

# **Cross Cultural Analysis of Facebook on Global Purchase**

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*This study attempts to examine the impact of culture on social media by utilizing the social media factors: brand influencers, brand generated content, consumer generated content, and brand engagement. In doing so, these social media factors between Turkish and American Facebook users are compared. Two hundred nine people were surveyed using, an online platform. Three-way MANOVA and Post-hoc tests were performed. The results showed that females are more affected than males while different age groups did not have any impact. Culture in Turkey has been changing since females use social media actively and influencers who work with popular brands, support women rights in their posts. Furthermore, Turkish consumers are more sensitive to social media factors on global brand pages of Facebook when compared to American consumers. Overall, gender, age, and cultural differences were observed for social media factors. Findings have practical implications for marketing, especially for advertising products and services on Facebook.*

*Keywords: social media factors, global brand, purchase intention, Facebook, Turkish and American consumers*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Social media is widely used across the globe. Businesses as well as academicians continue to indicate the importance of social media and its impact on purchase intentions. Strategic social media has many factors. These factors include the type of social media channel to use, the demographics, and the country or culture which are starting points for developing a social media strategy.

Global companies have social media pages to reach their customers using creative strategies. It is important for companies to increase their customer base through social media applications. As internet usage continues to increase all around the world, people from different countries have a chance to

communicate with each other and talk about brands on social media. Customer reviews, comments and discussions are highly valuable for global companies to show their prestige.

Through innovation, international companies strive to keep their social media pages active while they search for new techniques to reach a broader target audiences. People with different cultural background, age, and gender might have differences in social media platform usage on engagement factors. For example, Boz, Uhls & Greenfield (2016) found that Facebook usage of the U.S. and Turkish adolescents aged 14-18 is different. Self-promotion strategy is frequently used by adolescents in the U.S. compared to Turkish adolescents while exemplification strategy (using more examples and details to explain or convince others) is more frequently used in Turkey.

Social media activities of users in the U.S. differ by percentage (Statista, 2019). Majority of social media users spend time on Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat and Pinterest to view photos. For the type of milestones shared on social media in the U.S., holidays have the highest number by 66%, followed by travel 60%, family 59%, relationship 58% and home purchase 44%.

The goal of this study is to examine how differences between two cultures on four social media factors exist. We selected Turkey and the United States as sample. The U.S.A. is ranked as a second country in the world, which has the highest number of Facebook users by 193.9 million after India by 349.2 million (Statista, 2021). In Turkey, people spend a significant amount time online (Konda, 2011). Turkey has a great potential of young people as the number of young social media users keeps increasing. Average number of Facebook users increases about 42% every year for people over 18 years old. Although the rate of social media usage is high for Turkish and the U.S. users, interaction of users and content on brand pages might differentiate their impact on purchasing due to cultural differences. Social media factors of influencers, brand engagement, consumer generated content, and brand generated content are explored on the differences on demographics and country factors.

### **Facebook Statistics for USA and Turkey**

In January of 2022, it was estimated that there were 2.91 billion monthly Facebook active users worldwide. (DataReportal, 2022). In Turkey, Facebook and Instagram usage became the highest among other social media platforms in recent years (Statista, 2019). In 2018, Facebook usage was the highest 22.99% compared to Instagram 11.4% and YouTube 10.76% in Turkey. According to DataReportal Digital 2021 Turkey report, number of total visits to websites from highest to lowest were Google 2.40B, YouTube 844M and Facebook 380M. (Digital 2021: Turkey). Number of Facebook users in the USA w 297.14 millions in 2020 and this number is forecasted to be 307.34 in 2022, 312.09 in 2023 and 316.55 in 2014 (Statista, 2021).

### **Social Media Demographics in the USA and Turkey**

#### *Gender & Age*

Number of male users was 61% and number of female users was 77 percent for Facebook in the United States (Auxier & Anderson, 2021). YouTube has the highest Facebook user percentages with males 82% and females 80%. Instagram ranked as a third after Facebook with men as being 36% and women as being 44%. Facebook user percentages by the age groups in the U.S. were 18-29 70%, 30-49 77%, 50-64 73% and 65+ 50%. Turkey Facebook Stats July 2021 showed that for ages 25-34, Facebook male users were 19.3% and female users were 13.8%, followed by ages 18-24 male 12.7% and female 7.5%, ages 35-44 male 11.7% and female 8.3%, ages 45-55 male 2.1% and female 4.7%. (Statista, 2021). Statista (2021) reported that age distribution of Facebook users in Turkey by the end of July 2021 were 25-34; 33.1%, 35-44; 20.1%, 18-24; 20.2% and 45-54; 11.7%.

Ozturk, Ozkan & Kurtulus (2015) examined Turkish social media users and pointed out that Turkish social media users could be grouped as five clusters: *social pioneers* (mostly male undergraduate students, use internet more than seven hours), *observers/watchers* (mostly males aged 27 to 31, work as civil servants), *content creators* (males work in private sector), *engagers* (females aged 27 to 31) and *game lovers* (mostly females and civil servant). Although there is a great deal social media consumption among Turkish users, social media is used primarily to follow others for learning and social interaction. While

*game lovers* are mostly females looking for entertainment in social media, *observers/watchers* are mostly males using social media very little, compared to other groups.

Different age groups might be affected by social media differently as teenagers grow up using social media and follow recent social media platforms where their cohorts are different from adults. Majority of Gen Z watch Snapchat and Instagram stories compared to the majority of millennials (ages between 25-34) watch Facebook stories in the United States (emarketer pro, 2019). Additionally, users whose recent fashion purchase inspired by social media browsing were in order of Gen Z 55.2%, millennials 50.6%, Gen X (ages between 35-54) 38.1% and baby boomers (ages above 55) 27.5% (emarketer, 2019). In the United States, social media use has heavy growth. Surprisingly, people over the age of 65 has contributed to this growth a great deal while social media usage of other age groups has slowed down. In fact, between the age groups of 50 – 64, social media usage has not risen since 2013 (Smart insights, 2019).

Hutto et al. (2015) found that the wealth of users, which is related to habits of using social media, sharing behaviors, communication practices, preferences and concerns can give information about user modelling and personalization. Furthermore, in the United States among older adults, social media users are likely to be younger senior females, educated with higher incomes and have higher confidence in technology, more positive attitudes for information communication technologies, easy access to their social media accounts in their home and, keep connecting to their friends as their priorities. Network size also has a strong relationship with age. Younger people tend to build and place in larger networks while older people exist in smaller networks. Social ties between younger adults might differ from other age groups. Besides, motivation of adults to use social media might be different than motivation of young people and most of the reasons can be staying in touch with families for older ones.

## **MOTIVATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND PURCHASING IN GLOBAL CONTEXT**

As the Internet helps people communicate with friends and acquaintances, reach new information and share content through free services (Giannakos et al, 2013), social media enables interactivity among social media users. Social networks let people share interests, ideas, activities and lifestyles (Enginkaya & Yilmaz, 2014). In Taiwan, spending time on social media applications such as Facebook resulted from social networking online and users willing to participate in brand communities while social networking online (Chi, 2011). Cha (2009) supported that social networking experience is effective on attitudes for shopping of virtual items related to hedonic experience goods. Social interaction, emotional involvement and hedonic experience can be combined via social networking sites. When Babin, Darden & Griffin (1994) observed consumer behavior towards shopping experience related to utilitarian and hedonic values, they pointed out that not all consumer behavior stems from functional needs but also hedonic factors influencing unplanned and impulse shopping. A study conducted in Indonesia focusing social media found that hedonic and utilitarian motivations impact product browsing on social media positively (Arum & Sung, 2018). While product selection for utilitarian motivation was the most important factor of product browsing, factors of convenience and information availability, which are the other variables of utilitarian motivation (Babin, Darden & Griffin, 1994) did not impact social media product browsing.

People are active in social media by giving recommendations and opinions to others (Morris, Teevan & Panovich, 2010). Rhue and Sundararajan (2019) showed evidence that consumers leaving product reviews generate discussions more likely than disclosing additional purchases. Reasons of motivations for writing product reviews might be different than reasons of motivations for disclosing a purchase. Feedbacks, which come from non-friend peers can reduce the chance of future purchase disclosures. If people who are not the friend of consumer comment about consumer purchase under his or her post, this can impact consumers negatively to share purchases in future and decrease the possibility of making similar purchases as consumers become risk averse. When brands with physical stores can build trust on their consumers through social media, consumers can be loyal and trust physical stores (Mainardes & Cardoso, 2019). Utilizing social media for building trust, and loyalty which can be effective in strengthening company and consumer relationships. Consumers use of social media, company generated communication, and user generated communication that influence consumers to trust in stores and purchase.

In this study, we do not distinguish purchasing between online or brick and mortar stores for different cultures related to social media marketing strategies and content. In recent years, consumer buying trends evolved with increasing integration of women to business life and due to spending less time for household chores (Stark & Meier, 2001) Although, online purchasing is common, people still might not prefer to buy every product or service online. In Spain, people are quite used to receiving advertising as they browse the internet but, they might be still averse to food advertising because of feeling of mistrust (Mesias & Eighannam, 2019).

## **Social Media Factors**

### *Brand Engagement*

Companies can gain competitive advantages when they have social media brand engagement (Gomez, Lopez & Molina, 2019). Engagement and involvement can be triggered by social media interactions compared to traditional media such face to face or via phone (Hennig-Thurau et al, 2010). Brand interactions of customers on online networks become highly important as well as electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) in impacting consumer opinions (Karakaya & Barnes 2010). Klein et al (2016) also emphasized that eWOM communication plays an important role for brand image strength which leads to brand engagement.

In recent years, brand engagement usage by companies has been widespread. Gomez, Lopez & Molina (2019) found user generated content and firm related content impact social media brand engagement positively for Facebook pages of airline companies. Hudson et al, (2015) claimed that social media brand engagement is a determinant of customer's relationship strength with brands which is known as brand relationship quality. In building brand loyalty, engaging consumers is important because consumers feel connected to brands as they engage (Barger, Peltier & Schultz, 2016).

Social media consumer brand engagement studies are limited (Jin & Huang, 2017). If social brand pages support consumer personality, engagement might increase reflecting positive feelings for social media pages of brands (Algharabat et al. 2019). Consumers who are loyal to brands, have strong beliefs on their purchases compared to consumers who are not loyal to brands (Vivek, Beatty & Morgan, 2012). Furthermore, communications of consumers have a positive impact on enhancing brand loyalty level on social media (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015).

### *Brand Generated Content*

Previous studies referred to BGC (brand generated content) using FCC (firm created content) supported BGC impact on consumer attitudes. Companies try to enhance interactive environments in social media to understand consumer preferences and motivations of buying behaviors. Yang et al. (2019) observed brand generated content (BGC) and its effect on customer offline purchasing behavior through WeChat and found that both informative and persuasive BGC affect customer spending positively. Although informative BGC has features of traditional online advertising, persuasive BGC boosts more interaction on social media platforms. Persuasive BGC includes entertainment content visually which can attract consumers easily and it is stronger than traditional online advertisements to increase customer spending.

Tuten & Solomon (2012) stated that social media platforms can lead participation by making engaging easier. Participation can be encouraged by brands as users share experiences worth to tell. Consumer response to brand generated content through social media can be accepted as engagement. Firms might not easily start this form of engagement. Encouraging participation can be a challenge due to privacy concerns in different nations. Global companies need to be aware of privacy issues and create a trustful communication environments. When consumers engage, they can involve in positive WOM behaviors and give recommendations to others in their decision-making process. WOM has an impact on building positive brand equity, brand attitude, and purchase intention. Furthermore, higher brand engagement can bring positive WOM and increase perceptions of brand equity and sales.

### *Consumer Generated Content*

Social commerce is valuable, and companies need to invest in their social commerce activities. Lam et al. (2019) stated that firms' stock returns grow by social commerce and firms with high reputation can get more significant results. Consumer generated content (CGC), which is known as brand related UGC takes an important place in social commerce to reduce uncertainty faced by consumers (Lian & Yen, 2013). Companies, which sell cosmetics, need to plan their social media activities better to reduce uncertainty of products, potential customers might face. Social interactions and user contributions can help uncertainty to decline by giving benefit to cosmetics producers.

Chevalier & Mayzlin (2006) claimed that companies can increase sales of products and services through consumer generated content. Not only companies communicate with customers however, nowadays customers keep communicating with other customers on social media. According to Moran, Muzellec & Noran (2014), social interactions, electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) and relationships with brands can be enhanced by brand related user generated content (UGC). Content created by users for a specific brand are known as brand related UGC. Some brand related examples of UGC can be reviews of Facebook users or users discussing a brand in YouTube videos. YouTube, Facebook and Twitter include content with personal stories of social media users and their relationship with a brand (Roma & Aloini, 2019). Some content can be online posts before, during or after product purchases. The posted content might help companies lead consumers to socially visible purchase and consumption by building social identity.

Consumer generated content in consumer networking sites can be important forms of consumer engagement (Smith, Fisher & Yongjian, 2012). In fact, an earlier study found that non-socially based sites such as company web sites, search engines, and consumer advocacy sites have no impact on consumer opinions as opposed to socially based sites because opinions shared on socially based sites are assumed to be unbiased and trustworthy (Karakaya & Barnes, 2010). Previous research also found differences between Twitter (microblogging site), Facebook (social network), and YouTube (content community) based on brand related user generated content (Smith, Fisher & Yongjian, 2012). For contents with promotional self-presentation, brand related UGC differs across social media platforms. YouTube's self-promotion environment makes social media platforms to have stronger brand related UGC. YouTube can be helpful to give true information about brands. Twitter is very far from the culture of YouTube. Self-promotion of consumers is less likely to be seen on Twitter. Twitter users engage in activities to discuss and spread news. Communicating with marketers, Twitter users can use the network to make them respond to negative posts. Facebook can be placed between YouTube and Twitter somewhere since self-promotion of consumers is more obvious in Facebook than Twitter, but at the same time it is less than on YouTube.

### *Brand Influencers*

In this study, brand influencers are defined as social media influencers promoting brands. Freberg et al. (2011) defined social media influencers as third-party endorsers shaping consumer attitudes with blogs, tweets or other uses of social media. Social media influencers have power to persuade consumers to identify and follow influencers, who can bring positive results for company and brand value. The methods for identifying social media influencers (SMIs) can be based on the facts such as number of daily hits on a blog, how many times posts are shared or number of followers. Tools, which can evaluate quality and how relevant of social media influencers for organizations and brands can be developed for public relations practice. This can help them compare follower reactions and impressions of one social media influencer to another. Brands can deal with influencers by making them brand influencers as they play a role to shape consumer ideas.

Audrezet, Kerviler & Moulard (2018) clarified that social media influencers' non-commercial orientation and intrinsic motivations are valued highly by followers. Nowadays, brands work with digital celebrities to establish closer relationships with them and make them brand evangelists (Hwang & Zhang, 2018). If digital celebrities are not treated as short-term sponsorship partners or paid brand endorsers, but treated as brand evangelists, strong consumer networks based on good relationships with digital celebrities can be built by brands.

## **Purpose and Hypotheses**

There is limited research of social media branding and strategies on purchasing from a global perspective. An extensive literature review showed that there was a void in the literature focusing on social media comparisons among different cultures. Different from previous works, in this study, we choose a totally two different cultures for comparison: Turkey and the U.S.A. including demographic variables (age and gender) to understand the effect of influencers, brand, and consumer generated contents, and brand engagement as well as purchase decisions for global brands. Therefore, this paper is an exploratory study examining differences in global brand related social media factors including brand influencers (BI), brand generated content (BGC), consumer generated content (CGC), and brand engagement (BE), between Turkish and American Facebook users. With this in mind, we intend to examine whether there are significant differences between the two countries' social media platforms; Facebook including age (18-29: younger & 30-44: older) and gender factors.

Brand influencers (BI) talk about products of global brands on social media as consumers communicate with influencers. It is proposed that influencers affect opinions of other consumers as they think about buying or not buying any brand. It is hypothesized that consumers are positively impacted by brand generated content (BGC). Content coming from a global brand on social media might have an impact on consumer decisions about buying products of the brand. Brand generated content might not be the same for both countries since both countries have different cultural backgrounds. Consumer generated content (CGC) on social media might have an impact on other consumer decisions about buying brands. Opinions of the users' content about brands may impact consumer behavior for purchasing. Brand engagement (BE) is liking, participation, content sharing by consumers in social media. Consumers engage in posts of global brand pages through different social media platforms. These kinds of activities might affect consumers psychologically to purchase products or services of global brands. Brand engagement can build emotional connection and attachment as consumers feel like they engage in consumer communication about brand communication. Engaging on brand posts and reacting to other consumer ideas can be motivating to spread about brand information and purchase. Therefore, the following is proposed:

***H<sub>1</sub>: The U.S. and Turkish Facebook users differ from each other on social media factors of BI, BGC, CGC & BE on Facebook.***

Number of the followers and expectations of users from influencers might change including age and gender factors for both countries due to different backgrounds. Interests might also differ for gender and age groups and brand generated content might be different in both countries. Customer profile of usage might place in a different level for purchasing in both countries on both platforms as well as including gender and age. Engagement level can differ by country and gender, age factors can differentiate based on different preferences and background. Specifically, the following are hypothesized:

***H<sub>2</sub>: Males and Females differ from each other on social media factors of BI, BGC, CGC & BE on Facebook.***

***H<sub>3</sub>: Younger (18-29) and Older (30-44) Age groups differ from each other on social media factors of BI, BGC, CGC & BE on Facebook.***

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Sample**

Two hundred seven social media users in Turkey and the USA were surveyed to explore differences on social media factors. The survey was administered through Survey Monkey, an Internet survey distribution platform. Data was collected through a paid service from a panel that was derived through Survey Monkey. The survey was sent to 209 people in total. 100 people from Turkey and 109 people from USA answered the Survey. With the exception of two surveys from Turkey, all surveys were valid resulting in 98 surveys from Turkey and 109 surveys from the U.S. One hundred forty two of the total participants were 18-29

years old and 65 were 30-44 years old. Of the included sample, one hundred thirteen were males and 94 were females.

### Instrument

Using the previous literature on social media, a questionnaire was developed. The questions were measured on a Likert scale (ranging from 0= Not at all to 5= Very Strongly) and focused on learning more about social media factors including brand influencers, brand generated content, consumer generated content, and brand engagement on Facebook based on country, gender, and age. The questions are presented in Appendix.

### RESULTS

Three way MANOVA is used to analyze the impact of social media factors on consumers using Facebook. Specifically, we tested how both countries Turkey and the U.S. differ from each other including gender and age in terms of the four social media factors. The results from Box's test of equality of covariance matrices indicated that the assumption of equal dependent variable covariance matrices has not been met since Box's  $M = 122.383$  and  $p$  value equals 0.001, being highly statistically significant. The statistically significant outcome of Barlett's test of sphericity suggested that the data is appropriate for multivariate analyses with approximate chi square of  $\chi^2 = 501.488$  and  $p = 0.000$ . Overall, Consumer generated content has the highest mean score ( $X = 2.95$ ;  $s = 1.72$ ) followed by brand engagement (mean = 2.60;  $s = 1.74$ ); brand generated content (mean = 2.49;  $s = 1.700$ , and brand influencers (mean = 2.35;  $s = 1.81$ ).

The results indicate that BI, BGC, CGC & BE are statistically significant at 0.05 alpha level as all  $p$  values are lower than 0.05 for country (all  $p$  values = 0.000) and for gender (0.004, 0.000, 0.000 & 0.000 in order), but not for age factor. Therefore, we accept hypotheses one and two, but reject hypothesis three based on MANOVA (See Table 1). We also conducted a post-hoc test, Tukey's HSD, which showed that there were differences between age groups as well as gender, age and nationality combinations (see Table 2). Tukey's HSD shows the presence of statistically significant differences. Therefore, we partially accept hypothesis three. Ratings for all four social media factors, BI, BGC, CGC & BE, by Turkish males (means = 2.58; 2.56; 3.30, and 2.68 respectively) are higher than American males (means = 1.41; 1.59; 1.88, and 1.62 respectively). Turkish females (means = 3.56; 3.80; 4.20; 3.78) rate all four variables higher than Turkish males. However, the U.S. male respondents rate BGC, CGC and BE variables higher than their Turkish male counterparts. The Turkish consumer age group 18-29 rated all four social media factors higher than the American consumer age groups 18-29 and 30-44. Similarly, The Turkish consumer age group 30-44 rated all four variables higher than the same American age group. Other differences can be interpreted similarly from Table 2.

**TABLE 1**  
**FACEBOOK THREE WAY MANOVA - TESTS OF BETWEEN SUBJECTS EFFECTS**

Source	Variables Dependent	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	BI	125.622 <sup>a</sup>	7	17.946	6.477	.000
	BGC	123.349 <sup>b</sup>	7	17.621	7.423	.000
	CGC	139.902 <sup>c</sup>	7	19.986	8.433	.000
	BE	117.527 <sup>d</sup>	7	16.790	6.574	.000
Intercept	BI	1010.030	1	1010.030	364.563	.000
	BGC	1135.297	1	1135.297	478.277	.000
	CGC	1573.034	1	1573.034	663.749	.000
	BE	1250.222	1	1250.222	489.566	.000

Source	Variables Dependent	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Country	BI	69.755	1	69.755	25.178	.000
	BGC	68.043	1	68.043	28.665	.000
	CGC	90.876	1	90.876	38.346	.000
	BE	58.175	1	58.175	22.780	.000
Age	BI	.355	1	.355	.128	.721
	BGC	.024	1	.024	.010	.919
	CGC	.107	1	.107	.045	.832
	BE	.434	1	.434	.170	.681
Gender	BI	23.485	1	23.485	8.477	.004
	BGC	35.130	1	35.130	14.800	.000
	CGC	32.034	1	32.034	13.517	.000
	BE	35.746	1	35.746	13.997	.000

**TABLE 2**  
**POST-HOC ANALYSES USING TUKEY'S HSD TESTS OF MULTIPLE COMPARISONS**

Variables	GENDER				AGE				Sig. Gender <=.05	Sig. Age <=.05
	Turkey		USA		Turkey		USA			
	M (1)	F (2)	M (3)	F (4)	18- 29 (5)	30- 44 (6)	18- 29 (7)	30- 44 (8)		
Brand Influencers	2.58	3.56	1.41	2.15	2.93	3.17	1.67	1.95	1,2*;1,3* 2,3*;2,4*	5,7**; 5,8**; 6,7**; 6,8**
Brand Generated Content	2.56	3.80	1.59	2.34	2.99	3.39	1.94	1.97	1,2*;1,3* 2,3*;2,4* 3,4*	5,7**; 5,8** 6,7**; 6,8**
Consumer Generated Content	3.30	4.20	1.88	2.75	3.63	3.83	2.26	2.38	1,2*;1,3* 2,3*;2,4* 3,4*	5,7**; 5,8** 6,7**; 6,8**
Brand Engagement	2.68	3.78	1.62	2.62	3.05	3.43	2.07	2.18	1,2*;1,3* 2;3*;2,4* 3,4*	5,7**; 5,8** 6,7**; 6,8**

\*For example: should be read as follows: There is a significant difference between Turkish females and Turkish males (1,2\*); Turkish males and American males (1,3\*); Turkish females and American males (2,3\*); Turkish females and American females (2,4\*) females in terms of brand influencers variable. \*\* Should be read as follows: There is a significant difference between Turkish and U.S. respondents who are in the age category of 18-29 (5,7\*\*) and Turkish and the U.S. respondents who are in the age group of 30-44 (5,8\*\*) in terms of brand influencers variable. Similarly, Turkish respondents who are in the age category of 30-44 are different from the U.S. respondents who are in the age categories of 18-29 (6,7\*\*) and 30-44 (6,8\*\*) in terms of brand influencers variable.



In an attempt to shed more light into our analyses, we conducted independent sample t-tests to for the four dependent variables: BI, BGC, CGC, and BE. The responses from Turkey and the USA are different in terms of all four variables. Interestingly, the mean scores for all four variables were higher for Turkish respondents compared to American respondents. The mean scores for the social media factors, BI, BGC, CGC & BE were 2.99; 3.08; 3.67, and 3.14 respectively for Turkish consumers compared to 1.77; 1.95; 2.30, and 2.99 respectively for the U.S. consumers. The observed differences for all four variables were statistically significant at  $p < .001$  level (see Table 3).

**TABLE 3**  
**POST-HOC TESTS USING INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TESTS**

	USA Mean	Turkey Mean	t-value	Significance
Brand Influencers	1.77	2.99	-5.110	0.000
Brand Generated Content	1.95	3.08	-5.028	0.000
Consumer Generated Content	2.30	3.67	-6.259	0.000
Brand Engagement	2.11	3.14	-4.455	0.000

## DISCUSSION

This study explored differences of Turkish and the U.S. consumers on Brand Image, Brand Generated Content, Consumer Generated Content, and Brand Engagement on Facebook. Interestingly, the results showed that social media factors examined in this study influence females more than males. This is in line with previous literature; Turkish social media users are grouped as clusters; observers/watchers (mostly males aged 27 to 31), engagers (females aged 27 to 31) (Ozturk, Ozkan & Kurtulus, 2015) and Female usage is higher than male usage in both countries, USA and Turkey, (Shearer & Matsa, 2018). In Turkey, culture is changing since women spend longer time on social media and share their voice more actively compared to men. Turkish females interact with others through their purchasing journey and follow influencers and consumers, who share their ideas independently on social media platforms. Turkish females are more dominant than males on social media brand pages and they are highly effective to impact opinions others related to any seller, company or product. Besides working with brands, Turkish celebrities and influencers support women rights on their social media pages and bring attention to gender inequality in society. Turkish actress Demet Evgar who played in Lay's commercial became the first National Goodwill Ambassador of UN Women Turkey and UN Women ran #IamaWoman/ #BenKadınım campaign with Evgar (UN Turkey, 2022). Turkish Actor and influencer Kerem Bursin, who was the new face of Under Armour and BMW became the First National HeForShe Advocate for Turkey. He said "As men, we should walk hand in hand with women towards our goal of achieving gender equality. We need to eliminate gender stereotypes and unite to achieve an equal future for all women and girls." (HeForShe, 2022). These movements collaborated with social media followers can spread to Turkey's middle eastern neighbors where gender inequality is a big problem.

Turkish and American consumers view online suggestions and comments to learn about global brands in detail which proved that WOM is accepted as one of the effective factors shaping consumer behavior (Litvin, Goldsmith & Pan, 2008). Spreading and sharing information between each other, consumers care about the opinions of other consumers, and the content created by global brands. Their engagement activities on Instagram and Facebook with global brand pages can be accepted as an important type of communication, which might lead them to think about purchasing.

Results provided evidence that Turkish consumers are more sensitive to the behaviors of influencers as they visit Facebook. When influencers share any content including information about global brands, Turkish people are more likely to follow opinions of influencers. Decisions of Turkish people are affected highly by influencers compared to the U.S. consumers since they take suggestions at a higher level. Therefore, it might be possible that Turkish consumers end up buying products influencers mention in their posts more than Americans do. On Facebook, the research shows that Influencers are important to include for implementation of the social media strategy. They are powerful to impose ideas to Turkish consumers about global brands.

As consumers create content related to global brands and share with others, Turkish consumers' comments or suggestions seem to be more notable compared to the U.S. consumers. Consumer generated content may play a role to motivate Turkish consumers for purchasing more than it does the U.S. consumers. Turkish consumers prefer to get ideas from other consumers more than US consumers as they consider the opinions of others more. This can be effective for what other consumers think since Turkish people feel more comfortable as they take advice from people who already have experience with global brands.

## **RESEARCH LIMITATIONS & FUTURE RESEARCH**

This study only included participants from Turkey and the U.S.A., targeting specific age groups 18-29 & 30-35 years old. Number of participants were 209 and they were active users of Facebook. Therefore, the study focused on a single social media platform with constrained consumer age categories. Four social media factors; Brand Generated Content (BGC), Consumer Generated Content (CGC), Brand Influencers (BI) & Brand Engagement (BE) were included in the sample. Potential impact of BGC, CGC, BI and BE on purchasing products of global brands and *interactions* of those social media factors with branding, other social media platforms and demographic groups can be examined further.

Different age groups, income and education levels may be added in future studies as well as comparing and extending this study into other countries. Social media users from other regions such as Asia and Africa could be reached out to observe different consumer purchase intentions and to compare them with American and Turkish social media users for the future. Instagram, YouTube, Twitter or Snapchat, TikTok can be added to understand if any of the social media factors might yield purchasing for specific target groups. Survey questions can be extended to look at the possible impact of social media factors on global purchase. Different global brands might be included considering their social media content strategy and understanding media user behaviors.

## **PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS**

Findings can be helpful for global brand managers to adapt their branding and social media strategies for foreign countries. As females have higher social media usage percentages, targeting females as oppose to males might be an important finding to consider further and creating more content ideas focusing females might be effective on social media channels. Certain age groups and cultures can be more responsive to brand posts, influencers and consumer comments. This research can be beneficial to add value to brands while brands can increase their reach and revenue, targeting potential customers worldwide and interacting them to make them follow brand pages and posts.

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## APPENDIX

### Survey Questionnaire

#### *Cultural Influence on Purchase Intention in Social Media*

If you are willing to take this survey and are over 18 click YES to START, if NO then thank you for your time

Yes No

Do you use Facebook?

Yes No

0 = Not at all 1 = Slightly 2 = Somewhat 3 = Fairly 4 = Strongly 5 = Very Strongly

- 1) Influencers on Facebook affect my purchase intention  
0 1 2 3 4 5
- 2) Brand posts on Facebook affect my purchase intention  
0 1 2 3 4 5
- 3) I feel comfortable buying a product when I have gotten the opinions of others on Facebook about it  
0 1 2 3 4 5
- 4) 4) When I like, share or comment on Facebook a brand posts, I am more likely to buy from that brand  
0 1 2 3 4 5