organized by influencers themselves, such as sweepstakes, lucky dips, or giveaways, for selected followers. All given presents are also sponsored by a brand there, though. Besides, these “tricks” help influencers increase their follower numbers, encourage followers to comment under the related posts, and spread the hashtags determined by the sponsoring brand. Still, one of the major challenges for brands is to identify and select those influencers who can have a strong impact on their target audiences,

who can persuade them to try and adopt new products, and who help to diffuse their use across their social networks (Pophal, 2016).

The extraordinary success of Instagram proves that posts and follower numbers have become the key social currencies in the digital market. Social media influencers are categorized on the basis of their performances and receive profits from their social media marketing activities accordingly. The influencer's value is determined by the number of people who follow her/him in the digital world. In this regard, micro-influencers are described as those who have 10K-50K (from ten to fifty thousand) followers. Mid-tier influencers are followed by 50K-500K followers. Macro-influencers reach 500K-1M (from five hundred thousand to one million) followers, and mega-influencers are followed more than 1 million followers (Mediakix, 2019).

Independently from the volume influencers have, Instagram has proved itself to marketing world as being one of the most powerful influencer marketing tools. 2019 report released by *Mediakix* stated that across all online marketing activities, Instagram posts and stories became the two most effective content formats reaching target audience with 78% and 73% rating respectively (Mediakix, 2019). Instagram was followed by YouTube with 56%, which is announced as the second most used social media platform all around the world. This is also evidence for us to conclude that Instagram and influencer marketing have crushing impact on marketing sector.

We are Social notes that 33,1% of female and 25,1% male users between 16-24 years old follow social media influencers. 26,1% female and 21,9% male users who follow influencers on social media are between the ages of 25-34. When looking at the Instagram's advertising audience by gender and age group in Turkey, the ratio of female users is 42,2% and that of male is 57,8%. Potential audience number that Facebook reports can be reached by using adverts on Instagram is 46 million (Kemp, 2021b) which is 54% of Turkey's total population. Among the countries where Instagram reaches the highest percentage of the population, Turkey comes in the fifth rank with 66% ratio (Newberry, 2021).

Regardless of whether it is carried out by macro-influencers or micro-influencers, Instagram is proven to be the most effective content format for influencer marketing. Celebrity usage in ATL (above the line) marketing still continues, but just for those brands which have remarkable marketing budgets. For mid-tier businesses, social media influencers are the best option for promoting themselves. In television commercials or outdoor advertising, apart from the fees charged by celebrities, the production and distribution budgets also challenge brands. On the other hand, they incur almost no costs for the production of Instagram posts. Rather, influencers prefer to use their mobile phones' cameras and to pretend to follow their routines in order to make followers have a sense of authenticity and spontaneity.

According to the survey by *sproutsocial.com* in 2020, 89% of marketers evaluate Instagram as the most important social media channel for influencer marketing (Barnhart, 2020). Moreover, 90% of Instagram users across the world follow at least one business account ("Instagram Business", n.d.), and *Facebook Business* remarks that 83% of users discover new products and services on this platform ("How Instagram Boosts Brands and Drives Sales", 2019).

When summarising the reports and numeric data, Instagram and social media influencers are one of the most successful and effective marketing tools to deliver the required messages of brands to the target audience.

5. A Case Study; Influencer Marketing During Black Friday Period

Influencer marketing is expected to be used during the time when the brands are so active to announce their occasions, promotions or events on social media. As a case study, Turkey's biggest and most favoured e-commerce platforms are chosen to be studied on; *Trendyol*, *HepsiBurada*, *GittiGidiyor* and *Amazon*. The four platforms are known as market places which supply the demands of consumers directly from their sellers.

Case study, which involves as a method of qualitative research, is used to investigate specific individuals, groups, events or occasions (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011: 140-141). The research method is selected in order to understand the social media influencer preference of e-commerce in such specific special day as Black Friday. The reason why Black Friday has been selected as a case study is that period specifically refers shopping season and encourages the consumers for shopping. As it has been expected from e-commerce platforms to increase their digital marketing activities, collaborating with social media influencer in order for promotions to be announced might be one of the most preferable marketing strategies. Besides, the results of such a case study might imply for further marketing studies in terms of concentrating on digital marketing activities in special days.

5.1. Scope of the Study

In Turkey, there are more than 100 e-commerce platforms with different volumes, however, only five of them differentiate themselves from the rest in terms of business model. *Amazon*, *Trendyol*, *HepsiBurada*, *GittiGidiyor* and *N11* do not concentrate on a specific service or product, but with their market place business model, they answer the majority of customer demands. Namely, they provide a market place for the brands and sellers to promote and sell their goods. Other e-commerce platforms are known with their targeted sales, for instance Turkey's third and fifth biggest e-commerce websites, *Nesine.com* and *Bilyoner*, respectively, are only used for bet and online games. The seventh, *Yemeksepeti* serves as online meal delivery platform (Eticaretsitesi, 2021). Recently, it widens its service field with *Banabi*, which is online market delivery system. Therefore, such e-commerce platforms whose service model is different from *Amazon*, *Trendyol*, *HepsiBurada*, *GittiGidiyor* and *N11*, are excluded from this study.

During this study, which focuses on the social media influencers' collaborations of e-commerce platforms, *N11* has been eliminated because of the fact that it preferred not to work with any influencers or celebrities during Black Friday period.

5.2. Findings of the Study

In 2021, Black Friday was promoted about three weeks in Turkey. *Trendyol*, which is the leading e-commerce platform in Turkey (Trendyol, n.d.) started Black Friday Discounts on 8-11 November under the name of *Süper İndirim Günleri* (Super Sales Days) and continued till 26th November, the official Black Friday of 2021. The announcements started on 1st of November with a social media sweepstake. The participants were eligible for winning Iphone 12 Pro.

The official social media account of *Trendyol*, which owns 4,6 million followers on Instagram, shared 61 posts under the concept of Super Sales Days between the dates 1-26 November. During the time period, *Trendyol* collaborated with 32 social media influencers or celebrities and shared 52 posts with them. The list of influencers and celebrities was prepared in consideration of their follower numbers.

Table 1. The Social Media Influencers and Celebrities Who Collaborated with *Trendyol* for November Discounts

Social Media Influencer/Celebrity	Profession/Occupation	Number of Trendyol Posts	Number of Follower	Tier (Global Standardization)
Danla Biliç	Influencer	2	5,8M	Mega Influencer
Burcu Esmersoy	Model	1	4M	Mega Influencer
Cemal Can Canseven	Influencer	3	3,1M	Mega Influencer
Enis Arıkan	Actor	8	2,7M	Mega Influencer
Şeyda Erdoğan	Influencer/Content Producer	1	1,9M	Mega Influencer
Miray Daner	Actress	1	1,4M	Mega Influencer
Alper Rende	Influencer	1	1,3M	Mega Influencer
Somer Sivrioğlu	Chef	1	1,2M	Mega Influencer
Mert Yazıcıoğlu	Actor	1	1,2M	Mega Influencer
Elvin Levinler	Influencer/Content Producer	1	1M	Mega Influencer
Rachel Araz	Influencer	1	842K	Macro Influencer
Zeynep Özbayrak (zypzeze)	Influencer	1	748K	Macro Influencer
Fırat Albayram	Actor/Influencer	1	649K	Macro Influencer
Ezgi Köse (peppycooky)	Influencer	1	594K	Macro Influencer
Polina C. Arseven (polchursanova)	Influencer	1	593K	Macro Influencer
Melodi Elbirliler	Influencer	1	586K	Macro Influencer
Ala Tokel	Influencer	1	550K	Macro Influencer
Sibil Çetinkaya	Influencer	2	459K	Mid-tier Influencer
Aslı Kızmaz	Influencer/Entrepreneur	1	432K	Mid-tier Influencer
Hakkı Alkan	Editor	1	268K	Mid-tier Influencer
Ceren Morova (cerenzi)	Influencer/Content Producer	7	234K	Mid-tier Influencer
Tuana Yücel	Influencer	2	233K	Mid-tier Influencer
Rojda Sarıkaya (dekoratationwithpr)	Influencer/Content Producer	1	210K	Mid-tier Influencer
İlker Kızmaz	Actor	1	176K	Mid-tier Influencer
Selma Çiçekdal	Yoga	1	155K	Mid-tier Influencer
Alp Kavasoglu	Make-up Artist	1	113K	Mid-tier Influencer
Esra Geziyor	Influencer	1	96,2K	Mid-tier Influencer
Zuhal Okçu Özden (zefashion)	Influencer	3	67,9K	Mid-tier Influencer
İrem Cihanbeylerde (chouettelle)	Influencer	1	64,8K	Mid-tier Influencer
Merve Özübek	Influencer	1	42,6K	Micro Influencer
Paula (paula_mfp)	Influencer	1	26,2K	Micro Influencer
Mücahit Serhat	Influencer	1	11,5K	Micro Influencer

Besides, the brand placement was applied in most popular Turkish television series, *Yasak Elma* by Şevval Sam (2,4M followers), *Sadakatsiz* by Tarık Emir Tekin (196K followers) and *Camdaki Kız* by Burcu Biricik and Enis Arıkan (3,2M and 2,7M followers respectively) and the brand placement sequences were also taken place in *Trendyol*'s Instagram account.

Two commercials were also shot with celebrities and social media influencers and promoted in the brand's official social media account in addition to posts detailed above, as well. The first one which was hosted by Burcu Biricik, Berfu and Esen Yenenler (1,2M and 1M followers), Şevval Sam, Tarık Emir Tekin and Mete Gazoz (256K followers), was promoted 1-

8 November discounts. The second one, in which the married couple Ceyda Düvenli and Bülent Şakrak (2,9M and 952K followers, respectively) took place, advertised 23-26 November discounts.

HepsiBurada, which has been active in Turkey since 1998 (“Türkiye'nin HepsiBurada'sı”, n.d.), adopted the hashtags *#efsanekasım* (#legendaryNovember) and *#efsanecuma* (#legendaryFriday) to promote its discounts on its official Instagram account which has two million followers. Cem Yılmaz, one of the most popular comedians in Turkey with 5M followers, was the main ambassador of brand and *HepsiBurada* posted nine different video contents with him. His first video content was broadcasted on 27th October 2021. On 31st October, a Squid Game Reel shot by the actresses and scriptwriters Gupse Özay and Gülse Birsnel (1,9M and 3,4M followers, respectively) was posted by *HepsiBurada* in terms of last call for November discounts. The discounts in the website of *HepsiBurada* were available between 1-26 November like *Trendyol*.

Finally, the influencer couple Larissa Gacemer, who has 2,7M followers, and Burak Gacemer, whose follower number is 976K, also endorsed the e-commerce platform with their contents, as well.

The third e-commerce brand *GittiGidiyor*, which belongs to Ebay Inc. and is followed by 865.000 followers on Instagram, owned the hashtag *#keşfetmeyebak* (#letsdiscover) and it was endorsed by the famous Turkish actress Elçin Sangu, who is followed by 8,2M Instagram users, with seven posts. The Instagram posts with Elçin Sangu were static, in other words, the brand preferred to post her pictures rather than to produce video contents or Reels with her.

GittiGidiyor offered November discounts in three phases, 2-3 November, 10-11 November and 24-26 November. The last stage was boosted by six celebrities and influencers in six different life style videos. The list of celebrities and influencers and the product categories they publicized is given below. The celebrities and influencers were sorted according to their number of followers.

Table 2. The List of Celebrities and Social Media Influencers Who Collaborated with *GittiGidiyor* During Black Friday Period

Social Media Influencer/Celebrity	Profession/Occupation	Number of Followers	The Publicized Product Category	Number of Post Likes
Bengü	Singer	1,8M	Baby Care	12.252
Onur Büyüktopçu	Actor	1,7M	Kitchen Equipment	45.770
Başak Gümülcinelioğlu	Actress	1,6M	Hobby and House Plants	26.315
Alican Aytekin	Actor/Influencer	738K	Pet Foods	8.933
Nilay Cafer	Actress	222K	Hair Care Products	1.789
Ahmet Faik (Yiyelimguzelleselim)	Influencer	199K	Home Decoration	1.017

The last but not the least, *Amazon* which is an American multinational e-commerce company and is known as one of the Big Five companies in the U.S.A. (Lotz, 2018), entered Turkish market and started its operations on 19th September, 2018 (“Son Dakika...Amazon Türkiye Resmen Açıldı”, 2018). American origin e-commerce platform, with 98.000 Instagram followers, also followed the trend of being endorsed by social media influencers in November. The brand collaborated with actress Gonca Vuslateri and actor Gürgen Öz, each of whom the number of followers is one million. The brand broadcasted three live feeds on each Friday in November under *#gülümsetencuma* (#smileyfiday) and *#amazongülümsetir*

(#amazonmakesyousmile) hashtags on Instagram at 21.00. *Amazon* posted four teasers to promote the live feeds on Instagram and viewing numbers were given below.

Table 3. The Dates and Viewing Numbers of Instagram Posts of Amazon Which Announced Its Live Feeds under the Hashtags of #gülümsetencuma and #amazongülümsetir

Post Dates for Announcement	Viewing
11 November 2021 Thursday	398.347
12 November 2021 Friday	11.096
18 November 2021 Thursday	153.503
24 November 2021 Wednesday	6.686

6. Conclusion

Social media platforms have been at the forefront of communication channels that have played an active role in the digitalization process of the world in recent years. Such digitalization process has been also reflected to business sectors and marketing activities, as well.

Compared with traditional marketing channels, especially Instagram differentiates itself from other social media platforms by requiring budget-oriented prices and thanks to high exposure volumes. Today, the number of worldwide active social media users is 4.48 billion and 31% of them uses Instagram, as well.

When considering the penetration of Instagram adverts in Turkey, which equals to 54% of Turkey's total population, it is highly expected that brands and retailers, which actively use Instagram, collaborated with social media influencers and celebrities to promote their products, services, discounts and special occasions. In this regard, as a case study, the digital marketing activities of e-commerce platforms, *Trendyol*, *HepsiBurada*, *Amazon* and *GittiGidiyor* during Black Friday period have been examined. The reason why the retailers have been selected as the subjects of case study is that they differentiate themselves in terms of their business models. Unlike the other e-commerce platforms which are mainly established for online sales of specific brands, the four provide sellers with a market place to supply the demands of consumers. On the other hand, N11, which also serves as an online market place has been excluded from this study because of the fact that it was not endorsed or promoted by any celebrities or social media influencers.

The results show that the announcements and promotions of Black Friday were not limited with a single day, 26 November, but the companies promoted the discounts and sales approximately for one month. During that time, they worked with mega, macro, mid-tear and micro influencers together. The reason why they did not narrow down the scale of social media influencers and celebrities might be the purpose of reaching both the mass and the concentrated target audience as well.

When considering the capability of reaching concentrated masses, influencer marketing is the rising trend amongst marketing discipline. Black Friday period has proved that the celebrity or influencer endorsement of discounts, campaigns or promotions are highly preferred by the brands themselves. In this case, the impact of influencers on the social media users have not been measured, however their influence on marketers are not underrated. As it was indicated before that marketers evaluated Instagram as one of the most effective marketing tool and

influencer marketing has being secured in marketing discipline by increasing popularity amongst social media users year by year.

7. Limitations and Implication for Further Research

There are limitations to this study that must be acknowledged. First of all, as a case study, Black Friday period has been selected, but apart from that, other specific days such as New Year and Valentine's Day, must also be taken into account in this basis. Such platforms prefer to work with influencers and celebrities to boost such days as well. However, this limitation might be advised to researchers in terms of further research.

Secondly, only Instagram posts have been emphasised, but the 24-hour stories are missed. Therefore, the study is lack with evaluation of Instagram stories which pointed out Black Friday. Moreover, as noted before, only the official accounts of subjected e-commerce platforms have been examined, however, Instagram posts of collaborated influencers and celebrities have not been taken into consideration. Therefore, in following year new studies about Black Friday may be completed by widening study fields.

Finally, the websites, which are mainly established in order for online sales, also work with celebrities and influencers. The scope of this study is limited with four e-commerce platforms and Black Friday, so it is possible to study on the digital marketing activities of different brands, which own specific product or service categories, on Black Friday or other special days.

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