

# A Research on the Comparison of the Effect of Benefits Obtained from Social Media Marketing to Brand Commitment in Terms of Domestic and Foreign Consumers

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## Abstract

Nowadays businesses make enormous effort be one step ahead of their rivals and therefore, they evaluate every innovation to gain advantage in the rivalry. Lately, the lead of the new rivalry tools is social media. The utility of social media, that has an increasing amount of users, provides important gains for businesses. While it provides important advantages to manage this new environment well, mistakes could cause unrecoverable consequences. Therefore, businesses who want to have a place on social media have to know the methods of reaching the target markets and the strategies to use in this environment. In this context, target groups, especially on social media, should be determined wisely and it is important to use right social media tools for the target market. In addition, to know the benefits that target market gains from social media marketing helps for meeting the needs and claims in a better way. In this research, it is aimed to investigate the effect of the benefits that consumers gain from social media marketing on brand commitment. Accordingly with this aim, domestic and foreign consumers of a hotel that offers an all-inclusive service in tourism sector have been taken under the scope of this research. The research has been implemented on 385 domestic and 385 foreign consumers that follow the Facebook page of the hotel. For the analysis of data, methods of average, frequency distribution, reliability analysis, confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling have been used. As a result of these analyses, it is seen that hedonic and monetary benefits affect community participation in regards of domestic consumers, while functional, social and monetary benefits affects community participation in terms of foreign consumers.

**Keywords:** social media marketing, community participation, brand trust, brand commitment

## 1. Introduction

Although the history of social media marketing is quite old, its effect on consumers improves faster than other communication tools. For instance, it took 38 years for radio that is intensely used especially by local businesses for promotion works, 13 years for television, 4 years for internet to reach 50 million people. For Facebook, which is one of the social media tools, it took less than a year to reach 200 million people. The convenience to reach the consumers, getting feedback and the reliability of these feedbacks are effective on the fast acceptance and usage of social media marketing.

With the development of mass media, businesses place emphasis on preparing their marketing strategies considering this new market environment. One of the reasons why the importance of social media marketing increased is because it can reach the target market directly and first-hand. However, the problem here is that marketing activities carried out on mass media reach not only the target group, but also the other market sections.

New approaches rose with the usage of social media on marketing activities. While in conventional marketing, the marketing approach that businesses cared for was to keep employees, in social media marketing, it is important to learn the expectations of consumers directly, to determine the leading users that dominate the market, to be quick on product design, to provide two-way communication in promotion activities. While in conventional marketing, the purpose of advertising is to introduce and sell the product, the participation for the consumer is expected in social media marketing. Because, businesses could communicate with consumers through online content. In this context, blogs, podcasts, e-bulletin and all online content are arranged in a way

that consumers would be pleased.

Social media marketing is where it was, 20 years ago, a dream to estimate where it would be, concerning its position. Its importance increases every day, thanks to this successful position it has, and using it in marketing activities provides power in rivalry. The superiority it provides in rivalry is not only used on promotion, but also on creating brand commitment. In this study, it is examined if the benefits that domestic and foreign consumers gain from social media marketing in tourism sector differ in brand trust and brand commitment.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

### *2.1 Social Media Marketing*

Social media, which was utilized after the development of internet, attracts intense attraction and this situation arouses interest among businesses. The top reason why businesses use social media is because consumers started doing many activities of daily life on this virtual platform. The initiative of turning to this new area by businesses caused the spring of social media concept (Sevinç, 2012). Definitions made for a better understanding of the concept of social media are as follows:

“Unlike conventional communication tools used for delivering a message like newspapers, television and news sites; social media marketing is contacting with and establishing a dialog with the consumer” (Teo, 2006).

“It is to increase appearance and promote goods and services on internet via social media sites” (Akar, 2010).

“On activities carried out directly for consumers in online platforms, it is to increase the reputation, recognition and reliability of a good, service or brand belonging to a business and promote” (Kara & Özgen, 2012).

“Social media marketing is the activity of increasing visibility and to promoting goods and services on internet by using social media tools” (Wakeman, 2013).

As understood by the definitions above, social media marketing is to carry out the promotion and advertisement activities of conventional marketing with the help of internet and social media tools.

Among the reasons why social media marketing is important for businesses recently is that consumers use internet longer, it is easy and reliable to shop on internet and the consumer profile has changed (Ada & Abul, 2014). On the new consumer profile, the change in the purchase process is seen in two ways. First, positive or negative comments of buyers while they purchase is being tracked in the stage of defining alternatives via social media during a research and then according to these comments, the stage of defining alternatives is completed (Kircova, 2005).

For businesses, social media marketing is perceived as an effective, sufficient, fast and affordable way of communicating with the consumer. Because, it help to know fast about the messages, consumer claims, needs, opinions and suggestions that flow on the networks (Uygur and others, 2013). Accordingly with this purpose, businesses carry out their social media marketing in two sections. These sections are as follows (Miletsky, 2010).

**Content Generation Marketing:** Businesses arrange forums, hashtags and videos about their products and present these to their consumers via social media. This presentation is made by considering consumer's features and social media channels that have more users are preferred. Because, the amount of users means to reach more consumers that are interested in the product (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

**Viral Advertising:** Businesses create the content of product and advertisements attractive. Because, users pay more attention and share attractive videos, photos and content. More shares inform more users about the product of the business on social media (Kirby & Marsden, 2006).

If the businesses do not pay enough attention on the social media marketing activities mentioned above, it is possible to face some serious problems on the market. To not to fall behind the rivals on the market, businesses should present their products with appropriate tools and methods on social media and plan to reach to the target group (Parsons, 2002). The steps to follow on social media marketing can be listed as follows;

**Right Media Choice:** The thing to do as the first step of planning is to choose the right media channel. In this context, determining the website that would attract the target group and publishing informative photos, video and content about their product actively would help a business to be successful in their marketing effort (Safko, 2010).

**Application Choice:** Making the right choice among social media channels, especially a business creating its own application and carry out the social media marketing process via this channel would increase the effectiveness of planning (Dilmen, 2012).

**Compliance among Social Media Tools:** Today users use different social media tools. Choosing only one tool

would prevent a business to reach out to other consumers. To remove this situation, marketing activities should be carried out in all social media areas. The thing to be careful about is to use the similar messages in social media tools, in other words that they do not contradict with each other (Kang, 2011).

**Integrated Media Communication:** Businesses should not totally focus on social media and forget about the conventional media usage. Because it would help to increase the effectiveness of promotion activities by carrying out conventional and social marketing practices together and placing equal emphasis on them. There would be users in the target group who do not know how to use internet or have no knowledge on it (Mangold&Faulds, 2009).

**Openness:** The last thing that businesses should be careful about is that social media tool should be open to every user. Because, all users should be able to reach the business when and where they want via social media and share their opinions easily (Kang, 2011). As a result the increase in the internet usage leads businesses to use social media for marketing activities. Creating the proper marketing mix would ease reaching the target group and enable to gain superiority in rivalry.

## *2.2 Benefits that Social Media Marketing Provides to Consumers*

The transformation of businesses with the start of marketing goods and services via social media also affects the consumers. Ones, who used to look at the show cases to buy, walk around the streets, now go through the goods and services in the website of the businesses, look over and purchase what they like (Palmer & Koenig-Levis, 2009). According to the TÜİK data between April 2015 and March 2016, while ordering and purchasing rate was 24.2% in 2015, this ratio has risen up to 34.1% in 2016 (TÜİK, <http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=21779>, access date:16.08.2015). The numbers show that consumers prefer social media sites to investigate and be informed about the goods and the services.

The reason why consumers choose social media marketing is because the benefit they obtain. Researches have had different results on what these benefits are after detailed investigations (Hagel & Armstrong, 1997; Vogt & Fesenmaier, 1998; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2004; Kim et al., 2004; Hwang & Cho, 2005; Chung & Bulahis, 2008). These researchers agree that the benefits that consumers obtain from social media marketing are hedonic, social, psychological, monetary and functional benefits. In this study, these five benefits that consumers obtain from social media marketing will be examined in the given order.

**Hedonic Benefit:** The first of the benefits that social media marketing provide to consumers is hedonic benefit. The history of the concept 'hedonic' goes far back and has philosophical foundations. That is why it would be beneficial to define the concept before we examine hedonic benefit in its social media marketing aspect. Hedonism, whose historical background goes back to B.C. and which comes from the Greek word 'hedon', is defined as pleasure, delight and joy (O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2007). In a different definition hedonism is defined as running after pleasure or devote oneself to pleasure, especially sensory pleasures; or in a psychological way, a doctrine that defends a behavioral manner motivated by desire to look for pleasure or avoidance of pain (Çelik, 2009).

The pleasure that an individual has after an action lies behind hedonism. This, in fact, causes hedonism to be considered as not caring about others and selfishness, which cares only about the self. Hedonist individuals keep their own satisfactions prior and act with the thought that no matter what their satisfaction should be fulfilled (Odabaşı, 2006).

The first introduction of Hedonist philosophy to the consumer is the seminar article of Hirschman and Holbrook. As stated in the article, the reason why a consumer shops is not just satisfy a need. Consumers see shopping as a pleasure and strive for reaching to this pleasure. Hedonism, which is based on shopping for individual pleasure, could really be similar with selfishness on this aspect (Barnes&Böhringer, 2011).

There are several reasons that lead an individual to hedonic consumption. These reasons include satisfying the senses of the consumer, being successful, rest, gaining new experiences, ease of maintenance, gaining prestige, ease of use, gaining new information, keeping up with the trend, being happy, spending quality time with the purchased good or service (Özdemir & Yaman, 2007). Factors that lead a consumer to hedonist consumption in conventional marketing and pull to the social media marketing have similarities. Concepts like pleasure, joy and happiness which is gained in the conventional marketing also comes to the fore in the virtual platform. Because, many consumers do not prioritize real needs in shopping, they prioritize the pleasure (Torlak and others, 2007).

Another hedonic benefit that consumers gain in social media marketing is ease. Thanks to social media marketing, consumers can meet their need by sitting in their houses. With social media marketing, consumers can have the time saved for them and utilize this time for more consumption or other activities (Zarella, 2010).

Another concept that shows itself in hedonic benefit is entertainment. Consumers can look at the photos that sites offer when they are online for consumption, watch videos and join different activities. They can share the photos and videos they like and make them aware of the product either. In addition to the gain consumer have from the product, spending good time on the site and being able to explore product alternatives helps them to be happy (Park and others, 2012).

In conventional marketing, consumer goes where the business is. However, in social media marketing the purchased product comes to the door and this situation makes the consumer feel special. Moreover, consumer does not lose time on the shopping made via social media and can reach every product in the comfortable environment of a house for 24 hours (Dawson & Kim, 2009).

**Social Benefit:** First of the social change that started with the increase of individual users in social media is that socializing moved from real life to virtual life. Individuals have strong communication with each other on social networks (Buss & Strauss, 2009). Users with similar tastes can be more sincere and open than they are in their real life by using groups. They build strong relationships with people, whose faces they have never seen, by using the profile picture which we call avatar (Teo, 2006).

The effects of this new socializing structure that internet provided is seen on the social media marketing. With social media, consumers make contact with each other regularly (Tasner, 2010). In conventional marketing, while consumers are able to share negativity about a product with their friends and family, they can reach all the consumers through social media. Commentaries about the product support the purchase process by gathering different consumer group in data banks (Dawson & Kim, 2009).

With the increase in the importance and the usage of social media, new terms arose. First of them is “social consumer”. This new consumer group places emphasis on easy access of information, which is one of the advantages of social media (Bruns, 2009). These people consider what people on social media think and form their shopping style accordingly. This new consumer group reaches for the information about businesses via social media and shares their own opinions (Kasanava and others, 2010).

Lastly, social benefit becomes prominent on the dual mutual communication between the consumer and the business. This way, a business can have the information about active consumers that it is in touch with easily. Because, there consumers state their opinions about the new product and plays an active role on developing present products (Dilmen, 2012).

**Functional Benefit:** With this new marketing method, businesses lose their influence on consumers. In conventional marketing, consumers go towards the way businesses designate and usually would not be able to go out of this. This decision power of businesses passes to the consumer’s control with social media (Blossom, 2009). Social consumers who gather information and share it with other social consumers make the consumption decision instead of businesses. What enables this power is the functional benefit obtained from social media. Functional benefit that social media provides can be categorized as expertise power, enforcement power and effecting marketing activities directly. We can examine these benefits in this order as follows (Dholakia and others, 2004);

**Expertise Power:** Social media marketing offers the opportunity of shorter and more extensive research over-the-net in intended places and time instead of product search that takes too much time. With this marketing practice, consumer who have the chance to do detailed research on goods and services, is able to reach to the product commentaries of different user groups and be informed about the benefits that can be gained from the product by doing price and quality comparison on networks, instead of using the information given by businesses (Clemons, 2009).

**Enforcement Power:** With social media, consumers can easily be organized for unsatisfying products and services, transfer the negativities to every internet user and take steps that would cause negative results for businesses. In addition, they do not need high costs to perform these actions that would have great harm to a business. It would only take enough information to be organized in such way via social media (Oskayabaş & Yener, 2014).

**Effecting Marketing Activities Directly:** Businesses, in conventional marketing conception, do not pay enough attention on claims and suggestions stated by consumers and put goods and services accordingly with its own wishes on the market. However by social media, opinions of the consumer about goods is put forward and there is an effort to produce goods that are for consumer’s needs (Chaney, 2009).

Social media marketing is the marketing conception that puts consumers forward. Especially, in this era what we call information age, information is power. How to use this power is an important issue. Consumers can be both

beneficial and harmful with this information in their hand. With social media, businesses, who do not want consumers to use this power against them, care about putting enough importance on prioritizing consumer's satisfaction (Zyl, 2009).

**Psychological Benefit:** Psychological Benefit comprises with the mutual relations of consumers on social media. Consumers do not only talk about the product they will purchase. Different individuals, even though their values and lives are much different from each other, find a common ground about their expectations and wills via product groups on social media (Blossom, 2009).

Trust is important on consumer's preference of brand and product. Users shopping on networks share their personal information with the business and do the shopping with this information. Credit card data is one of the important information among shared info. When these data get into the wrong hands, it causes enormous loss (Oskayabaş & Yener, 2014). In this type of environment, the reason consumer can shop in peace is the trust to the quality of the system. Shopping sites could earn the trust of consumers by keeping security applications highest and enable them to shop comfortably (Hess & Story, 2005).

Another effect social media marketing leave on the consumer is that they are pleased with this shopping process. In shopping made on social media, going out of the concepts of time and space, getting easy information about the product and doing good and price comparison make a consumer pleased. In social media marketing, having no one around to disturb the consumer makes the shopping comfortable and peaceful. Consumers, having no pressure on them, could make product search on any product group, surf and compare with rival companies easily (Syed-Ahmad & Murphy, 2010).

**Monetary Benefit:** On purchasing transactions for consumption, in addition to the pleasure, monetary cost of the product is one of the benefits gained from social media marketing. Especially during shopping, the effort put on the salesman to cut off the price shows the importance of monetary benefit for the consumer. Because with functional benefit, discounts turn into additional motivation sources (Kirschenbaum, 2004).

In conventional marketing, consumers do not only spend for products. Until they get the product, expenditures like transportation, food, entertainment are added to shopping budget. However, in purchases made via social media, most of these expenditures are removed (Park and others, 2012).

Consumer expectations while forming monetary benefits that is obtained from shopping over-the-net plays an important role. Because, in virtual environment, consumers are able to do enough market research while evaluating products and prefer the proper alternative after a comparison (Kang, 2011). In conventional marketing process, extensive product comparison and being informed about the products in different stores are not possible and discounts that seller offers must be accepted. However today, with social media marketing, this situation that favors businesses changes in favor of consumers (Kirby & Marsden, 2006).

Among the benefits social media sites provide are special discounts and campaigns. Business offers privileged campaigns to consumers they reach through social media. Consumers feel special with these campaigns and start following the social media site of that business actively (Chan & Guillet, 2011). Today one of the leading aspects of social media marketing is that it offers low-cost products. The feeling of purchasing products for low costs leads the consumer to shop on virtual platforms. In this case, consumers follow the websites of businesses on internet and try not to miss products on sale (Park and others, 2012).

### **3. A Research on the Comparison of the Effect of Benefits Obtained from Social Media Marketing to Brand Commitment in Terms of Domestic and Foreign Consumers**

#### *3.1 Purpose and Scope of the Research*

The purpose of this research is to examine if the effects of benefits consumers in all-inclusive concept tourism sector obtain from social media marketing are different in terms of domestic and foreign tourists. For this purpose, first we tried to define the effects of benefits obtained from marketing activities carried in social media on community participation, then we tried to investigate the effect of community participation on brand trust and commitment.

The scope of the research is designated as a five-star hotel that serve all-inclusive in Kuşadası town of Aydın, have a Facebook account and use this account actively. Since the hotel administration did not allow to state the hotel's name, it will not be stated. The results obtained from the research cannot be generalized for hotels and sectors that serve with different concepts.

#### *3.2 The Methodology of the Research*

Model, hypothesis and sample of the research are presented below.

### 3.2.1 The Model of the Research

In the research model, functional benefit, social benefit, psychological benefit, hedonic benefit and monetary benefit are used as input variables in the research model. Functional benefit is the benefit that consumer that consumer get from the function of the product. Since this is a benefit based on the product, it is easy to imitate.

Social benefit generates from the relation of consumer and product. In this relation that is based on mutual communication, consumers share their opinion about the product with the business and provide sources for new products. Moreover, consumers could find officials of the business when they have a problem with the product.

The variable of psychological benefit is the spring of what consumers will gain from the product in an emotional dimension. Consumers consider factors like the statue, value, difference a products provides for them, more than the functionality of the product.

In hedonic benefit, as another variable, the thought that leads the consumers to pay the product is not that the product will meet their needs, it is the pleasure that product will provide for them. The happiness that consumers feel with purchasing shows the hedonic benefit.

The last input variable is monetary benefit. Along with emotional and functional benefits that consumer will gain from the product, product's cost is also an important preference reason. Motivational elements provided with the product like discounts, gifts, and lottery coupons forms monetary benefit dimension.

In the research model community participation and brand trust are intervalvariables, while brand commitment is output variable. In the interval variable, as we call it community participation, active participants were evaluated. This group consists of active participants that like and comment the posts on hotel's Facebook account and also share posts in favor of the hotel. In sum, there are 8 variables in the model. Among these variables, functional benefit consists of 4 statements, it is 4 statements for social benefit, 3 statements for psychological benefit, 4 statements for hedonic benefit, 3 statements for monetary benefit, 4 statements for community participation, 4 statements for brand trust and 3 statements for brand commitment. In this situation the model is composed of 8 variables and 29 statements.

Variables used in the research model were prepared with the help of Wang & Fesenmaier (2004) for functional benefit, Dholakia and others (2004) for social benefit, Hwang & Cho (2005) for psychological benefit, Mangold & Faulds (2009) for hedonic benefit, Kang (2011) for monetary benefit, Kang (2011) for community participation, Aaker (1995) for brand trust and Pride (2010) for brand commitment.

### 3.2.2 Hypotheses of the Research

Hypotheses listed below are developed according to the model, purpose and expected benefits of the research:

H<sub>1a</sub>: Functional benefit effects community participation in terms of domestic tourists.

H<sub>1b</sub>: Functional benefit effects community participation in terms offoreign tourists. H<sub>2a</sub>: Social benefit effects community participation in terms of domestic tourists.

H<sub>2b</sub>: Social benefit effects community participation in terms offoreign tourists.

H<sub>3a</sub>: Psychological benefit effects community participation in terms of domestic tourists.

H<sub>3b</sub>: Psychological benefit effects community participation in terms of foreign tourists.

H<sub>4a</sub>: Hedonic benefit effects community participation in terms of domestic tourists.

H<sub>4b</sub>: Hedonic benefit effects community participation in terms offoreign tourists.

H<sub>5a</sub>: Monetary benefit effects community participation in terms of domestic tourists.

H<sub>5b</sub>: Monetary benefit effects community participation in terms offoreign tourists.

H<sub>6a</sub>: Community participation effects brand trust in terms of domestic tourists.

H<sub>6b</sub>: Community participation effects brand trust in terms offoreign tourists.

H<sub>7a</sub>: Community participation effects brand commitment in terms of domestic tourists.

H<sub>7b</sub>: Community participation effects brand commitment in terms offoreign tourists.

H<sub>8a</sub>: Brand trust effects brand commitment in terms of domestic tourists.

H<sub>8b</sub>: Brand trust effects brand commitment in terms offoreign tourists.

### 3.2.3 Sampling Process

The main mass of the study consists of consumers who live in Kuşadası town of Aydın, use Facebook actively,

are members of the Facebook page of a five-star all-inclusive hotel and are 18 or over. Since the main mass variance is not known, in %95 trust range with  $e=4\%$  error variance, sample size is designated as  $n=385$  for domestic and foreign hotel consumers each, in total 770 (Kurtuluş, 2004). Survey study was practiced between June 1<sup>st</sup> and July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Between these dates, consumers who spend their vacation in the studied hotel were asked how they found out about the hotel's name. This survey was made to 405 domestic and 391 foreign consumers who stated that they found the hotel's name on Facebook. After removing deficient and incorrect surveys, 770 surveys, separated for domestic and foreign consumers were evaluated. We regarded to choose foreign consumers among European Union member countries. In this context, tourists were 76 German, 51 French, 49 English, 39 Dutch, 38 Romanian, 36 Irish, 35 Danish, 31 Polish and 30 Hungarian.

### 3.3 Analysis of the Data

#### 3.3.1 Demographic and Economic Features of Surveyors

Participants of the research were chosen among hotel's consumers that are over 18 and are members of Facebook page of the hotel. As for demographic and economic features, sex, civil status, age, income and educational background were analyzed. 385 domestic surveyors of the research were %50.1 male and %49.9 female. Out of them, %55.3 is married and %44.7 are single. Age distribution is that %18.9 are between 18-25, %25.7 are between 26-33, %21.8 are between 34-41, %16.2 are between 42-49, %12.7 are between 50-57 and %4.7 are 58 and over. Income distribution of domestic surveyors is %13.2 between 0-1000 TL, %23.3 between 1001-2000 TL, %44.9 between 2001-3000 and %16.6 over 3000. As for their educational background, %27.1 has high-school degree, %20.3 has two-year degree, %41.7 has undergraduate degree and %10.9 has undergraduate degree.

Out of 385 foreign surveyors, %44.9 is male and %55.1 is female. %52.2 of them is married and %47.8 is single. Their age distribution is %26.8 between 18-25, %20.3 between 26-33, %19.7 between 34-41, %14.5 between 42-49, %17.1 between 50-57 and %1.6 above 58. Income distribution of the surveyors is as follows: %6.2 between 0-1000 €, %34.5 between 1001-2000 €, %53.2 between 2001-3000 €, %6.1 above 3000 €. As for their educational background, %10.4 has high-school degree, %27.5 has two-year degree, %49.1 has undergraduate degree, 13% has undergraduate degree.

#### 3.3.2 Testing the Scales of the Research

To test the reliability of the variables of research model, Cronbach alpha coefficient method was used to measure variable's internal consistency. This coefficient shows the degree of compliance between statements in multi-statement variable, and is valued between 0 and 1. We can say that the more this value is close to 1, the more internal value between statements in the variable is high (İslamoğlu and Alnaçık, 2013). For domestic surveyors, it is observed that Cronbach alpha value is high for variables of functional benefit ( $\alpha=0.743$ ), social benefit ( $\alpha=0.862$ ), psychological benefit ( $\alpha=0.743$ ), hedonic benefit ( $\alpha=0.786$ ), monetary benefit ( $\alpha=0.968$ ), community participation ( $\alpha=0.930$ ), brand trust ( $\alpha=0.885$ ) and brand commitment ( $\alpha=0.705$ ). For foreign surveyors, Cronbach alpha value is high for variables of functional benefit ( $\alpha=0.808$ ), social benefit ( $\alpha=0.937$ ), psychological benefit ( $\alpha=0.848$ ), hedonic benefit ( $\alpha=0.718$ ), monetary benefit ( $\alpha=0.978$ ), community participation ( $\alpha=0.875$ ), brand trust ( $\alpha=0.910$ ) and brand commitment ( $\alpha=0.734$ ).

After seeing that research variables are reliable, confirmatory factor analysis was applied to test the compliance of these variables to our example. In the first stage of analysis, confirmatory factor analysis was done for domestic consumers and it is found that psychological benefit, monetary benefit, community participation and brand commitment are in perfect compliance<sup>1</sup> with the example. However, it is seen that compliance values of functional benefit, social benefit, hedonic benefit and brand trust variables are not in acceptable limits. Examining the modifications, statements of "FB1: I think the following is important obtaining up-to-date information about the Hotel brand" from functional benefit variable, "SB4: I think the following is important getting involved with other members" from social benefit variable, "HB1: I think the following is important being amused by other members" from hedonic benefit variable and "BT4: The Hotel brand meets its promises" from brand trust variable, that offer the highest value modification on Chi-square, were left out of the analysis. It is seen that the values obtained after completed modifications were in perfect compliance.

According to the results of confirmatory factor analysis made for foreign consumers, Psychological benefit and

<sup>1</sup> Perfect Compliance Values;  $0 \leq \chi^2 \leq 2df$ ,  $0.05 < p \leq 1.00$ ,  $0 \leq \chi^2/df \leq 2$ ,  $0 \leq RMSEA \leq 0.05$ ,  $0 \leq SRMR \leq 0.05$ ,  $0.95 \leq NFI \leq 1.00$ ,  $0.97 \leq NNFI \leq 1.00$ ,  $0.97 \leq CFI \leq 1.00$ ,  $0.95 \leq GFI \leq 1.00$ ,  $0.90 \leq AGFI \leq 1.00$ ,  $0.95 \leq IFI \leq 1.00$  (Schermelleh-Engel and others, 2003).

brand commitment variables are in perfect compliance with the example, while community participation and brand trust variables are in acceptable compliance<sup>2</sup>. However, it is seen that compliance values of functional benefit, social benefit and hedonic benefit variables are in acceptable limits. Thereupon, after examining modifications, statements of FB3: "I think the following is important efficiently communicating online" from functional benefit, "SB4: I think the following is important getting involved with other members" from social benefit variable and "HB2: I think the following is important having fun on the brand's Facebook page" from hedonic benefit variable, that offer the highest value modification on Chi-square, are left out of the research. It is seen that the values obtained from modifications are between perfect compliance values.

In conclusion, as a result of confirmatory factor analysis, it is decided to use total of 8 variables and 25 statements as 3 for functional benefit, 3 for social benefit, 3 for psychological benefit, 3 for hedonic benefit, 3 for monetary benefit, 4 for community participation, 3 for brand trust and 3 for brand commitment for domestic consumers. For foreign consumers, it is decided to use total of 8 variables and 2 statements as 3 for functional benefit, 3 for social benefit, 3 for psychological benefit, 3 for hedonic benefit, 3 for monetary benefit, 4 for community participation, 4 for brand trust and 3 for brand commitment.

Table 1. In the Model Designed For Domestic Consumers, Average, Standard Deviation, t Values, Standard Coefficients, R<sup>2</sup> and Error Variations

Constructs Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	t value	Standardized Solution	R <sup>2</sup>	Error Variance
<b>Hedonic Benefits</b>						
HB2: I think the following is important having fun on the brand's Facebook page.	3.87	1.30	2.28	0.96	0.92	0.14
HB3: I think the following is important seeking enjoyment on this Facebook page.	3.88	1.29	7.37	0.87	0.75	0.41
HB4: I think the following is important being entertained on this Facebook page.	4.08	1.06	12.80	0.67	0.44	0.34
<b>Monetary Benefits</b>						
MB1: I think the following is important obtaining discounts or special deals that most consumers don't get.	4.29	1.09	4.59	0.98	0.96	0.04
MB2: I think the following is important obtaining better prices than other consumers.	4.30	1.08	2.68	0.99	0.98	0.02
<b>Community Participation</b>						
CP1: I take an active part in the brand Hotel's Facebook page.	3.38	1.23	13.48	0.67	0.45	0.84
CP2: I frequently provide useful information to other members.	3.43	1.15	5.30	0.97	0.94	0.09
CP3: In general, I post messages and responses on the brand's Facebook page with great enthusiasm and frequency.	3.38	1.13	5.93	0.96	0.93	0.11
<b>Brand Trust</b>						
BT1: What the Hotel brand says about its products/service is true.	3.14	1.10	2.53	0.93	0.87	0.12
BT2: I feel I know what to expect from the Hotel brand.	3.66	1.23	13.28	0.47	0.85	0.11
BT3: The Hotel brand is very reliable.	3.12	1.14	8.08	0.79	0.62	0.37
<b>Brand Commitment</b>						
BC1: If the Hotel brand had no available reservations, I would have no problem finding a different Hotel with which I would want to make reservations.	4.26	1.08	7.99	0.76	0.57	0.58
BC2: I consider myself to be highly loyal to the Hotel brand.	3.60	1.09	10.27	0.67	0.45	0.97
BC3: When another brand has a special deal (e.g., discounted room rate), I generally visit that Hotel with the better deal.	4.24	1.08	9.92	0.69	0.47	0.64

### 3.3.3 Testing the Research Model for Domestic and Foreign Consumers

To designate the effect of functional benefit, social benefit, hedonic benefit and monetary benefit variables to

<sup>2</sup>Acceptable Compliance Values:  $2df \leq \chi^2 \leq 3df$ ,  $0.01 \leq p \leq 0.05$ ,  $2 \leq \chi^2 / df \leq 3$ ,  $0.05 \leq RMSEA \leq 0.08$ ,  $0.05 \leq SRMR \leq 0.10$ ,  $0.90 \leq NFI \leq 0.95$ ,  $0.95 \leq NNFI \leq 0.97$ ,  $0.95 \leq CFI \leq 0.97$ ,  $0.90 \leq GFI \leq 0.95$ ,  $0.85 \leq AGFI \leq 0.90$ ,  $0.90 \leq IFI \leq 0.95$  (Schermelleh-Engel vd., 2003).



community participation, effect of community participation to brand trust and effect of brand trust to brand commitment, Structural Equation Modelling (Path analysis) is used.

For domestic consumers, it is seen after the first analysis that compliance index value is not in acceptable limits. After seeing that the values are not in acceptable limits, t values between variables have been investigated first. As a result of this investigation, after seeing that t values between functional, social and psychological benefit variables and community participation are 0.81, 1.78 and 0.96, these variables have been removed from the model and H<sub>1a</sub>, H<sub>2a</sub> and H<sub>3a</sub> hypotheses have been denied. Since compliance values were at desirable level, statements of “MB3: I think the following is important receiving free coupons for the Hotel brand by becoming a member of the Facebook page” from monetary benefit variable and “CP4: I do my best to participate in activities offered on the brand’s Facebook page” from community participation variable, that offer the highest value modification on Chi-square, are left out of the research and it is seen that the model has desired compliance value and average, standard deviation, t values, standard coefficients, R<sup>2</sup> and error variations of statements in the model are shown in Table 1.

Table 2. In the Model Designed For Foreign Consumers, Average, Standard Deviation, t Values, Standard Coefficients, R<sup>2</sup> and Error Variations

Constructs Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	t value	Standardized Solution	R <sup>2</sup>	Error Variance
<b>Functional Benefits</b>						
FB1: I think the following is important obtaining up-to-date information about the Hotel brand.	4.16	1.02	6.12	0.82	0.11	0.93
FB2: I think the following is important conveniently communicating with others online.	3.59	1.21	23.35	0.94	0.88	0.18
FB4: I think the following is important sharing experiences in the Hotel brand.	3.66	1.21	22.05	0.90	0.81	0.27
<b>Social Benefits</b>						
SB1: I think the following is important having trust in the community of Facebook.	3.59	1.18	19.62	0.83	0.69	0.42
SB2: I think the following is important establishing and maintaining relationships with other members of Facebook.	3.49	1.21	22.40	0.90	0.81	0.27
SB3: I think the following is important communicating with other members.	3.55	1.14	22.19	0.90	0.81	0.25
<b>Psychological Benefits</b>						
PB2: I think the following is important seeking a sense of belonging.	3.66	1.16	17.94	0.99	0.97	0.05
PB3: I think the following is important seeking self-identity.	3.97	1.19	13.61	0.72	0.52	0.93
<b>Monetary Benefits</b>						
MB1: I think the following is important obtaining discounts or special deals that most consumers don't get.	4.25	1.17	27.21	0.99	0.98	0.02
MB2: I think the following is important obtaining better prices than other consumers.	4.26	1.18	26.99	0.99	0.98	0.03
MB3: I think the following is important receiving free coupons for the Hotel brand by becoming a member of the Facebook page.	4.11	1.24	23.68	0.92	0.85	0.23
<b>Community Participation</b>						
CP1: I take an active part in the brand Hotel's Facebook page.	3.57	1.19	9.81	0.68	0.15	0.76
CP2: I frequently provide useful information to other members.	3.43	1.09	7.84	0.89	0.79	0.25
CP4: I do my best to participate in activities offered on the brand's Facebook page.	3.38	1.05	7.96	0.96	0.92	0.08
<b>Brand Trust</b>						
BT1: What the Hotel brand says about its products is true.	3.90	1.18	12.96	0.91	0.83	0.23
BT3: The Hotel brand is very reliable.	3.80	1.18	41.55	0.99	0.98	0.02
BT4: The Hotel brand meets its promises.	3.77	1.19	39.77	0.98	0.96	0.05
<b>Brand Commitment</b>						
BC2: I consider myself to be highly loyal to the Hotel brand.	3.44	1.19	6.96	0.72	0.18	0.81
BC3: When another brand has a special deal (e.g., discounted room rate), I generally visit that Hotel with the better.	4.19	1.09	9.35	0.75	0.56	0.53

For foreign consumers, at the end of the first analysis, it is that compliance index values are not in acceptable limits. After seeing that the values were not in acceptable limits, first t values between variables have been examined. As a result of this examination, after seeing that hedonic benefit variation's t value is 1.22, the variable has been removed from the model and  $H_{4b}$  has been denied. Since compliance values are not as desired, statements of "CP3: In general, I post messages and responses on the brand's Facebook page with great enthusiasm and frequency" from community participation variable, "BT2: I feel I know what to expect from the Hotel brand" from brand trust and "BC1: If the Hotel brand had no available reservations, I would have no problem finding a different Hotel with which I would want to make reservations" from brand commitment, that offer the highest value modification on Chi-square, are left out of the research and it is seen that the model has desired compliance values. In the model designed for foreign consumers, average, standard deviation, t values, standard coefficients,  $R^2$  and error variations of statements in the model are shown in Table 2.

In conclusion, it is found by the model designed for domestic consumers that hedonic and monetary benefits effect community participation and accordingly community participation effects brand trust and brand commitment. In the model designed for foreign consumers, functional benefit, social benefit, psychological benefit and monetary benefit effects community participation. Community participation has effect on brand trust and brand commitment. The trust placed on the brand is also effective on brand commitment. Summary information of research hypotheses are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Summary of Support for Hypotheses Based on The Results of SEM in The Research Model

Hypotheses	t value	Standardized Solution	$R^2$	Error Variance
$H_{1a}$ : Functional benefit effects community participation in terms of domestic tourists.	<b>NON-SIGNIFICANT</b>			
$H_{1b}$ : Functional benefit effects community participation in terms of foreign tourists.	2.81	0.76	0.58	0.41
$H_{2a}$ : Social benefit effects community participation in terms of domestic tourists.	<b>NON-SIGNIFICANT</b>			
$H_{2b}$ : Social benefit effects community participation in terms of foreign tourists.	3.16	0.81	0.49	0.56
$H_{3a}$ : Psychological benefit effects community participation in terms of domestic tourists.	<b>NON-SIGNIFICANT</b>			
$H_{3b}$ : Psychological benefit effects community participation in terms of foreign tourists.	2.99	0.77	0.80	0.37
$H_{4a}$ : Hedonic benefit effects community participation in terms of domestic tourists.	2.62	0.76	0.70	0.29
$H_{4b}$ : Hedonic benefit effects community participation in terms of foreign tourists.	<b>NON-SIGNIFICANT</b>			
$H_{5a}$ : Monetary benefit effects community participation in terms of domestic tourists.	3.20	0.81	0.81	0.11
$H_{5b}$ : Monetary benefit effects community participation in terms of foreign tourists.	2.24	0.69	0.69	0.42
$H_{6a}$ : Community participation effects brand trust in terms of domestic tourists.	2.73	0.78	0.48	0.42
$H_{6b}$ : Community participation effects brand trust in terms of foreign tourists.	3.82	0.92	0.71	0.36
$H_{7a}$ : Community participation effects brand commitment in terms of domestic tourists.	3.29	0.66	0.61	0.36
$H_{7b}$ : Community participation effects brand commitment in terms of foreign tourists.	3.43	0.87	0.95	0.05
$H_{8a}$ : Brand trust effects brand commitment in terms of domestic tourists.	8.36	0.91	0.59	0.38
$H_{8b}$ : Brand trust effects brand commitment in terms of foreign tourists.	2.15	0.65	0.98	0.03

#### 4. Conclusion and Suggestions

The importance of social media that constantly increase the number of users is increasing day by day as a new, efficient and leading method that businesses prefer to have rivalry advantage. To be different among rivals, the preferred method to reach for potential consumers and to exist in this competitive environment is social media marketing. With this method, marketing activities carried out between consumer and sellers are now carried on virtual platform. Today, many businesses are carrying out product promotion, price discount and consumer opinions for product improvement via the communication made with users that follow social media accounts businesses have.

Social media marketing provides many benefits for not only businesses but also consumers. In this virtual

environment, consumers can reach for the information about any product that they want to purchase fast, easy and safe. In conventional marketing, information transformed from mouth to mouth is obtained through user group posts on social media accounts. The power that businesses had before is now in the hands of consumers. Because, consumers can transfer their opinions about a product to possible buyers on the other side of the world via social networks.

This study made with the purpose of measuring the effect of benefits gained from social media marketing on brand commitment has been implemented on tourism area which is an important branch of service industry. In this study, in which if benefits gained in terms of domestic and foreign consumers are different, was investigated, these results were obtained:

Most of the surveyors of this research are male, married, between 26-33, has between 2001-3000 TL income and a high-school degree. Most of the foreign surveyors are female, married, between 18-25, has 2001-3000 € income, and a high-school degree. While designating that domestic tourists gain hedonic and social benefit from social media marketing, foreign consumers gain functional, social, psychological and monetary benefit.

In terms of domestic consumers, entertainment provided by hedonic benefit which is gained from social media marketing is as important as consumption for consumers. Consumers that participated on the research think that spending quality time on hotel's Facebook page is important. Therefore, it is important to ensure that they spend entertaining time on social media accounts. On posts that are on behalf of the hotel, the aim should not only be giving information. Especially in service industry, in hotels that are important entertainment tools, this concept should have a priority. It should be ensured that consumers follow the Facebook account of the hotel and take a look at regularly.

Monetary benefit is another benefit that domestic consumer gain from social media marketing. In conventional marketing, affordable price concept which is important for consumers is also prior in social media marketing. Especially in social media marketing where consumers can make price-quality research more easily, it is important to have affordable price for consumers. Data obtained from this study have designated that along with the rivalry of brands, consumers use social media to have an affordable vacation. To be able to stay in a hotel for a more affordable price, rivalry, indirectly, incents to be a member of hotel's social media account. Because in this competitive environment, it is necessary to follow the social media account of the hotel regularly not to miss latest discounts. Therefore, consumers who want to be in this rivalry keep active participation on the Facebook account.

Data taken from consumers about monetary benefit variable shows that in social media marketing, activities like coupon, promotion, lottery ticket are important for consumers. Especially, they wish to have these when they follow hotel's Facebook page. With this type of rights, consumers, along with being hotel's consumers, do a volunteer marketing of the hotel by advertising these campaigns to their close ones. Community participation is also affected by these activities that require constant active participation.

According to the results of the research, functional benefit has a direct effect on community participation in regards to foreign consumers. According to the data gathered from surveyors, it is determined that consumers place great emphasis on mutual communication in social media marketing. With the communication that consumers make, they share information about hotel with each other. This sharing is effective on their decision process. Consumers that carry out mutual communication effect community participation, which is an interval variable in the model, in functional benefit dimension. A subtitle in community participation, online participants make mutual contact on social media accounts. Another factor on functional benefit dimension is the communication that consumers have with the hotel. Gathered data shows that regularly updated Facebook accounts draws consumer's attention. Therefore, businesses who carry their marketing activities on social media should share posts regularly. However, if these shared posts are used for wrong purposes, consumers do not pay attention.

According to the data gathered from surveyors, in functional benefit, former consumers' experiences are important. Possible consumers evaluate positive and negative commentaries of former consumers about a product or service. These evaluations effect consumers' preferences.

It is designated that social benefit has direct effect on community participation in terms of foreign consumers. Especially with the increasing in usage of social media, socialization is being carried out on social networks. In this socialization process, social media users build sincere relations with people they have never seen. During these relations, it is important to trust the communicated group. Especially, in social media, it is designated that trust has an important value for consumers. Suggestions of people who are trusted are paid attention.

According to research results, socializing continues during marketing. Consumers try to join groups in the Facebook page of the hotel. Because, there is a share of information in these groups and they should not be destitute of it. Therefore, socializing on social media is an important concept. However, not every user is in this interaction. The reason is that there are some posts in the Facebook page of the hotel, which they do not find appropriate for them. If the information shared via the account is out of consumer's interest or disturbing, consumers keep themselves away from this area. A business should not fall in these errors.

Following suggestions can be made regarding the findings of the research;

- Hotel brands that use social media marketing should regularly update their social media accounts. Attentions of the consumers should be driven by regular posts. Detailed information about hotel's campaigns, activities, services should be given on the account. Taking this information from another source may cause wrong informing.

- While hotel brand can carry out its marketing activities on one social media tool, it would be more beneficial to more tools. Because each social media tool serve with a different feature. While Twitter offers short and quick communication opportunity, with Instagram hotel photos can be filtered and presented to followers. Using these social media tools in compliance could provide success in social media marketing.

- The first mistake done in this area is not to fully understand the power of social media. Mistakes done here can cause problems that will be hard for the businesses to recover. The first reason of making mistake is incorrect policies about social media accounts that managers who lack information about social media. Therefore, businesses who want to reach the target with social media marketing should be managed by trained personnel who are an expert on the issue.

- Businesses that work international in service industry like hotels should be careful about language diversity. Using only Turkish explanations on publicity of a hotel that host consumers from different countries would be an incorrect policy. Along with Turkish, having accounts in languages like English, German, French and Russian would be beneficial. However, if there is no time and budget for this practice, there could be a translation in different languages with Turkish explanations.

- Different arrangements on social media accounts should be paid attention. If consider Facebook as an example, using hotel's name or logo for profile picture and a wide-angled photo of the hotel for cover photo, we can have a visually successful page arrangement. Moreover, sharing contact and location information of the hotel in the about section would be easy for the consumers who needs information.

- Social media is a rapidly developing area and needs constant update. Every structural innovation should be integrated by the hotel. Social media accounts' old versions should be renewed with new versions.

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