

A Study on the Effects of Digital Life and Instagram Celebrities on Life Styles of Youth as a Popular Cultural Element

Emel Demir Askeroğlu

Namık Kemal University

edemir@nku.edu.tr

Abstract

Spread of internet usage and developed social media environments started to have an impact on individuals' lives along with rapid progress of digital technologies. Moreover, the use of social media is becoming effective in shaping our daily life and even our culture. These environments are positioned as a popular culture carrier and play a role in shaping individuals' lifestyles. Instagram arises as an important application especially among younger generation with the usage of social media. As consumption and fashion concepts become important due to usage of Instagram. Instagram is surfacing as a change playing a big role in construction of fashion and lifestyle. This study is being conducted upon describing the relation between popular culture and consumption along with consumption orientation efforts of Instagram as one of social media tools resulting from the digital age. In order to set this out, focus interviews have been conducted with Instagram users among university students to show the effect between Instagram products that are being followed in Instagram and the students' consumption. The study is carried out upon focus interviews with two different groups consisted of high vocational school students. These groups consist of 6 individuals. Each group interview lasted for 1 hour and the whole interviews lasted 2 hours in total. The first group is formed of female students and the second group of male students.

Key words: Culture, Consumption, Social Media.

JEL classification: M31.

1. Introduction

Technological developments have accelerated with the industrial revolution leading to great changes in human history. As the rapid change in production system has also influenced creation of the consumer society by uncovering the consumption phenomenon at the same time. Along with the cycle of production consumption marketing professionals moved to new searches and begun to develop new techniques through the opportunity of developing technologies. Rapidly developing communication technologies have been effective in changing lifestyles as well as bringing a new breath to the marketing world especially with the twentieth century. And due to rapid spread of internet technology and convergence to digital life and regarding entering into the whole aspects of human life resulting in forming a new structure of individual and society. More even, the cultural structure shown in society's general structure, lifestyle and total appreciation is also affected by all these digital developments and emerging as a new life style surrounding the individual.

Popular culture concept which can also be defined as general public's taste has gained the power to provide influence on society structure by taking its place in all these technological processes. Popular culture that has been influencing all kinds of communication tools and of course has continued to build up a new way of life by using digital technology as a medium for itself. The rapid development of communication technologies and especially the rapid expansion of internet technology has brought the formation of social networks. And a new type of culture has emerged with social media environments providing application with increased number of users each passing day.

Consumption is defined by Borock as a historical change process constructed socially (1997: 24), and defined by Chaney as all types of social activities benefited by individuals in sorting their properties or positioning themselves (1997: 26). Regarding to this definition we can say that individuals are continuing their lives under the influence of popular culture by continuing

consumption madness through social media tools.

2. Overview of Culture, Popular Culture, Consumption Culture and Lifestyles:

Culture is a very comprehensive term that encompasses human adaptation and compliance form and ways of maintaining lives by different groups of people. People face difficulties in directly and simply adaptation to physical and biological environment, they also adapt to the cultural environment including means of continuing human's existence and guidance of established channels. Culture can be defined as "A complex whole containing knowledge, beliefs, arts, ethics, traditions and some elements related to the individual as a member of the society" (Kaypakoğlu, 2006: 43). many elements have to be brought together and these elements have to be absorbed by individuals in order to talk about culture concept. Culture occurs with the combination of many elements. And language concept emerges as the most important and effective element in culture formation.

Language as one of cultural items; is one of the best indicators that provides information about the culture. Lexicology science tries to explain a society by examining its words as a new development of structural semantic sciences. Language cannot be abstracted from culture and practices of contemporary and updated life. The relativity between language and specific culture provides an idea about social level of society, cultural characteristic, warrior identity, artist identity, productive identity (Özerkan, 2001: 90). Another important element of culture is the combination of traditions. Traditions play an important role in the formation of cultural structure.

Traditions; are related to the nonverbal behavior of individuals in different cultural environments. For example; Men in France use twice the amount of cosmetics women use, which is due to the tradition of French men being well-groomed. Belief as another element, provides a continuous organization of perception and knowledge of the individual's life. A belief means the sum of the meanings of something and expressed as the complete knowledge of an individual about things (Erdoğan, 1997: 132). Convergence point of culture and consumption concepts is the effect of socialization process. As cultural elements in individuals are playing an active role in their decision-making. Resulting in individuals learning behaviors along with socialization.

Socialization plays an active role in consumer behavior. For example; eating pork is prohibited in Islamic culture as well as the fact that cows have a special place in Indian culture, which both represent generally accepted value judgments passing along from generation to another while bringing consumption habits and preferences at the same time (Odabaşı and Barış, :316).

At this point, the concept of popular culture emerges as an effective culture in buying behavior. Popular culture, which has an important place in the decision-making process of individuals, is also a concept directly related to consumer culture.

In the late-term capitalism consumer society, everyone is a consumer. Consumption, whether material-functional (clothing, food, transport) or semiotics-cultural (media, education, language), is the only way to capture living resources. In fact, these two forms of consumption are intertwined. For example, the car is not just a mean of transportation; At the same time, it is a speech act, cooking is not only a food preparation activity, but also a way of communicating (Fiske, 1999: 49). Consumption becomes a necessity of everyday life. While individuals do not consume for their needs, they also send messages regarding consumed products to individuals wh. For this reason, consumption as an important subject of the popular culture.

3. An overview of social media and the use of social media as a marketing tool

Among the definitions made for social media most frequently this definition is used "Online platforms used by people to share their ideas, opinions, experiences, perspectives and to communicate with each other" (Akt.Askeroğlu, 2010:47).

According to Social Media Expert Fruchter, "The foundation and core of what social media is,

consists of the five C's. Conversation, community, commenting, collaboration and contribution. These are the five fundamentals that companies and marketers must understand to be able to successfully market on the social web" (Fruchter, 2009):

Conversation: Go where the conversations are taking place Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, YouTube, etc. Establish accounts and create your identity. Stay up-to-date with your accounts and participate often. Really get to know your followers and audience so you can actively participate.

Community: Seize the opportunity to not only join and participate in conversations, but add your own value. This is how you create a community, which you must work to maintain and earn the trust of your followers. A good site for community building (in addition to the ones mentioned above) is Ning. Ning allows its users to create their own social websites and social networks. It's a good place to create a form or community around your product, which in return can produce useful user feedback.

Commenting: It's important to maintain a relationship with your audience, so always be engaged. Track everything so you can respond to comments, whether they are comments to your blog posts, tweets, videos, etc. In addition, comment on other individuals posts, tweets, etc. The more engaged you are, the better response you will get.

Collaboration: Think of your followers as your partners. They are your most loyal brand endorsers. Only friend and follow the people who are conversing about your brand and collaborate with them regularly. Do not spam them or push your product on them. Create the environment for them to want to learn more and endorse you.

Contribution: Content is essential to being successful in social media. Create creative content that is engaging, unique, and news worthy. Make your audience want to learn more and want to share what they learn with their friends (Digg, Reddit, Stumble, Delicious, YouTube, etc.).

Encourage others to promote your content too.

Social media can be defined as; relatively uncensored, containing all sorts of different views, points of view and approaches, and independent of most interest groups, as relatively neutral and highly interactive and shared by their own means at the same time (Kahraman, 2010: 14). In order for a website or app to be identified as social media, it is necessary for publishers to have independent users or members, with no limitations to time and space, to enable user-generated content and to interact with users. In order to have a better understand of social media, we need to look at social media tools (Erkul, 2009: 96-101). There is a need for a medium for social media to exist as well as for traditional media. We can call these mediums social media tools in general. All of these tools, where different technologies and different methods are used, are perhaps the only common point to provide top-level sharing services for all users. These tools include; wikis, social networks, blogs, social building sites, content sharing sites, microblogging and life stream (Kahraman, 2010: 15).

3.1. Instagram as a Social Media Tool:

Instagram has occurred from the combination of the words "instant" and "telegram" in English. One of the factors that makes Instagram popular is the environment in which people share their lives in a fun and fast way through photography. Instagram also shows which of the people in your environments are involved in this medium, and communicates with those people through the social network. One of the most important features of Instagram is the ability to like photos and leave comments. In addition, with the "labeling" feature included in application in early

2013, photographs can be classified and made more easily accessible in the social environment (Türkmenoğlu 2014: 96).

Instagram posts are public by default, though users can opt to make their accounts private so only followers that they approve can see their posts. Users upload photos (or videos) and optionally apply filters to them. They then share them, making them discoverable by adding hashtags. In the mobile application, hashtags are clickable, taking the user to a stream of all posts to which the hashtag has been applied. In the image caption, users can also “tag” other users by adding their handle. Tagged users are then notified. Users can also comment on posts, but it is notable that, unlike Facebook, Instagram is rarely used as a platform for discussion. The images speak for themselves (Boy&Uitermark, 2015:8).

4. Study: An analysis of 'Instagram' usage as a consumption-orientation tool and level of effectiveness upon applications made to university students

4.1. Study Methodology: The study is carried out upon focus interviews with two different groups consisted of high vocational school students. These groups consist of 6 individuals. Each group interview lasted for 1 hour and the whole interviews lasted 2 hours in total. The first group is formed of female students and the second group of male students.

4.2. Purpose of Study: Revealing effect - contribution of sharing from fashion bloggers on consumer perceptions of university students.

Sub-problem 1: How recommendation from people being followed by students about product or brand are met by students.

Sub-Problem 2: How statements from people being followed by students about brand and products names are met by students.

Sub-Problem 3: How sharing product brand experiences and usage explanation of product or brand from people being followed by students are met by students.

Sub-Problem 4: Are the recommendations or suggestions from people being followed is convincing to students?

Sub-Problem 5: Do these shares lead to consumption buying behavior?

Sub-Problem 6: why do you follow phenomena-celebrities. Do these people affect your lifestyle? Do applications such as gifts or draws become effective in follow-up and product decisions?

4.3. Study Results:

According to interviews made with female students:

In the subject, how recommendation from people being followed by students about product, brand or services are met by students its likely to have positive results. As they continue to follow when people they follow recommended pages which can suit them. Although its negativities occurring sometimes it's quite useful.

Whether or not their income levels are not enough to buy the recommended products or brands, the majority want to use recommended products although they don't have the purchasing power, and if they have the purchasing power they would use most of recommended products. Product referrals do not get approved when its perceived as direct advertising. As these people provide recommendations for gaining money in frequent referrals a dissatisfied condition may occur when they try to provide that with commercial gain.

As young people become aware of receiving advertisements by celebrities, they do not take recommendations in consideration and might react negatively to these recommendations. In fact, all details of Ingram's Celebrities are aspects of curiosity. First of all, their dress and clothes, then eating and drinking, travel followed in this order. Everything they do or wear is a

type of curiosity by others. For example, when a celebrity doesn't mention the brand name of the outfit he wears in his photo he shared it becomes a source of curiosity. But credibility disappears because of the too much focus on the brand. Recommendations are not convincing when they come in different aspects or areas but from an expert on certain areas. For example, makeup bloggers are expected to recommend makeup materials as the recommendation is not convincing in other areas. Because of the envy and curiosity of Instagram celebrities they form satisfaction and followed due to same reason. And reaction is formed when Instagram celebrities announce brands very frequent and insistently. In the same way, hesitation is formed when brand recommendation changes frequently. As recommending X brand in one day and recommending another Y brand next week forms negativity in same product recommendation. Continuously different brand recommendations reduce credibility. They also do not find it advisable to recommend it, but they say it when they need recommendations. Especially in health care products, recommendations of Slimming tea or cream etc. are considered dangerous.

The inconsistency in messages and credibility of discourses create impact effect. It is important when they give advice as part of everyday life. Discussions like using this product and sharing results with you bring credibility. Recommendation in the form of continuous pressure has a negative effect. Purchasing behavior can also occur in case of need. Messages on generalizations can be more effective. They explain how products and brands are used and provide guidance to make it easier to learn how to use and deal with them.

It is considered important information to search for and find recommendation, to realize costume combinations and to present makeup points when purchasing a product. It seems like it is very easy to explode a product in the Instagram. And to have all young people talking about the product in their conversations. In the context of credibility, they do not believe in the usage of those products sometimes, and they don't see the point of using the replicated products especially when they have the original products.

They do not think that they will receive that product or service as wealthy people. They find it believable as long as it's not exaggerated. They give the expression they have to buy the product themselves and they need to catch what they need. They want to see the use of these products in daily life. They distinguish between celebrities and phenomena because they find the phenomena sincerer. They find the celebrities more advertising-focused. They see their phenomena as having average buying power. And they see the buying behavior on the phenomena, they think they are going to get the clothes that appear on X person. They express that they prefer a lot of products such as clothes, shoes, make-up materials regarding to celebrities they like. They say that people who are close to their own age are more likely to purchase their advice. They express that they lead consumption and create purchasing behavior. As they produce fashion with a lot of people who buy and use these products as fashion. At the end, they think buying behaviors are created in some ways.

The places suggested by some people are preferred, and they express that they make the decision-making process of places to go easier. They express that they are trying to go to the places that the phenomena they follow went to. They express that they have discovered many places thanks to them, expressing that they have discovered places where they have already passed through with the recommendation of others. They express that they are influencing many areas, from traveling to eating, eating and drinking habits. They are more successful when they try to attract attention and make habit. There are those who want to pursue the celebrities, where they come from and find fun, they want to be like them, they want to learn their daily life because they are curious about the lives of people in more luxurious life. There are those who do not want to do what they cannot like, follow new entrepreneurs, to be able to reach them, to make people under the influence, and because people's lifestyles they start affecting it. They wonder about the lifestyle they cannot reach and they follow up. Legendary

storytelling makes phenomena more striking.

They express their influence on their way of life. They become more conscious, for example, in the make-up fashion field, the influence is increasing as they criticize each other. They see it as an instrument for men to take care of fashion. Girls say that there is more to luxury involved.

According to interviews made with male students:

How the point of view is changed when celebrities they follow provide recommendation on a product or brand as clothing style is popularized by the celebrities. This situation is perceived negative by some students, as it may be negative to have brand recommendation from names, he might want to purchase the product but due to lack of purchasing power it may be perceived negative to care for and buy the product. On the other hand, the effort shortening to like saving time is accelerating the buying behavior.

To advertise a famous person as an advertisement is positive if the brand is a famous brand and negative in a brand with little recognition. It is often perceived deceptive provide trademark recommendation. The desire to buy that brand is waking up and they are approaching it positively because a famous person has advised it. If the Instagram celebrity is an artist, this recommendation is more convincing. As purchase behavior is shown to collect and buy a shoe used by a football player. As opinions get positive towards suggestions. Sharing use experiences can be effective. Particularly products recommended by football players gathers attraction and forms purchasing power. As it is encouraging by changing the perspective of the mark and creating a positive image.

It is important to explain the names of the brands used by the Instagram celebrities. As they will be able to learn the brands and get the products they like. It is important that they choose the same brand with that person. People express that they feel like them when they use those brands. A request is made when it is not shared. Brand awareness is provided because of that. The sharing and advice of places to go are important the same. From there, the comments on service areas by celebrities wake up to the wanting in people to go there to share a place. Taking into account the advice of people who are especially fun and laughing. Celebrities who are good in sharing attract attention. Even family life is especially becoming incentive.

In subjects of content sharing like usage format and usage features in car promotions terms of design issues are described in order to provide purchasing for the brand. Using a brand and describing its properties by a celebrity is important in brand preference. And this is especially impressive if this celebrity is a popular and loved one. Sometimes they say they do not need to hear the properties of a brand from them. They do not need their recommendation especially for products with high brand image. For example, it is not necessary for a celebrity to promote BMW. As their image is already too high, so their recommendation is not needed.

The credibility of the brand recommendations increases in case of matching up between brand image and celebrity reputation. Celebrity harmony with the brand is also important. And sometimes they are effective even though they are not convincing. For example, when they recommend a place, they wake up curiosity and need to go to this place at least once. Upon these recommendations, you save money to go to luxury restaurants. There are also those who express that they are influenced by these recommendations in the entire decision-making process. Private lives of Instagram celebrities are a source of curiosity and the brands they use are arousing their desire to buy. Purchasing behavior is taking place in the direction of purchasing power.

Even if the financial power is not enough, it's possible to save and fall into a difficult situation to try their recommendations. There are many effects in the Instagram that can be shared from pair-compatible outfits to combos. The credibility situation is weak beside participation in the campaign being held in the Instagram.

5. Conclusions

The study has shown that youth who use Instagram see Instagram celebrities' recommendations as mind guided in every aspect, and they also mention that it provides encouragement and challenge in topics such as books, travel and entrepreneurship. As a result of all these recommendations, young people become more and more consumers and want to buy more of brands or products advised by celebrities they like or follow.

Young people are going to become individuals because of the sharing that encourages them to become rich. It drives consumption at the rate of its own purchasing power. They are trying to get the products they want by concentrating on consumption. And they try to save money to balance the budget, and to work part-time.

Young people who participated in the study say that their lifestyle is also affected. This effect covers a very broad framework: from shaving, dressing, even language they are using is varying with their lifestyles. And a consumption focused individual subject is occurred. As a desire to get things they see forms leading to consumption focused lifestyle.

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