

**T.C.
ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**



**THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL CONTENT MARKETING ON BRAND
AWARENESS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA AND CUSTOMER
ENGAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF STARBUCKS IN ISTANBUL**

MASTER THESIS

ANA EL KEDRA

**Department of Business
Business Administration Program**

January, 2021

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ANA EL KEDRA
(Y1812.130024)

Department of Business
Business Administration Program

Thesis Advisor: Assoc. Assist.Prof. Dr. Uğur ŞENER

January, 2021

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DEDICATION

I adopt that all information and documents which are collected and presented in the current thesis are according to academic and ethical rules. I also adopt that I have completely cited the references' results and information which are not original for this thesis.



ANA EL KEDRA

FOREWORD

This thesis is written to complete the requirements of Master program in Istanbul Aydin University, Department of Business Administration. The study is focused on the impact of digital content marketing on brand awareness through social media and customer engagement, a case study of Starbucks in Istanbul, Turkey.

I dedicate this project to my family and my friends. A special gratitude for the one and only hero of my life, my father Dr. Mabrouk Elkedra and to my source of power and strength my mother Dr. Elizabeta Elkedra whom I depend on unlimited trust.

To my sister, her husband and their two little sweet children, Mohammed and Adam for believing in my success regardless the difficulties which I may face.

To my wonderful grandmother Mrs. Vera Milanoska, thank you for supporting me and for being always there for me.

With all my respect, I thank my thesis advisor Assist. Prof. Dr. UĞUR ŞENER for his helpful critiques, guidance, advices, and suggestions. His carefully readings, observations, and attention to details helped me in creating the best I can in my thesis. My sincere thanks to all respondents for their allocated time for answering the questionnaire assigned to the study.

Above all, the biggest thanks to God Almighty for providing me with patience and power to complete my education requirements.

I hope that this thesis will be helpful for researchers in the future studies related to the fields in this topic.

January 2021

ANA EL KEDRA

THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL CONTENT MARKETING ON BRAND AWARENESS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA AND CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF STARBUCKS IN ISTANBUL

ABSTRACT

Digital content marketing is a wide field with different tools that offers great opportunities for company to build its business, connect with customers, and engage them in promoting brand awareness, increasing loyalty, and revenue.

The purpose of this study is to understand the impact that digital content marketing has on increasing brand awareness, and to examine the extent of mediating role of social media and customer engagement in that impact.

In order to achieve these objectives, the study develops theoretical framework based on literature review of existing theories which include the components of the study: digital content marketing, brand awareness, social media, and customer engagement.

And, in order to complete the empirical part of research, a questionnaire has been designed and the total of 398 customers of Starbucks Company in Istanbul shared their opinions about the relations and impacts of the components in the research topic. After that, the data collected from the survey was analyzed by using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science).

The results indicate that digital content marketing has significant effect on brand awareness. The effects of both social media and customer engagement on brand awareness are significant too, but the direct effect of digital content marketing on brand awareness is greater than their total indirect mediating effect on brand awareness.

These results help the researcher to develop recommendations and suggestions for better using the opportunities of digital content marketing in increasing brand awareness and achieving the company's goal through different tools.

Keywords: Digital content marketing, social media, customer engagement, brand awareness, mediation.



DİJİTAL İÇERİK PAZARLAMASININ SOSYAL MEDYA VE MÜŞTERİ KATILIMI YOLUYLA MARKA BİLİNCİ ÜZERİNE ETKİSİ: İSTANBUL STARBUCKS ÖRNEĞİ

ÖZET

Dijital İçerik Pazarlama; şirketin işini kurması, müşterilerle bağlantısı kurması ve marka farkındalığını teşvik etmek, sadakati ve geliri artırmak için harika fırsatlar sunan farklı araçlara sahip geniş bir alandır.

Bu çalışmanın amacı, dijital içerik pazarlamasının marka farkındalığını artırma üzerindeki etkisini anlamak ve aynı zamanda bu etkide sosyal medyanın ve müşteri katılımının aracılık rolünün kapsamını incelemektir.

Bu hedeflere ulaşmak için; çalışma, çalışmanın bileşenlerini içeren mevcut teorilerin literatür taramasına dayalı teorik çerçeveyi geliştirir ve aynı zamanda dijital içerik pazarlaması, marka bilinirliği, sosyal medya ve müşteri katılımını sağlar. Araştırmanın deneysel kısmını tamamlamak için bir anket tasarlanmış ve Starbucks firmasının İstanbul'daki toplam 398 müşterisi araştırma konusu olan bileşenlerin ilişkileri ve etkileri hakkında görüşlerini paylaşmıştır.

Ardından anketten toplanan veriler SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science) kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Sonuçlar, dijital içerik pazarlamasının marka bilinirliği üzerinde istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir etkiye sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Sosyal medyanın ve müşteri katılımının marka bilinirliğine etkisi istatistiksel olarak önemlidir. Ancak dijital içerik pazarlamasının marka bilinirliği üzerindeki doğrudan etkisi, toplam dolaylı aracılık etkisinden daha büyüktür. Bu sonuçlar, araştırmacının marka bilinirliğini artırmada ve farklı araçlarla şirketin hedefine ulaşmada dijital içerik pazarlamasının fırsatlarını daha iyi kullanması için öneriler geliştirmesine yardımcı olmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeleri: Dijital içerik pazarlaması, sosyal medya, müşteri katılımı, marka bilinirliği, meditatiflik

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ABBREVIATIONS

CE : Customer Engagement

DCM : Digital Content Marketing

SM : Social Media

SPSS : Statistical Package for the Social Sciences



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I. INTRODUCTION

Digital content marketing is a continuously growing process because of increasing company's understanding of content marketing concept and its importance for the business success. Nowadays consumers are moving over traditional ways of advertising and other marketing strategies for communication, thereby, opening the chance for digital content marketing prosperity. Digital content marketing depends on a desire for adding new value to customers' lives in a reliable and relevant way by introducing shareworthy content with high quality that meets their needs, increases their awareness, trust, and loyalty. It is a new way for attracting potential customers and retaining the existing ones, and the beneficial tool for achieving and sustaining trusted brand position via a more cost-effective but far, reaching medium. (Holliman & Rowley, 2014; Hollebeek & Macky, 2019).

Now, customers become digital connected with each other and more informed about products and services. The future of marketing is a content itself. Brands can be winners if they successfully attract their audience through storytelling related to the company and its products and services (Pulizzi, 2012; Y Bu, Parkinson & Thaichon, 2020).

A. Research Background

In this digital environment, companies use pull marketing strategy to direct the customers to their websites and capture customers' interest at the right time, the time when customers through social media tools and websites are already searching information about products, services, or brands that fulfilling their needs (Holliman & Rowley, 2014).

Digital content marketing as a main part of digital marketing is relatively a new marketing approach with significant practitioner attention but underdeveloped academic research, so there is not a unified definition about it, yet (Hollebeek, 2019).

According to Koiso-Kasntilla (2004), digital content marketing has been defined as a process in which products, services, and their delivery are digital, it is a marketing of digital content as commodity. The essential nature of this digital content is information.

Both, Wang et al. (2017) and Hollebeek (2019), agree that encouraging customer engagement, gaining customer trust, and building long-term relationships with them, require developing competitive digital content marketing tools and strategies to generate and deliver an authentic, attractive, timely and valuable content to target customers through different and innovative technological platforms.

Companies which develop unique digital content strategy make customers to deal in different way. In most cases, the customers who are well informed and satisfied by the content play important role in increasing the sales level of the company. The content is a spirit of digital content marketing and it is related to the publishing world where words, videos or pictures are interested enough to attract customers to brand sites (Holliman & Rowley, 2014).

Due to the rapid growth of new media, digital marketers are introducing their content by variety of technological means. Company establishes its content and provides it to the target audience by using different social media sites, platforms, and apps (Ahmed et al., 2019).

Nowadays, social media become essential for connecting people all over the world and make their communication easier. Social media changed not just interaction and communication between individuals, but also facilitated two-ways communication between the company and customers.

Compared with traditional marketing ways, social media shift the customers from being passive members in their relationship with the brand to become active members and share their interest, needs, and feedback (Kljucanin et al, 2013).

Digital competition is obviously increasing through social media. The evidence is number of users of social media platforms that is rising every minute. The first platform was developed in 2002 named Friendster but it could not stay long. In 2004, Facebook was created, and after two years Twitter, then in 2010 Instagram and so on. Social sharing that happens on those different platforms can be quite impactful for a brand and allows brand to extend its reach.

Social media is a group of platforms based on Web 2.0 that enable users to content and share it. Brands use different social media platforms to increase customer awareness about company and its personality as well as the products and services it produces (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Tritama & Tarigan, 2016; Mosley, 2019).

Whenever the business starts, the first aim is achieving success in that business. Social media as the best opportunity available with unlimited possibilities to promote company's products, and to communicate with a prospective customer, has immense impact on brand awareness which on its side is very important in the purchasing process of a customer (Arora & Sharma, 2013).

Social media is recognized as the most influential engine in the marketing world. Every brand is involved on one or more of social media platforms. Smart companies use this incredible medium resource as a competitive advantage that enable them to capture customers, communicate with them, and engaged them and at the same time achieving company's goals (Scott, 2010; Menezes, 2013).

Social sites are a playground for engaging customers with one another, and a great place which enables company to connect and maintain relationships with current or potential customers at every stage of their journey with the company (Mosley, 2019).

According to Vivek et al (2012), customer engagement is divided in two main elements, one is focusing on experiences and feelings of customers, and the other is concentrated more on participation and actions of customers, both inside and outside exchange process.

In the business competitive environment, many companies recognize the importance of customer engagement in converting the customers into real partners and more active participants who, by their experience, can contribute to companies' success. Customer engagement is an effective strategy for increasing company's overall performance which will automatically increase sales and generate high profits. Companies can obtain a superior competitive advantage through customer engagement (Greve, 2014; Cuillierier, 2016).

Recently, not only company's attention to customers and their behaviors is apparent and visible, but customers also are interested and more aware of brand and company's offered services. Customer engagement is a process that is not just about

selling, it is also about taking the audience on a journey and making a positive relationship with them which increase their awareness about the brand. Through customer engagement, the company can show the customers its interest in their preferences and needs and also a willingness for finding the best solutions for their complains. Many social media marketers are going to say the magic numbers for the level of engagement are based on likes, shares, and feedback (Kuvykaite & Piligrimiene, 2014).

Customer engagement is a channel which company builds with current or predicted customers in order to discover more about their needs, interests, experiences, and to reap the full benefit from their feedback, ratings, reviews, and comments about products and services company provides. Customer engagement can be improved by social media tools which allow sharing a content as a more significant driver of engagement and building a better brand-consumer relationship. Social media gains its power from sharing a content, nowadays a digital content as a new marketing approach, and it is mainly described by the content trials-ratings, feedbacks, reviews, and comments. Digital content marketing through social media and customer engagement as superior combination, help company to increase brand awareness of the customers about it.

Brand awareness is not just about whether the customer knows the name of a brand, but it also manifests the length of the brand presence in the customer's mind, and how well the customer is informed about the quality that makes the brand unique. Brands with good brand awareness are more demanded and preferred in the decision-making process. Every company needs to have strategy in place to create brand awareness that helps in consistently expanding of the brand (Rossister & Percy, 1987; ElAydi, 2018).

Brand awareness reflects the customer's capacity to recognize or to recall a particular brand, and to the extent to which customers precisely match the brand with given product categories or services. It is a power of a brand 'node or trace in memory'. Brand awareness is determined by ability of audience to link the brand to brand name, logo, or symbol, regardless of buying decision of that product or service or not (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 2003).

B. Starbucks Experience

Globally, Starbucks is a one of the most recognizable and the number one coffee retail brand. It is a multinational brand with unique product formulation. Starbucks has differentiated from its competitors with the reach aroma, great taste and quality of its coffee which resulted in building brand image, high recognition, reputation, popularity, and customer loyalty. Starbucks is involved in its coffee path beginning from the selection, collecting, roasting, and blending of the coffee beans, to distribution and innovative service delivery. It has established a comprehensive set of “brand building blocks”, created much credibility and emotionality, and succeed to be accepted as the “Chief protagonist of the coffee culture” (Keller, 2003) .

Michelli (2007), highlighted five principles that Starbucks uses and help the company by “turning ordinary into extraordinary” to achieve high level of success and become globally recognizable brand in coffee industry. These five principles are: “Make it Your Own”, “Everything Matters”, “Surprise and Delight”, “Embrace Criticism”, and “Leave Your Mark”.

Principle 1 “Make it Your Own” focuses on full engagement of every employee and giving chance to their individual talents that lead to an extraordinary experience, both for the employees and customers. On this way employees will be happier and more satisfied, and customer more loyal which all together add value to the brand and boost sales. The basis of this principle is the “Five Ways of Being” that includes being welcoming, genuine, considerate, knowledgeable, and being involved.

Second principle “Everything Matters” related to attention to all business' details because it makes the name of the business synonymous with quality. Starbucks, by following this principle ensures producing and delivering products and services with consistent quality that reduces the chance of customer dissatisfaction and builds superior client experience.

Principle 3 “Surprise and Delight”, at Starbucks is seen in their efforts to delight not only customers, but employees too, which motivate employees to please and surprise their customers on daily basis.

At Starbucks, principle 4 “Embrace Criticism” has been done in different ways. Their leaders face the criticism seriously and use it as feedback about actions or services that don't satisfy their customers' needs, and work toward finding the best

solutions. This approach helps Starbucks to be a socially conscious company and increases the loyalty of their customers.

Social responsibility, protecting the environment and global conscience are very important in success of every business. Customers are more loyal to brands that are environment-friendly (Pratap, 2019), and Starbucks, by following the principle 5 “Leave Your Mark” shifts from “a business that sells a product, to a business that makes a difference”, and magnetize more customers by its global awareness and improvement (Michelli, 2007).

Starbucks invests heavily in its own marketing strategy and incorporate different social media platforms in its active digital marketing. It understands its customers, knows what exactly they are looking for, informs its customers about new corporate policies, awards, and creates challenges to get them more engaged and more loyal. The organization effectively uses video, photography, and excellent writing, mix humor, fabulous graphic design, and inventive campaigns to attract customers interest and share company’s culture (Wilson, 2016).

Starbucks is very successful in creating a digitally enhanced experience through use of digital capabilities as integral part of overall company’s strategy in communication with its customers “in only the way that digital can and only the way that Starbucks can”. With an incredible number of fans on Facebook and Twitter, Starbucks has a leading presence in social media. It used social media platforms to fuel customer-driven innovation and suggestions (Welch & Buvat, 2013).

C. Problem Statement

Today's digital environment creates new challenges in front of global companies as Starbucks who are competing for a stable position in the marketplace.

In recent times, digital content marketing has obviously become a phenomenal marketing strategy used by companies to achieve their different goals. Among these goals is building brand awareness and working on its improvement as brand awareness with its functions is an important contributor in overall business success. Although there is increased interest from marketers, academics, and researchers in the concept of digital content marketing as a powerful marketing strategy, it remains not enough explored field.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of digital content marketing on brand awareness and also to determine the significance of two mediators, social media and customer engagement in the relationship between digital content marketing and brand awareness.

D. Importance of the Research

Nowadays, companies face a big competition trying to attract a huge number of customers and secure a stable position in the marketplace. Therefore, every company should work on finding a unique, fast, effective, and efficient ways to achieve this aim. The prevalence of digital content marketing and its presence in everywhere of our daily lives increased the interest in more deeply understanding and exploring the potentials of digital content marketing in creating and strengthening the branding of the company. Particularly, this research aims to explore and get more knowledge about the importance of digital content marketing in increasing brand awareness. The study also works on testing the mediating role of social media and customer engagement in the effect that digital content marketing has on brand awareness.

E. Organization of the Research

The research is dividing into four main chapters. Following this introductory chapter that includes general introduction about the study, background, problem statement, and objective of the study, and also describes the Starbucks experience, chapter two contains a literature review about each of the variables, identifies digital content marketing, social media and some of its programs, customer engagement, and brand awareness. It reviews a few previous studies related to the topic, too.

Chapter three is focusing more on quantitative research methodology, the chapter also includes research design, main variables, research hypothesis and questions, the statistical tools that research depends on in analyzing data collected. The chapter presents a discussing about the relationships between variables, too.

Finally, chapter four that is the last chapter represents the conclusion, recommendations for further research, and the main limitations that faced the researcher during the study and completing the thesis.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A terminology of the study's concepts and background for each of them is presented in this chapter. It also discusses the previous studies related the topic and its variables.

A. Terminology

The origin of word content is from Classical Latin (contentus) which means (satisfied). In business language, content can be defined as picture, text, video or a combination of them which delivers a company message aimed to attract and satisfy customers more effectively and efficiently.

Awareness simply means knowledge of something based on previous information and experience so, brand awareness is knowledge of a brand that customer can recall or recognize among its competitors in the same industry by its name, logo or symbol.

Customer engagement can be defined as meaningful connection between customers and company which increase the willingness of customers to interact and co-operate with brand on brand's different platforms, and by sharing their experiences, thoughts, and ideas to participate in brand promotion.

Social media, a virtual planet with its different platforms, sites, and programs enable individuals and companies to communicate and share content, ideas, feedbacks, and opinions.

Researcher describes digital content marketing as modern century term with big importance for every business because of it's incredible opportunities to reach customers' mind by offering them unique, valuable, and interesting content about company, its product and services, and distributed it though different digital means.

B. Digital Content Marketing

“Content marketing is not a noun but a verb, and a very active verb, with ongoing action. You do not just do it, and then stop. You do it and keep doing it. And on and on” (Neil Patel, 2020).

Using the content as a key marketing instrument is obvious after the remarkable development in digital communication, which led to the appearance of the term digital content marketing as a modern marketing strategy for generating, distributing and managing of the content (Rancati & Gordini, 2014).

“What the customer gets out” is main responsibility of digital content marketing which must focus on having honest desire for adding value to customer’s life in some relevant way, and not slip back to “what the producer out on” mode (Rowley, 2008; Hollebeck & Macky, 2019).

Through unique and attractive content marketing, the brand or company can get a powerful chance for going beyond complains and difficulties with their audience. A strong content will increase the base of current customers who will have willingness to share that content and attract new customers. Qualitative content is a key for putting the company or brand in equal footing with its competitors (Kakkar, 2017).

There is evident lack of literature on digital content marketing, it is a new, emerging phenomenon that needs further extensively research. The conceptualizations and definitions of digital content marketing differ from each other as a result of different authors’ point of view and backgrounds.

Koiso-Kanttila (2004), has proposed the digital content as a commodity and discipline of digital content marketing, as a strategy where the products and their distribution are digital. The difference of this digital content is due to the specific nature of its basic element, the information (Rowley, 2008). Koiso-Kanttila presents recombination, accessibility, navigation, interaction, speed as other distinctive characteristics, all of them related to the informational nature of digital content that the companies are using in achieving success for its business.

According Rowley (2008), the main elements of digital content marketing are “bit-based objects” or digital content with its underlying characteristics delivered

through online channels. They are responsible for profitably identifying, anticipating, and satisfying customer requirements, and understanding the nature of the marketed product, that offers new opportunities for management and marketing strategies.

Holliman and Rowley (2014), give in some way different definition of digital content marketing as an inbound marketing approach and highlight the key characteristics of the content. According to them meaningful, persuasive, and relevant content created, distributed, and shared at consistent basis, attract customers at the right time of their buying cycle, and highly engage them in brand and trust building, and business goal achieving.

Pulizzi (2014), the founder of Content Marketing Institute, in his formal definition describes content marketing as the marketing and business process for attracting, acquiring, retaining and engaging a clearly determined and comprehended target customers audience by continually creating and giving them high-quality, relevant, valuable, and compelling content, that can change or promote a consumer's behavior and drive profitable customer action. By creating and delivering interesting information the audience is seeking out, and passionate about, business attracts customers' attention.

Carranza (2017), considering a content marketing “the heart of marketing” in today's digital environment, defines it as a strategic marketing technique related to creation and delivery of helpful, relevant, innovative, inspirational, and permanent content aimed in attracting new customers and retaining the existing once which contributes in building brand awareness and enhancing loyalty and profitability.

Hollebeek (2019), similarly conceptualizes digital content marketing as the process of creation and distribution of beneficial and rewarding content to existing and potential customers through different online channels. It is a narrative form of marketing, all about storytelling which uses a variety of media formats including the company website, virtual communities, blogs, text, audio, video, social media, infographics, all of them to tell brand or company's story (Kakkar, 2017; Neil Patel, 2020).

Although the definitions of digital content marketing may differ from each other, rules, strategies, and principles are very similar.

Customers are mainly interested in their needs and wants not in brands,

products or services, so basically, digital content marketing focuses on interests, needs, questions, and preferences of target audience, increasing customers' appreciation of the brand or firm, building and maintaining customer engagement, trust, and relationships which all together indirectly lead to long-term sales. Content marketing is "the art of communicating" with current and prospect customers which by meaningful two-way conversation uncovers and suggests solutions for their problems and needs (Swieczak, 2012; Pulizzi, 2014). Content marketing goes beyond just the promotion of company's products and services without selling (Pulizzi, 2014; CMH, 2015). In this point digital content marketing is different from traditional advertising which directly persuade consumers to purchase (Hollebeek, 2019). The key to success in all these activities is good content, "not just any content, great content" (Pulizzi & Barrett, 2009). Content marketing is not push marketing, it is a pull strategy where high-quality and targeted content acts as a magnet for customers who already seek out information, advice or brand that satisfy their wants (Halligan & Shah, 2010; Bezovski, 2015). By developing and delivering consistent, interesting, valuable and engaging content presented on a company's website or other available digital channels with mission of communicating to a target audience, content marketing attracts and acquires new customers, and retains existing ones who ultimately reward brand or company with their attention and loyalty (Swieczak, 2012; Pulizzi, 2014).

Digital content marketing is simple terminology but a complex process that requires a long-term strategy. It is a huge challenge and big opportunity that allows companies to communicate with their customers as never before. To take advantage of this opportunity, every company must apply very specific and strategic steps (Pulizzi & Barrett, 2009; CMH, 2015). Pulizzi and Barrett suggest B.E.S.T. (behavioral-essential-strategic-targeted) formula for creating a successful content marketing strategy, where behavioral is associated to the purpose when communicating something with customers; essential is related to the information that customers really need; strategic explains that efforts of content marketing must be an comprehensive part of a business strategy; and targeted is about precisely targeting the content to the customers.

The first step of digital content marketing strategy is identifying and clarifying the objectives or goals company tries to achieve. In this step, the SMART

criteria help company to set the concrete goals (specific-measurable-attainable-relevant-time based). Of course, the ultimate goal is growing of the business, and almost always the first thing that is taken in consideration is increasing of brand awareness, because simply if people don't know about company or its products and services, they will not buy from it. There is no pursuit more powerful than content marketing in increasing brand awareness (Carranza, 2017). Content marketing spreads brand message and strengthen brand identity and brand image, it builds a reputation and health of a brand, and it is also remarkable in putting the brand in the customer's consideration set (Pulizzi, 2014; Kakkar, 2017; Patel, 2020). Determining and setting the goals, whether they are increasing brand awareness or reinforcement, lead generation, customer engagement, customer retention, website traffic, customer loyalty or higher sales, are very important for selecting the type of content that will best suit company's end goal (CMH, 2015; Lee Judge, 2020).

The next step is identifying and detailed description of target audience, collecting information about their interests, needs, preferences, expectations etc. Defining the target group is according to some criteria: demographics (age, gender, education, social status, location...), psychographic (lifestyle, personality characteristics, habits, personal goals...), professional roles, information sources, buying habits and so on (CMH, 2015; Lee Judge, 2020). Digital content marketing recognizes customers' needs by focusing on customers' conception values and experiences that are base of their decision-making process, and at the same time reflects the company's effort to optimize consumer-perceived value in order to ensure and maintain profit (Rowley, 2008; Pulizzi, 2014). Content marketing is the art of understanding completely what information customers seek for and sharing the useful information to them in appropriate way (Pullizi & Barrett, 2009). Analyzing and understanding of potential target audience is important for business companies that are operating through digital channels because it determines the kind of content organizations need to create for attracting new customers and keeping the existing once, and at the same time this strategy leads to achieving company's goals.

In this step of content creating, it is essential to take in consideration that the content is for the customers, not for the brand or company, they are willing to learn, hear about, watch or try (Swieczak, 2012). Company that wants to reach its customers through digital content marketing must produce new, original, fact-driven

content that is interesting, exciting, distinctive, amazing, covers broader issues, and provides all valuable information for target audience. Incorporating “timing” is substantial too, because for the published message, sometimes “when” can be more important than “what” and “how”. Relevancy and continually optimizing of the content are other contributors in attracting customers, and boosting their engagement (CMH, 2015; Depino, 2017; Kellam, 2019; Dinesh, 2020). Customers want to see content regularly, so consistency of the content is also important attribute. Delivering content inconsistently will damage customers’ perception of the brand (Pulizzi & Barrett, 2009; Depino, 2017).

Pulizzi (2014), argues that in content marketing journey there are three stages: content aware, thought leader, and storyteller. Content aware stage includes creating and using lots of worthy and helpful content that meets the demand of target audience, in order to drive awareness of brand or company. Next stage, thought leader, is related to winning stable and trusted brand position that helps business to earn leadership in the industry category. Final stage, storyteller targets those who are not customers, increases their interest and excitement, and engages them with the brand. Simply, right content is warranty of success. It is obviously that the content companies create is limited only by their ideas, so marketer must learn to think like a publisher if he/she wants to take advantage of content marketing through digital channels. Companies shift toward publishing instead of advertising and position themselves not as “buy me!” banners, but as trusted advisors who will “be there” when customers are researching and gathering information about company’s products or services (Pulizzi & Barrett, 2009; Lieb, 2012; CMH, 2015).

After creating great, educational, entertaining, informative, and compelling content, it’s a time for distribution and dissemination of the content to its target audience through digital channels as websites, social media networks, blogs, newsletters, video-sharing sites, and more. If customers “don’t see/hear/watch/listen to it, it won’t make a sound” (Lieb, 2012). Because of its incredible power in promoting the content, social media is crucial and heavily involved in digital content marketing, “it is the fuel to set content on fire” (Pulizzi, 2014).

1. Global Content Strategy

Multinational and global companies should take into consideration three fundamental elements in their global content strategy, people, company system, and its processes and also the following approaches when they create content and use digital content marketing:

1. **Localization:** Localized content as more effective, creative, and out of box thinking, suitable to customer's culture, values, and provided to target audience at right time, distinguishes the brand from its competitors, and bring company more profit while working outside of home country.
2. **Personalization:** Customer expects to be patronized both as individual, and at the same time, as a part of a community. He/she does not prefer to be treated as stranger in the group. The growth of digital technology enables content marketer to be more capable in creating personalized content that is relevant for each customer, regardless the changes in his/her behavior. The social media connection enables satisfied customer to share that relevant and up-to-date content with his/her community, despite of location. So, building a valuable base of customers through personalized content can be the bridge for attracting new and more audiences.
3. **Emotions:** Being viral is another indicator of success. By providing more attractive content, focused on the main topic at the same time, brand gives visitors chance to stick around, spending more time on the company's website that consequently has a positive impact on the company's search engine optimization (SEO). Content marketing is more fixable when dealing with the psychology of customers in influencing their decision-making process. When company guides its customers with helpfulness, kindness, and availability, they are much more likely to be intensively attracted to company. The company's content can touch customer's emotions in two steps. First step is by spreading a positive message which is naturally preferred, and more viral than negative one, and second step is by creating message that emotionally fascinates the customer, long enough to the level that makes him/her eager to take action by sharing and promoting the value proposition posited by content marketer (CMH, 2015; Wong An Kee &

Yazanifard, 2015; Kakkar, 2017; Smith, 2019).

4. Diversification of approach: Fresh content is a secret behind keeping customers familiar with the brand. The company should continually innovate its content means to position the brand at the top of the mind of customer, comparing with other competitors in the same industry. Hiring the right person in the right place, talented for creating unique, up-to date content that includes company's story, style, voice, layout, colors by using text, video, pictures, is another successful method in marketing, and leads to desirable, profitable results (Wong An Kee & Yazanifard, 2015; Depino, 2017; Kakkar, 2017; Smith, 2019).
5. Co-creation and trust: In today's busy digital marketplace, communication and co-creation are new strategies for building the brand and surviving in competitive environment. Connecting with customers is an effective way for better understanding their needs and interests and improving performance by optimizing content after listening to their feedback. Communicating is a new way for establishing long-term customers, increasing their trust, minimizing risk, and content exploration. Customers who are intensively interested are usually the most motivated, more knowledgeable comparing with other customers, and more likely to be a part of co-creation process, especially when brand recognizes and respects their expertise. Potential customers are much more likely to learn, which results in change of their thoughts and actions, and brings more desirable benefits for the company (CMH, 2015; Wong An Kee & Yazanifard, 2015; Kakkar, 2017; Smith, 2019).
6. Ethics and honesty: Customers usually prefer pull marketing strategy instead of push marketing, they do not like to be forced to read or watch content. To attract customers' attention, it is not enough to try trick their minds by depending on paid or owned media, but company should continually provide innovative, ethical, honest, and transparent content, and let customers be free in their choosing decisions. On this way, content marketing wins loyal customers (Wong An Kee & Yazanifard, 2015; Kakkar, 2017; Smith, 2019).

A continually use of appropriate content “runs like a thread through all marketing activities” (CMH, 2015).

To deeply reach its customers, brand should put them in front of its eyes all the time, listen to them, concentrates on their words, points, questions, on their needs, interests, and expectations. The brand must take advantage of its experience in the market and using the benefits of customer's feedback to change its content marketing strategy to keep a fruitful, and long-lasting relationship with its customers.

Digital content marketing is a modern competitive environment full of challenges how to be noticed, to be unique, to be impressive, to “break through clutter”, to win more and more customers, and become first option for target audience even when new competitors enter the industry trying to snatch company's existing customers. “Content marketing is no longer nice-to-have. It's a must-have” (Lieb, 2012).

C. Social Media

Social media: “A good way to think about social media is that all of this is actually just about being human beings” (Mayfield, 2008).

“Be human, be honest, be transparent, be you!” (Gunelius, 2011).

Social media is a phenomenon, a power horse for marketing world due to the widespread that creates new era for companies and brands in the way of dealing with their customers. Many companies ensure the power and significance of social media as a leader tool in improving brand image (Le, 2013).

Social media is dominant medium that allow companies to create competitive digital presence and optimal environment for monetizing relationships with target customers. Successful brands understood the use of this phenomenal resource as a potential advantage for delivering their marketing communications, and achieving their goals (Scott, 2010; Menezes, 2013).

Mayfield (2008), arguing that among other features that characterize social media is the indistinct definitions, continuous improvement, spreading, and innovation, explains that social media is a collection of different online media platforms that is described with collaboration, openness, communication, and connectedness. It is seen as a tool for two-way communication that motivates contributions, participations, feedback, finding and sharing information and inspiration, forming communities, faster than ever before. For Mayfield, social media

is revolution with dizzying speed that emerge new ideas, business models, and technologies.

Social media is about sharing and arriving thoughts and experiences of mutual interest through natural, genuine conversation between people, that enable users to make a better choice (Evans, 2008).

Safko and Brake (2009), explain social media as broad range of players, rules, activities, and practices that enable conversation, maintain relationships and interactions between individuals or groups of people, and the ways through which these conversations can be prompted, promoted, and monetized. According to Safko and Brake, conversational media facilitate sharing of ideas, thoughts, experiences, and allow content developers generating and exchanging their content easily by using different forms.

For Scott (2010), social media is an online way that allow people to transmit their ideas, content, thoughts, and relationships in form of words, pictures, videos, or audio. It is different from mainstream media in that everyone can generate his own content and share it with other peers through social media channels. Instead of giving generic information, social media allows organizations to tell authentic stories that catch customers' attention and deliver information at the moment customers need it.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), provide formal clarification of the term social media as a group of Web-based tools and applications in close relation with Web 2.0 technologies and inventions that enable creating and transmitting user generating content, explaining a difference between social media and two related concepts mentioned in their definition, Web 2.0 and user-generated content. Social media depends on technological foundations of Web 2.0. They are not exactly synonymous, but are close related and come together to enable users to interact with one another, generate their own content, and share it with other users of social media (Safko & Brake, 2009; Khan & Jan, 2015). Web 2.0 is an ideological and technological platform whereby users participate and collaborate in creating and modifying the content and applications. The term user-generated content usually describes sum of different kinds of content that are generated and communicated by the users (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

In the "Dictionary of Media and Communication" by Chandler and Munday

(2011), social media is described as a broad, virtual category that facilitate interactions, communications, and sharing content between users regardless they know each other or not, and regardless their geographically presence.

McCay-Peet and Quan-Haase (2017), illustrate social media as a Web- based set of tools that enable people and organizations to establish and publish their own and easily accessible content, share it, vote or modify it, and recommend to their friends, communities, or companies.

Developing, positioning, and perfecting products and services requires good marketing, it is social media that enables the new way of thinking and approach (Safko & Brake, 2009). Development of social media with its interactive nature has special role in changing the business environment and traditional means of marketing. Social media with its platforms enable organizations to be “available everywhere”, to reach customers easily, connect with them, and build long term two-way relationship. It is all about participating, sharing, collaborating, rather than advertising and selling (Gordhamer, 2009; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Social media consist of varies technologies and tools that help organizations to interact instantly and directly with their existing and potential customers and reach them in places they are congregating in the moment (Scott, 2010). By tapping on social technologies, companies can generate wealthy insights into their products and services, create precisely targeted messages and offers, and improve productivity (Chui et al., 2012). Social media modern platforms are not just about sharing information, but also establishing conversations among companies and customers, involving customers in content creating and value addition. Through these platforms customers can express themselves openly, collaborate by identifying and understanding problems and developing solutions for them, and communicate their opinions to a large audience. In this way, customers become advocates and through their interactions can influence and change purchase decisions of others. By converting the current and potential customers into collaborators, company creates the optimal environment for increasing its success and profits (Safko & Brake, 2009; Sashi, 2012).

Social media from its side gives companies access to customers’ feedback enabling company to act according customers’ wishes (Alfreðsdóttir & Steinþórsson,

2018). Even when there is a negative comment, social media give the company opportunity to react and reply quickly and honestly to turn around negative situation (Scott, 2010). By building, maintaining, and measuring a feedback loop, companies can be more aware of how to manage conversations on social media that are meaningful to them. For marketers this is the most beneficial advantage of social media (Evans, 2008).

In a business context, engagement with customers, employees, and other stakeholders with social media is very important for achieving a desired action or outcome. Companies must transform their structures from hierarchical to more open, and create a culture of trust (Chui et al., 2012).

Safko and Brake (2009), argue that social media strategy of any company is supported by four primary categories for internal or external audience engagement and these are: communication, collaboration, education, and entertainment, and they give some rules for using social media by organizations. The rules highlight the communications as a base of social media. It is challengeable for companies to understand that the communications cannot be controlled but can be influenced in the way that will economically benefit the organization.

Evans (2008), similarly discusses this influence pointing that marketers should not use social media as a resource for controlling their audience. Companies who want to “influence the crowd” can do this by paying attention, listening, and responding to customers’ conversations, and then influencing these conversations through social media. Results will be meaningful, and conversations continuously improved only when this influence is transparent, genuine participation. Using of social media enable the company to reveal more transparency, and forge new, more genuine, authentic, and direct relationship with customers (Gordhamer, 2009).

In traditional marketing, creating, and distributing of content was limited to the media. With advent of digital technologies, this has changed, people can create their own contents in a form of words, images, videos, audios, can contribute and participate (Mayfield, 2008). Social media is evaluated mostly depending on content-ratings, feedback, comments, and opinions of customers (Evans, 2008). People go to the web looking for content, so marketers, social media experts and consultants have to work on building unique social media strategy to proactively engaged with target

audience. Company should create a unique content that is consistent with customers' needs and motivations, and at the same time, relevant, updated content about company's product and services. After that, they should make customers willing to share that content by themselves. In this way the company can attain to customer's hearts and minds, increase their brand awareness, credibility, and loyalty which in turn leads to high profitability for the company (Coon, 2010; Taylor, Levin & Strutton, 2011; Erdogmus & Cicek, 2012).

Gunelius (2011), also argues that the secret behind successful usage of social media is in generating variable content, building enduring relationships with customers, and creating an opportunity for their active participation. In this way companies can attract and engage more customers and convert them in brand advocates. This is effective and efficient way for improving brand awareness and customer's loyalty and become more recognizable company in the market. User-generated content and its promotion is considered more prosperous as it is "created for the people by the people, or by the users for the users" (Trackeray, et al., 2009).

Customer engagement on different social media can enhance tangible value for organizations. The use of social media is "less about selling and more about engagement". Through such engagement people are more motivated for doing business with company that leads to product development, impact on brand awareness and brand selection. Because of this, organizations must encourage interaction with their customers through social media platforms (Gordhamer, 2009; Alfreðsdóttir & Steinþórsson, 2018). What is more remarkable is that social media give organizations opportunities to engage with customers at relatively low cost and high level of efficacy that is advantageous for small, medium, or large organizations. Although it may be difficult especially for big and multinational organization to coordinate a great variety of content, putting it all together, and showing unified personality on a corporate site can bring a big benefit for organizations (Scott, 2010; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Taking in consideration that social media is a very effective, aggressive, and fast-moving domain, it is very important for organization to follow some steps when it uses social media for marketing purpose. First of all, organization has to find its best audience, get involved them, and learn what they expect. Then, it must spend time to create a great, interesting content that is authentic and transparent, and offer

something extra or exclusive, and share it. The more people know it, trust it, link to it and share it, the more opportunities for organization to build its brand and business, and achieve desirable goals (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

1. Social Media Tools

Social media is in a rapid and continuous development, it is a huge world of platforms available and because of this, it is difficult to present and analyze all. “With social media every rule seems to have an exception” (Mayfield, 2008). Also, we notice that all the time, new sites appear and other disappear. This huge number of social media tools is a reason behind difficulty of their categorization and descriptions. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), divided social media tools based on two key elements, first on the worthiness of the medium and the extent of its social presence, and second on the degree of “self-disclosure” and the type of “self-presentation” it facilitates.

Basically, social media as a superset includes: social networking, microblogging, photo, video, audio sharing, blogs, wikis, postcards and many, many more (Mayfield, 2008; Safko & Brake, 2009; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Scott, 2010; Gunelius, 2011).

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) give useful advices for choosing the right medium of social media because organization cannot participate in all of them. According them, the right medium can be chose depending on the audience organization aims to capture, and on message or information it aims to share; the basic idea behind social media is sharing, participating, not selling; if organization intends to utilize more social media applications, it is essential to secure that all used social media platforms in the line with each other; incorporation that traditional media is key; access for all employees. To achieve more success by using social media is very important for company to communicate through customers’ chosen means, not company’s (Gordhamer, 2009).

Facebook is social media platform, created by Mark Zuckerberg and his Harvard College colleagues in 2004, as a social medium for students, and quickly became available and popular among public. Facebook has ability to attract both people and businesses, although it was started out to keep in touch or reconnect with friends. Facebook became popular marketing choice and powerful tool for promoting

a new product or service and subsequently increasing brand awareness. Working with numerous compatible applications, Facebook can also be used as a method of intercompany communications, and as a medium for providing updates between organizations and departments. After registering for a free Facebook account, company can create its own business page that is different from a profile or a group page. This page allows business to categorize itself properly, shares information, news, photos, events, special sales, and builds personal relationships with customers. Facebook enables content creation and distribution and allows an interactive space where brands can engage with their customers in real-time two-way conversations. Facebook provides these business pages with advertising and promotion options that give a business an edge on the competition.

Twitter is the most popular microblogging platform that allow users to exchange short (140 characters or less) instant messages called "tweets". Twitter was created by Jack Dorcsey, Eran Williams, Biz Stone and Noah Glass in March 2006. Biz Stone described it as a short messaging service, at a simplest level, but a communication utility. So, on one hand, you use it to just communicate, on the other hand, you look through it to find out what is going on. Twitter marketing strategy is like any other social media strategy-creating, publishing, and distributing content in order to attract new followers, boost conversations, and grow brand recognition by taking advantage of unique and creative ways to reach a target audience.

Instagram is another modern and powerful social media platform with nearly billion users, it was designed by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger and started in October 2010, as a free phone application. Instagram through its different features allows its followers to create, publish, added, and share their visual content, mainly through photos and videos. Because of its image-oriented characteristics, its preferred platform for many youth users who express themselves with real experiences. Instagram is also a phenomenal tool for business marketing because through sharing photos, videos, and stories, it allows company to extent its presence in the market, promote its visibility and creativity, generate greater customer engagement, drive interest and trust of customers, and more easily achieve brand awareness and loyalty (Systrom & Kreger, 2010).

Pinterest was founded by Ben Silbermann, Paul Sciarra and Evan Sharp and launched in March 2010 and quickly becomes one of the most popular and the

fastest-growing social media platform with 57% growth by overall member growth. Pinterest is a highly visual medium that allows users to share images and colorful infographics associated with projects, products, and services, with almost endless list of included categories and possibilities. His cofounder, Paul Sciarra described Pinterest as a “catalog of ideas” which empowers its users “to go out and do that thing” (Rouse, 2016). Pinterest helps business to start their own pages that include various data, topics, and information, aimed at promoting them online. Comparing with other social media platforms, Pinterest is considered as a more effective tool for sales advertisement.

Choosing the right social media platforms, maintaining and managing correctly their presence can be a very effective marketing tool for organization to achieve its main goal which means to be noticed among the various offerings, and even more, to be customers’ first choice (Eisman, Heinonen & Nguyen, 2016).

D. Customer Engagement

In today’s dynamic, competitive, and interactive environment, with almost endless product choices, media channels and variety of advertising strategies, customer engagement is crucial in developing brand awareness. With new communication technologies, the customers became more involved, knowledgeable and active in every step of decision-making process (Prahald & Ramaswamy, 2004).

Customer engagement is more than selling, it is about creating a meaningful, emotional connection and relationship with customers that lead to brand recognition, foster and heighten brand awareness and loyalty. Companies who have highly engaged customers perhaps found a way to create that positive connection with their audience by closer understanding and anticipating customers’ needs and expectations and fulfilling them more effectively. Keeping customers engaged will bring a sense of familiarity with the brand. The deeper the connection, the more likely it is that customer will continue spending on the brand and promoting the brand. Customer engagement transforms customers into empowered, effective unofficial advocates who can do more to promote and recommend the brand by caring company's message to other individuals through sharing their experiences, thoughts and ideas via positive word-of mouth, social media, blogs, and comments on web sites. Engaged customers by influencing others drive innovation, advertising and future

sales add beneficial changes for the company because “customers are more likely to trust another customer than a brand” (Brown et al., 2007). A strong customer engagement is far more than influence on awareness, transactions, purchase, satisfaction, retention, and loyalty, it can also lead to long-term competitive advantages (Bowden, 2009; Verhoef et al., 2010; Evans & McKee, 2010; Sashi, 2012; Vivek, 2012).

During the last two decades, customer engagement received significant attention from academics, managers, and consultants worldwide, and has been explained in different marketing and science disciplines (Ilic, 2008; Van Doorn et al., 2010; Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011). The increased interest of practitioners in customer engagement and it is closely related to continued spread of digital communication technologies and tools, especially social media and its ability to build strong emotional relationships between brands and customers and make them part of creating a valuable content (Sashi, 2012).

Communications in social media between brand and consumers, consumer-to-consumer, and consumer and brand (feedback), result in expanding of brand awareness and brand image, and cause long-lasting feelings to the brand (Zailskaite-Jakste & Kuvykaite, 2012). For example, big companies like Starbucks “has developed an incredible brand presence” by “meaningful customer engagement via social media” (Belicove, 2010). One of their activities is "my Starbucks idea" that is presented as a suggestion box for innovative ideas (Evans & McKee, 2010).

Understanding customer engagement, its mechanics and implications is important for both of academic and practitioners because it affect the main dimensions of marketing.

According to Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004), in traditional system “consumers have little or no role in value creation”, they were “outside the firm” and the process of value creation was inside the company. Customer engagement changed that traditional role of customers. Nowadays, customers “have a real voice”, they are more knowledgeable about company, and its products and services, and contribute to the product development process as co-creators of value. They add value by providing user-generating content which better satisfy their and needs of others. Customers also provide feedback, and even become advocates who by

spreading their experiences and delights recommend the product, brand, or company to others and as such a potentially solid base in bringing competitive advantage to the company (Evans & McKee, 2010; Sashi, 2012) .

Executives argue that in competitive business environment better product or price are not any long the winning differentiator, but it is company's success in building enduring relationship with its customers, employees, and external investors (Voyles, 2007). In business and marketing practice, the term “customer engagement” has gained increasing attention after the research by Gallup Consulting firm which shows that the key for attracting customers is emotion. Customers become and stay loyal to “brands that earn both their rational trust and their deeply felt affection”. Gallup proposed 11-question metric scale of customer engagement that measures rational loyalty containing overall satisfaction, customer's intention to repurchase, and recommend, as well as emotional aspects of customer engagement that include trust in a brand, and its integrity, appreciation, and affection toward the brand (Appelbaum, 2001).

In Economist Intelligence Unit briefing paper, customer engagement is all about building of deeper, more soulful, and intimate long-term relationship between the company and its customers, and to the way for creating customer interaction and participation. Engagement means that customer become more personally interested in the company and subsequently more willing to share their time and power to talk to company and about it (Evans & McKee, 2010). The findings in survey conducted by EIU with executives from around a world demonstrate their beliefs that customer engagement is extremely essential for the business success because more customer engagement impact the business and leads to increased loyalty, revenue, and profits. Executives find that the most important benefit is that engaged customers are source of referrals as they recommend product and services to others. For effective implementation of customer engagement, companies must develop engagement strategy that will help them to better understand customers' expectations and identify how new technologies can help in engaging customers (Voyles, 2007) .

Sashi (2012), expresses customer engagement as a cycle constituted of several stages beginning with connection between customers and company, interaction between them which can lead to better understanding of customers' needs and preferences, customer satisfaction, retention resulted from overall fulfilling

which led to the next step, a commitment, then advocacy of customers who spread their positive experience, and engagement as a last goal to be achieved.

Forrester Consulting's research in 2008, describes customer engagement as purposeful emotional association between customer and company or brand that encourage customer's buying decisions, and their involvement with company over time .

In an interview with HubSpot, CRM expert Paul Greenberg describes customer engagement focusing on developing ongoing and loyal connections between company and customers, "offered by the company, chosen by the customer" (Robinson, 2019).

Despite the recent attention and interest, there are differing conceptualizations and definitions of customer engagement. Many researchers adopt multidimensional perspective rather than unit-dimensional perspective. Although customer engagement represented mostly emotional bonds of customer and company, cognitive and behavioral components are also core elements in many conceptualizations of customer engagement .

Patterson and Yu (2006), argue that customer engagement as a high-quality concept describes the level of customer's physical, emotional, and cognitive 'presence' in their interactions with the organization. It includes four elements: 1) vigor-identifies to the customer's level of willingness, and invested time while communicating with company or other customers; 2)dedication-customers' sense of familiarity of the company and proud of it; 3)absorption- the customer is fully concentrated and happy while interacting with firm or brand; 4)interaction-refers to various two-way interaction and connections. Authors note at customer engagement as a superior prerequisite of customer loyalty .

Bowden (2009), although distinguishes involvement, commitment, and loyalty from customer engagement, gives limited definition of customer engagement as a psychological process with fundamental techniques through which customers stay loyal to company's products or service, thus customer engagement goes beyond customer loyalty. Moreover, it has been proposed that customer engagement is related with understanding the way in which other concept such involvement, affective commitment, trust, and delight, might be used to drive customer loyalty,

and is thus crucial for the growth and success of the company. Bowden also conclude that relationships built between brand and customers and company's strategies that drive loyalty change between the new and old purchasers to a specific brand because there are quite deferent cognitive and affective responses between these two customer segments toward service or brand .

Van Doorn and colleagues (2010), in their definition of customer engagement focus on customer's behavior with brand, derived emotionally word-of mouth activity, suggestions, experiences, and feedback etc. Positive and effective association between brand and its target customers can be considered the basis for building and maintaining strong customer engagement.

Brodie, Hollebeek, Juric, Ilic, (2011), developed general, most encompassing definition of customer engagement, which by “portaiting the relevant dimensions generally rather than specifically” is applicable across a range of situations and works for all brands and services. Their definition includes five fundamental propositions and through analyzing each of them acknowledges cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral components of customer engagement, its dynamic nature, as well as distinguishes the term from other similar constructs such as participation and involvement. But this definition has been criticized for being too broad and “cannot fully capture the specific experimental qualities that underlie engagement” and “content-specific experiences that are relevant to a particular brand” (Malthouse & Calder, 2011) .

According Vivek et al. (2012), customer engagement as the potency of relationships between current or potential customers with organization, initiated by customers and/or organization and based on customers’ unique experiences with organization’s offering and activities, as well as intensity of customers’ participation with the brand. Their definition has also emotional and cognitive elements which include customers’ feelings and experiences, and behavioral and social elements represented in customer’s participation. Authors identified customer’s levels of participation and involvement as antecedents of customer engagement, whereas consequences are increased value perceptions, word-of-mouth activity, customer’s affective commitment, trust and loyalty to the brand and organization.

Poorrezei (2016), after a systematic review of the literature regarding customer engagement developed a clear definition of this multidimensional concept as a behavior related to customer's psychological and cognitive way of understanding the relationships with the brand. Customer engagement model developed by Poorrezei for the digital brand community, represent antecedents and consequences. The antecedents include brand and community identification, the value of information, and community standards where the consequences are customer satisfaction and his loyalty to the brand. In addition, socializing, sharing, advocating, co-development, and learning are five dimensions of customer engagement concept.

Pansari and Kumar (2017), defined customer engagement concept as a different technique of a consumer direct and indirect contribution in value addition to the company. In their definition, the direct contribution of customer is related to purchases that can directly affect firm's performance.

The contributions that indirectly affect firm's performance are discussed separately by Pansari and Kumar: referral value is related to referrals provided by customers, customer influence value is made by discussing the brand on social media, and customer knowledge value involves feedback and suggestions about products or services provided to the firm by customer .

So, there is no universal definition of the term customer engagement. It is a complex concept with a various aspect, but the premise in different definitions remains the same, it is the two-way relationship.

E. Brand Awareness

In brand equity models demonstrated by Aaker (1991), Keller (1993), and Kapferer (2007), brand awareness is one of the major elements, it is a starting point in building brand equity. Brand awareness adds value to the product or service, so developing brand awareness and regularly promoting the positive experience of the brand is essential for brand equity.

Many researchers define brand awareness in a similar way by focusing on customers' ability to properly identify, recognize or name the brand from their memory. According to Keller (2008), the strength of the brand related to its place in

customer's mind.

Brand awareness describes the capacity of customers to recognize or to recall a brand, and the degree to which customers precisely associate it with specific product category or services. It is a power of brand “node or trace in memory”. It is related to the capability of audience member to link the brand to its name, logo, or symbol regardless of his/ her purchase decision (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 2003) .

Rossister and Percy (1987), defines brand awareness as a customer ability to recognize the brand, it's characteristics in order to make a purchase decision.

For Gustafson and Chabot (2007) brand awareness is the impression customers have of a brand, and it is very important for differentiating the brand of similar others, and those of competitors. They define brand awareness to which extent customers are aware of brand's products and services.

Brand awareness is a continuum process starting from simple recognition of the brand to consider the brand as the only option in given product category (Aaker, 1991) .

Aaker (1996), in his awareness pyramid distinguishes four stages of brand awareness beginning with unaware of brand at the bottom, brand recognition level, brand recall level, and top of mind at the top of pyramid.

Brand recognition which is also known as aided recall is a cognitive process that refers to consumers’ ability to differentiate the brand among others in a particular product category. Brand recognition can be important when there are new or niche brands (Aaker, 1991; Aaker, 1996). Brand recognition comes from external stimulant that can be identity, attributes as logo, packaging, colors, slogans, and advertisements (Bhasin, 2019). It means how quickly and correctly a customer prior exposure to the brand as a cue, can recognize and discriminate the brand from other similar brands or in other words customer saw the given brand or heard about it before (Keller, 1993) .

Brand recall or unaided recall is a spontaneous recall of a brand from consumers' mind. The consumer is able to identify the brand without any aid. Brand recall as a second level of brand awareness related to the capacity of customers to correctly recall and generate the brand using the information that is stored in customers' mind whenever its category is mentioned, customers wants satisfied by

that category, or another clue given. Prashar et al. (2012), add that brand recall depends on both, brand personality and brand image, and how well these characteristics match with personality of target customers. Brand recall is more difficult, more sensitive, and meaningful, and it is an evidence that the brand has a stronger position (Aaker, 1993; Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993; Prashar et al., 2012) .

Top of mind is the leader in the brand awareness pyramid, it is a preferred brand that customer recalls without any help, the brand dominates the mind, has a special position, it is a first brand that comes to a customer's mind when he/she is asked about a particular product category. There is a still stronger level, not presented in Aaker's pyramid but suggested by Aaker, and that is a dominant brand which is evident when consumer can only recall one brand in a product category. The presence of dominant brand provides a strong competitive advantage for the company because in purchasing situations it will be the only brand considered by a customer (Aaker, 1996) .

According to Kapferer (2007), every stage of brand awareness has its own purpose and implications. Aided awareness that measures whether the brand has a minimal resonance, helps the brand to get out of anonymity. Aided awareness is basically significant at the purchase decision point. The aim of unaided, spontaneous awareness that "is a measure of saliency, of share of mind when cued by the product", is to place the brand as a priority when it comes to purchase decision point. Top of mind awareness puts the brand in consumers' mind as preferred brand, therefore is important for decision making without selection process (Aaker, 1991; Rosister, 2014).

Building brand awareness is fundamental for building brand strength. Keller (2001) suggests that brand awareness has two key dimensions which are important in building a strong brand, breadth, and depth of brand awareness. Depth considers how fluently and easily brand comes in mind. Brand that customers can recall quickly has a larger depth. Breadth is related to different purchase situations where the brand might come to mind. The most prominent and remarkable contains both of dimensions of brand awareness, depth and breadth (Keller, 2003) .

Brand awareness reflects the level of familiarity consumers have with a company. It isn't just whether the customer knows the products and services, but also

the features, qualities, attributes, and uniqueness of product and service the company offers. Creating a brand awareness is extremely important, it is a measure of the effectiveness of a company's marketing activity, and therefore, can be an indicator of success or failure of brand or company. Through continuous connections of brand value and favorable usage and experience of a brand, lead to building and improving of brand awareness, brand equity and overall confidence of customers (Vukasovic, 2013) .

High brand awareness generates and fosters trust with audience, the more that customers are aware of brand's values, the more likely that they are to trust in their product and services. Trust in return positively impacts loyalty which leads to increase of sales and profits.

Brand awareness affects associations that form the brand image (Keller, 1998), by promoting the features and attributes that associate the brand. Brand awareness is starting stone in building brand attitude and brand image (Keller, 1998; Macdonald & Sharp, 2003) .

Although purchase intention is the ultimate goal of advertising, first of all it is important to raise the salience of a brand and then form some attitudes toward it before purchase is considered (Persy & Rossister, 1992) .

Brand awareness has important role in customers purchase decision. It is a prerequisite in customers decision making. When buying a product for the first-time, brand awareness is interpreted as cognitive simplification, and customers choose the product comparing some attributes such as packaging and price with other products. When making next purchases, brand awareness has a stronger impact if the brand fulfilled the expectations of customer. Customer focuses on product's practical attributes, these attributes become more significant for the customer in the subsequent purchases (Koniewski, 2012). A recognized brand will often be selected from the range of alternatives, the more the customer is aware of particular brand, there is a more chance that he/she will prefer, select, value and choose the brand among a set of different brands.

There is a significant relationship between recall and consideration or evoked set. Consideration set is a short list of brands that fit the relevant criteria and receive serious attention by consumers in their final purchase decision. Generally, if a brand

does not achieve recall it will not be included in customer's consideration set. Brands that customers are already aware of, can be easily added to consideration pool, thus increasing brand awareness increases possibility for the brand to be more preferred and chosen at the point of purchase (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Macdonald & Sharp, 2002).

Brand awareness impacts sales rate, strong brand awareness establishes reputation and encourages customers to buy again and again because customers buy the most familiar and recognizable product.

Brand awareness reduces marketing spend because on average, it is relatively inexpensive to keep existing customers and especially when they are satisfied with the brand. These customers, at the same time provide brand exposure and encouragement to new customers (Aaker, 1991).

Because brand awareness has a number of important functions, the specific of branding and marketing strategies of every company is to sustain brand awareness so, It should be a top priority for marketers (Macdonald & Sharp, 2002). By investing in brand awareness companies can earn the familiarity that will bring their brand to be top of mind for customers and this can lead to sustainable competitive advantage (Aaker, 1991; Jallad, 2019). Carefully built brand awareness, image, trust, and reputations are the best guarantee of future profits and overall success of business (Kapferer, 2007).

F. Previous Studies

Odhiambo (2012), in his research explored how a social media have a role and can be the main player in increasing brand awareness and discussed the challenges of those companies that employ social media to improve brand awareness. According to the case study that was examined the researcher found that brand awareness can be enhanced by using social media. The results also indicated that companies could achieve more success when use traditional advertisement tools besides social media.

Kljucanin, Pourjanaki, and Said Shahbazi (2012), worked on the study with aim to understand and explain the role of social media as a main tool of marketing, and how it can affect brand awareness. The study was applied on Husqvarna Sverige

company which is specialized in outdoor power product market in Sweden. The researchers used questionnaire which was sent through Husqvarna Facebook page to the interested customers, and they also collected empirical data from company manager. The results indicated that social media is encouraging brand awareness through three different ways: better interacting with the company's customers and giving them social support, increasing social commerce, and increasing inspiration of Husqvarna customers by creating value for them.

The study of Georgieva and Djoukanova (2014), aimed to illustrate the opportunities and managerial perspective of content marketing process in online branding and online brand equity building. The research focused on firm-generated digital content as an essential tool in strengthening online brands, and whether delivering more digital content can bring more benefits for companies. To answer on these questions, researchers used semi-structured interviews with representatives of the chosen company, and also virtual observation of the digital content that was published, distributed, and promoted by the company. Empirical findings highlighted the importance of content marketing process and identified three phases of it, and explained strategic objectives and specific activities of each phase starting with content planning phase that includes identifying target audience, their interests and demands, after that the phase of content creation and content sharing as a last phase. The results also indicated that digital content has important role in creating brand equity, especially in content distribution phase of content marketing process. Continuously delivering relevant, valuable digital content that fits customers' needs, contributes in building real relationship between the brand and target audience, increasing brand trust, and loyalty, and positively impacts and improves brand awareness.

The study of Bija and Balas (2014), examined the role of firm-generated content on brand awareness as the first main step in every business, and also the impact on brand loyalty and electronic word-of-mouth. The study aimed to conclude how those relations influence consumers purchase intentions. Researches also compared between Facebook and Instagram as two popular social media platforms. They used structural equation modeling to hypothesize and answer the questions of the study.

The study confirmed that the firm-generated content as a type of marketing strategy for communication enhances the level of brand awareness, loyalty, and electronic word-of-mouth, which together positively influence purchase intention of customers. So, marketers should focus on creating valuable and attractive firm-generated content that will capture consumer's attention, increase brand awareness, and subsequently purchase intention.

Çızmeçı, Tuğçe Ercan (2015), explored the impact of digital marketing tools on creating brand awareness among large-scale housing companies. Researchers also compared between marketing communicating tools responsible for creating paid digital content and creating proactive digital content and their impact on improving brand awareness.

Researchers used the "Delphi Analysis Technique" where a group of individuals reach consensus about some complex problem. Interviews were made with marketing and corporate experts and marketing managers, and then results and conclusions were evaluated based on consensus reached by experts. All group experts without exception agreed that corporate websites have significant impact in creating brand awareness. Accordingly, to consensus, marketing communication tools responsible for paid digital content, have greater impact on building brand awareness, than the tools that create proactive content. Experts also agreed that large housing companies use digital marketing communication tools mainly for enhancing brand awareness, not for sales purposes. Although traditional marketing is still effective, the new digital marketing communication tools become more important because they enable customers to be active participants in creating brand awareness.

Myllys (2016), developed the study with main objective to understand the concept of content marketing, its characteristics, possibilities, benefits, and its impact on company branding, without going in details of measurement and financial aspect of content marketing. The research depended on qualitative method for collecting needed information about content marketing activities of two case companies.

The analysis showed that content marketing can play a vital role in company's branding and leads to increasing of brand awareness, strengthening customer-brand relationships, and purchases. The basic tools of content marketing were the same at two case companies, although each company has used different

approaches. The two companies' focus was on attracting young generation, creating great stories, and continuously publishing new content in social media.

The research of Koljonen (2016), aimed to know more about the content marketing, its techniques and benefits, and its effect on increasing brand awareness, engagement, and loyalty. Another goal of the research was to determine the types of content that should be generated, distributed, and offered by case company through different social media platforms for improving customer engagement and attracting new customers. Qualitative and quantitative methods was used for data collection, by conducting questionnaire, interviews and observation. The results showed that content marketing through effective and appropriate actions and strategy can be meaningful tool for company's branding and business. The findings also indicated that good, valuable digital content can pull consumers to the company's websites and have positive influence on increasing the sales.

Yang He (2016) examined the role of social media communications on brand equity creation. The study also examined in details the impact of firm-generated and user-generated content presented by brand on social media, on brand awareness, brand associations, and brand image, and subsequently brand attitudes and purchase intentions.

The study confirmed positive impact of social media communications on brand awareness, so lead to positive brand attitudes and purchase intentions of customers. Interesting finding was related to comparison between firm-generated and user-generated brand content presented on social media. The results showed that new brands should focus on providing social media content created by the firm, as it has significantly greater effect on brand awareness than user-generated content. Finally, hedonic brands benefit more from firm-generated content and have stronger influence on brand awareness than utilitarian brands.

Sjöberg (2017), in her study used three Finnish interior brands as benchmarking to explore the impact of social media on brand awareness through Facebook and Instagram platforms, and the actions that can influence brand exposure, customer engagement and electronic word-of-mouth. In the research, posts which were published in these platforms by the three brands between 2016-2017, were collected. The results confirmed that brand awareness is affected by social

media in different ways such as posts, hashtags, and other forms. However, it was difficult to evaluate the extent to which these actions affect brand awareness.

Denham-Smith and Harvidson (2017), in their thesis aimed to provide better understanding of how content marketing affects customer engagement from a consumer's view, how consumers feel about online content, and why do they decide to engage or not to engage in online content marketing. Authors also aimed with their findings to gain knowledge of customer engagement and content marketing. The study used semi-structured interviews and observations for data gathering.

The results showed that consumers visited brand' website to find information, not for purchasing or engaging, so descriptive, informative and valuable content that is not seen as marketing is meaning for customers. The results indicated that for create relationship with customers and engaging with the brand, a company should focus on creating credible, differentiated, and targeted content.

The aim of the research conducted by Özgül and Akbar (2018), was to determine how different social media activities affect brand awareness, and also to test the effectiveness of social media marketing on brand awareness of potential customers. Researchers examined two dimensions of social media, first social integration and emotional connection, and second integration into routines, both as independent variables. The focus in study was on young consumers, university students. The results of the questionnaire showed that social media activities, and both examined dimensions have positive impact on brand awareness.

The study of Dabbous and Barakat (2020), aimed to examine how content quality offered by the brand on social media, and brand-customers interactions through social media too, influence brand awareness and purchase intentions of customers. Authors also explored the mediating role of each of hedonic motivation, utilitarian motivation, and customer engagement in impact of social media on purchase intentions. Target population in their study were Millennials, generations born between 1981 and 1999. Researchers chose these individuals taking in consideration their exposure and integration of technologies from the early stages of their lives.

The results of conducted questionnaire were evaluated using different analytical techniques. The results confirmed that content quality and brand

interactions have significant positive influence on brand awareness, and especially the high quality of the content. Hedonic motivation related to joy and pleasure while using social media, has stronger impact on customer engagement on social media than utilitarian motivation which is more rational and goal oriented. Brand awareness and customer engagement positively impact purchase intentions.



III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter represents different methodological procedures and tools used in the current research which examines the impact of digital content marketing on brand awareness through social media and customer engagement: a case study of Starbucks in Istanbul - Turkey. The chapter gives answers on several questions started with designing of the research, determining the study population and sample, designing a proper questionnaire that covers all dimensions of the study, and analyzing the collected data through different statistical tools. All of these steps are proceed to evaluate reliable and valuable results about the studied topic.

A. Research Design

The research design is a plan and strategy that is used in order to conduct an accurate explanation for the research questions and hypothesis of the current study. A descriptive analytic approach was followed by using the questionnaire that was designed to test the impact of digital content marketing on brand awareness through social media and customer engagement, whereas Starbucks in Istanbul was taken as a case study. By focusing on four main dimensions, the research questionnaire consists of five parts as followed: part 1- consists of general information about different categories of respondents, namely gender, age, and monthly income; part 2- questions related to digital content marketing as an independent variable; part 3- focuses on the social media; part 4- focuses on customer engagement. Both, part 3 and 4 are related to mediating variable. The last part 5- is focused on brand awareness as a dependent variable.

B. Research Variables

The research contains multiple variables: digital content marketing as independent variable, social media and customer engagement as mediator variables, and brand awareness as dependent variable.

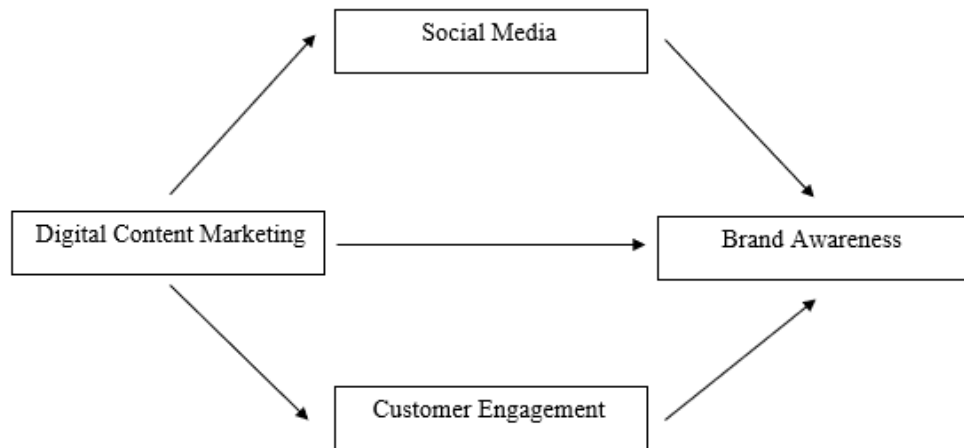


Figure 1. The research model

C. Research Hypothesis

Research hypotheses are presented below:

1. There is significant relationship between Digital Content Marketing and Social Media.
2. There is significant relationship between Digital Content Marketing and Customer Engagement.
3. There is significant effect of the variable Social Media on Brand Awareness.
4. There is significant effect of the Customer Engagement on Brand Awareness.
5. The relationship between Digital Content Marketing and Brand Awareness is significantly mediating by Social Media and Customer Engagement.
6. There is significant effect of Digital Content Marketing on Brand Awareness.

D. Population and Sample Size

Research population term can be defined as a comprehensive representative group of members with common characteristics that are the interest of a researcher (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). In educational research, it is difficult to collect

needed information from the whole population of the research so, a researcher selects a sample, that is a specific and representative part of the population, the researcher is interested about.

In the current study, the researcher focuses on the Starbucks customers who live in Istanbul- Turkey. To complete the research process, the researcher selects a sample random sampling consists of (440) customers.

E. Test of Normality

Test of normality is applied to examine if the data are well-modeled, and whether a sample distribution follows the characteristics of normal distribution. In this study Kolmogorov- Smirnov test is examining normality of distribution. The p-value is used to determine if the null hypothesis will be accepted or rejected according to differences of the values. If p-value of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is larger than 0.05 then variables of the research are normally distributed. Table 1 represents the findings of test of normality for this research. The results indicate that the p-value of all dimensions are larger than the level of significance 0.05, so it can be concluded that there are normal distributions of studied variables. This is important for consequently using the parametric statistic tests to examine and analyze data because these tests effectively work only when the data is normally distributed.

Table 1. Test of normality

Field	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	
	Statistic	P-value
Digital Content Marketing	0.900	0.392
Social Media	0.983	0.288
Customer Engagement	1.012	0.257
Brand Awareness	0.730	0.661
All items of the questionnaire	0.434	0.992

F. Questionnaire Validity

For a measurement instrument to be considered as acceptable it must have some important qualities as evidence for ensuring integrity and quality of measurement instrument, and they are reliability and validity (Kimberlin & Winterstain, 2008).

Validity expresses if the used instrument succeed to measure what it is aimed to measure, it can be said that validity is an estimation of survey's accuracy and truthfulness (Thatcher, 2010). Validity is divided in two main parts: internal and external. Internal validity shows if the research findings represent the truth and are legitimate in the population that was selected. External validity is related to the degree to which the estimated results of the particular research are transferrable and applicable to other groups of interest. There are several types of validity:

1. Face Validity is the extent to which any used measurement instrument is related to a specific construct. This is a very weak kind of validity because it is based on subjective assessment, not on the expert analysis and judgement.
2. Content Validity can be defined as the extent or the degree to which the questionnaire delivers adequate coverage of all important aspects of a given construct of the interest (Saunders et al., 2009). This type of validity ensures that the measurement instrument consists of set of items appropriate to the construct of interest. The content validity of the questionnaire as a measurement tool is examined through the review and rational analysis of the supervisor and experts who are knowledgeable about the topic. The experts' rate if the test, survey, or any other measurement instrument represents all relevant aspects of the construct it is assumed to measure. In other words, they examine if the content of measurement instrument suits the problem and objective of the study. In this study, academicians and committee of the Istanbul Aydin University, Business Administration Department checked and accepted the proposed questionnaire. Appendix (1) presents the final form of the questionnaire.
3. Criterion Validity is the extent to which the scores derived from the survey represent a specific criterion and can predict an outcome for another measure. They are two types of internal validity: concurrent and predictive validity. Concurrent validity compares the measure in the questionnaire with the criterion

exists at the same time as the measure. Predictive validity compares the scores in the questionnaire with an outcome in the future.

4. Structure (Construct) Validity is the degree to which the assessment instrument is representative of the theoretical construct that it is assumed to measure. It is considered as the most accurate and the most specific measurement of validity (Bhattacharyya et al., 2017). In the current study, ensuring of validity was done through measuring the associations between the items in each dimension and between the dimension and the whole questionnaire.

Table 2. Pearson coefficients of "Digital Content Marketing" items and field

No	Item	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	P-Value (Sig.)
1	Starbucks provides me with complete set of information.	.629*	0.000
2	The information provided by Starbucks is accurate.	.604*	0.000
3	The information from Starbucks is always up to date.	.543*	0.000
4	Having different types of content formats (product information, video, tutorials, social media, and reviews) on the product page is useful and relevant.	.504*	0.000
5	Having more content displayed makes me feel like I know the product better.	.586*	0.000

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

There is different statistical analysis for estimating the validity of the questionnaire.

Pearson's correlation coefficient is a statistical test used for measuring the relationship between two variables. It gives information about the direction and strength of the linear association between observed variables. The values of Pearson's correlation coefficient range between -1 and +1, where -1 indicates strong negative correlation, and +1 indicates strong positive correlation. To ensure that estimated correlations between the items didn't occur by chance, and that there is a significant associating, p-value was calculated.

Table (2) shows the analysis of the correlation between each of the items of "Digital Content Marketing" and the field as a whole. Pearson correlation coefficient

for each item is greater than 0.5 which means that there is positive linear relation between each item and "Digital Content Marketing". All p-values for the correlations between each item and "Digital Content Marketing" field are less than significance level of 0.05 so, it can be concluded that all estimated correlation coefficients are significant, and this indicates the validity and consistency of the items of this field.

Table (3) presents the analysis of correlation coefficients between each of the five items and the field of "Social Media" as a whole. Pearson correlation coefficient for each item is greater than 0.5 which means that there is positive linear relation between each item and the whole field. The p-values of all items are smaller than significance level of 0.05, which insures the significance of all correlation coefficient and is another evidence of validity of this field of questionnaire.

Table 3. Pearson coefficients of "Social Media" items and field

No.	Item	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	P-Value (Sig.)
1	I feel more knowledgeable about the brand when it is advertised on social media.	.574*	0.000
2	Social media help me to increase awareness of certain brand that is being advertised.	.604*	0.000
3	When I see an advert on social media, I purchase more from that product and brand.	.581*	0.000
4	I like to visit the Starbucks websites.	.521*	0.000
5	I am willing to engage in social activities with other customers of the Starbucks brand.	.639*	0.000

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

In the table (4) the analysis for the associations between five items of the "Customer Engagement" and the overall field are shown. Pearson correlation coefficients are greater than 0.5 which indicate a positive linear correlation between each item and the total of the field. Exception is item 4 "I like to know that my comments and suggestions can influence the brand and its products", with Pearson correlation coefficient value of 0.448 that is considered as a moderate correlation. The p-values of all items of the field are less than significance level of 0.05, and these values confirmed the significant associations between items and the whole field. Also, it is an indicator that the field "Customer Engagement" measures what it

was supposed to measure.

Table 4. Pearson coefficients of "Customer Engagement" items and field

No.	Item	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	P-Value (Sig.)
1	I use the online brand page to communicate with people who share the same interest as me.	.503*	0.000
2	When asked, I recommend the brand to other coffee consumers.	.664*	0.000
3	I am motivated to participate in the online brand's page because I can help to improve the brand and its products.	.773*	0.000
4	I like to know that my comments and suggestions can influence the brand and its products.	.448*	0.002
5	I promote the brand through my participation and expression in online brand page.	.767*	0.000

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table (5) presents the correlation coefficients of used items in the "Brand Awareness". Pearson correlation coefficients of five items are greater than 0.5 that means that there is positive relation between each item and the whole field. The estimated p-values smaller than significance level of 0.05, assure the significance of correlations.

The results of the analysis ensured the validity of the field. According to the Pearson correlation coefficient, the results indicate that the associations between each item and the field as a whole are positive so, the consistency and validity are considered high.

Table 5. Pearson coefficients of "Brand Awareness" items and field

No.	Item	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	P-Value (Sig.)
1	I am aware of the Starbucks brand.	.653*	0.000
2	I can recognize Starbucks among other competing brands.	.601*	0.000
3	When I think about coffee, Starbucks come to my mind quickly.	.707*	0.000
4	Starbucks offer a higher quality product than its competitors.	.635*	0.000
5	I have a strong affection for the Starbucks.	.663*	0.000

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table (6) shows the results of analysis of correlations between each field and the overall questionnaire. Pearson correlation coefficients for the variables vary from 0.699 for "Brand Awareness" and 0.797 for "Digital Content Marketing", that indicate a strong positive association between each variable and the whole questionnaire. The significance of these correlations is confirmed with p-values which are smaller than the significance level of 0.05 for all variables. The conclusion is that all fields and the whole questionnaire are valid and constant to measure what they were supposed to, in order to achieve research objectives.

Table 6. Pearson coefficients of questionnaire fields

No.	Field	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	P-Value (Sig.)
1	Digital Content Marketing	.797*	0.000
2	Social Media	.746*	0.000
3	Customer Engagement	.773*	0.000
4	Brand Awareness	.699*	0.000

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

G. Reliability of the Questionnaire

Reliability as another technical property of a questionnaire or any other measurement instrument, is an ability of used instrument or procedure to achieve consistent and stable scores on repeated tests, when using over time, under the similar conditions and circumstances, and even from different researchers.

One type of reliability is internal consistency reliability which measures the consistency and closeness between different items of the same construct or group. It is the extent to which a questionnaire or procedure measures the same thing, features, or quality.

Testing for reliability beside the validity in research adds the given study more truthfulness, credibility, accuracy, and quality (George & Mallery, 2006).

The researchers frequently use Cronbach's alpha test for examining internal consistency. It is typically applicable when the questionnaire has scale design in which responses options are for example, as in this research from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. The values of Cronbach's alpha range between 0.0 and

+1.0, where 0.0 means a not reliable questionnaire, and 1.0 indicates absolutely reliable questionnaire. The Cronbach's alpha of 0.7 or above is the evidence of high reliable questionnaire in SPSS.

Table 7. Cronbach's Alpha for the questionnaire fields

No.	Field	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Digital Content Marketing	0.867
2	Social Media	0.827
3	Customer Engagement	0.720
4	Brand Awareness	0.753
5	Total questionnaire	0.881

Table (7) displays the results of internal consistency analysis of the items and whole questionnaire of this study. It can be noticed that values of Cronbach's alpha are between 0.720 for "Customer Engagement", and 0.867 for "Digital Content Marketing", and 0.881 for the entire questionnaire. The evaluated results suggest that all items are highly correlated, and that the questionnaire as a whole has a high internal consistency reliability.

H. Research Questions

Research questions are presented below:

1. What is the impact of digital content marketing on brand awareness? Can it drive the improvement of brand awareness?
2. What is the degree of influence of each of social media and customer engagement influence on brand awareness?
3. Are the social media and customer engagement playing the mediating role in the relation of digital content marketing and brand awareness?
4. Are there other mediating factors that can affect the relation of digital content marketing and brand awareness more than social media and customer engagement?

I. Methodology

Methodology is a system of methods with different principles, rules,

procedures, and techniques applied to formulate the problem and objectives of a research and analyze the data about specific topic. The researcher follows particular steps to systematically design the study and combines the best of different analytical and data visualization methods in order to ensure valid, reliable and accurate results about studied problem.

Descriptive analyses is considered as a basic method in almost every academic research because it helps researcher to simplify and summarize the data. Descriptive analyses do not describe data, it uses data to describe the phenomenon by re-arranging, ordering, and transforming data into a manageable format which is easily to understand and interpret (Zikmaud, 2003). Descriptive analysis includes several consequent steps: identifying the phenomenon of interest, detecting its most noticeable features and aspects, finding the most appropriate and effective measures for these features, choosing the types of data and data collection methods, determining different statistical methods for data analyzing and interpreting the result in form and way that is suitable and acceptable for target audience (Loeb et al., 2017).

The researcher used mixture of qualitative and quantitative methodology, as the combination of two allows achieving the best understanding of the topic and its dimensions. The mediational part of the model is analyzed through regression based bootstrap approach for testing mediation hypothesis and effects (Hayes, 2013). This strategy involves determining specific indirect effects, total indirect effect, and direct effect. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 26) was applied for analyzing and identifying interaction between the variables of the study, first based on the direct regression coefficient, then on bootstrap samples.

J. Data Collection

Data collection is one of the steps in conducting every research project. There are two types of data sources: primary and secondary. Primary data is an original data proposed, designed, organized, controlled, and collected by researcher in the way appropriate to cover specific aims and objectives of the research. Secondary data contain information provided from other researchers as previous research, articles, publications, journals, academic books etc. This data is easily available and help researcher to successfully complete the work and achieve valid and reliable results

(Evans & Mathur, 2005).

In current study researcher used primary and secondary sources in collecting data. Primary data source was a questionnaire designed in a proper form to include all dimensions of the study. Both descriptive and analytical approaches were used to get enough knowledge about the phenomenon and developing the questionnaire that was distributed online to the Starbucks's customers in Istanbul. Online surveys are fast, accurate, cost-effective tool for data collecting and especially practical due to the world pandemic situation and the consequences of Covid-19. 440 questionnaires were distributed, received 398 out of them which represent 90.45% of distributed questionnaire.

K. Data Measurement

Measurement scales are different ways in which variables are grouped. For deciding the correct scale that will be used for measuring and analyzing the data, the level of measurement should be known.

In current study, ordinal scale was applied. Ordinal scale describes and identifies the magnitudes of ordered values but does not informs about the differences between variables. The attributes are placed in ascending or descending order depending on importance from 1 to 5, for example, without determining and measuring the interval differences and quantities between categories. According Likert scale, the data ranked as following:

Table 8. Data Measurement

Item	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
Scale	5	4	3	2	1

1. Pilot Study

Pilot study is a small study conducted usually prior to large study, to examine if the structure of the research, its data collection and analyzing techniques are appropriate, and the defined objectives of the study, or there are some problem areas and deficiencies that need to be changed or corrected. By conducting pilot study, researcher assures better efficacy and overall quality of original research project. In

this research pilot study was applied on 40 respondents as a preparation for the original study.

L. Statistical Analysis Tools

For evaluate the strength of study outputs, the researcher used (SPSS 26) to analyze quantitative and qualitative data by using the statistical tools as mentioned bellow:

- 1) Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is a non-parametric test that examines if variables are likely to follow some given distribution in a population.
- 2) Pearson correlation coefficient measures the internal consistency, validity, and the associations and direction of the relation.
- 3) Cronbach's Alpha test is a measuring tool for confirming the questionnaire reliability.
- 4) Frequency and Descriptive analysis describe personal information of the study sample.
- 5) One-sample T test is used for comparison between a sample mean and hypothesized value.
- 6) Multiple Linear Regression Model is used for evaluating the mediation between variables.

M. Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

Digital content marketing impact on brand awareness through mediating role of each of social media and customer engagement will be examined and discuss by analyzing the data and mediation using proper methods for testing the hypothesis of the research. These methods are presented below.

1. Analysis General Information

This part of analysis focuses on the general information about respondents that includes age, gender, and monthly income. As shown in table (9), the sample comprised a total 398 respondents where 197 (49.5%) were female, while 201 (50.5%) were male. Regarding the age, the largest age group of respondents was

between 25-31 that represents (41.5%), and it was followed by age group between 18-25 that equals (33.4%). In addition, the results related to monthly income of respondents showed that the biggest two segments were, less than 1000TL and more than 4000TL.

Table 9. General Information (N=398)

General Information		Frequency	Percent
Age	less than 18	3	0.8
	18-24	133	33.4
	25-31	165	41.5
	32-38	55	13.8
	more than 38	42	10.6
Gender	Female	197	49.5
	Male	201	50.5
How much is your month income?	less than 1000	98	24.6
	1000-2000TL	87	21.9
	2001-3000TL	78	19.6
	3001-4000TL	47	11.8
	More than 4000 TL	88	22.1

The study contains different categories of respondents, related to age, gender, and monthly income and because of this Chi-Square test of independence was used as appropriate tool to examine relationships between those categorical variables and to evaluate if the variables are independent of each other or not. The p-values smaller than significance level of 0.05 indicate that categorical variables are not independent of each other, and that there is a statistical relationship between them.

From the results presented in table (10), it is obvious that relationships between digital content marketing and customer engagement variables with all demographical categories (age, gender, monthly income) are not significant, because all p-values are larger than significance level of 0.05. The results showed significant relationship between brand awareness variable and age, with Chi-Square equal 18.877 and p-value 0.016 which is smaller than significance level of 0.05. There is also significant relationship between social media and gender with Chi-Square equals 7.649 and p-value 0.022.

Table 10. Chi-Square test

Field	Age		Gender		Income	
	Test value	P-value (Sig.)	Test value	P-value (Sig.)	Test value	P-value (Sig.)
Digital Content Marketing	8.602	0.377	5.393	0.067	4.715	0.788
Social Media	10.975	0.203	7.649*	0.022	9.855	0.275
Customer Engagement	11.043	0.199	0.148	0.929	6.503	0.591
Brand Awareness	18.877*	0.016	1.074	0.584	4.554	0.804

* Relationship is significant at level of 0.05

2. Analysis for Each Field

The study is divided into four main fields: digital content marketing, social media, customer engagement, and brand awareness. The analysis determines if there is significant relationships between the means of each field separately through comparing T-values and p-values with a hypothesized value.

a. Digital Content Marketing Analysis

Table (11) interpret the results as following:

Table (11) presents the results of respondents' opinions about the items of "Digital Content Marketing" field, where the means of these items range between 3.41 for "Starbucks provides me with complete set of information", and 3.83 for "Having more content displayed makes me feel like I know the product better", with the proportional means of (68.24%) and (76.63%), respectively. T-values for those items are 18.15, and 9.58 respectively with p-values less than significance level of 0.05 for both items. In addition, the proportional mean of all items of digital content marketing variable was (72.66%) with t-value equals 21.11 and p-value less than 0.05, which is considered a high level of agreement to this field.

Table 11. "Digital Content Marketing" field's means and test values

Item	Mean	S.D	Proportional mean (%)	Test value	P-value (Sig.)	Rank
1 Starbucks provides me with complete set of information.	3.41	0.86	68.24	9.58*	0.000	5
2 The information provided by Starbucks is accurate.	3.57	0.77	71.31	14.57*	0.000	4
3 The information from Starbucks is always up to date.	3.62	0.84	72.31	14.62*	0.000	3
4 Having different types of content formats (product information, video, tutorials, social media, and reviews) on the product page is useful and relevant.	3.74	0.91	74.82	16.21*	0.000	2
5 Having more content displayed makes me feel like I know the product better.	3.83	0.91	76.63	18.15*	0.000	1
The total field	3.63	0.60	72.66	21.11*	0.000	

* The mean is significantly different from 3

The results indicate that Starbucks should keep focusing on its content displayed because it makes customers to be more aware of its products and services. Keeping customers near and always in touch, and providing them with more details contribute in increasing of brand awareness about kinds of products and services, Starbucks offers.

The lowest level of agreement received from respondents, was about the set of information that Starbucks provides. So, Starbucks should offer information with more valuable, richer, well-designed, and up-to date content on the product page. On this way the customers of Starbucks will be more satisfied and feel like they know the products better that means a greater brand awareness.

b. Social Media Analysis

Table (12) presents the results of social media variable analysis:

- Table (12) presents the results of respondents' level of agreement to the items of the field "Social Media", where the means of these items range between

3.15 for “I like to visit Starbucks websites”, and 4.02 for “Social media help me to increase the awareness of certain brand that is being advertised”, with the proportional means of (62.96%) and (80.30%), respectively. T-values for those items are 23.54, and 2.80 respectively with p-values less than significance level of 0.05 for both items.

- In addition, the proportional mean of all items of social media variable was (70.97%). T-value equals 18.01, and p-value less than significance level of 0.05, which is considered a high level of agreement to this field.

The results indicate that customers of Starbucks feel more knowledgeable and familiar when the brand is advertised on social media platforms and websites which affect positively their purchase intention and choices and although on their willingness to engage on the brand sites and promote its products to other customers. So, Starbucks websites should be more active and attractive with continuously innovative content that catches customer more effectively.

The company should always show its presence, and by using different platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and so on, to communicate more frequently with biggest fans, reply fast and honestly to their problems and complains, and satisfy them by taking their feedback in consideration. These actions lead to increasing of awareness about the company and its image in customers' eyes.

Table 12. "Social Media" field's means and test values

Item	Mean	S.D	Proportional mean (%)	Test value	P-value (Sig.)	Rank
1 I feel more knowledgeable about the brand when it is advertised on social media.	3.83	0.96	76.68	17.31*	0.000	2
2 Social media help me to increase awareness of certain brand that is being advertised.	4.02	0.86	80.30	23.54*	0.000	1
3 When I see an advert on social media, I purchase more from that product and brand.	3.53	0.95	70.55	11.04*	0.000	3
4 I like to visit the Starbucks websites.	3.15	1.06	62.96	2.80*	0.005	5
5 I am willing to engage in social activities with other customers of the Starbucks brand.	3.22	0.97	64.37	4.48*	0.000	4
The total field	3.55	0.61	70.97	18.01*	0.000	

* The mean is significantly different from 3

c. Customer Engagement Analysis

Table (13) presents the results of customer engagement variable analysis:

- Table (13) presents the results of respondents' opinions of agreement to the items of "Customer Engagement" field, where the means of these items range between 3.15 for "I use the online brand page to communicate with people who share the same interest as me", 3.76 for "I like to know that my comments and suggestions can influence the brand and its products", with the proportional means of (62.96%) and (75.13%), respectively. T-values for those items are 17.49, and 2.91 respectively with p-values less than significance level of 0.05 for both items. In addition, the proportional mean of all items of social media variable was (69.45%). T-value equals 14.46, and p-value less than significance level of 0.05, which is considered a high level of agreement to this field.

Table 13. "Customer Engagement" field's means and test values

Item	Mean	S.D	Proportional mean (%)	Test value	P-value (Sig.)	Rank
1 I use the online brand page to communicate with people who share the same interest as me.	3.15	1.02	62.96	2.91*	0.004	5
2 When asked, I recommend the brand to other coffee consumers.	3.61	0.94	72.11	12.85*	0.000	2
3 I am motivated to participate in the online brand's page because I can help to improve the brand and its products.	3.41	0.98	68.19	8.35*	0.000	4
4 I like to know that my comments and suggestions can influence the brand and its products.	3.76	0.86	75.13	17.49*	0.000	1
5 I promote the brand through my participation and expression in online brand page.	3.44	0.93	68.84	9.50*	0.000	3
The total field	3.47	0.64	69.45	14.64*	0.000	

* The mean is significantly different from 3

The results indicate that Starbucks should work on improving its communication staff skills if they want to build a strong base of loyal customers who will become brand advocates and will be more willing to interact with other customers who have similar interest on Starbucks webpages. The highest result indicates the importance of taking customers' feedback and suggestions in improving the quality and differentiation of Starbucks products. Engaged customers who feel that are part of a production process, can positively contribute in increasing of brand awareness.

d. Brand Awareness Analysis

Table (14) shows the following results:

- Table (14) presents the results of respondents' level of agreement to the items of the field "Brand Awareness", where the means of these items range between 3.46 for "I have a strong affection for the Starbucks", and 4.02 for "I can recognize Starbucks among other competing brands", with the proportional

means of (69.15%) and (80.35%), respectively. T-values for those items are 23.88, and 8.76 respectively with p-values less than significance level of 0.05 for both items. In addition, the proportional mean of all items of brand awareness variable was (74.79%). T-value equals 20.15, and p-value less than significance level of 0.05, which is considered a high level of agreement to this field.

The results indicate that respondents are aware and can easily recognize Starbucks, its logo, symbol, and products among its competitors in the coffee industry. This is an indicator of strong marketing strategies the company uses in promoting its products and services, and a reason behind the global popularity of the company on daily basis.

Starbucks has earned the trust of its customers, with the high quality and uniqueness of its products and services, by paying attention in producing products that are environmentally friendly, by focus on every single and important detail. In this way Starbucks delight customers.

Starbucks also takes into consideration the customers' relationships with their friends, and all these activities are incorporated in company's mission statement: "To inspire and nurture the human spirit one person, one cup, and one neighborhood at a time".

Table 14. "Brand Awareness" field's means and test values

Item	Mean	S.D	Proportional mean (%)	Test value	P-value (Sig.)	Rank
1 I am aware of the Starbucks brand.	3.87	0.96	77.34	18.01*	0.000	2
2 I can recognize Starbucks among other competing brands.	4.02	0.85	80.35	23.88*	0.000	1
3 When I think about coffee, Starbucks come to my mind quickly.	3.74	1.07	74.87	13.91*	0.000	3
4 Starbucks offer a higher quality product than its competitors.	3.61	0.98	72.26	12.46*	0.000	4
5 I have a strong affection for the Starbucks.	3.46	1.04	69.15	8.76*	0.000	5
The total field	3.74	0.73	74.79	20.15*	0.000	

* The mean is significantly different from 3

N. Investigation of the Relationships Between the Variables of the Study

1. First: Scatter Plot Matrix

The scatter plot in Figure (1) shows the relationships a pair of variables and it facilitate collecting all variables of the study in one matrix. The graph show

s that there is positive linear relation between each of digital content marketing and social media and dependent variable brand awareness, and weak positive relationship between Digital Content Marketing and each of mediators social media and customer engagement.

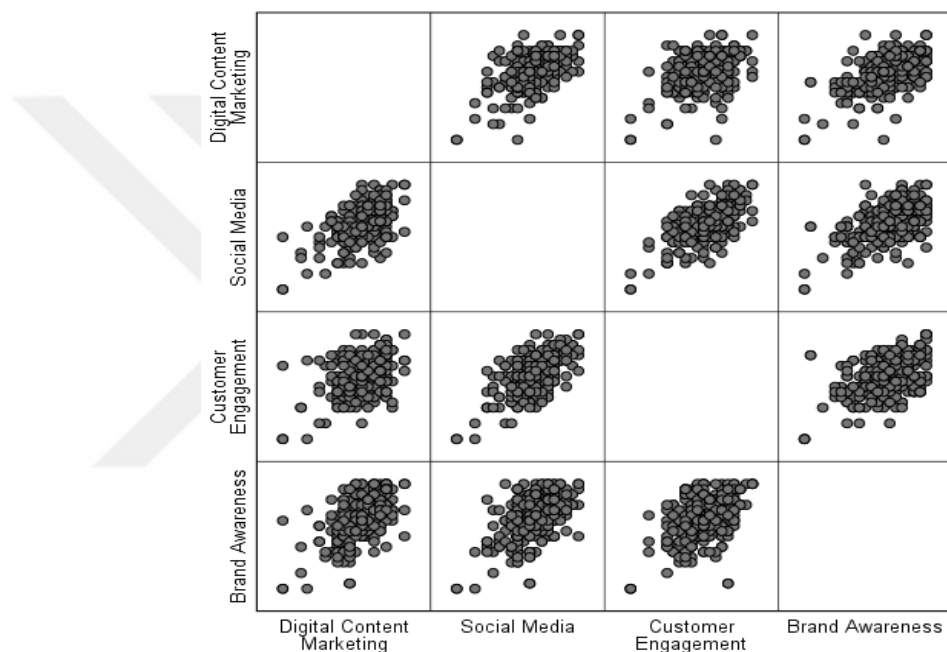


Figure 2. Scatter Plot Matrix

2. Second: Correlation Coefficient Matrix

When there are multiple variables in a data set, correlation matrix is useful tool to summarize data and determine correlation coefficients between all possible pairs of variables. Pearson's correlation coefficient is commonly used in investigating these relationships between variables.

Table 15. Correlation Coefficient Matrix

		Digital Content Marketing	Social Media	Customer Engagement	Brand Awareness
Digital Content Marketing	Pearson Correlation	1	.583*	.451*	.602*
	P-Value		.000	.000	.000
Social Media	Pearson Correlation		1	.634*	.526*
	P-Value			.000	.000
Customer Engagement	Pearson Correlation			1	.476*
	P-Value				.000

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table (15) illustrates Pearson's correlation coefficients for the four variables of the study besides the significance level (Cronbach's Alpha) for each relationship.

Taking into consideration that p-values for correlations between all pair of variables are less than significance level of 0.05, it can be concluded that correlations between variables are significant, In details, correlation coefficient between Digital Content Marketing and Social Media (0.583), Digital Content Marketing and Brand Awareness (0.602), Social Media and Customer Engagement (0.634), and Social Media and Brand Awareness (0.526), are between 0.5 and 0.7 which indicate moderately correlated variables. Correlation coefficients between Digital Content Marketing and Customer Engagement (0.451), and between Customer Engagement and Brand Awareness (0.476), are considered as a weak to moderate positive relationships.

O. Mediation Analysis

Mediation occurs when a causal variable (X) affects outcome variable (Y) through one or more mediator variable (M). Thus, simple mediation occurs when there is only one mediating variable, and multiple mediation when two or more mediators are included. Mediation analysis

is statistical method through which a functional understanding of the relationships among variables can be achieved by exploring the effect of mediators in impact of independent on dependent variable. One form of multiple mediating models is a parallel mediating model.

The model below illustrates a multiple mediation design of the study where path-c is the total effect of independent variable "Digital Content Marketing" on dependent variable "Brand Awareness", path-a1 estimates the effect of "Digital Content Marketing" on the mediator "Social Media", path-a2 is the effect of "Digital Content Marketing" on the mediator "Customer Engagement", path-b1 and path-b2 are the effects of mediators "Social Media" and "Customer Engagement" on "Brand Awareness" controlling for "Digital Content Marketing".

Path-c' is the direct effect of "Digital Content Marketing" on "Brand Awareness" holding the two mediator variables constant. The product of path-a and path-b is called specific indirect effect. In multiple mediation total indirect effect is sum of specific indirect effects of all mediators.

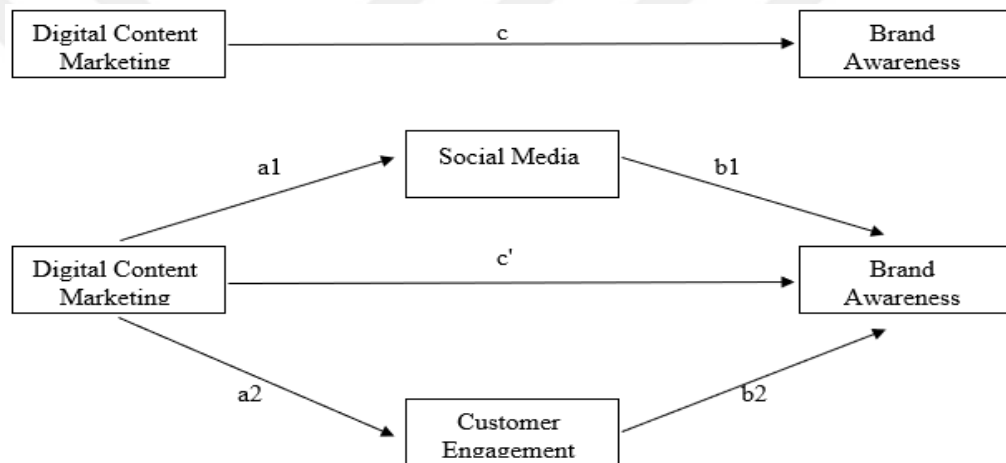


Figure 3. Mediation Model

For the researcher, the focal element in conducting mediation analysis is determining the indirect effect which ensures if the proposed mediator can explain an effect of (X) on (Y) at all. Another point of interest which is necessary to be estimated is a direct effect as it explains the mediation process between the independent and dependent variable (Hayes, 2013). So, it is required an interpretation each of the specific indirect effect, total indirect effect, and the direct effect.

First, the researcher explains the estimated results based on the direct regression, and after that the results from Bootstrap samples, all of them presented in the appendix (1).

First: Results based on the direct regression

Table 16. Regression of the variable " Digital Content Marketing" on "Social Media"

Variable	B	T	Sig.	LLCI	ULCI	R	R-sq	F	Sig.
Constant	1.3984	9.1556	.0000	1.0981	1.6987				
Digital Content Marketing	.5919	14.2676	.0000	.5103	.6734	.5827	.3395	203.5641	.0000

- For the "Social Media" variable, as presented in the table (16) the unstandardized regression coefficient equals 0.5919, confirmed by p-value (0.0000) less than significance level of 0.05 and $t(396) = 14.2676$ that is larger than t-table value 1.96. In addition, 95% CI (0.5103, 0.6734) does not contain zero. This result indicates that the variable "Digital Content Marketing" has significant effect on the "Social Media" variable. In this way path-a1 was estimated.

Table 17. Regression of the variable "Digital Content Marketing" on "Customer Engagement"

Variable	B	T	Sig.	LLCI	ULCI	R	R-sq	F	Sig.
Constant	1.7073	9.6107	.0000	1.3581	2.0566				
Digital Content Marketing	.4858	10.0691	.0000	.3910	.5807	.4515	.2038	101.3866	.0000

- For the "Customer Engagement" variable, as shown in the table (17) the unstandardized regression coefficient equals 0.4858, p-value (0.0000) less than significance level 0.05 and $t(396) = 10.0691$ that is larger than t-table value 1.96. In addition, 95% CI (0.3910, 0.5807) does not contain zero. This result indicates that the variable "Digital Content Marketing" has significant effect on the "Customer Engagement" variable. In this way path-a2 was estimated.

Table 18. Regression of direct and indirect effect of the variables "Digital Content Marketing", "Social Media", and "Customer Engagement" on "Brand Awareness" variable

Variable	B	T	Sig.	LLCI	ULCI	R	R-sq	F	Sig.
Constant	.4355	2.2297	.0263	.0515	.8195				
Digital Content Marketing	.5210	9.0039	.0000	.4072	.6347				
Social Media	0.1985	3.0207	0.0027	.0693	.3276	.6544	.4283	98.3926	.0000
Customer Engagement	0.2036	3.6048	0.0004	.0926	.3147				

Table (18) shows the regression of two mediators "Social Media" and "Customer Engagement" on "Brand Awareness" with controlling the independent variable "Digital Content Marketing" because all of "Social Media", "Customer Engagement", and "Brand awareness" are caused due to "Digital Content Marketing" effect.

- The unstandardized regression coefficient for "Social Media" equals 0.1985, P-value (0.0027) less than significance level 0.05 and $t(394) = 3.0207$ that is larger than t-table value 1.96. In addition, 95% CI (0.0693, 0.3276) does not contain zero. This result indicates that the effect of the mediator "Social Media" on "Brand Awareness" is significant. In this way path-b1 was estimated.
- The unstandardized regression coefficient for "Customer Engagement" equals 0.2036, p-value (0.0004) less than significance level of 0.05 and $t(394) = 3.6048$ that is larger than t-table value 1.96. In addition, 95% CI (0.0926, 0.3147) does not contain zero. This result indicates that the effect of the mediator "Customer Engagement" on "Brand Awareness" is significant. In this way path-b2 was estimated.

The product a_1b_1 ($0.5919 \times 0.1985 = 0.1175$) is a specific indirect effect of "Social Media", and a_2b_2 ($0.4858 \times 0.2036 = 0.0989$) is a specific indirect effect of "Customer Engagement". The sum of two indirect effects equals (0.2164) which is the total indirect effect of both mediators on "Brand Awareness".

- The unstandardized regression coefficient for "Digital Content Marketing" equals 0.5210, p-value (0.0000) less than significance level of 0.05 and t

(394) = 9.0039. In addition, the 95% CI (0.4072, 0.6347) does not contain zero. This result indicates that the effect of "Digital Content Marketing" on "Brand Awareness" is significant. In this way path-c' was estimated.

It is important to pay attention to how well "Digital Content Marketing" and both mediators "Social Media" and "Customer Engagement" predict "Brand Awareness" through R-square. From the table (18), R-sq. equals 0.4283 which means that the independent variable and both mediators explain 42.8% of the variability of the dependent variable "Brand Awareness".

Some authors (Preacher& Hayes, 2008; Hayes, 2013) argue that the estimation of total effect of independent variable on dependent variable is unnecessary for interpretation, whereas according to others (Baron& Kenny, 1986) the estimation of this regression is important as a starting point that there is an effect which could be mediated. However, the information provided from this regression can help researcher to evaluate how much the effect of mediator reduces the strength of association between independent and dependent variables.

Table 19. Regression of total effect of "Digital Content Marketing" variable on "Brand Awareness" variable

Variable	B	T	Sig.	LLCI	ULCI	R	R-sq	F	Sig.
Constant	1.0607	5.8691	.0000	.7054	1.4160				
Digital Content Marketing	.7374	15.0221	.0000	.6409	.8339	.6025	.3630	225.6645	.0000

- Table (19) shows the regression of the "Digital Content Marketing" on "Brand Awareness" variable. The unstandardized regression coefficient equals 0.7374 with p-value (0.0000) less than significance level of 0.05 and t (396) = 15.0221, in addition, 95% CI (0.6409, 0.8339) does not contain zero. This result indicates that "Digital Content Marketing" has significant effect on "Brand Awareness" variable which represent path-c.

This total effect (0.7374) is equal to the sum of direct effect (0.5210) and total indirect effect (0.2164).

The alternative approach to calculate indirect effect of digital content marketing on brand awareness is via Bootstrapping confidence interval method.

Second: Results based on Bootstrapping confidence interval

Table 20. Indirect effect of “Digital Content Marketing” variable on “Brand awareness” variable

Variable	B	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
Total	.2164	.1297	.3022
Social Media	.1175	.0272	.2043
Customer Engagement	.0989	.0324	.1706

- For the mediator “Social Media”, the indirect effect of “Digital Content Marketing” on “Brand Awareness” variable equals .1175 and the confidence interval (.0272, .2043) does not contain zero. This result indicates that for the mediator “Social Media”, the variable “Digital Content Marketing” has significant indirect effect on the “Brand Awareness” variable.
- For the mediator “Customer Engagement”, the indirect effect of “Digital Content Marketing” on “Brand Awareness” variable equals .0989 and the confidence interval (.0324, .1706) does not contain zero. This result indicates that for the mediator “Customer Engagement”, the variable “Digital Content Marketing” has significant indirect effect on the “Brand Awareness” variable. Therefore, for the mediators “Social Media” and “Customer Engagement”, the total indirect effect of “Digital Content Marketing” on “Brand Awareness” variable equals (.2164) and the confidence interval (.1297, .3022) does not contain zero. This automatically generated total indirect effect is equal to previously calculated total indirect effect based on direct regression coefficient. The findings indicate that for the mediators “Social Media and Customer Engagement”, the variable “Digital Content Marketing” has significant total indirect effect on the “Brand Awareness” variable.

Researchers prefer estimating of standardized indirect effect in mediation analysis rather than unstandardized, as a more accurate and appropriate indicator not only of the effect size, but also of its direction and strength (Cheung, 2008; MacKinnon, 2008; Hayes, 2013). Table (21) and table (22) represent partially and completely standardized indirect effect of "Digital Content Marketing" and "Brand Awareness" variable where partially standardized indirect effect expresses indirect effect using original metric of digital content marketing, but standard deviation of

brand awareness, and the completely standardized effect expresses indirect effect using the standard deviation of both "Digital Content Marketing" and "Brand Awareness" (Hayes, 2013).

Table 21. Partially standardized indirect effect of “Digital Content Marketing” variable on “Brand Awareness” variable

Variable	B	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
Total	.2955	.1805	.4102
Social Media	.1604	.0382	.2756
Customer Engagement	.1351	.0436	.2322

Partially standardized indirect effect of “Digital Content Marketing” variable on “Brand Awareness” variable

- For the mediator “Social Media”, the partially standardized indirect effect of “Digital Content Marketing” on “Brand Awareness” variable equals .1604 and the confidence interval (.0382, .2756) does not contain zero. This result indicates that for the mediator “Social Media”, the variable “Digital Content Marketing” has significant partially standardized indirect effect on the “Brand Awareness” variable.
- For the mediator “Customer Engagement”, the partially standardized indirect effect of “Digital Content Marketing” on “Brand Awareness” variable equals .1351 and the confidence interval (.0436, .2322) does not contain zero. This result indicates that for the mediator “Customer Engagement”, the variable “Digital Content Marketing” has significant partially standardized indirect effect on the “Brand Awareness” variable. Therefore, for the mediators “Social Media” and “Customer Engagement”, the total partially standardized indirect effect of “Digital Content Marketing” on “Brand Awareness” variable equals .2955 and the confidence interval (.1805, .4102) does not contain zero. This result indicates that for the mediators “Social Media and Customer Engagement”, the variable “Digital Content Marketing” has significant total partially standardized indirect effect on the “Brand Awareness”.

Table 22. Completely standardized indirect effect of “Digital Content Marketing” variable on “Brand Awareness” variable

Variable	B	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
Total	.1768	.1048	.2502
Social Media	.0960	.0225	.1664
Customer Engagement	.0808	.0260	.1406

Completely standardized indirect effect of “Digital Content Marketing” variable on “Brand Awareness” variable

- For the mediator “Social Media”, the completely standardized indirect effect of “Digital Content Marketing” on “Brand Awareness” variable equals .0960 and the confidence interval (.0225, .1664) does not contain zero.

This result indicates that for the mediator “Social Media”, the variable “Digital Content Marketing” has significant completely standardized indirect effect on the “Brand Awareness” variable.

- For the mediator “Customer Engagement”, the total completely standardized indirect effect of “Digital Content Marketing” on “Brand Awareness” variable equals .0808 and the confidence interval (.0260, .1406) does not contain zero.

This result indicates that for the mediator “Customer Engagement”, the variable “Digital Content Marketing” has significant completely standardized indirect effect on the “Brand Awareness” variable.

- Therefore, for the mediators “Social Media” and “Customer Engagement”, the total completely standardized indirect effect of “Digital Content Marketing” on “Brand Awareness” variable equals .1768 and the confidence interval (.1048, .2502) does not contain zero, and it represents about 17.7% of maximum value that is could have been.
- This result of total completely standardized indirect effect indicates that “Social Media” and “Customer Engagement” are a significant mediators in the effect of “Digital Content Marketing” on “Brand Awareness”.

In summary, based on the represented results, both "Social Media" and "Customer Engagement" have significant effect on " Brand Awareness". The direct

effect of “Digital Content Marketing” variable on “Brand Awareness” variable equals (.5210), while the total indirect, total Partially standardized indirect, and total Completely standardized indirect effect of “Digital Content Marketing” on “Brand Awareness” variable equal (.2164, .2955, and .1768), respectively. These results indicate that the direct effect of “Digital Content Marketing” on “Brand Awareness” is greater than each of the total indirect effect. Therefore, it can be concluded that there are some others, potential and more powerful mediators in the relationship between “Digital Content Marketing” and “Brand Awareness” that have been abandoned and not included in the model which is a good reason for further researches.

The findings of current research match the results of Dabbous and Barakat (2020), who concluded that the content quality offered by brand on different platforms of social media and the consumer-brand interactions on social media, too, have positive influence on brand awareness and customer engagement, as mediators in purchase intention of customers. But their study didn't confirm the significant effect of customer engagement on brand awareness which was estimated in the presented study.

The results of this study found that social media and brand awareness are positively and significantly related, which is supporting the findings of Odhiambo (2012), Kljucanin et al. (2012), Yang He (2016), Sjoberg (2017), and Ozgul and Akbar (2018), who in their studies confirmed the positive influence of different social media activities in building and improving of brand awareness.

The findings in current research related to positive relation between digital content marketing and customer engagement are consistent to those of Koljonen (2016) and Bija and Balas (2014) who considered that good, interesting digital content sharing through social media captures customer's attention and increases customer engagement. Denham-Smith and Harvidson (2017) also agreed that customer engagement is close related to informative, credible, descriptive content presented on websites.

This research points that digital content marketing has significant positive effect on brand awareness. These results are matching with the findings of Georgieva and Djoukanova (2014) who illustrated the opportunities of content marketing in building brand equity, and the role of relevant, digital content as important tool for

increasing of brand awareness.



IV. CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATION AND LIMITATION

Business no longer means having location somewhere, nor gaining profit in short time. Today, there is a huge number of local and global companies and markets in different kind of industries. All of them, using different techniques, qualities, programs, and skills are trying to capture more customers. So, it is very important for every company to have virtual presence through Internet platforms and create unique, high-quality, and compelling content that fits customers' interests, needs, and preferences. Digital content marketing, a new phenomenon, plays significant role in the current competitive and dynamic environment by offering big opportunities to a company in communicating with customers. It is "the heart of marketing" when it comes to building and increasing brand awareness, loyalty and profitability, and it is an "art of communicating" with existing and potential customers through meaningful two-way conversation (Swieczak, 2012; Pulizzi, 2014). Present time, with its complexity and technological innovations, changed the old traditional ways in satisfying customers' needs and interests and created new strategies for dealing the target customers. Before creating a digital content on company's webpage, marketers and content developers should try to understand that customers are motivated by different attitudes, stimulus, and behavioral intentions. They also should examine what makes a customer to be more interesting and willing to visit company's webpage, spend time and engage on company's website. This research tried to provide understanding of the digital content marketing as a process which gains importance in recent times, as well as to examine its impact on increasing brand awareness. The research also posed questions about mediating role of social media as most effective communicative tools, and customer engagement that is considered as a key of involving customers in production and decision-making process. Depending on the literature review about main concepts of the research, and comparing different researchers' points of view, the researcher used descriptive analytical methodology to collect the customers' responses about the influence that digital content marketing has on brand awareness through social media and customer engagement and chose

Starbucks customers who are living in Istanbul as a case study.

Once the quantitative data were conducted via questionnaire, the Statistical Package Social

Science (SPSS) was used to analyze the data and examine the developed hypotheses to get more explanations if social media and customer engagement are strengthening the impact of digital content marketing on brand awareness or there are other factors that affect more this relation.

The result of the study pointed on the high level of consistency of the measuring tool, confirmed with Cronbach's Alpha for the proposed questionnaire equaled to (88.1%) which indicates an excellent reliability and validity of overall questionnaire. Depending on the results of correlation coefficient matrix, regression, and analyzing total effect, direct, indirect (partially and completely standardized and unstandardized) effects, researcher concludes that there are significant relationships between all variables in the study, and there is significant effect of all of digital content marketing, social media, and customer engagement on brand awareness, but the direct effect of the causal variable (digital content marketing) on the outcome (brand awareness) is greater than total indirect mediating effect of social media mediator and customer engagement mediator together.

A. Recommendations

In today's competitive business environment, companies are facing big challenges, trying to penetrate, and chosen marketplace, and at the same time maintain their presence and position in it.

Brand awareness is very important and a basic stone in building and driving business growth, so working on improving brand awareness should be one of the primary goals of every company and its marketing strategy.

Based on theoretical framework and empirical study, it is obvious that digital content marketing as a new phenomenon have a vital role in displaying the name of the brand, strengthening relationship with the customers, and increasing brand awareness, customer loyalty and sales.

In order to achieve sustainable competitive advantage, marketers and content

developers should upgrade company's digital marketing strategy, keep searching for the new, modern and unique marketing tactics to enhance the relationship between digital content marketing and brand awareness by creating innovative, capturing content about company and its products, different from its competitors.

B. Limitation

The most obvious limitation of the study was the global pandemic of COVID-19 and its effect on daily and social life of everyone in the community, and the community as a whole.

This was a reason why the researcher used only online platforms to collect the responses on questionnaire and did not conduct the questionnaire face to face. From the same reason, the research is limited only to the customers' perception of the influence that digital content marketing has on brand awareness and didn't examine the managerial perspective due to inability of researcher to conduct interviews with managers and representatives of Starbucks company, and listen to their views and opinions.

Second limitation is related to the choice of a case company. Although Starbucks is a global company, it is a single case in the chosen coffee industry, and the research was focused on the customers who are living in Istanbul-Turkey, so the results cannot be generalized on the broad scope.

Third, the literature about digital content marketing as a relatively new and rapidly growing concept is limited, and until now there is lack of studies about its impact on increasing the brand awareness. Also, there is explicit gap of existing literature in relation with the effects of both, social media and customer engagement, as mediating tools in the impact of digital content marketing on brand awareness.

In the end, limited time and budget should be used in consideration.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A: Statistics

Appendix B: Questionnaire

Appendix C: Ethical Approval Form



Appendix 1 Statistics

```
*****
****
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
med1

Model Summary

      R    R-sq   MSE     F   df1   df2    p
.5827  .3395  .2446 203.5641  1.0000 396.0000  .0000

Model

      coeff    se     t     p   LLCI   ULCI
constant  1.3984  .1527  9.1556  .0000  1.0981  1.6987
ind        .5919  .0415 14.2676  .0000  .5103  .6734

*****
****
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
med2

Model Summary

      R    R-sq   MSE     F   df1   df2    p
.4515  .2038  .3308 101.3866  1.0000 396.0000  .0000

Model

      coeff    se     t     p   LLCI   ULCI
```

constant	1.7073	.1776	9.6107	.0000	1.3581	2.0566
ind	.4858	.0482	10.0691	.0000	.3910	.5807

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

dep

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.6544	.4283	.3089	98.3926	3.0000	394.0000	.0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	.4355	.1953	2.2297	.0263	.0515	.8195
ind	.5210	.0579	9.0039	.0000	.4072	.6347
med1	.1985	.0657	3.0207	.0027	.0693	.3276
med2	.2036	.0565	3.6048	.0004	.0926	.3147

Test(s) of X by M interaction:

	F	df1	df2	p
M1*X	4.4850	1.0000	393.0000	.0348
M2*X	4.2492	1.0000	393.0000	.0399

***** TOTAL EFFECT MODEL

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

dep

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.6025	.3630	.3424	225.6645	1.0000	396.0000	.0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	1.0607	.1807	5.8691	.0000	.7054	1.4160
ind	.7374	.0491	15.0221	.0000	.6409	.8339

***** TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y

Total effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c_ps	c_cs
.7374	.0491	15.0221	.0000	.6409	.8339	1.0070	.6025

Direct effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c'_ps	c'_cs
.5210	.0579	9.0039	.0000	.4072	.6347	.7115	.4257

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
TOTAL	.2164	.0442	.1297 .3022

med1	.1175	.0443	.0272	.2043
med2	.0989	.0355	.0324	.1706

Partially standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
TOTAL	.2955	.0577	.1805 .4102
med1	.1604	.0593	.0382 .2756
med2	.1351	.0484	.0436 .2322

Completely standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
TOTAL	.1768	.0370	.1048 .2502
med1	.0960	.0358	.0225 .1664
med2	.0808	.0299	.0260 .1406

Appendix 2 Questionnaire

Part I. General Information

Instructions- Please place a tick mark in the box that most appropriately applies to you.

1- Age?

-less than 18

-18-24

-25-31

-32-38

-more than 38

2- Gender?

-Female

-Male

3- How much is your month income?

-less than 1000

-1000-2000TL

-2001-3000TL

-3001-4000TL

-More than 4000 TL

Part II. The Impact of Digital Content Marketing on Brand Awareness through Social Media and Customer Engagement: A case study of Starbucks in Istanbul - Turkey.

Instructions- When answering the questions below, please think of Starbucks. Use the following scale to place a tick mark in the box which corresponds to your opinion about each item:

(1=Strongly disagree 2= disagree 3= neutral 4= agree 5= strongly agree).

Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Digital Content Marketing:					
1. Starbucks provides me with complete set of information.					
2. The information provided by Starbucks is accurate.					
3. The information from Starbucks is always up to date.					
4. Having different types of content formats (product information, video, tutorials, social media, and reviews) on the product page is useful and relevant.					
5. Having more content displayed makes me feel like I know the product better.					
Social Media					
6. I feel more knowledgeable about the brand when it is advertised on social media.					
7. Social media help me to increase awareness					

of certain brand that is being advertised.					
8. When I see an advert on social media, I purchase more from that product and brand.					
9. I like to visit the Starbucks websites.					
10. I am willing to engage in social activities with other customers of the Starbucks brand.					
Customer Engagement					
11. I use the online brand page to communicate with people who share the same interest as me.					
12. When asked, I recommend the brand to other coffee consumers.					
13. I am motivated to participate in the online brand's page because I can help to improve the brand and its products.					
14. I like to know that my comments and suggestions can influence the brand and its products.					
15. I promote the brand through my					

participation and expression in online brand page.					
Brand Awareness:					
16. I am aware of the Starbucks brand.					
17. I can recognize Starbucks among other competing brands.					
18. When I think about coffee, Starbucks come to my mind quickly.					
19. Starbucks offer a higher quality product than its competitors.					
20. I have a strong affection for the Starbucks.					

Appendix 3: Ethical Approval Form

Evrak Tarih ve Sayısı: 04/09/2020-2922



T.C.
İSTANBUL AYDIN ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜ
Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü Müdürlüğü

Sayı : 88083623-020
Konu : Etik Onayı Hk.

Sayın Ana EL KEDRA

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Dr.Öğr.Üyesi Alper FİDAN
Müdür Yardımcısı

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Adres: Beşyol Mah. İnönü Cad. No 38 Şişli/Şişli, 34295 Kültürçayırca / İSTANBUL
Telefon: 444 1 428
Elektronik A.Ş. <http://www.aydin.edu.tr/>

Bilgi için: Tuğba SUNNETCI
Uzman: Enstitü Sekreteri



RESUME

Name Surname: ANA EL KEDRA

Education:

2013-2017 Al-Azhar university/ Palestine _ Bachelor of Business Administration.

2018-2020 Istanbul Aydin University_ Master of business Administration.

Work experience:

2015-2016_ Manager of Personnel Affairs at the Palestine Red Crescent

Languages:

Arabic_ taking, writing, reading.

Macedonian_ taking, writing, reading.

English _ taking, writing, reading.

Turkish_ taking, writing, reading.

Skills:

Computer skills

Working under pressure

Working as a team