

**THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
BAHCESEHIR UNIVERSITY**

**THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA
ON BRAND AWARENESS:
THE CASE OF PULSES INDUSTRY**

Master's Thesis

EİRİNİ AMARGİANİTAKİ

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**THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
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**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
MARKETING PROGRAM**

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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON BRAND AWARENESS: THE CASE OF PULSES INDUSTRY

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Thesis Supervisor: Altay Ayhan

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This study investigates the effects of social media use of companies operating in Turkish pulses industry on brand awareness. In this work based on the current literature, statistical data, history, current situation and the future of pulses industry in the world and in Turkey, the concepts of brand, brand personality, brand identity, brand image, brand equity, brand loyalty and brand awareness, also the concept, features, the usage area, advantages and disadvantages, the history and evolution of social media, social networks used via social media management such as Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, YouTube and LinkedIn, the effects of social media in business world and on the brands have been analysed.

In this context, in addition to the literature review about the pulses industry, brand awareness and social media, there has been conducted 11 questioned in-depth interview with six companies operating in Turkish pulses industry and four advertising companies which are experts on social media consultancy as a qualitative research method. According to the findings of in-depth interview, there has been made evaluations and suggestions on the thesis topic in case of pulses industry. To sum up, it can be summarized that the use of social media by companies operating in pulses industry are not enough yet. However, they are aware of the significance of technological changes in the world and the sudden effects and power of social media.

Keywords: Pulses Industry, Social Media, Social Network, Brand Awareness, Brand

ÖZET

SOSYAL MEDYANIN MARKA FARKINDALIĞI ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ: BAKLİYAT SEKTÖRÜ ÖRNEĞİ

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Bu çalışma, Türk bakliyat sektöründe faaliyet gösteren işletmelerin sosyal medya kullanımının marka farkındalığı üzerindeki etkisini araştırmak üzere hazırlanmıştır. Çalışma kapsamında mevcut literatür taranarak, dünyada ve Türkiye’de bakliyat sektörünün tarihi, mevcut durumu ve geleceği ile birlikte bakliyat sektörüne ilişkin istatistiksel veriler; marka, marka kişiliği, marka kimliği, marka imajı, marka değeri, marka sadakati ve marka farkındalığı kavramları; bunun yanında sosyal medya kavramı, sosyal medyanın özellikleri, kullanım alanı, avantaj ve dezavantajları, tarihi ve gelişim süreci ile sosyal medya yönetimi açısından önem arz eden Facebook, Twitter, Bloglar, Youtube ve LinkedIn gibi sosyal network platformları analiz edilmiştir.

Bu kapsamda, bakliyat sektörü, marka farkındalığı ve sosyal medya hakkında yapılan literatür taraması ile birlikte Türk bakliyat sektöründe faaliyet göstermekte olan altı işletme ve reklamcılık sektöründe faaliyet gösteren dört sosyal medya danışmanlığı firması ile kalitatif bir araştırma yöntemi olan ve 11 sorudan oluşan derinlemesine mülakat tekniği vasıtasıyla görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Yapılan derinlemesine mülakat bulguları doğrultusunda, tez konusunun kısıtlılık sahasını oluşturan bakliyat sektörü üzerinden değerlendirmelerde ve önerilerde bulunulmuştur. Sonuç olarak, bakliyat sektöründe faaliyet gösteren işletmelerin henüz yeterli seviyede sosyal medyayı kullanmamakta oldukları, ancak dünyada yaşanan teknolojik değişimlerden ve sosyal medyanın gücü ve etkisinin farkında oldukları ifade edilebilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bakliyat Sektörü, Sosyal Medya, Sosyal Network, Marka Farkındalığı, Marka

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ABBREVIATIONS

DAB	: Damla Bakliyat
DİB	: Dimyat Bakliyat
DOB	: Dokuzlar Bakliyat
FAO	: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
RG	: Reis Gıda
TDK	: Türk Dil Kurumu
TMO	: (Toprak Mahsulleri Ofisi
TURKSTAT	: Turkish Statistic Institute
UBK	: Ulusal Baklagil Konseyi
U.S.	: United States
YA	: Yayla Argo

1. INTRODUCTION

For 30 years there have been important changes all around the world. Globalization, economic liberalization, advances in information and communication technologies and transportation have affected and changed human life continuously. Today people could easily access the information whatever they search, reach products whatever they purchase and go wherever they want.

The enormous technological progress of the last decades has significantly changed the way people used to 'socialize' in the past. Additionally, the "Social Media" revolution has played a determinant role in re-shaping social interaction, taking it many steps beyond the borders of tradition. More specifically, nowadays people do not have to visit a bar, join a concert, or attend any other kind of social event in order to socialize. Instead, they are able to meet each other in social networking sites like Facebook, appreciate art and share photographs in visual content applications like Instagram, re-write history in collaborative projects like Wikipedia or even start a relationship in virtual social worlds like Second Life. In other words, people have been given the opportunity to socialize without being physically present in any kind of real life social activity. This enormous development has been one of the main topics in the agenda of many firms and business executives, who are also enabled to reach the consumer in an easier and time consuming manner.

The purpose of this study is to analyse the effects of social media on brand awareness in the case of pulses industry companies in Turkey. To make the research it will be benefited by literature resources such as books, periodicals, articles, theses, notifications, websites and companies operating in the pulses industry. In this context, the major research question of this thesis is "What is the attitude of the companies which operate in the Turkish pulses industry regarding the effects of social media usage in relation to brand awareness?". Thus, the objectives of this thesis are determined as to investigate and examine the attitudes of the Turkish companies which operate in the sector of pulses towards social media utilization and engagement, to research whether these companies

relate social media engagement with brand awareness or not, and to what extent, to analyse the attitudes of social media experts on social media usage by companies operating in pulses industry and evaluate their recommendations on how to increase brand awareness through social media engagement, and to evaluate the current situation and give recommendations regarding the issue.

In order to analyse the issue, it will be made in-depth interview as a qualitative research technique where data collection methods such as interview and documentary were used. The in-depth interview will be carried out with six companies operating in pulses industry in Turkey which are Dimyat Bakliyat, Damla Bakliyat, Dokuzlar Bakliyat, Reis Gıda and Yayla Agro, and four advertising companies which are experts on social media consultancy that are Buro Advertising, Mobilike Advertising, Milklab Advertising and Rabarba Advertising. In order to make the interviews, 11 questions have been prepared as follows;

- i.** Does your company use social media?
- ii.** What do you think about social media utilization by companies for commercial reasons?
- iii.** Do you think that a company which manufactures and sells pulses like yours should engage in social media? Why?
- iv.** Could you please specify which you think is the most suitable platforms for a company selling pulses to engage and why?
- v.** Do you think that Health & Taste issues are getting more ‘trendy’ in the case of pulses on the various social media platforms?
- vi.** What do you think is the role and the impact of celebrity endorsements for Social Media usage in your industry?
- vii.** How would you conceptualize ‘brand awareness’?
- viii.** Do you think that social media engagement is related to brand awareness? If yes, in which ways?
- ix.** How do you think that companies should use social media platforms? Is there any specific ‘recipe’ that they should follow?

- x. Do you think that companies which utilize social media have a competitive advantage from those which do not? Why?
- xi. Do you think the utilization of social media can affect a company's sales? If yes, in which way?

The first section of this thesis is introduction. Then in the second section, it will be mentioned about pulses industry in the world and in Turkey with statistical data of cultivation areas, yields, production volume and value, consumption, export and import numbers and etc. In the third section, it will be mentioned about the concepts of brand, brand identity, brand personality, brand image, brand loyalty, brand equity and brand awareness. In the fourth section, the social media will be examined. In this context, features of social media, the usage area of social media, advantages and disadvantages of social media, the history and evolution of social media, social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, YouTube and LinkedIn, social media in business world, and effects of social media on brands will be analysed. In the fifth section, there will be mentioned about the methodology used to analyse the research question and objectives. In the sixth section, there will be explained the answer given by six companies operating in Turkish pulses industry and four advertising companies which are experts on social media consultancy through the in-depth interview. And then the last and sixth section will be prepared as conclusion and recommendation.

2. PULSES INDUSTRY

As globally pulses yearly are manufactured comestible seeds of legumes. They comprise many plants such as field peas, lentils, dry edible beans, chickpeas, soybeans, fenugreek, broad beans and other minor plants. Nowadays pulses is the most certain part of the global market like other agricultural products (Janzen et al 2006, p. 3).

2.1 GLOBAL PULSES INDUSTRY

Last ten years, global production of these crops has maintained its continuity and per year around 40 million tonnes production exist. In 2006, bean production accounted for the maximum percent of the world's pulse production followed by peas, chickpeas and lentils at over 18 million tonnes. In the world, largest pulses producer is India, followed by Canada. When Brazil is well known and biggest bean producer, other kind of pulses really are not produced in Brazil. However other countries like Canada, China, the United States (U.S.) and Mexico are interested in all kind of pulses. In Turkey, are produced too much lentils and chickpeas but are produced very small amounts peas or beans. International pulses trade has averaged 7.4 million tonnes last 10 years. During this period, peas actualized for %43 of world pulse trade on average, followed by beans with %32, lentils with %15 and chickpeas with %10 (Pulse Canada 2007, p. 1).

In the world, since 2007, average in 63 million ha area, 53 million tons of pulses are produced. Beans is the first place in the world among legumes produced. Chickpeas, peas and lentils are followed this product. In our country, within legumes the most production is chickpea. Lentil and bean are followed these products. In the world, peas has more cultivation area and production however in our country it takes sixth ranked. Worldwide last six years, when peas's and lentil's planting areas are decreasing, chickpea's planting area and production are increasing. With developing countries, last years in developed countries demanding for beans increased. However, legumes plantation areas decreased because of shift to producing of maize and sugar cane to supply raw material needed to produce biofuels (UBK 2012, p. 1).

In the world, 19.7 million tonnes of beans, 9.7 million tonnes of chickpeas and 3.5 million tonnes of lentil are produced in 2009. When viewing yields of beans, seems that yields of beans is 78 Kg/Da, yields of chickpea is 88 Kg/Da and yields of lentil is 99 Kg/Da. Although production of pulses are spread in the world, countries generally are to the forefront in the production of a certain species. In the world most planting areas with bean production are in Asia and the U.S., with chickpeas production in Asia, the U.S. and Africa, with lentil production in the U.S. and Asia, peas production in the U.S., Asia and Australia, with broad bean in Asia, Africa and Europe, with kidney beans in Africa obtained density (Uysal ve Subaşı 2014, pp. 257-258). When the situation of global production has been investigated in our country bean, was observed the pioneer countries for pulses that chickpea and lentil production, bean of production in Brazil, chickpea of production in India and lentil of production in Canada. Turkey is take a part of third rate in chickpea and lentil production. Despite of first rate in bean and lentil production, India today's, lost priority because of increasing planting areas and the low efficiency. Canada, is take a part of first ranked for lentil production in the world, increased 74% percentage of lentil planting areas from 554 thousand ha to 963 thousand ha between 2005 and 2009 (UBK 2012, p. 2).

Around the world, 58.7 million tons of pulses have been produced in 63 million ha production fields in 2013 and %60 of the production consists of lentil, dried beans and chickpea. Bean comes as the first product in world pulses production and after bean, chickpea, peas, kidney beans, lentil and broad bean has come (Hasdemir ve Terzi 2014, p. 28).

Table 2.1 shows the pulses production in the world by years. According to table, cultivation area of bean has increased from 27.548.000 ha to 29.291.000 ha between the years of 2002 and 2012. Also cultivation area of chickpea has increased from 10.403.000 ha to 12.345.000 ha between the years of 2002 and 2012. Moreover, cultivation area of lentil has increased from 3.648.000 ha to 4.206.000 ha between the years of 2002 and 2012.

In the Table 2.1 it is showed that production of bean has increased from 19.811.000 tons to 23.598.000 tons between the years of 2002 and 2012. Furthermore, production of chickpea has increased from 8.293.000 tons to 11.626.000 tons between the years of 2002 and 2012. Moreover, production of lentil has increased from 2.884.000 tons to 4.558.000 tons between the years of 2002 and 2012

Table 2.1 also shows that the yield of bean has increased from 72 kg/da to 81 kg/da between the years of 2002 and 2012. Moreover, the yield of chickpea has increased from 80 kg/da to 94 kg/da between the years of 2002 and 2012. Furthermore, the yield of lentil has increased from 79 kg/da to 108 kg/da between the years of 2002 and 2012.

Table 2.1: Pulses production in the world by years

Year	Bean			Chickpea			Lentil		
	Cultivati on Area (1000Ha)	Producti on (1000 Tons)	Yield (Kg/D a)	Cultivati on Area (1000Ha)	Producti on (1000 Tons)	Yield (Kg/D a)	Cultivati on Area (1000Ha)	Producti on (1000 Tons)	Yield (Kg/D a)
2002	27.548	19.811	72	10.403	8.293	80	3.648	2.884	79
2003	28.243	20.970	74	9.644	7111	74	3.552	2.980	84
2004	27.156	18.231	67	10.471	8.383	80	3.849	3.589	93
2005	26.693	18.898	71	10.203	8.436	83	4.076	4.036	99
2006	27.867	20.812	75	10.513	8.459	80	3.828	3.338	87
2007	29.142	21.353	73	11.270	9.749	87	3.703	3.298	89
2008	26.770	20.971	78	11.069	8.606	78	3.313	2.825	85
2009	25.721	21.149	82	11.512	10.439	91	3.699	3.933	106
2010	30.851	23.772	77	11.987	11.064	92	4.335	4.724	109
2011	30.432	23.178	76	13.273	11.750	89	4.144	4.426	107
2012	29.291	23.598	81	12.345	11.626	94	4.206	4.558	108

Source: Hasdemir, M. ve Terzi, D., 2014. *Yemelik baklagil çalıştay*, 5-6 Mart, Konya. Ankara: Gıda, Tarım ve Hayvancılık Bakanlığı, p. 14.

Table 2.2 shows the main pulses producer in the world. According to table, the most productive country in bean production is Myanmar with 3.722.000 tons and then India, Brazil, Mexico and Turkey has come. The most productive country in the production of chickpea is India with 7.700.000 tons and then Australia, Turkey, Iran and Pakistan has come. Furthermore, the most productive country in lentil production is Canada with 1.494.000 tons and then India, Turkey and Nepal has come.

Table 2.2: Pulses producers in the world (2012)

Product	Country	Cultivation Area (1000Ha)	Production (1000 Tons)	Yield (Kg/Da)
Bean	India	9.100	3.630	40
	Myanmar	2.846	3.722	131
	Brazil	2.727	2.821	103
	Mexico	1.559	1.081	69
	Turkey	93	200	215
Chickpea	India	8.320	7.700	93
	Pakistan	1.055	291	28
	Iran	565	315	56
	Australia	456	673	148
	Turkey	416	535	129
Lentil	India	1.600	950	157
	Canada	990	1.494	151
	Turkey	237	438	184
	Nepal	208	208	100

Source: Hasdemir, M. ve Terzi, D., 2014. *Yemeklik baklagil çalıştay*, 5-6 Mart, Konya. Ankara: Gıda, Tarım ve Hayvancılık Bakanlığı, p. 28.

Table 2.3 shows the dried bean trade in the world between the years of 2001 and 2011. According to the table, dried bean export and import quantities and values have increased globally between the years of 2001 and 2011.

Table 2.3: Dried bean trade in the world

Year	Export Quantity (Tons)	Export Value (1000\$)	Import Quantity (Tons)	Import Value (1000\$)
2001	2.208.648	1.061.046	3.029.839	1.238.930
2002	2.352.935	1.173.445	3.403.152	1.357.067
2003	2.925.494	1.383.268	3.501.086	1.358.070
2004	2.482.450	1.265.351	2.989.953	1.274.498
2005	2.478.103	1.408.728	2.728.405	1.387.707
2006	2.893.574	1.846.529	3.335.380	1.929.505
2007	3.028.247	2.122.482	3.829.071	2.460.502
2008	3.326.491	2.863.542	4.410.196	3.432.858
2009	3.672.159	3.141.671	4.438.957	3.418.341
2010	3.090.257	2.919.263	4.126.843	3.292.740
2011	3.321.726	3.227.563	3.393.895	3.074.549

Source: Hasdemir, M. ve Terzi, D., 2014. *Yemeklik baklagil çalıştay*, 5-6 Mart, Konya. Ankara: Gıda, Tarım ve Hayvancılık Bakanlığı, p. 15.

Table 2.4 shows the chickpea trade in the world between the years of 2001 and 2011. According to the table, chickpea import quantity and value have increased globally between the years of 2001 and 2011. However, the export quantity of chickpea has decreased, while the export value of chickpea has decreased between these years.

Table 2.4: Chickpea trade in the world

Year	Export Quantity (Tons)	Export Value (1000\$)	Import Quantity (Tons)	Import Value (1000\$)
2001	1.118.320	509.654	1.040.814	456.449
2002	860.172	354.919	802.240	347.942
2003	922.012	386.516	856.123	353.112
2004	740.935	363.585	759.819	356.665
2005	832.377	468.640	845.176	441.709
2006	782.393	520.911	974.015	578.921
2007	893.178	652.684	803.970	547.182
2008	997.260	736.799	934.645	689.988
2009	1.140.683	739.838	1.198.794	720.918
2010	1.031.287	750.977	1.188.074	822.147
2011	1.114.171	975.969	1.158.957	963.705

Source: Hasdemir, M. ve Terzi, D., 2014. *Yemeklik baklagil çalıştay*, 5-6 Mart, Konya. Ankara: Gıda, Tarım ve Hayvancılık Bakanlığı, p. 15.

Table 2.5 shows the lentil trade in the world between the years of 2001 and 2011. According to the table, lentil import quantity and value have increased globally between the years of 2001 and 2011. Moreover, the export quantity and value of lentil has also increased globally.

Table 2.5: Lentil trade in the world

Year	Export Quantity (Tons)	Export Value (1000\$)	Import Quantity (Tons)	Import Value (1000\$)
2001	1.138.504	456.373	1.177.013	431.416
2002	1.076.922	436.520	1.018.923	355.644
2003	1.118.432	507.295	1.041.169	434.918
2004	1.030.364	503.115	1.127.666	497.943
2005	1.316.448	622.629	1.403.589	631.831
2006	1.326.900	600.322	1.553.348	629.452
2007	1.571.823	836.141	1.648.504	847.337
2008	1.340.262	1.339.224	1.360.250	1.316.180
2009	1.680.803	1.521.226	1.807.257	1.500.417
2010	1.875.929	1.757.829	1.993.725	1.725.675
2011	1.918.223	1.650.961	1.963.981	1.548.557

Source: Hasdemir, M. ve Terzi, D., 2014. *Yemeklik baklagil çalıştırı*, 5-6 Mart, Konya. Ankara: Gıda, Tarım ve Hayvancılık Bakanlığı, p. 16.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has announced that 2016 will be the “International Pulses Year” in the world during the 146th council meeting conducted in Roma in consequence of the recommendations made by Turkey (Hasdemir ve Terzi 2014, p.18).

In the future, it is expected that cultivation areas of the pulses will decrease. Moreover, pulses consumption per person will decrease in developing countries due to urbanization issue. However, it is expected that pulses consumption in the world will rise about %23 until the year of 2030 due to increase in world population and the fastest consumption increase will be in Asia and Africa countries. The import rate of the pulses could rise due to continuous increase in demand although the production rate will decrease (Hasdemir ve Terzi 2014, p. 17).

2.2 PULSES INDUSTRY IN TURKEY

Turkey is at the nexus of European, Black Sea, Asian and Middle Eastern trade. There are some countries to involve for next status of economic growth and Turkey is the one of this countries. Also traders and investors interested in global growth cooperated the “BRIC” countries (Informa Economics 2013). Turkey is a 77.9 million ha area-country

and %35 of these areas are agricultural production fields. There are nearly 700 types and 18.000 kinds of pulses in flowering plants family. Pulses family has been used in human nourishment, animal feedings, medicine industry, furniture and paper manufacturing, dye and resin production, cosmetics and etc. (Hasdemir ve Terzi 2014, p. 25).

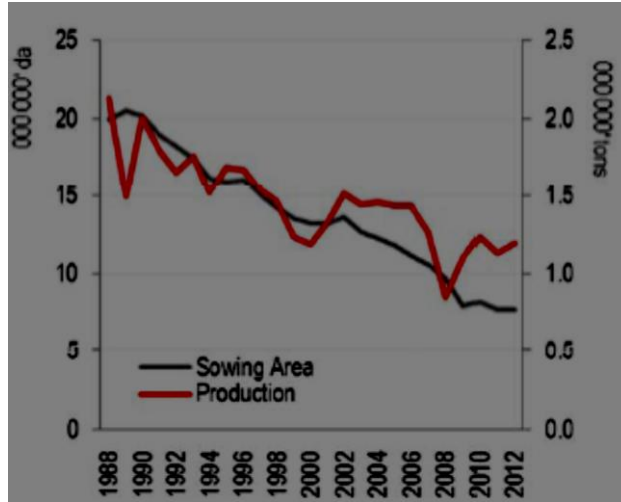
In Turkey there 8 types of pulses has been produced and the most production has been made in chickpea, dried beans and lentil (Hasdemir ve Terzi 2014, p. 28). Turkey is the most important part of the gene centre of pulses which is named as “efficient crescent”. Turkey has an important role in pulses consumption around the world and has been a vital exporter historically. The pulses production in Turkey has been spread around the country that Southeast Anatolia, Central Anatolia and the south of Marmara regions are the main production areas. In general, red lentil has been produced in Southeast Anatolia, green lentil, chickpea and dried beans have been produced in Central Anatolia, brand bean and peas have been produced in Aegean and South Marmara regions. Pulses industry is a strategic sector for Turkey. Therefore, the management of this industry should be handled with a global vision rather than a local or regional perspective (Hasdemir ve Terzi 2014, pp. 18-24).

Since 1923 the establishment of the Turkish Republic, the Turkish economy has been a considerable development. Pulses production has also been affected from that development. Pulses are second to cereals with 11 % of the total cultivated area. The most broadly cultivated pulses in Turkey lentil and chickpea. In Turkey 3.4 percent of total agricultural production and 6.7 percent of field crop production average is the value of pulses production accounts. Of the 3.4 percent, 70 percent is from lentil and chickpea production. Since more than three-quarters of the whole food legume areas are occupied by lentil and chickpea, the terms pulses and lentil-chickpea will be used each other in the next. Until 1980's, a clement increase in the area planted to pulses had been observed. After the production increased more than five times. Although there had been increased production of pulses since 1930s, the yield of production has not been change more. Climate is a restrictive factor for production, in Turkey is subject to though weather condition to productivity. Year by year, yield have differ range in bad year from 0.5 t/ha in 1930s and in a better year to 1.3 t/ha in 1953 (Knight 2000, p. 237).

Southeast Anatolia less developed regions of Turkey are leading produced legumes (pulses crops). These crops, has relatively infertile conditions and restriction compared to western regions, have extra importance for the regional economy. In the last fifteen years, the effect on legumes has been to distressingly decrease production even government policy case are intended to reduce the economic disparities among the regions and prevent migration from rural to urban (Informa Economics 2013).

Exhibit 2.1 shows the dramatic changes in pulses acreage and production since 1988. Due to increased average farm yields in this period while cultivated area diminished by 61%, production decreased solely %44. Since 2000, decrease in the contraction rate, has been observed. Besides, sessional growth in output was around %5.2 in 2012 compared to the previous year. The maximum growth rates have been in chickpeas and lentils, which were respectively 6.3 and %7.9. One of the economic reason for this narrowing is principally the increased production of alternative crops driven by the development of regional irrigation networks in recent years. As far as alternative crops are concerned, production of corn has accelerated rapidly. Wheat and cotton are rivalling crops in the region. In present year, the first prediction reported by Turkish Statistic Institute (TURKSTAT) on May 23, indicate a small increase in production of 12 thousand MT, rising 1% compared to the previous year. Symbolizing %77 of total legumes capacity like chickpeas and red lentils are expected to be the primary crops (Informa Economics 2013).

Exhibit 2.1: Changes in pulse acreage and production since 1988



Source: Informa Economics, 2013. Turkey's legume crops: turbulence goes on? Client prospectus: a special study by Informa Economics & SERES International, August, <http://www.informaecon.com/MCSTurkeyLegumesAug2013.pdf>, p. 2.

As one of the major players in the global lentil market, actual red lentil export and import volumes represent 98 and 87% of total respective lentil trade during the period of Jan-May 2013. In the first five months of 2013, the rate of export/import volumes is 93% in generally being a net exporter of red lentils. The price parity between imported and domestically produced dehiscid red lentil has been 86% in the Gaziantep commodity exchange in May 2013. With important imports of pulses into Turkey, away from the domestic production zones. Major processing capacity is located near the ports. The extent of grain handling, transporting, merchandising, and processing of pulses may be supplemental opportunities in the Southeast Anatolia Region. In fact, there are variant projects under development in this region. This could impulse the regional growth of legume production, helping increase the regional economy (Informa Economics 2013).

In Turkish pulses industry, chickpea is the 1st with the share of %44 in terms of production. In Turkey, the main production fields are in Konya, Diyarbakır, Uşak, Yozgat, Kütahya, Çorum, Isparta, Kahramanmaraş, Balıkesir, Antalya and Adıyaman. Total chickpea production of these cities is %55 of the country production. In Turkey, there are two types of lentil which are red lentil and green lentil. In terms of lentil production, %94 of the lentil production is red lentil and %6 is the green lentil. The share of chickpea production among total pulses production is %37. %75 of red lentil is

produced in Şanlıurfa, Diyarbakır and Mardin, while %51 of the green lentil is produced in yozgat, Çorum and Ankara. However, in Yozgat the production of green lentil has decreased after 1990 nearly %75 and it was replaced with sugar beet, onion and corn (UBK 2012, p. 4).

Pulses exports of Turkey have been made into the Middle East countries, Western Europe countries, North Africa countries and South Asia countries. Pulses exports have been done more than 80 countries around the world and the most important markets are Sri Lanka, Iraq, Kuwait, Egypt, Great Britain, Saudi Arabia, Germany and Jordan. East Europe countries, South America countries, Russian Federation and Central Asia Turkish Republics are also potential countries for Turkey's pulses exporting (UBK 2012, p. 7).

Table 2.6 indicates the general pulses production in Turkey. According to table, the cultivation area of all pulses types have been decreased between the years of 1988 and 2014. In terms of production, only dried bean has the stability on production quantity, while the other pulses types have decreased between these years. Moreover, in terms of yield, the yield of all of the pulses types have increased from 1988 to 2014.

Table 2.6: Pulses production in Turkey by years

Year	Total	Broad Bean	Peas	Chickpea	Dried Bean	Red Lentil	Green Lentil	Kidney Beans
Cultivation Area (Decar)								
1988	20 025 510	420 000	20 000	7 780 000	1 760 000	7 310 000	2 520 000	35 000
1989	20 532 610	400 000	19 000	8 180 000	1 780 000	7 210 000	2 760 000	22 800
1990	20 259 990	400 000	18 500	8 900 000	1 710 000	6 300 000	2 760 000	16 300
1991	19 027 080	380 000	17 000	8 780 000	1 780 000	5 370 000	2 530 000	20 500
1992	18 239 180	365 000	16 000	8 560 000	1 680 000	5 150 000	2 300 000	22 000
1993	17 481 070	344 000	16 000	8 200 000	1 620 000	5 140 000	1 990 000	19 500
1994	16 164 980	288 500	15 000	7 600 000	1 630 000	4 810 000	1 650 000	23 000
1995	16 003 830	260 000	16 000	7 450 000	1 700 000	4 750 000	1 650 000	26 000
1996	16 150 950	245 000	16 500	7 800 000	1 725 000	4 750 000	1 450 000	28 500
1997	14 981 550	243 000	16 700	7 210 000	1 750 000	4 300 000	1 300 000	24 500
1998	14 227 700	220 000	14 500	6 650 000	1 720 000	4 410 000	1 080 000	26 000
1999	13 497 950	210 000	13 000	6 250 000	1 740 000	4 200 000	970 000	25 500
2000	13 168 070	200 000	13 300	6 360 000	1 760 000	3 900 000	820 000	30 000
2001	13 208 750	190 000	12 500	6 450 000	1 750 000	4 000 000	700 000	29 000
2002	13 603 500	180 000	14 500	6 600 000	1 800 000	4 200 000	720 000	29 500
2003	12 636 500	170 000	11 500	6 300 000	1 620 000	3 800 000	620 000	30 000
2004	12 263 500	151 000	13 500	6 060 000	1 550 000	3 790 000	600 000	29 000
2005	11 771 000	124 000	14 000	5 578 000	1 412 000	3 867 000	532 000	30 000
2006	11 168 802	105 389	15 658	5 243 672	1 290 515	3 787 075	454 625	29 254
2007	10 577 817	108 461	12 967	5 036 745	1 092 497	3 572 328	323 083	29 405
2008	9 740 080	102 634	13 647	5 051 654	982 326	2 909 766	276 977	30 405
2009	8 009 592	93 870	12 282	4 559 344	949 280	1 893 780	255 531	29 349
2010	8 221 554	82 970	11 815	4 556 900	1 033 811	2 116 000	228 922	22 020
2011	7 780 223	74 417	13 048	4 464 129	946 254	1 923 225	225 248	20 323
2012	7 723 446	85 334	12 193	4 162 416	931 740	2 147 875	226 903	24 221
2013	8 066 462	70 751	12 618	4 235 570	847 630	2 605 000	206 783	20 624
2014	7 438 228	59 114	11 490	3 885 175	911 103	2 324 461	170 476	19 408
Production (Tons)								
1988	2 136 030	78 000	4 500	777 500	211 000	829 000	211 000	4 000
1989	1 494 592	75 000	4 700	683 000	193 000	320 000	200 000	1 900
1990	2 012 876	75 000	4 500	860 000	210 000	630 000	216 000	1 630
1991	1 800 080	70 000	4 400	855 000	214 000	440 000	200 000	2 200
1992	1 657 470	68 000	4 000	770 000	200 000	430 000	170 000	2 100
1993	1 760 741	65 000	4 000	740 000	200 000	570 000	165 000	2 000
1994	1 513 606	52 000	4 000	650 000	180 000	510 000	100 000	2 025
1995	1 689 434	49 000	3 900	730 000	225 000	515 000	150 000	2 500
1996	1 672 221	46 300	4 000	732 000	230 000	520 000	125 000	2 700
1997	1 534 960	46 000	3 900	720 000	235 000	410 000	105 000	2 500
1998	1 459 360	42 500	3 100	625 000	236 000	440 000	100 000	2 650
1999	1 230 300	39 000	3 000	560 000	237 000	300 000	80 000	2 300
2000	1 182 487	37 000	3 100	548 000	230 000	280 000	73 000	2 600
2001	1 327 700	35 000	2 700	535 000	225 000	460 000	60 000	2 000
2002	1 510 100	32 000	4 000	650 000	250 000	500 000	65 000	2 200
2003	1 437 050	33 000	3 500	600 000	250 000	485 000	55 000	2 400
2004	1 453 800	30 000	3 500	620 000	250 000	480 000	60 000	2 300
2005	1 433 360	28 000	3 600	600 000	210 000	520 000	50 000	2 500

2006	1 430 578	21 316	4 373	551 746	195 970	580 298	42 326	2 937
2007	1 264 809	21 043	3 503	505 366	154 243	508 378	26 803	1 845
2008	855 354	20 668	3 920	518 026	154 630	106 361	24 827	3 072
2009	1 101 348	21 150	3 604	562 564	181 205	275 050	27 131	3 017
2010	1 235 306	19 898	3 200	530 634	212 758	422 000	25 400	2 290
2011	1 131 986	19 678	3 628	487 477	200 673	380 000	25 952	2 149
2012	1 190 706	18 406	2 686	518 000	200 000	410 000	28 000	2 111
2013	1 147 735	17 826	3 235	506 000	195 000	395 000	22 000	2 112
2014	1 035 832	14 927	2 987	450 000	215 000	325 000	20 000	2 006
Yield (Kg/Decare)								
1988	.	186	225	100	120	113	84	114
1989	.	188	247	83	108	44	72	83
1990	.	188	243	97	123	100	78	100
1991	.	184	259	97	120	82	79	107
1992	.	186	250	90	119	83	74	95
1993	.	189	250	90	123	111	83	103
1994	.	180	267	86	110	106	61	88
1995	.	188	244	98	132	108	91	96
1996	.	189	242	94	133	109	86	95
1997	.	189	234	100	134	95	81	102
1998	.	193	214	94	137	100	93	102
1999	.	186	231	90	136	71	82	90
2000	.	185	233	86	131	72	89	87
2001	.	184	216	83	129	115	86	69
2002	.	178	276	98	139	119	90	75
2003	.	194	304	95	154	128	89	80
2004	.	199	259	102	161	127	100	79
2005	.	226	257	108	149	134	94	83
2006	.	202	279	105	152	153	93	100
2007	.	194	270	100	141	142	83	63
2008	.	201	287	103	157	37	90	101
2009	.	225	293	123	191	145	106	103
2010	.	240	271	116	206	199	111	104
2011	.	264	278	109	212	198	115	106
2012	.	216	220	124	215	191	123	87
2013	.	252	256	119	230	152	106	102
2014	.	253	260	116	236	140	117	103

Source: TURKSTAT, 2015

Table 2.7 indicates the pulses consumption in Turkey in 2013. According to table, the consumption per person is 5,5 kg/year for chickpea, 4,5 kg/year for red lentil, 3 kg/year for dried bean, and the total pulses consumption is 13,9 kg/year.

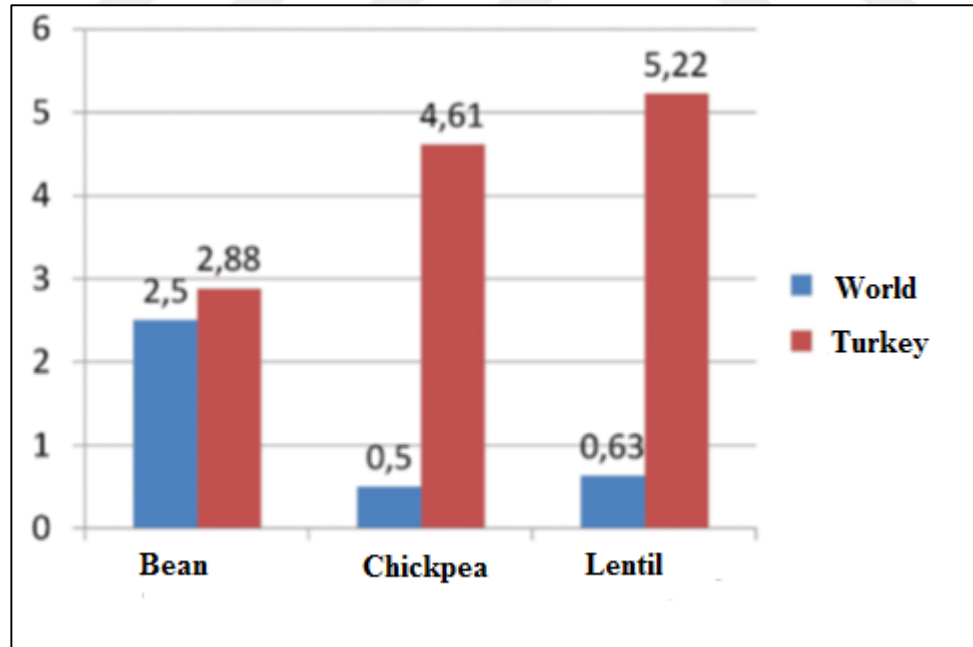
Table 2.7: Pulses consumption in Turkey (2013)

Product	Consumption per Person	Sufficiency Rate
Chickpea	5,5 kg/year	102%
Red Lentil	4,5 kg/year	102%
Dried Beans	3 kg/year	83%
Total Pulses	13,9 kg/year	97%

Source: Hasdemir, M. ve Terzi, D., 2014. *Yemeklik baklagil çalıştay*, 5-6 Mart, Konya. Ankara: Gıda, Tarım ve Hayvancılık Bakanlığı, p. 23.

Exhibit 2.2 shows the pulses consumption per person in Turkey and in the world. According to the exhibit, bean consumption per person in the world is 2,5 kg/year and 2,88 kg/year in Turkey. Moreover, chickpea consumption per person in the world is 0,5 kg/year and 4,61 kg/year Turkey. Furthermore, lentil consumption in the world is 0,63 kg/year and 5,22 kg/year in Turkey.

Exhibit 2.2: Pulses consumption per person (kg/year) (2014)



Source: Hasdemir, M. ve Terzi, D., 2014. *Yemeklik baklagil çalıştay*, 5-6 Mart, Konya. Ankara: Gıda, Tarım ve Hayvancılık Bakanlığı, p. 26.

Table 2.8 shows the industrial information about the dried bean production in Turkey. According to table it can be said that in 2013 there are 19.907 producers in Turkey.

Moreover, the cultivation area of dried bean has decreased from 180.000 ha to 84.763 ha between the years of 2002 and 2013. In terms of production quantity, the dried bean production has decreased from 250.000 tons to 195.000 tons in these years. However, the value and yield of the dried bean have increased between these years.

Table 2.8: Dried bean industry in Turkey

Year	Numbers of Producers	Cultivation Area (Ha)	Production (Tons)	Value (Thousand TL)	Yield (Kg/Da)
2002		180.000	250.000	335.000	139
2003	9.284	162.000	250.000	377.500	154
2011	22.392	94.625	200.673	518.760	212
2012	21.616	93.174	200.000	588.713	215
2013	19.907	84.763	195.000	652.829	230

Source: Hasdemir, M. ve Terzi, D., 2014. *Yemeklik baklagil çalıştırı*, 5-6 Mart, Konya. Ankara: Gıda, Tarım ve Hayvancılık Bakanlığı, p. 20.

Table 2.9 shows the industrial information about the chickpea production in Turkey. According to table it can be said that in 2013 there are 69.743 producers in Turkey. Moreover, the cultivation area of chickpea has decreased from 660.000 ha to 423.557 ha between the years of 2002 and 2013. In terms of production quantity, the chickpea production has decreased from 650.000 tons to 506.000 tons in these years. However, the value and yield of the chickpea have increased between these years.

Table 2.9: Chickpea industry in Turkey

Year	Numbers of Producers	Cultivation Area (Ha)	Production (Tons)	Value (Thousand TL)	Yield (Kg/Da)
2002		660.000	650.000	546.000	98
2003	152.011	630.000	600.000	576.000	95
2011	84.219	446.412	487.477	995.932	122
2012	75.978	416.241	518.000	1.359.270	127
2013	69.743	423.557	506.000		121

Source: Hasdemir, M. ve Terzi, D., 2014. *Yemeklik baklagil çalıştırı*, 5-6 Mart, Konya. Ankara: Gıda, Tarım ve Hayvancılık Bakanlığı, p. 22.

Table 2.10 shows the industrial information about the lentil production in Turkey. According to table it can be said that in 2013 there are 22.425 producers in Turkey.

Moreover, the cultivation area of lentil has decreased from 492.000 ha to 281.178 ha between the years of 2002 and 2013. In terms of production quantity, the lentil production has decreased from 565.000 tons to 417.000 tons in these years. The yield of lentil has also decreased after 2012, while it has a grow tendency between the years of 2002 and 2012. However, the value and yield of the lentil have increased between these years.

Table 2.10: Lentil industry in Turkey

Year	Numbers of Producers	Cultivation Area (Ha)	Production (Tons)	Value (Thousand TL)	Yield (Kg/Da)
2002		492.000	565.000	378.550	119
2003	30.316	442.000	540.000	405.000	128
2011	23.749	214.847	405.952	544.477	198
2012	21.764	237.478	438.000	544.887	193
2013	22.425	281.178	417.000		152

Source: Hasdemir, M. ve Terzi, D., 2014. *Yemeklik baklagil çalıştay*, 5-6 Mart, Konya. Ankara: Gıda, Tarım ve Hayvancılık Bakanlığı, p. 21.

Table 2.11 shows the regional green lentil production in 2011. According to the table, Central Anatolia has the biggest cultivation area with 13.000 ha, while Southeast Anatolia has no space for green lentil production. In terms of production, Central Anatolia has the biggest production capacity with 14.900 tons, it is the %57 of the total production in Turkey. Also, East Anatolia region has the biggest yield.

Table 2.11: Regional green lentil production in Turkey (2011)

Region	Cultivation Area (Ha)	Production (Tons)	Yield (Kg/Da)	Share in Production
Marmara	500	560	112	2
Black Sea	4000	4602	115	18
Central Anatolia	13000	14900	115	57
Aegea	4200	4800	114	18
Mediterranea	600	750	125	3
Southeast Anatolia	0	0	0	0
East Anatolia	267	340	127	1
Total	22567	25592	115	100

Source: TMO (Toprak Mahsulleri Ofisi), 2013. 2012 yılı hububat sektörü raporu. Ankara: Toprak Mahsulleri Ofisi Genel Müdürlüğü, p. 43.

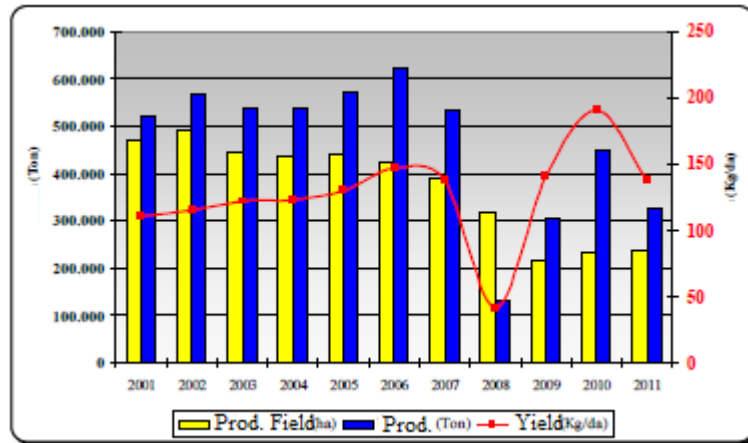
Table 2.12 shows the regional red lentil production in 2011. According to the table, Southeast Anatolia has the biggest cultivation area with 210.000 ha, while Black Sea region has no space for red lentil production. In terms of production, Southeast Anatolia has the biggest production capacity with 294.000 tons, it is the %98 of the total production in Turkey. Also, Marmara region has the biggest yield. Moreover, Exhibit 2.3 shows the lentil cultivation area, production and yield.

Table 2.12: Regional red lentil production in Turkey (2011)

Region	Cultivation Area (Ha)	Production (Tons)	Yield (Kg/Da)	Share in Production
Marmara	120	250	208	0
Black Sea	0	0	0	0
Central Anatolia	2.200	2.700	123	1
Aegea	1.800	1.650	92	1
Mediterranea	500	800	160	0
Southeast Anatolia	210.000	294.000	140	98
East Anatolia	500	600	120	0
Total	215.120	300.000	139	100

Source: TMO (Toprak Mahsulleri Ofisi), 2013. 2012 yılı hububat sektörü raporu. Ankara: Toprak Mahsulleri Ofisi Genel Müdürlüğü, p. 44.

Exhibit 2.3: Lentil cultivation area, production and yield in Turkey



Source: TMO (Toprak Mahsulleri Ofisi), 2013. 2012 yılı hububat sektörü raporu. Ankara: Toprak Mahsulleri Ofisi Genel Müdürlüğü, p. 43.

Table 2.13 shows the export volume of Turkey in pulses industry between the years of 2001 and 2010. According to the table, dried beans export quantity and its value has

decreased in years. Moreover, chickpea export quantity and its value has decreased also. However, the value of red lentil has increase by years, while its export quantity has decreased.

Table 2.13: Export in Turkey's pulses industry

Year	Dried Beans		Red Lentil		Chickpea	
	Quantity (Tons)	Value (1000\$)	Quantity (Tons)	Value (1000\$)	Quantity (Tons)	Value (1000\$)
2001	45.324	31.809	155.819	83.564	153.916	75.261
2002	20.125	14.042	133.240	50.559	107.917	49.351
2003	42.194	24.162	214.441	86.581	189.642	82.580
2004	31.660	12.444	169.285	83.673	133.073	69.166
2005	2.923	3.599	116.621	69.380	123.593	83.026
2006	3.973	4.896	300.020	157.208	104.684	83.660
2007	2.269	3.208	184.978	125.424	69.192	57.986
2008	3.499	5.423	68.654	98.869	88.337	76.757
2009	19.026	17.904	128.312	172.724	88.509	74.976
2010 (9 Months)	1.141	1.866	158.147	174.564	42.450	38.479

Source: UBK (Ulusal Baklagil Konseyi), 2012. Türkiye Ziraat Odaları Birliği baklagil raporu, http://www.ubk.org.tr/ziraat_rapor.pdf, p. 7.

Table 2.14 shows the import volume and value of Turkey's pulses industry between the years of 2000 and 2010. According to the table, dried beans import quantity and its value has increased in years. However, chickpea import quantity and its value has decreased in the same years.

Table 2.14: Import in Turkey's pulses industry

Year	Dried Bean		Chickpea	
	Quantity (Tons)	Value (1000\$)	Quantity (Tons)	Value (1000\$)
2000	20.187	11.890	7.411	4.278
2001	32.980	17.986	14.396	6.151
2002	41.488	21.584	10.636	3.382
2003	6.365	3.238	41	23
2004	13.872	7.166	546	306
2005	37.687	22.295	646	358
2006	30.968	27.977	1.881	1.569
2007	36.968	38.442	5.178	4.362
2008	51.461	56.269	8.759	9.141
2009	53.649	56.378	4.403	4.177
2010 (9 Months)	23.831	25.257	6.143	6.000

Source: *UBK (Ulusal Baklagil Konseyi)*, 2012. Türkiye Ziraat Odaları Birliği baklagil raporu, http://www.ubk.org.tr/ziraat_rapor.pdf, p. 8; *TOBB*, 2013. Türkiye tarım sektörü raporu. Ankara: TOBB Yayınları, p. 10.

Table 2.15 shows the import volume and value of Turkey's lentil market between the years of 2003 and 2010. According to the table, green lentil import quantity and its value has increased in years. Moreover, red lentil import quantity and its value has increased in the same years.

Table 2.15: Lentil import in Turkey

Year	Green Lentil		Red Lentil	
	Quantity (Tons)	Value (1000\$)	Quantity (Tons)	Value (1000\$)
2003	16.792	8.071	35	14
2004	1.852	957	3.704	1.700
2005	8.004	3.972	56.276	25.189
2006	17.171	7.842	51.590	22.688
2007	19.756	11.603	11.222	6.861
2008	22.695	21.391	168.107	221.715
2009	16.967	16.164	124.501	117.298
2010 (9 Months)	15.903	15.154	148.652	141.262

Source: *UBK (Ulusal Baklagil Konseyi)*, 2012. Türkiye Ziraat Odaları Birliği baklagil raporu, http://www.ubk.org.tr/ziraat_rapor.pdf, p. 8; *TOBB*, 2013. Türkiye tarım sektörü raporu. Ankara: TOBB Yayınları, p. 10.

SWOT Analysis of the pulses marketing and consumption in Turkey has been stated such that (Hasdemir ve Terzi 2014, pp. 63-65);

i. Strengths

- a. Production potential's being high,
- b. The use of marginal fields,
- c. The use of family labour force,
- d. High quality in the pulses production in Turkey,
- e. Government supports on organic agriculture,
- f. High market potential,
- g. Having a regulation on covenanted production,
- h. High marketing margins,
- i. Licensed warehousing,
- j. Having high pulses processing technology,
- k. Pulses industry's clustering around certain geographical areas,
- l. Agricultural supports in pulses industry,
- m. Development on network management of the local exporter firms in foreign sales,
- n. Developed fast food industry,
- o. Developed advertising and campaign opportunities.

ii. Weaknesses

- a. Inadequate supporting of research and development activities in pulses production and marketing,
- b. Weak marketing organization,
- c. Inadequate legislations,
- d. Insufficiency of legal controls,
- e. Price based competition,
- f. Production's depending on substantially climate conditions,
- g. Inadequate production,
- h. Not producing in international standards,
- i. Weak organizational structure of producers,
- j. Inadequate publicity on pulses products,
- k. Financing needs,

- l.** Licensed warehousing's needing high capital,
 - m.** Finance system's not trusting and supporting to special licensed warehouses,
 - n.** Clustered industry's not comprising a common strategy,
 - o.** Activities on increasing consumption's being low,
 - p.** Information pollution,
 - q.** Smallness of the productions fields and quantities,
 - r.** Not having a standardized product which is presented to the market.
- iii. Opportunities**
- a.** Announcement on the year of 2016 as "World Pulses Year",
 - b.** Growing and developing market structure,
 - c.** Increase in consumers' purchasing power,
 - d.** Easiness on consumers' achieving the products,
- iv. Threats**
- a.** Supply gap resulting from not doing production planning and producers' being affected from price fluctuations,
 - b.** Not establishing retail chain effectively from producers to consumers,
 - c.** Quotas conducted by European Union countries in order to protect local markets and high tariffs,
 - d.** The change of Turkish lira against foreign currencies,
 - e.** Inadequate production.

3. BRAND AWARENESS

In the globalizing world, there are many similar or different products in the market with an intense competition. Companies use brands in order to make their products different from other similar products. It can be seen that today all products and/or services have various brands. Brands have started to become important after industrialization and accordingly this importance has constantly increased as a result of the augmentation in the product diversity caused by the dominance of today's globalization and free market economic system, and steps taken by consumers in order to be conscious consumers (İşgör 2001, p. 11).

It can be stated there would be no communication and no transaction, if there was no brand awareness. Therefore, it can be said that brand awareness is very important (Percy 1987, p. 26). Some of the consumers could make rule to purchase only those brand which are famous in the market (Keller 1993, p. 12).

3.1 THE CONCEPT OF BRAND

Brand that states the communication between producers and consumers has a substantially influential role in terms of marketing management implications. Brand is the main item that consumers remember about product and it enables the brand to make different from others (Aktuğlu 2004, s. 11).

Consumers regard brand as a significant part of products because brands put added value into the products. Brands have not only a concrete meaning, but also have some abstract and symbolic meanings such as image, prestige and status together with the abstract meaning (Uzun ve Erdil 2003, p. 172). Products made by companies differ from each other especially in terms of services they provide together with package and label. Therefore, the design of any product makes it seem different from other products. (Ar 2004, p. 4).

Consumers have learned to evaluate the product options through some environmental factors that can affect and change the behaviours of them. In this process, recall of the brand and the purchasing process of the consumers are facilitated via consumers' making of the product. Therefore, the brand name specified the true and positive image is very important in product management and marketing communication (Odabaşı 2002, ss. 359-360).

Brands could be analysed in terms of consumers under four different categories. These categories could be specified as follows (Randall 1998, p. 9);

- i. Geography, physical location and climate
- ii. Market structure such as global competitors, powerful brands and maturity level of the market
- iii. Demographic structure such as language, religion, age, nation, education, race and socioeconomic situation
- iv. Psychograph such as usage habits, beliefs, mental equipment, traditional values, consumption preferences, conceptions, customs and traditions.

Brand refers to a special name or symbol used to represent any object or commercial product and distinguish it from similar others (TDK). In other words, brand is a composition of name and symbol that designates the product or service identity, helps the product to be different from others, makes it easy to communicate with consumers who are the main point of marketing management and its implementations and provides some legal and patent rights (Aktuğlu 2004, p. 16).

Brand could be defined as symbols that are used for distinguishing the product from others which are manufactured, produced or put up for sale in the industry and are put on or in the package (Tek 1997, p. 352). According to the American Marketing Association brand could be defined as a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of these, intended to identify the products of sellers and to distinguish these products from others in the competition (Keller 2003, p. 3; Odabaşı 2002, p. 360).

Brand provides differentiation of one product from the others produced by competitors via indicators such as name, symbol and sign. However, it is the meaning of communication between producers and consumers, and more significant for consumers rather than producers (Tosun 2010, p. 7). In other words, brand is the signs indicating the holder of right as the symbol of both quality and business volume (Tek 1997, p. 352).

Brand contains some different meanings in it such as (Kotler 2005, pp. 404-405);

- a. Specifications
- b. Benefits
- c. Values
- d. Culture
- e. Identity
- f. User

Brands have some functions that are evaluated important for both consumers and producers. These functions can be stated as follows (Akyol 2010, pp. 14-15);

i. Functions for Consumers

- a. Liberates consumers for deciding,
- b. The function of creating difference,
- c. The function of trust and guarantee.

ii. Functions for Producers

- a. Profilizing,
- b. Sales promotions,
- c. Tool for customer loyalty and retention,
- d. Ease in playing with price strategy,
- e. Mistakes of powerful brands' being forgiven easier by consumers,
- f. Monopolizing,
- g. Gaining power against market intermediaries.

Brands have some benefits for both consumers and producers. These benefits could be specified as follows (Odabaşı ve Oyman 2006, p. 360; İncesu 2011, pp. 42-44; Ar 2004, pp. 8-9);

i. Benefits for Consumers

- a. Brands give trust to consumers.
- b. Products with brand are perceived more qualified than products without brand.
- c. Brands make consumers facilitate to prefer something in purchasing process, while providing consumers to recognize the product.
- d. Brands affect consumers' attitudes and beliefs about subsequent purchases through providing information about the product.
- e. Products with brand means guarantee for consumers and provides consumers' protecting.
- f. Products with brand provides prestige for consumers.

ii. Benefits for Producers

- a. Brands help to provide consistency in demand and provides the costs about orders to decrease the minimum level.
- b. Product addiction is created by brand.
- c. Profitable target market could be formed.
- d. It provides support into promotional activities.
- e. Brands cause the products to be sold with more expensive prices according to its awareness through increasing the value of the products.
- f. Brands bring reputation to the companies.
- g. Brands help companies to enter new markets through the trust given to the consumers.
- h. Brands could be sold with high prices, if truly positioned.
- i. New products with brand have a big chance in terms of recognizing and promotion in the process of entering to the market, and it makes the control of producer on distribution channel facilitate.
- j. If recorded, brands provide the product to be protected with legal ways, while preventing the unpermitted use of the product or service by others.

3.2 BRAND PERSONALITY

Personality means whole of the thoughts, senses and behaviours that distinguishes one person from another. Therefore, brand personality can be defined as the implementation and correlation of human features such as age, gender, socioeconomic class with the brand. Thus, it can be said that brand personality provides establishing an emotional connection with consumers, while adding soul to the brand (Yiğit 2011, p. 70).

Assumption of the brand personality is based on brands' having emotions and personal features like people. From this perspective, brand personality has a symbolic function and is shaped with the communication efforts of the company. Thus, it differs from the brand image (Uztuğ 2003, pp. 41-42).

Brand personality refers to the human features' loading into brand in short (Gülsoy 1999, s. 55). Brand personality is a concept which comprise all the details about the brand features such as symbols, logos, shape of product, name and etc. and it has an integrating affect. Therefore, it specified the core features of the brand that is indicated through humanistic terms and experiences (Giep 2005, s. 52). When describing the brand personality, brand is defined by demographic information and the words stating human (Aaker 1996, pp. 160-161).

3.3 BRAND IDENTITY

Brand identity is a unique set of brand associations implying a promise to customers and includes a core and extended identity. Here the core identity is the central, timeless essence of the brand that remains constant as the brand moves to new markets and new products. Core identity broadly focuses on product attributes, service, user profile, store ambience and product performance. Extended identity is woven around brand identity elements organized into cohesive and meaningful groups that provide brand texture and completeness, and focuses on brand personality, relationship, and strong symbol association (Ghodeswar 2008, p. 5).

Brand identity is the visual and verbal articulation of a brand, including all pertinent design applications such as logo, business card, letterhead or packaging. It often includes a tagline and web site. Brand identity can also be called as corporate identity or visual identity. Brand identity is a program that integrates every visual and verbal element of a company's graphic design, including typography, colour, imagery, and its application to print, digital media, environmental graphics, and any other conventional or unconventional media (Landa 2005, p. 5).

Brand identity comprises both tangible values such as visual identity elements and intangible values such as brand's evoking values and meanings on consumers. It contains also the concept of brand personality (Elden 2009, pp. 113-114). It can be said that brand identity introduces a six-way prism that consist of these elements as follows (Okay 1998, pp. 53-54);

- i. Quality
- ii. Character,
- iii. Culture,
- iv. Connection with consumers,
- v. Spontaneous connection,
- vi. Vision.

3.4 BRAND IMAGE

Brand image could be described as the collection of the meaning that consumers identify with the products and everything consumers comprehend with the product. Brand image occurs as a result of the impressions consumers gathered from various resources. There are many factors among these resources such as trying branded product, prominence of producer company, package of the product, brand name, format and content of the used advertisement and media used during the broadcast of advertisements (Gökoğlu 2013, p. 20)

Brand image is related closely with brand personality. It refers to the whole meanings correlated with the brand by consumers and it is shaped by emotional or rational thoughts of consumers on brand. Formation and implementation of brand image could be stated in 5 issues as follows (Uztuğ 2003, p. 40);

- i.** General features of brand, emotions or impressions of consumers,
- ii.** Perception of the product,
- iii.** Attitudes and beliefs of consumers,
- iv.** Brand personality,
- v.** Connection between the brand features and emotions of consumers.

Brand image could be described as the perception and preference of one brand due to formerly obtained different brand related emotions and connections (Akyol 2010, s. 24). In the brand image planning process, creating effective brand image has 3 important functions stated as follows (Ayar 2011, pp. 17-18);

- a.** Sending only one message that forms the brand promise and product character,
- b.** Conveying this message via preventing similar messages of competitors from mixing,
- c.** Transmitting the emotional effect that appealed to the emotions of consumers.

According to Keller and Kotler (2008, p. 288) there are differences between brand image and brand identity. Identity is the way a company aims to identify or position itself or its product. Image is the way the public actually perceives them. For the right image to be established in the minds of consumers, the marketer must convey brand identity through every available communication vehicle and brand contact. Identity should be diffused in ads, annual reports, brochures, catalogs, packaging, company stationery, and business cards. If “IBM means service”, this message must be expressed in symbols, colours and slogans, atmosphere, events, and employee behaviour.

3.5 BRAND EQUITY

Aaker (2001) approaches brand equity as a set of fundamental dimensions grouped into a complex system comprising mainly: brand awareness, brand perceived quality, brand loyalty and brand associations. Aaker defines the brand equity as the possessions and responsibilities related with the brand, brand name or symbols that add or remove value to the product (Akyol 2010, s. 29). Keller (1998, p. 45) approaches brand equity from a customer based perspective and define it as the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand.

Brand equity refers to accumulation of positive intent and effects created for consumers by brand. Moreover, it can be defined as the use of one popular brand's adding value to a product. Brand equity occurs after a long-term period. One brand's being successful, powerful and high brand equity is related with the awareness and recognition of the brand by consumers. In order to create brand equity, companies should inform consumers about the product and create brand awareness on them (Yiğit 2011, s. 65).

There are some different approaches in terms of the producers and consumers about the concept of brand equity after 1990s. For producers, brand equity means accumulation of the positive effects which is the return of all kinds of investment. In terms of consumer perspective, the consumers are influential participants in the process of creating value, (Odabaşı 2002, p. 372).

An important dimension of brand equity is brand awareness, very often an undervalued component. Not only that awareness is almost a prerequisite for a brand to be included in the consideration set (the brands that receive consideration for purchase), but it also influences perceptions and attitudes, and can be a driver for brand loyalty (Aaker 1991, p. 58).

3.6 BRAND LOYALTY

Brand loyalty which is a part of brand equity, affects the choices of consumers about brand to a high extent. When consumers are loyal to a brand, they purchase for the product of this specific brand on a regular basis. By being loyal, the consumers close their eyes for other brands which may be even better brands than the chosen one. In that way, brands with many loyal consumers have great advantages. Thus, they can handle competition in terms of lower price and improved products much better if they have many loyal consumers (Bornmark et al 2005, p. 38).

In order to mention about brand loyalty, there should be different brand alternatives and consumers need to continue to purchase for the same products although there are different options to buy (Velioğlu ve Çoknaz 2007, s. 96). Tucker (1964) Defines the brand loyalty as one brand's three times repeatedly being purchased and states that there are some behaviour types through this situation (Tucker 1964, pp. 32-35);

- a. Some consumers have loyalty to a certain brand even if there is no clear differences among brands.
- b. Even if this type of loyalty occurs through small and superficial differences, the loyalty to the brand occurred in this conditions do not become small and superficial.
- c. Every consumer has so different loyalty tendency.
- d. Since some consumption preferences are mostly trial-aimed, in such a situation loyalty is generally low.

Brand loyalty forming the base of brand equity (Altıntaş 2000, p. 38), could be defined as the tendency of rejecting other existing brands and choosing only one of them that consumers are loyal to this unique brand (Gülsoy 1999, p. 55). Aaker (1996) states that loyal consumers represents a barrier to entry to the market, a basis for a price premium, time to respond to competitors and a bulwark against deleterious price completion, and brand loyalty is a core dimension of brand equity (Chi, Yeh and Yang 2009, pp. 135-136).

In order to gain loyal consumers and sustain this loyalty, producers need to create brand awareness, consumers' perceiving quality should be sustained and the brand personality should be formed unequivocally (Aaker 1996, p. 37).

There are some conditions to mention about brand loyalty as follows (Erbaş 2006, pp. 52-62);

- a. Brand loyalty is not incidental.
- b. It is a behavioural reaction.
- c. It occurs after a certain time period.
- d. It is constituted by a decision-maker.
- e. There should be more than one option.

The main characteristics of a powerful brand is to create its own loyal consumer group. Therefore, every company has the aim of getting loyal consumers for their brands (İncesu 2011, s. 67). Moreover, the relations between brand equity and brand loyalty can be explained as follows (Elitok 2003, ss. 94-95);

- a. Brand loyalty is the basis of brand equity. If there was no equity for consumers, there would be no loyalty.
- b. Brand loyalty is the tie created by brand.
- c. Brand loyalty can gain value and strengthen as a result of interaction of four elements that are awareness, institutionalization, qualified product and the other values.
- d. The value gained today has as important effect on future sales.

There are some different loyalty types among consumers when measuring the brand loyalty. These loyalty types can be classified as follows (Uztuğ 2003, p. 35);

- a. **Long-term Loyalty:** Purchasing for only one brand in long-terms usage.
- b. **Short-term Loyalty:** It means short-term or long-term usage despite purchasing for more than one brand.

- c. **Changeable Loyalty:** Various brands' being sold in different times.
- d. **Selective while Shopping:** Purchasing during shopping requires preference among brands.
- e. **Price-oriented Purchasing:** Purchasing for more than one brand, but these brands are specially qualified and luxury.
- f. **Low Usage:** Users who purchase too few.

3.7 BRAND AWARENESS

Consumers will have a higher purchase intention with a familiar brand (Kamins and Marks 1991, p. 178). Likewise, if a product has higher brand awareness it will have a higher market share and a better quality evaluation (Dodds and Grewal 1991, p. 308). A well-known brand will have a higher purchase intention than a less well-known brand (Hsu 2000, p. 56).

Brand awareness is the first and prerequisite dimension of the entire brand knowledge system in consumers' minds, reflecting their ability to identify the brand under different conditions: the likelihood that a brand name will come to mind and the ease with which it does so (Keller 1993, p. 5). There will be no brand communication activity without creating brand awareness. Therefore, it requires consumers to be informed about the brand and consumers should be aware of the brand to purchase for its products (Akyol 2010, p. 37).

Brand awareness can be described as being informed about the brand, the place of the brand in the memory of consumers comparatively with the competitors' brands. Moreover, brand awareness is related with the success of brand identity functions such as sign, logo, word and etc. Thus, it can be said that brand awareness consists of the integration of brand recognition and brand recall (Ayar 2011, p. 21).

Brand awareness is not only to know the name of the brand or see the brand before. The brand, brand name and its symbol should combine in the minds of consumers (Hoeffler and Keller 2003, p. 423).

Brand awareness is essential in buying decision-making as it is important that consumers recall the brand in the context of a given specific product category, awareness increasing the probability that the brand will be a member of the consideration set. Awareness also affects decisions about brands in the consideration set, even in the absence of any brand associations in consumers' minds. In low involvement decision settings, a minimum level of brand awareness may be sufficient for the choice to be final. Awareness can also influence consumer decision making by affecting brand associations that form the brand image (Keller 1998, pp. 95-96.).

Brand awareness means the ability of a consumer can recognize and recall a brand in different situations (Aaker 1996, p. 104). Brand awareness consists of brand recall and brand recognition. Brand recall means when consumers see a product category, they can recall a brand name exactly, and brand recognition means consumers has ability to identify a brand when there is a brand cue. That is, consumers can tell a brand correctly if they ever saw or heard it. Moreover, Hoeffler and Keller (2002, p. 80) indicate that brand awareness can be distinguished from depth and width. Depth means how to make consumers to recall or identify brand easily, and width expresses in how many occasions when consumers purchase a product, a brand name will come to their minds at once. If a product owns brand depth and brand width at the same time, consumers will think of a specific brand when they want to buy a product. That is, the product has higher brand awareness. Moreover, brand name is the most important element in brand awareness (Davis et al 2008, p. 56). As a consequence, brand awareness will affect purchase decision through brand association, and when a product owns a positive brand image, it will help in marketing activities (Keller 1993, p. 3).

The main titles that create the levels of brand awareness can be specified as follows (Uztuğ 2003, pp. 29-39);

- i. Recognition,
- ii. Recall,
- iii. Being the 1st in brand recall,

- iv. Brand dominancy,
- v. Brand information,
- vi. Brand idea.

Since consumers prefer the brands that they are familiar, it can be said that brand awareness brings many competitive advantages. Through the awareness of brand name, some ideas can be presented by connecting with the brand's images, contents and specifications. This situation is so important in terms of luxury good producers and durable goods producers (Ayar 2011, ss. 22-23).

The awareness pyramid indicates and describe the levels of brand awareness which are awareness, brand recognition, brand recall and top of mind (Elitok 2003, p. 103). The level of awareness brand managers want to reach is being in the top of mind (Campbell 2002, p. 212). The levels of brand awareness can be described as follows (Aaker 1991; Bornmark et al 2005, p. 33; Elitok 2003, pp. 104-105);

- i. Brand recognition level is the first stage of brand awareness. It is when the consumers can recognize a specific brand among others; aided recall. Aided recall can also be explained as a situation where an asset of given brand names from a given product class is shown. The task is then to identify the recognized names. Brand recognition is major when consumers face the buying procedure.
- ii. Brand recall is upon the consumers to name the trademark in a product class. Apart from level one, this is an unaided recall since there are not given any examples of specific brands. The role of brand recall can also be vital for regularly purchased products like coffee, detergent and headache remedies, for which brand decisions usually are made prior going to the store. Further on, in some categories such as cereal there are so many recognized alternatives that the shopper is overwhelmed.
- iii. A brand that is top of mind is the first brand that consumers think of within a given product class.

The awareness pyramid mentioned before could be seen in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Awareness pyramid



Source: Jerenold, 2012. Brand awareness pyramid, July 11, <https://jerenold.wordpress.com/2012/07/11/brand-awareness-pyramid/>

One of the most important works about brand is creating brand awareness. The aim of brand awareness is to reach the top of mind level in the awareness pyramid. Thus, the works to reach the top of the awareness pyramid is planned, after determining the level of the brand in the awareness pyramid (Elitok 2003, p. 105).

Awareness position of the brand is significant in terms of the sustainability and future of the brand. Therefore, plans about creating brand awareness should be creative, brand-based, differentiated and original. In this perspective, it can be said that there are some techniques to conduct the brand awareness which are stated as follows (Aaker 2007, ss. 93-98; Elitok 2003, s. 107);

- i.** Making visible differences,
- ii.** Use of a slogan or jingle,
- iii.** Creating a sign or symbol,
- iv.** Advertisement messages or visibility in the media,
- v.** Activity sponsorships,
- vi.** Brand extension,
- vii.** Use of cues,
- viii.** Recall requires repeating,
- ix.** Recall bonus.



4. SOCIAL MEDIA

After 1970s the internet has been started to use by people and after 1990s the number of internet users has increased through the usage of internet by people due to increasing number of websites, portals and etc. And after 2000s social media has emerged for internet users. New communication technologies presents a media to people in which anyone can share their thoughts, works and something else. This system has been defined as social media which has an important role in terms of increasing the interaction among people via bringing them together (Akıncı-Vural ve Bat 2010, pp. 3348-3349).

4.1 THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Technological developments bring interactive and two-way communication concept in communications applications (Odabaşı 2007, p. 27). Today internet users could use websites with social content in order to find old friends, from new friendships and share photographs, videos and etc. (Kim, Ok-Ran and Sang-Won 2010, pp. 215-216).

The internet made a communication revolution in terms of sending and conveying the information to the every point of business and life areas of people (Neumann and Hogan 2005, p. 472). With this revolution, data exchange and analyse have been facilitated and the global business cycle have been accelerated (Mohamed 2007, p. 103).

Social media can be defined as a platform where blogs and online network sites pass along and share information in instant network communication worldwide (Lariscy et all 2009, p. 314). Social media is the technology and application system which facilitates efficient interaction among people, content and data in order to encourage new business formats, social structures and technological presentations. It is also used as the synonymous of Web 2.0 many times (İyiler 2009, p. 9). In fact, Web 2.0 highlights technological dimension of the transformation, whereas social media reflects the social dimension and usage of transformation (Akar 2010, p. 17). The word of Web 2.0 was started to use since

2004 and defined as the systems created by internet users through sharing social communication websites, wikis and communication tools (İyiler 2009, p. 9).

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), Web 2.0 is a term first initiated in 2004 in order to describe the new way in which software developers and end users started to make use of the World Wide Web. Before that, in the era of Web 1.0, individuals used applications like personal web pages or Encyclopedias were only limited to the publication of content . In other words, Web was only used as an “Information Portal” where end users were only able to view and download the specific information without having a direct participation. On the contrary, Web 2.0 is *“a platform whereby content and applicants are no longer created and published by individuals, but instead are continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative fashion”*(Kaplan and Haenlein 2010, p. 61).

From this standpoint, Web 2.0 is a new generation of web services and applications which emphasizes human participation and collaboration. The fact that all users were enabled to utilize the web in such a way can be definitely considered to be a revolution against the era of Web 1.0; a revolution that re-shaped social interaction and re-defined the relationship between the enterprises and their customers. Historically, companies were able to control the information available about them since the Web 1.0 did not enable them to have a share in modifying or re-creating the available content on the firms’ corporate WebPages. The firms through strategically placed press announcements and good public relations managers were the suppliers of the content and the customers/users were the readers/observers. Today, with the introduction of Web 2.0 this situation has been altered in such a way that firms *“have been increasingly relegated to the sidelines as mere observers, having neither the knowledge nor the chance-or, sometimes even the right-to alter publicly posted comments provided by their customers”*(Kaplan and Haenlein 2010, p. 60). Table 4.1 shows the differences between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0

Table 4.1: The differences between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0

	Web 1.0	Web 2.0
Format	Reading	Writing and contribution
Primary item of content	Page	Mailing / Recording
Situation	Static	Dynamic
Visible with...	Any web browser	Browsers, RSS readers
Structure	User service	Web service
Creation of the content	By web coding	By anyone

Source: Lincoln, S.R., 2009. *Mastering web 2.0 transform your business using key website and social media tools*, London: Kogan Page, p. 9.

Trends and features explaining Web 2.0 can be stated as follows (Rigby 2008, pp. 7-8);

- a. Over 1 billion people use the internet.
- b. The more people use any software, product or service, the more valuable it becomes.
- c. People are not only readers of online materials, but also the author and creator of these. The contributions of people increase the value of used software and services.
- d. Even if people using internet live all around the world, their collective actions have a powerful effect when they behave together.
- e. Many parts of the internet such as data and software could become easily affordable and accessible with lower prices or without any price by people who want to use them.
- f. Web 2.0 can integrate many sources and make them mixed.
- g. Web 2.0 presents an elastic structure and needs its users rather than designers to find ways to use it.
- h. Websites contain videos, photographs and live visual formats, and these contents resemble to the real life experiences.

Social media refers to the wide range of internet based and mobile services which allows people participating in online exchanges, contributing user-created contents and/or joining any communities (Dewing 2012, p. 1). Moreover, social media can be defined as

the activities, applications and behaviours among the human communities who prefer the thoughts, information and news used in media interactions. Here the media interactions means web-based applications in which people could reach easily words, photographs, videos and voices (Safko and Brake 2009, p. 6).

Social media is an online platform which provides chatting easily and sincerely on common interests of participants. It enables people to get more information about integration of users in common ground and choosing the best (Evans 2008, p. 31). In other words, social media is the communication format where sharing and discussion is the main fundament without time and place limit. Therefore, the roots of the social media are communication and sharing. Social media combines the technology and social entrepreneurship with words, photographs, videos and audio files. The definition of social media could change from people to people. However, its main tools can be stated as blogs, microblogs, online chat, RSS, social networks, forums, podcasts, video sharing sites, virtual worlds and etc. (Hatipoğlu 2009, p. 72).

According to the definitions about social media, social media websites and applications need to have these specifications (Erkul 2009, p. 3);

- a. Users who are independent from broadcasters.
- b. Content which is user sourced.
- c. Interaction among users.
- d. No time and place limit.

4.1.1 Features of Social Media

Social media is one of the most ideal platforms in terms of continuous updating, openness to multiple usage, enabling virtual sharing and etc. People could write their daily thoughts, could discuss on these thoughts and could produce new ideas. Moreover, they could share some photographs and videos except personal information, could look for a job and could live the real world with virtual world (Akıncı-Vural ve Bat 2010, p. 3349).

The basic features of social media could be specified as follows (Mavnacıoğlu 2009, p. 64);

- a. It is an internet applications chain where sharing and discussion is important without any time and place limit.
- b. Individuals can publish their own contents easily in internet and mobile platforms.
- c. Individuals can follow the contents and comments of other users.
- d. Individual is the man who is both follower and followed in social media applications.
- e. The basis of social media is related with the logic of sincerely chatting rather than a communication format with certain rules.
- f. When the contents are analysed in detail, it can be seen that these are informal and can be transformed into a gossip chain among the users in time.

As one of the most new ideas that present opportunities about sharing something online to people, social media has these specifications (Mayfield 2010, p. 6);

- a. **Participants:** Social media encourage the users and get feedback from them about everything related with these users.
- b. **Openness:** Social media services are open to feedback and participants.
- c. **Chatting:** Traditional media is related with broadcast (content or information transfer to the users), whereas social media is better due to enabling two-way chatting.
- d. **Society:** Social media allows communities share photographs, political values, favourite TV shows and etc. quickly and influentially.
- e. **Correlativity:** Many types of the social media carry out related works, enable other websites, researches and people to give a link about any issue related with.

Social media has some different specifications from traditional media. These differences can be stated as follows (Akıncı-Vural ve Bat 2010, p. 3352);

- a. **Access:** Both traditional media and social media enable everyone to reach something related with their interests.
- b. **Accessibility:** In general, private sector and governments try to produce something in traditional media. However, social media tools can be used by everyone without any costs.
- c. **Availability:** Traditional media production requires mostly specialized abilities and education. However, in social media everyone can produce something.
- d. **Innovation:** Time range in traditional media communications is more than social media communications which has instant action and reaction. Participants decide on the time range of reactions.
- e. **Permanence:** Traditional media cannot be changed after its creation, while social media can be changed easily and instantly with comments and rearranging.

Digitalization and technical improvements have direct and important effects on new communication technologies. These effects can be stated as follows (Souter 1999, p. 409);

- a. Computer capacities, communication networks, information systems has been developing faster rather than it was in the past.
- b. Both telephone prices and digital transformation and computer equipment's values have been decreasing.
- c. Services provided by new communication technologies has been rapidly growing.
- d. Internet as a new communication technology, has been providing the transformation of both accessing to information and the capacity of new communication technologies.

From another perspective, social media contains these ideas as follows (Sweeney and Craig 2011, p. 16);

- a. Social media contains participation infrastructure, that is, new applications could be added to the applications of the users.
- b. Social media enables the use of collective intelligence.
- c. Social media provides easy information share via small niches.

- d. The role could be switched between the audiences and the author via social media.

4.1.2 The Usage Area of Social Media

Social media usage which becomes today a habit for internet users responds social demands of wide communities from everywhere and every culture, while it is in the focus point of people criticizing social media. Advances in new communication technologies and increase in the interest on information technologies strengthen the power of social media and add a new dimension to the socialization concept (Akıncı-Vural ve Bat 2010, p. 3349).

Social media provides companies building relations with their customers. Companies could use social media platforms in order for talking with their customers and also customers could communicate with the companies through social media applications. Moreover, social media gives an opportunity to customers to talk with each other through blogs or Facebook groups. Therefore, marketing is now a two-way process to bring the company and the consumer together with the social media. The interactive features of social media gives opportunity to individuals share and talk with each other. Audiences have begun to create content about the brand/firm without any control by the firm (Özçelik 2015, pp. 45-46).

Social media usage can be evaluated globally through some statistical information as follows (Kahraman 2009);

- a. Social media leaves the porn category behind in the internet.
- b. The growth rate of Twitter in 2008 was %1500.
- c. 2/3 of people around the world use social networks.
- d. 100 million videos have been daily watched in Youtube.
- e. People spend 8 billion minutes every day in Facebook and 285 million contents have been shared.
- f. If Facebook would be a country, it was the 3rd crowded country in the world after China and India with its members.

- g.** After launching, 6.7 billion tweets had been sent in Twitter until 2009.
- h.** %65.1 of the internet users use e-mail applications, while social media users are %68.
- i.** Turkey is the 3rd most active country in Facebook with its 14 million users.
- j.** Turkey is the most popular country in the usage of Friendfeed around the world.
- k.** Turkey is the most time spending country in internet among European countries.

4.1.3 Advantages and Disadvantages of Social Media

Social media has many advantages for both consumers and firms. These advantages can be evaluated as follows (Biçer 2012, pp. 17-18);

- a.** Cost is low,
- b.** Measurable,
- c.** Provides fast, elastic and easy access,
- d.** Provides the opportunity to identify customers better,
- e.** Provides easiness for WOM application,
- f.** Enables people to express themselves,
- g.** Provides the advantage of location and mobility,
- h.** It is funny,
- i.** Social networks enable firms to make market segmentation,
- j.** Provides firms to access true target markets,
- k.** Enables firms to follow thoughts about their brands in real time,
- l.** Enables firms to propagandize more effectively in blogs for positive brand image,
- m.** Provides easiness firms to give more effective messages for brand users.

Social media provides some opportunities for its users. This opportunities can be stated as follows (Brogan 2010, pp. 6-7);

- a.** It provides chronological regularization of ideas, situations and thoughts, therefore performs more than e-mails.
- b.** It encourages to learn podcast videos and audios in different and portable formats.

- c.** Networks encouraging collaborations change corporate indexes and increase the value of e-mail chatting channels.
- d.** Social networks bring people together who are in common ideas like political organizations.
- e.** Blogs and wikis encourages people to produce, share and chat.
- f.** It improves mediated information share among people.
- g.** Social news websites indicates the popularity of certain information in some democracies.
- h.** Social networks contain general information about production, sales and marketing.
- i.** It indicates important ways to understand the ideas of the consumers.
- j.** Social networks contains much information about competitors, customers and expected innovations.
- k.** Blogs allow thoughts to be shared, listen and follow freely that cannot be said in any other media channel.
- l.** Podcasts provides the way to establish relation with information.
- m.** Podcasts integrate people who try the abilities of new tools.
- n.** Tagging, sharing and the other activities have a common feature on social web which means conveying information faster to the environment.
- o.** It enables individuals to bring together.

Also there are some disadvantages of social media as follows (Biçer 2012, p. 19);

- a.** The use of social media is so easy, but success of the social media usage is so hard.
- b.** It is risky and uncontrollable. There is no certain formula or road map to use social media.
- c.** It is possible for people to bring together who have common negative thoughts on any brand image,
- d.** Increasing growth of social networks could result in increase of noise in communication, losing of marketing and communication messages for firms, misdirecting and feedbacks' becoming below expectations.

4.2 THE HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Internet usage began in 1970s increased its user number via becoming widespread of websites and portals slowly until 1990s (Akıncı-Vural ve Bat 2010, p. 3349). After internet's starting to be popular in 1990s, there were arisen many websites in which people could create and upload some contents. In 1997, the 1st social network website was launched that named as SixDegrees.com. After 2002, so many social network websites have been founded and most of them filled the gaps in internet based technology and became so popular among internet users. By the late 2000s social media tools had been started to accept and use by huge numbers of people (Dewing 2012, p. 2). In MediaLive International Conference conducted in 2004 it was mentioned about the Web 2.0 concept in order to explain new period approach. During this conference, wikis, blogs and tagging were stated as the web services of 2nd generation (O'Reilly 2005; Biçer 2012, p. 6). In 2012, Facebook management announced that Facebook have 1 billion members around the world and Twitter management announced that there are 517 million Twitter users in the world (Dewing 2012, p. 2).

There are some technological factors that contributing the rapid development of social media such as increased broadband availability, improvement of software tools, continuous development of powerful computers and mobile devices. Moreover, it can be said that there are some social factors affecting the development of social media such as the rapid uptake of social media by youths. Furthermore, easiness on affordability of computers and growing commercial interests in social media sites can be evaluated as the economic factors affecting the evolution of social media (Dewing 2012, p. 2).

The milestones of the social media after the year of 2000 could be stated as follows (Biçer 2012, pp. 10-11);

- a. 2000:** With the launch of new social network websites, there happened a boom in .com system.
- b. 2002:** Friendster was launched and in 3 months it had reached 3 million users.

- c. **2003:** MySpace, Plaxo, LinkedIn, Hi5, Second Life were launched.
- d. **2004:** Facebook was launched and in the 1st month nearly 20.000 students joined to the site. Moreover, more than 4 billion photographs were shared after Flickr made the photograph share start.
- e. **2005:** YouTube was launched. Moreover, Facebook was opened for also college students. Furthermore, Bebo was launched.
- f. **2006:** Twitter was launched. Moreover, Facebook was opened for everyone.
- g. **2007:** Tumblr which is a microblog service and Friendfeed which is a social content share service were launched.
- h. **2008:** Facebook became the leader social network website via beating Myspace.
- i. **2009:** Foursquare which works based on location was launched.
- j. **2010:** Buzz service was launched by Google. Moreover, the integration of social networks with Gmail was enabled. Furthermore, Pinterest social platform which works with panel system was launched.
- k. **2011:** Google+ was launched. The user number of Facebook reached to 550 million. Averagely 65 million tweets were daily sent in Twitter, 2 billion videos were daily watched in YouTube, LinkedIn accessed 90 million professional users.

4.3 SOCIAL NETWORKS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Online social networks form the heart of some popular web sites. The more technology develops, the more the applications become interrelated. Also it indicates that social networks play roles in both local and organizational information and also personal and commercial online interaction (Mislove et al 2007, p. 31).

Social networks refers to a group in which there are different effects containing interrelated or different information. In other words, social networks provide information to share and convey among the members joined to the network (Phillips and Phillips 1998, p. 330). Moreover, social networks means the integration of personal connections which are combined via relation sets (Downes 2005, p. 411).

Social networks are differentiated from each other in terms of size and heterogeneity. Small homogenous networks are the networks which are formed by working groups, people living small towns and etc. These networks are good in protecting presence reason. However, wide social groups are more complex and more heterogeneous due to the features of network members (Lea et al 2006, p. 122).

Social networks consist of these elements as follows (Dawley 2009, p.111);

- a. **Social sites:** MySpace, Facebook, Twitter,
- b. **Photograph sharing sites:** Flickr, PhotoBucket,
- c. **Video sharing sites:** YouTube,
- d. **Professional network sites:** LinkedIn, Ning,
- e. **Blogs:** Blogger.com, Wordpress,
- f. **Wikis:** Wetpaint, PBWiki,
- g. **Content tagging:** MERLOT, SLoog,
- h. **Virtual world:** SL, Active Worlds, There, Whyville, Club Penguin, HiPiHi.

Table 4.2 shows the top 10 visited multi-platform social-networking websites and forums in October 2015. According to the table, it can be seen that Facebook has the market share of visits in the U.S.A. with %45.4. Then YouTube is the second with %22.2 and Twitter is the third with %4.8.

Table 4.2: Top 10 visited multi-platform social-networking websites and forums

Rank	Website	U.S. Market Share of Visits
1	Facebook	45,4%
2	YouTube	22,2%
3	Twitter	4,80%
4	Reddit	4,43%
5	Pinterest	1,65%
6	Tumblr	1,36%
7	LinkedIn	1,34%
8	Instagram	1,32%
9	Yahoo! Answers	1,28%
10	Google+	0,90%

Source: Experian Marketing Services, 2015, October, <http://www.marketingcharts.com/updates/top-10-multi-platform-social-networking-websites-forums-october-2015-60998/>

Social networks have been used not only to socialize and enjoy, but also to access information, learn and do professional business. Specifications provided by social networks such as personalization, user supported content adding and metadata enrich the user experience and enable these sites more attractive (Tonta 2009, p. 742).

There are some important statistical data about social networks as follows (Lenhart and Madden 2007, p. 2);

- a. %82 of the university students and %55 of the age below 19 use the social networks.
- b. Youths who are between the age of 13 and 19 have blog.
- c. %28 of internet users were tagged.
- d. %48 of the internet users use video sharing sites like YouTube.

4.3.1 Facebook

Facebook as the biggest social network in the world has 500 million members in August 2010. It is one of the biggest online companies in the world with its more than 1700 workers. Also, it has more than one million entrepreneur in 180 different countries. One half of the online social network users use Facebook daily and spend 6 billion minutes in a day. These users upload 2 billion photograph and 14 million videos to Facebook every

month and share 2 billion contents such as e-mails, connections, news, notes and etc. every week (Tonta 2009, pp. 748-749).

The reasons of increasing interest on Facebook could be evaluated as follows (Nielsen Company 2009, p. 9);

- a. Easy and basic design,
- b. Wide demographic participants,
- c. Being activity based,
- d. Creative features and open architecture,
- e. The feature of limiting personal information by members in terms of security reasons,
- f. Interrelation opportunities with other social networks.

Facebook applications presents these benefits for its users as follows (Sweeney and Craig 2011, p. 54);

- a. Restaurant reservations through Facebook pages,
- b. Sharing the PowerPoint presentations via uploading to the page,
- c. Interviewing, sending and getting voice messages,
- d. Sharing files and project plans,
- e. Customer program interviews,
- f. Collecting product specifications with calendar, photographs and details,
- g. Doing task and goal classifications,
- h. Getting blog posts via RSS.

4.3.2 Twitter

Twitter which is a microblog service enables users to transmit any message freely to the connected people in 140 characters through computer, tablet or smartphone via a social network (Genç 2010, p. 4). The user invites people in order to connect with them after

creating the account. It is possible to upload photographs to Twitter via twitpic and videos via twitvid applications (Bat 2012, p. 61).

Twitter is an interactive talking tool that other people could be added to the conversations and also conversations among other people could be followed. The reason that makes Twitter important is these conversations. According to the need of users, it can be used as a social tool, business tool, promotion tool or research tool (Weber 2009, p. 9).

4.3.3 Blogs

The word of “Blog” comes from the integration of “Web” and “Log”. Therefore, the term was named as “Weblog” firstly. Then “Weblog” was shortened as “Blog” when this technique became widespread (Özata ve Öztaşkın 2005, p. 36).

Blog refers to an easy preparable website in short, that is, forming diary on a website via free or cheap software. Blogs have some distinctive features such as calendar or archive, permalink for every post, fields for comments (Özata ve Öztaşkın 2005, p. 36). One of the major and popular examples of blog services personalizing the web is MySpace (Mestçi 2009, p. 590).

Companies could use blogs in order to carry out their public relations, strengthen the brand image, relate with customers, launch communication platforms for workers stating their thoughts and hire workers (İyiler 2009, p. 15).

The evaluation of blog use in terms of marketing could be stated as follows (Özata ve Öztaşkın 2005, p. 39);

- a.** Market research,
- b.** Determining, following and analysing the mouth-to-mouth communication,
- c.** Measurement of advertising effectiveness,
- d.** Early warning system,
- e.** Expand of relational marketing,

- f.** Target marketing,
- g.** Multiple media information resource,
- h.** Idea leadership.

The advantages of the blogs could be stated as follows (Goodfellow and Graham 2007, p. 396);

- a.** It is cheap or free.
- b.** It does not need any special software for setup.
- c.** It does not need computer knowledge in expert level.
- d.** The contents are updated easily.
- e.** It is followed via using RSS.
- f.** It can create dialogs between audience and author with the feature of adding comments.

Benefits of blogs could be evaluated in terms of marketing efforts conducted by companies as follows (Wright 2006, pp. 52-53);

- a.** Creates and develops customer loyalty.
- b.** Helps to form an early rumour.
- c.** Be influential in reacting against negative situations.
- d.** Provides increasing the effect on customers.

4.3.4 YouTube

YouTube became the biggest video share community in the world in short time. This growth provides some benefits to both users and marketing officers. These benefits could be stated as follows (Biçer 2012, p. 30);

- a.** Benefits for users
- b.** Access to the biggest inventory in the world composed of videos prepared by professionals and users.

- c. Opportunity for participating in a huge community that is in interaction with content.
- d. Opportunity of taking part of more than one platforms.
- e. Benefits for marketing officers
- f. Access to a wide user community highly participating in the consumed content.
- g. Methods that can be used to transmit the messages and protect the brand in a secure environment.
- h. Basic service platforms that can be used to publish advertisements and measure the effectiveness of advertising activities.

4.3.5 LinkedIn

LinkedIn was launched in 2003 by Reid Hoffman with the slogan of “The largest professional social network in the world” in order to establish business network. There are also some similar social networks such as Çember Net and Xing (Bat 2012, p. 62).

LinkedIn provides people coordinating their professional identity in the internet environment and helps the career process to be successful (Elad 2008, p. 11). Moreover, LinkedIn users could establish groups or participate in existing groups and ask questions about industry to other members (Hall and Rosenberg 2009, p. 109).

4.4 SOCIAL MEDIA IN BUSINESS WORLD

Although Web 2.0 applications become newly important in Turkey, many companies which are worldwide brands try to increase their revenues and brand loyalty by using communication opportunities provided by internet technologies beside traditional media tools such as radio and television advertisement (Parlak 2010, p. 41). Companies use social media tools for some goals. These goals could be specified as follows (Barnes 2010, p. 9);

- a. Social media sites is another way of communication.
- b. Be used to create customer value.

- c.** Increases the product and/or brand awareness.
- d.** Enables to follow the competitors and trends.
- e.** Used for the exhibition of the products.
- f.** Increases the efficiency more in the cost and marketing related goals.

Companies want to use social media, should follow these processes stated as follow (Hatipoğlu 2009, p. 74);

- a.** Company should determine to what it wants to reach via social media strategy.
- b.** How to behave when changing the relations with customers should be determined.
- c.** The tools that will be used to implement strategy should be evaluated in detail with its returns to the company.
- d.** Social map of the target which is wanted to reach should be determined. Target group's what to do in social media should be followed.
- e.** Individuals should feel themselves as the part of the brand.
- f.** More than one access opportunity should be provided to the target group.
- g.** Produced content should be appropriate to share.
- h.** Some personnel should be hired for the following of social media.
- i.** The advantage of determining the target group provided by social media should be benefited.
- j.** Studies done should be measured.

Social media marketing differentiated from the traditional marketing with some features. These features could be specified as follows (Weinberg 2009, pp. 6-7);

- a.** Social media marketing facilitates the natural exploration of new content. The website allows users to reach hundreds of content spontaneously without any relation with commercial intention.
- b.** Social media marketing increases the traffic of websites.
- c.** Social media marketing forms powerful relations.

Rapid technological advances and its heading for different fields by creating more special usage area to individuals necessitate a fast shift on developed plans and applications in terms of marketing. The effects of the information technologies and network technologies to the individuals in the future could be specified as follows (İyiler 2009, p. 17);

- a. The importance of virtual organizations will increase.
- b. Different terminals will be used in connecting the network.
- c. The services will be accessed by wireless networks and portable data terminals from everywhere.
- d. Fun and communication will be together.
- e. Every service can be accessed from home.
- f. Home office working system will become widespread.
- g. The communication cost will decrease.
- h. GPS and locators will be used more.

4.5 EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON BRANDS

Taking part in the social media is a new marketing communication channel for brands and products. If it is used effectively, it has a big potential for companies to reach their target groups. It enables to make voluntarily announcements with the creation of brand loyalty and help of many groups. User who are the members of some sites are in fact the volunteers for branding in these platforms. It enables an important advantage for companies which measure their marketing strategies with the participants who share content and also be the members of the brand page (Parlak 2010, p. 49).

Social media marketing provides good options in order to increase brand awareness and present services or products. It is possible to follow the competitor's what to do through social media beside the communication with the target group of the company. Companies should participate in organizations and activities where they share their messages with other companies which are in the subject of interest via managing the social media. Therefore, it is possible to be in close touch with both competitors and other job enlargement oriented companies (Jason 2010, p. 40).

Social media sites have carried out many functions related with public relations such as easiness to reach the consumers, increasing the brand loyalty, while these have been started to be used for the objective of e-commerce. Companies with any scales could benefit from social media in these fields as follows (İyiler 2009, p. 13; Tuten 2008, pp. 25-26);

- a.** Creating demand,
- b.** Strengthening search engine optimization,
- c.** Improving customer relations,
- d.** Protecting connections with business partners,
- e.** Doing research and development,
- f.** Informing customers about new products,
- g.** Getting customer thoughts directly,
- h.** Providing workers talking with the customers directly,
- i.** Providing customer services and supports,
- j.** Relations with the workers,
- k.** Positioning the company as the ideational leader in the industry.

Social media sites has an important features as a marketing tool and these features can create financial support to the commercial activities (Westerlund and Syahn 2008, p. 493). Millions of consumers with common thoughts can come together and could positively or negatively comment on product and brand through social media. This situation affects the brand image significantly (Cote and Pybus 2007, p. 95).

Going into business through Facebook for instance, has evidenced many successful commercial stories. Arkonem for example, a Turkish skincare brand in an effort to raise awareness for the launch of its new product range Soft Touch; by utilizing “Facebook for business” (a Facebook marketing tool), reached more than 7 million people with a reach and frequency campaign that shifted brand perception at scale (Arkonem Success Story).

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 RESEARCH TECHNIQUE

This research is prepared based on exploratory qualitative research method. Qualitative research is a multi-method technique adopting an interpretive approach into the research problem in focusing to the research issue. As the strategy of qualitative research method, the case studies strategy that means analysing a systematic research on certain organization in terms of a certain issue via interviews, observations or surveys is used (Coşkun et al 2015, pp. 303-304).

In this thesis, multiple cases from pulses industry have been investigated through interviews with pulses producer companies. The research aims to compare and contrast the thoughts and applications of these companies on social media usage and awareness issue, and to find out whether or not the results are unique or different for these companies. Moreover, in order to prepare this research, in-depth interview technique is used to analyse the thoughts and applications of companies operating in pulses industry about the effects of social media usage on brand awareness.

5.2 REASONING FOR QUALITATIVE METHOD ADAPTION

There are studies conducted before this research using in-depth interview with cases as example of qualitative research method. Rahman (2015) used four interviews in investigating the relations between the use of social media and brand management on clothing industry. Yüncü (2012) analyses the effects of consumer behaviour factors on international marketing in textile industry with one interview.

In this research, qualitative research method is used to analyse the research questions and objectives in the sixth section through in-depth interviews with companies in pulses industry that investigate the effects of social media on brand awareness.

5.3 RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES

The major research question of the present thesis is the following: “What is the attitude of the companies which operate in the Turkish pulses industry regarding the effects of social media usage in relation to brand awareness?”. Based on this question, the objectives of this work are addressed as follows;

- i. To investigate and examine the attitudes of the Turkish companies which operate in the sector of pulses towards social media utilization and engagement,
- ii. To research whether these companies relate social media engagement with brand awareness or not, and to what extent,
- iii. To analyse the attitudes of social media experts on social media usage by companies operating in pulses industry and evaluate their recommendations on how to increase brand awareness through social media engagement,
- iv. To evaluate the current situation and give recommendations regarding the issue.

5.4 PARTICIPANTS AND SAMPLING

This thesis focuses on the interview responses of 10 experts. Six of them are representatives of Turkish brands that operate in pulses industry, while the other four are social media experts working on brand management and advertising. As far as the pulses sector is concerned, the selection of the specific representatives was not random, but it was based on the reputation of those brands in the Turkish pulses market. In the same context, the social media experts whose specializations are on brand management were also selected due to the reputation of the advertising agencies they work in the current market.

More specifically, the companies chosen in Turkish pulses market are Yayla Agro, Reis Gıda, Dimyat Bakliyat, Sezon Bakliyat, Dokuzlar Bakliyat and Damla Bakliyat.

Yayla Agro is one of the biggest companies in the Turkish pulses market. It was established in 1980s. In the domestic market it has established a dealership network in 65

provinces (Yayla Bakliyat). In Table 5.1, social media platforms Yayla Agro engaged could be seen.

Table 5.1: Yayla Agro social media platforms

Official Website	http://www.yaylabakliyat.com.tr
Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/yaylabakliyat
Twitter	https://twitter.com/yaylagida
Instagram	https://www.instagram.com/yaylabakliyat
LinkedIn	https://www.linkedin.com/company/yayla-agro
Pinterest	https://www.pinterest.com/yaylabakliyat/markalar%C4%B1m%C4%B1z/
Google+	https://plus.google.com/115960775393311948371/posts
Youtube	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyWkYxIF-iVg6hDW3tliKiw
Blog	Not available

Reis Gıda is also one of the biggest brands in pulses market which was established in 1981. Reis products certified as in conformity with the relevant national and international quality norms, are exported mainly to the USA and the other countries like North Cyprus, Canada, France, Austria and Turkish Republics (Reis Gıda). In Table 5.2, social media platforms Reis Gıda engaged could be seen.

Table 5.2: Reis Gıda social media platforms

Official Website	http://www.reisgida.com.tr/
Facebook	https://tr-tr.facebook.com/reisgida/
Twitter	https://twitter.com/reisgida
Instagram	https://www.instagram.com/reisgida/
LinkedIn	https://tr.linkedin.com/in/reis-gida-523531b9
Pinterest	https://www.pinterest.com/pin/560768591080064751/
Google+	https://plus.google.com/117394061588140609048/about
Youtube	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZUtKXS0YjY_VKAhbu-1UvA
Blog	Not available

Dimyat Bakliyat was established in 2002. The company operates as both for producing its own brands and for packaging the products of private labels (Dimyat Bakliyat). In Table 5.3, social media platforms Dimyat Bakliyat engaged could be seen.

Table 5.3: Dimyat Bakliyat social media platforms

Official Website	http://www.dimyat.com.tr/
Facebook	https://tr-tr.facebook.com/DimyatGold/info?tab=page_info
Twitter	https://twitter.com/DimyatGold
Instagram	https://www.instagram.com/dimyatgold/
LinkedIn	https://www.linkedin.com/company/dimyat-gold
Pinterest	Not available
Google+	https://plus.google.com/u/0/+DimyatTrDimyatGold/posts
Youtube	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCD4dcNjGQSNRT5ul4So4y8Q?guided_help_flow=3
Blog	http://dimyatgold.blogspot.com.tr/2015/10/dimyat-gold_30.html

Sezon Bakliyat was established in 1950. The company became dominant in organized retail market with its brand and producing other international organized retail seller's brands since 1983 (Sezon Bakliyat). In Table 5.4, social media platforms Sezon Bakliyat engaged could be seen.

Table 5.4: Sezon Bakliyat social media platforms

Official Website	http://www.sezon.com.tr/tr/index.html
Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/sezonpirincas
Twitter	https://twitter.com/sezonpirincas
Instagram	https://www.instagram.com/sezonpirinc/
LinkedIn	https://www.linkedin.com/company/sezon-pirin%C3%A7
Pinterest	https://tr.pinterest.com/sezonpirincas/
Google+	Not available
Youtube	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCq88O1B0BULLmk4_Zre7Xxw
Blog	http://sezonunlezzetleri.blogspot.com.tr/

Dokuzlar Bakliyat was established in 1986 and was institutionalized in 1994. In 2008, the company entered to the packaged pulses industry (Dokuzlar Bakliyat). In Table 5.5, social media platforms Dokuzlar Bakliyat engaged could be seen.

Table 5.5: Dokuzlar Bakliyat social media platforms

Official Website	http://www.dokuzlarbakliyat.com/
Facebook	https://tr-tr.facebook.com/DokuzlarBakliyat
Twitter	Not available
Instagram	Not available
LinkedIn	Not available
Pinterest	Not available
Google+	https://plus.google.com/116661298985608952350/posts
Youtube	Not available
Blog	Not available

Damla Bakliyat was established in 1983. The company operates both for its brand's production and also for private labels' production (Damla Bakliyat). In Table 5.6, social media platforms Damla Bakliyat engaged could be seen.

Table 5.6: Damla Bakliyat social media platforms

Official Website	http://www.caglayangida.com.tr/
Facebook	https://tr-tr.facebook.com/pages/%C3%87aglayan-G%C4%B1da-Damla-Bakliyat/327303423956110
Twitter	Not available
Instagram	Not available
LinkedIn	Not available
Pinterest	Not available
Google+	https://plus.google.com/103215288242480564431/about
Youtube	Not available
Blog	Not available

Moreover, the advertising agencies chosen related to the social media engagement are Buro, Mobilike, Milklab and Rabarba.

Buro is one among the most reputable advertising agencies in Istanbul, established in 2009. Buro's offerings concentrate on creative consultancy, project and product development and advertising. Buro's work has been awarded many times from various organizations like PIAF (Prague International Advertising Festival) in 2013, where Buro was given the bronze award in the category of creative use of traditional advertising formats (Buro).

Mobilike is a mobile advertising agency located in Istanbul, founded in 2009 by Sekip Can Gokalp and Volkan Bicer. Mobilike is a member of Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) and Mobile Marketing Association (MMA). In advance, Mobilike is the mobile advertising industry leader in Turkey and Greece representing 65% market share, with a reach over of 4 billion page impressions spread over 350 publishers. Mobilike has been granted many awards by various national and international organizations like EMEA and Smarties Turkey for its innovation, creativity and success (Mobilike).

Milklab is a new generation digital agency mainly focused on digital marketing, motion graphic and interactive technologies. It was established 2 years ago in Istanbul by Murat Ersoy and Alaattin Koptur. Despite the fact that Milklab is a relatively new company they recently won two crystal awards on the categories of digital media and interactive events for their work (Milklab).

Rabarba is a well known agency operating in the sector of marketing and advertising located in Istanbul and founded in 2007. Rabarba has been awarded for its work several times in the fields of mobile, tv and computer services by organizations like Felis, Effie, Golden Drum, Eurobest and Epica (Rabarba).

Judgemental (purposive) sampling which is a non-probability sampling technique was selected as the most appropriate way for the conduction of the present research. Judgemental sampling usually occurs under the judgement of the researcher. In this research, judgemental sampling was chosen due to the following reasons (Black 2010, p. 225);

- i. To begin with, judgemental sampling is used when the purpose of a research is to obtain information from a very specific group of people, in our case the managing directors of companies operating in the sector of pulses and the social media experts on brand management.
- ii. Furthermore, judgemental sampling is also used when the population under investigation is in some way representative of the population of interest.

- iii. Moreover, in judgemental sampling experts are used to interview on a specific issue.

5.5 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

In a research, there are two methods to gather data. These are primary data collection and secondary data collection. The general rule in researches is to use primary resources as data collection method (Karasar 2012, p. 135). In researches in which primary data is used, some techniques such as interview, survey, observation, experiment and etc. are conducted in order to reach objective and accurate information. In this research, interview technique as a primary data collection method is used.

Interview is a data collection method via verbal and/or written communication (Karasar 2012, p. 165). In this research in-depth interview technique is used through e-mail interviewing as an interview technique. Primary data about the effects of social media on brand awareness in pulses industry is collected via e-mail interviewing due to limited time.

The interviews conducted in this research are semi-structured, that means, interviewer has a road map for interview, but he tries to reveal different dimensions of the issue through asking different questions about the interest and information of the interviewee (Coşkun et al 2015, p. 94).

The interviews in this study are conducted in an exact way. Before the interview, the questions were prepared by interviewer and the supervisor. Then, all of the interviewees were informed about the research. The consent of declaration was sent to the interviewees by the interviewer in order to able to recognize their names and brand in this research. The in-depth interview questions of the research prepared and sent to the interviewees are as follows;

- i. Does your company use social media?
- ii. What do you think about social media utilization by companies for commercial reasons?
- iii. Do you think that companies operating in pulses industry like your company should engage in social media? Why?
- iv. Could you please specify which is/are the most suitable platforms for a company selling pulses to engage and why?
- v. Do you think that health and taste issues are getting trendier in the case of pulses on various social media platforms?
- vi. What do you think is the role and the effect of celebrity endorsements for social media usage in pulses industry?
- vii. How would you conceptualize brand awareness?
- viii. Do you think that social media engagement is related to brand awareness? If yes, in which ways?
- ix. How do you think that companies should use social media platforms? Is there any specific “recipe” that companies should follow?
- x. Do you think that companies which utilize social media have a competitive advantage than companies not using social media? Why?
- xi. Do you think the utilization of social media can affect a company’s sales? If yes, in which way?

5.6 DATA ANALYSIS

In this research, data gathered through in-depth interview are obtained through e-mail interviews with managers of the pulses brands in Turkey and social media experts. In order to analyse the data acquired through this technique, the content analysis which is a technique used to characterise and compare the interview reports and/or records is conducted (Altunışık et al 2004, p. 234).

5.7 LIMITATIONS

Limitations of a research mean that the things the researcher have to give up through some reasons although the researcher wants to do these things which seem ideal (Karasar 2012, p. 73). The main limitations of the research is that interviewees do not want to share some information due to the information's being trade secret as a company procedure. Moreover, e-mail answers are another limitation for the research that can cause misinterpretation about some information on the research problem. Furthermore, time limitations is other limitation type of this research. It leads to reaching to limited number of interviewees.



6. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW WITH PULSES INDUSTRY COMPANIES AND ADVERTISING AGENCIES

In this thesis, the effects of social media on brand awareness will be analysed and evaluated in terms of 6 companies operating in pulses industry and 4 advertising agencies by the use of in-depth interview technique. The companies operating in Turkish pulses industry are Dimyat Bakliyat (DİB), Damla Bakliyat (DAB), Dokuzlar Bakliyat (DOB), Reis Gıda (RG), Yayla Agro (YA) and Sezon Bakliyat (SB), whereas the advertising agencies are Buro (BR), Mobilike (MB), Milklab (ML) and Rabarba (RB).

6.1 IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW WITH PULSES INDUSTRY COMPANIES

There were conducted 11 questioned in-depth interview with 6 pulses companies in Turkey. The questions and the answer of these companies are stated below.

Question 1: Does your company use social media?

All of the 6 companies operating in the pulses industry gave the answer of “Yes” for this question. All of these companies have active website and also commercial pages on social networks.

Question 2: What do you think about social media utilization by companies for commercial reasons?

DİB: We evaluate positively the use of social media by commercial reasons. Today it is an accurate and effective way to reach people directly to inform people about company, products or promotions.

DAB: The use of social media for commercial reasons is a good and logical option to increase reputation rather than advertising especially in terms of costs. However, we do not think that it has too much influential.

DOB: Every commercial brand and supplier company wants to be known and to be preferred by huge target groups. Awareness could provide arising more commercial fields, increasing the trade volume and creating welfare for society.

RG: The use of social media is less costly compared to the other media tools. Therefore it can affect the choices of consumers with a more appropriate budget.

YA: I think it is an essential tool for many reasons such as increasing market exposure, creating visibility, being accessible by more audience and building/maintaining your brand awareness. For instance; if you are a larger organization, focusing on social media to connect with a larger audience in order to get national exposure for your brand and products. On the other hand, if you label yourself as SME or local business, you can use social media to build a dedicated, loyal customer base.

SB: Social media usage is one of the nowadays realities. Every company must pay attention to this issue. People from 7 to 70 spend time on social media and it is more than watching TV today. People can easily get and produce information at any time such as in a bus, in the park, during eating, travelling and etc. Therefore, it is inevitable for companies to engage in social media platforms.

Question 3: Do you think that companies operating in pulses industry like your company should engage in social media? Why?

DİB: We think it is necessary engaging in social media because it is the easiest way to reach the end users.

DAB: We consider that social media users want to change or close the page when meeting with any advertisement in their channel. Therefore, the rate of tracking for advertisements is very low. However, we have no enough data about this to evaluate properly.

DOB: Social media is used more than predictions in Turkey. People from every age group and social structure have social media accounts. Therefore, it can be said that advertising sector will invest mostly in social media tools in the close future and it will reduce the advertising costs because of affordability of social media advertising. Thus, we can see that today both big and small companies are eager to use social media.

RG: Because pulses products have many benefits for human health, companies operating in pulses industry could engage in social media in order to inform the society about healthy foods. We used an advertising campaign in 2009 with the slogan of “Traditional Tastes Healthy Generations” as Reis Gıda in order to deal with obesity. Such campaigns could be so logical and it can be done with low costs. Furthermore, it can be said that companies could prefer to engage in social media related with their marketing strategies. Social media facilitates to reach especially housewives who cook pulses such as bean, chickpea and lentil or women in working area.

YA: I have positive thoughts about it. I think any industry is not in a position where you may deny the power of social media regardless. As Yayla Agro, we should be pioneer in so many aspects; social media should be one of them for sure. Nowadays, human beings are more careful about what they eat and how these products are made, especially after GMO pulses affected the whole market in a certain era, still does. In other words, we should give a right message to our target market as showing exposure in terms of our healthy choices, manufacturing conditions and our scale in current industry from the right channel, social media is the most powerful one indeed.

SB: Yes, certainly. Companies should engage in social media in order for one-to-one connection with consumers. We can reach the final consumers through using social media. We should be aware of everything written or told about us as a company operating in food industry. If we do not engage in social media platforms, we cannot know anything written about us and it can take time to fix and change the negative thoughts about us. Therefore, it is important to establish one-to-one connection with our customers.

Question 4: Could you please specify which is/are the most suitable platforms for a company selling pulses to engage and why?

DIB: We think visual sharing and recipes are important. Therefore, it can be said that the best way is food magazines and also social media to reach end users.

DAB: It might be Facebook. The advertisements published in the margins can be memorable.

DOB: The media platform where the society participate the more in terms of consumption habits could increase the awareness. However, high-income social class is not the target group of companies operating in pulses industry. People who have high-income do not eat pulses products so much.

RG: If all of the mass media tools could be used in correct time, these platforms can be appropriate. Of course there can be some platforms that require to be used more. We use every advertising platforms in the beginning periods of our campaigns and also in special days.

YA: I think it would be difficult to be located in only one of them. Each of them has different audience and different power as it is well-known. In terms of target audience and showing exposure, a pulse company should absolutely use LinkedIn and Youtube. Also, Twitter should remain as a side support to these two significant tools to give simple/short message and to keep your presence in front of more audience. On the other hand, LinkedIn appears as more into personal business network, a pulse company can use it as attracting more followers by highlighting articles, videos and industry trends regarding their company. Regardless of your audience, it will be pure business world and this situation will assist the company to reach core elements of the industry.

SB: It is inevitable to be in Facebook and Twitter, because the two major platforms social media users following mostly are Facebook and Twitter. Moreover, we care about LinkedIn as another social media platform. Also we use Instagram and Pinterest.

Question 5: Do you think that health and taste issues are getting trendier in the case of pulses on various social media platforms?

DİB: In all around the world, the product types we are interested in named as the “super food” and it the need for healthy foods has increased recently.

DAB: Yes.

DOB: Nowadays, programs about health in visual media have contributed to the pulses consumption. It is remembered that agriculture is so important for Turkish society and pulses products have been one of the unchanging foods of our society historically.

RG: Yes. It can be understood by food websites’ being a lot.

YA: Nowadays, “Stay Healthy” motto appears in every single corner. People are more cautious in regards to nutrition facts, organic foods and pulses. On Instagram, every single fitness account shows off what they eat, why it keeps you healthy, etc. Especially, 18-35 years old audience already started to believe Pulses are the new playmaker if you want to stay healthy rather than choosing fast-food products as it was popular back in 90’s. I think, power of social media has substantial effect to advertise pulses in a positive/trendy way.

SB: Pulses are really tasty and healthy foods. Therefore, the issues of health and taste need to be emphasized. We face with two types of target audiences. The first one is target audiences fed healthy, the second one is target audiences fed unhealthy. In this context, it should be highlighted that pulses are healthy and tasty in order to increase the pulses consumption of target audiences fed healthy. Moreover, target audiences fed unhealthy should be provided to make habit of pulses consumption.

Question 6: What do you think about the role and the effect of celebrity endorsements for social media usage in pulses industry?

DİB: In social media, famous people are getting more famous. Therefore, famous people can impress the brand in a few seconds. The sector is not important if you do agree with famous person.

DAB: Bloggers who have got many followers regard their sharings by their followers, but there are too many such blogs and websites.

DOB: Definitely, famous people's what to eat and wear is followed by people all around the world. Thus, it can be said that it has significant contribution.

RG: It could be preferred to take attention like in all advertising campaigns. Famous people who are loved and trusted by society could facilitate the message's transmitting into the society.

YA: Unfortunately, I haven't had a chance to make solid observation to relate it specifically my industry. However, celebrity endorsements are still dominant in other industries for Social Media usage such as sports.

SB: When the name of celebrities is written in press releases, it is seen as exciting by media and the interest of the media increases in such a situation. Therefore, it can be said that the media broadcasts mostly the news in which the name of celebrities is written. It is the same in terms of the target audiences in social media, because these people show interest in the accounts and shares of any individual if they know this individual.

Question 7: How would you conceptualize brand awareness?

DİB: Brand awareness is the sense of final consumer about any product during the purchase. We think that it steps forward the brand with its differences among the alternatives.

DAB: When you think brand, specific products come to your mind.

DOB: Honest manufacturing and correct advertising strategies make the brand to be aware, but companies should develop the aim of moving the brand to the future without any fear about earning much money.

RG: Brand awareness is the level of recognizing of a brand by customers. This is not only potential customers' realizing the brand image, but also correlation of brand with the products and services of the company. As Reis Gıda, we made Nielsen company research the reason of brand preference in 2009 and the result were "trust". It is so significant for us that perception of brand awareness by customers is "trust".

YA: Brand awareness is the level of consumer consciousness of a company. It measures a potential customer's ability to not only recognize a brand image, but also associate it with a certain company's product or service. I would say achieving brand awareness is the initial challenge for new brands. On the other hand, maintaining high levels of brand awareness is tough challenge faced by all established brands.

SB: Brand awareness is the creation of a positive thought in the minds of people when hearing and/or seeing the name and logo of a brand. Awareness has two dimensions that are being the recognizing brand and the recalled brand. If the target audiences recognize the brand and meet frequently with the brand and recalling the brand creates a positive sense and/or thought in the minds of target audiences, it can be said that brand awareness provide maximum benefit. Moreover, it is important that by whom the brand is recognized besides the brand awareness. If the activities on brand awareness do not reach to the right target audiences, brand awareness will not be meaningful.

Question 8: Do you think that social media engagement is related to brand awareness? If yes, in which ways?

DİB: Yes, using Facebook or Instagram to create brand awareness is possible.

DAB: No.

DOB: Not only social media is enough for brand awareness. Firstly, the marketing strategy and mission of the company is important. You want to play in regional brand league or become a national brand? This marketing strategy is so significant. If you want to become a regional brand, the brand will be known in the region as long as you do not capitulate from the production and quality. However, if you want to become a national brand, you have to use all of the advertising strategies that are used by other companies. This could be a sponsorship to a food program or to sport team or something else.

RG: No.

YA: In technology era, we have no chance to say “NO”. Social media enables you to reach more people at a significantly lower cost than traditional marketing channels; therefore it will help your new buyers to recall and stay on top of mind in a cost effective way. In a certain way, trade shows and sponsorships will remain as traditional way of putting your exposure out there. However, only social media can reach B2C and B2B with large audience in such a quick, cost effective and visual way.

SB: Today, target audiences of almost every company use social media platforms. It is possible to create brand awareness through reaching to the Internet users. Since Internet is both visual and audial platform, the recall of the brand could increase. There are no limitations in Internet like in other platforms. Companies can perform public relations and advertising activities with intended frequency due to its cheap cost. Moreover, Internet is a free platform where people can share anything without any control. Formerly, companies cannot choose their target audiences and there was no analysis to learn who to know the brand. However, today it is possible with Web 3.0 technology. When internet users search for any product, word and etc. in Internet, this information is saved in database and advertisements related with the searched word have appeared suddenly in front of the individual in any website. Therefore, it can be said that Internet is a useful platform in terms of brand awareness.

Question 9: How do you think that companies should use social media platforms? Is there any specific “recipe” that companies should follow?

DİB: We think the good way is that determining the target audience and being their preferred channels.

DAB: Social media has an agenda that can change very quickly. Because of this reason, there must be a special team. The new advertising should be on a daily basis and the slogan should be able to be created.

DOB: Today, access to the information is too easy and cheap. Every type of producers can give advertisements in Facebook easily and in a cheap way. The other platforms are also similar.

RG: It can change according to the mission, vision and aims of the companies. However, they can give advertisements on social media for their target groups with an appropriate planning in the advertising campaign periods.

YA: It is really challenging to build long lasting brand awareness through social media and in general. It requires a substantial effort toward building an engaged audience that is willing to consistently share your content with their networks. Growing an audience takes time, generating more leads are always helpful, over promotion and retaining your existing clients are main indications to keep you in the game.

SB: First of all, sincerity is important. Companies should adopt a more sincere language in social media and also use some humorous things, because social media is less institutionalized platform than the other networks.

Question 10: Do you think that companies which utilize social media have a competitive advantage than companies not using social media? Why?

DİB: Yes, we think that it is the most quickly and controllable way to reach the target audience.

DAB: No, not just consist of social media advertising.

DOB: Yes, communication in social media is faster. You can answer to a customer dissatisfaction immediately via social media. Therefore, it can bring competitive advantage. Every interest brings good emotions. Turkish society is an emotion-based society. If you are interested in people and answer them immediately, the conversations increase also. As the manager of our company, I am interested in product dissatisfactions directly and answer all of the complaints.

RG: No. Other platforms play more role in reaching to the target audience rather than the social media. Only one platform cannot do these always. Social media can contribute to reaching to the periodical aims of companies. In order to provide sustainable competitive advantage, social media should use within the chain where all other platforms are included.

YA: It is relatively an important fact that in terms of creating brand awareness and maintaining. In every industry, there are pioneers and followers remain their existence. Regardless, pioneers have “first come first served” advantage, followers can turn this disadvantage into an advantage. For example; apple and Samsung case is a perfect choice to paint perfect picture of why one don’t have absolute advantage to another. The key point is how to utilize and having a solid background before using social media.

SB: Absolutely yes. As an example, nobody say hello to someone while walking on the road. However, you definitely salute someone when you see him/her, if you met before. In social media, you are not any brand for someone who see you in a post, comment or tweet. You are a familiar brand for them now.

Question 11: Do you think the utilization of social media can affect a company’s sales? If yes, in which way?

DİB: Yes, it can affect. Sales campaign notification, about the usage of new products introductions, advantages such as the ability to respond immediately to requests from customers, affect in a positive way.

DAB: Yes, but slightly may be effective. This can only increase the consumer in the form of advice and awareness.

DOB: Social media is the portal where people can reach the news in fastest way today. Whatever you produce, your costs will be higher if you do not convey your messages to the huge communities. And this lead to low business volume, low profits and low customer satisfaction. Reaching to big communities and groups means both more consumption and more production and profit with the same energy.

RG: Yes, it provides companies to reach the target audiences directly. For example, Facebook advertisements provides detailed targeting choices to the brands such as age, gender, relationship status, interests and etc. Thus, it can be useful for periodical campaigns.

YA: It will be a positive effect for sure but management of social media in companies is generally handled by marketing teams. Sales and marketing are always hand in hand when it comes to generate sales and maintain brand awareness. In other words, how successful in marketing will help a certain company to generate more sales but sales department should be aware of representing not only company but also the reputation and brand management policy as well. In more precise way, if you have social media tools, your sales channels should be accessible to your consumers depending on a product or service base company.

SB: Yes, it can affect. First of all, the sincere language used in social media makes your brand be familiar and recognized in terms of consumers. You could be a preference reason, as long as you explain your brand as safe, reliable, clear, healthy and tasty. You can provide users to try your products through some campaigns in certain periods. Every consumer who are satisfied will definitely bring new customers to you.

6.2 IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW WITH ADVERTISING AGENCIES

There were conducted 10 questioned in-depth interview with 4 advertising agencies in Turkey. The questions and the answer of these companies are stated below.

Question 1: What do you think about social media utilization by companies for commercial reasons?

BR: A brand's being included in the lives of the people is related to existing in the platforms where people spend time. Formerly, it was enough to advertise in newspapers and TVs, existing in outdoor platforms for being included in people's lives. However, today new platforms have become the places where people spend time in many societies. Youths watching TV, could spend time in Facebook with their smart phone or tablet PC at the same time. Therefore, brands have to exist in Facebook in order to reach them, while brands are also in TV channels. Furthermore, women do shopping on Instagram or shopping websites, while they do this through stores in shopping centres. Thus, clothing brands which desire to reach to these women have to announce their new coming products or campaigns through social media. Brands that are actual, in life and targeting the youths have to be active in social media as in other media platforms.

MB: Social media is free media, which is every client's dream. That's why almost every company is trying to speak out through social media channels. Since it allows speaking directly with target audience, brands take advantage of free and direct speaking with them and try to develop a unique and noticeable way of language. They highly utilize it once they achieved to do that.

ML: Companies should be in the platforms where consumers are and could communicate with them. Therefore, companies should not use the social media for the aim of advertising, but should use for the aim of communication and introduce stories that benefit to the consumers.

RB: I think it is given redundant importance to social media utilization. There is no need for every brand to exist in social media or in every social media channel.

Question 2: Do you think that companies operating in pulses industry like your company should engage in social media? Why?

BR: Social media communication of the brand should be formed according to the target audiences' demographics and the structure of the market. For me, firstly there should be conducted a research to investigate the target audiences to whom the brand will sell its products. If the target audiences have more interaction with the traditional media platforms, the brand should absolutely communicate in these traditional platforms and also should support its traditional activities with social media communication in order to invest in the future, because today people from a broad age range are participating in the social media, for example social variety in Facebook is getting closer to the traditional platforms. Therefore, I think that it will be beneficial for companies selling pulses products to engage in social media. Here, separation of the budget between traditional and social media should be done well balanced through observing the target audiences.

MB: Definitely. Penetration of social media usage in Turkey is really high –almost %90 of internet users have a Facebook account and they spend averagely 3 hours on different social media channels. That is a huge opportunity. Every client, including pulse brands need to be there and find a unique communication way with its target audience.

ML: Companies should absolutely be in social media. Consumers are not the same as in the past. Today users direct the brands and determine the communication strategies of the companies. Therefore, pulses producers should be in social media, should share the information that benefits to the consumers and should talk the same language with them. Companies should definitely try to connect with them. Before the purchasing decision, companies should connect with consumers on social media in order to place in their minds. Companies should get closer with consumers through supporting the communication established on social media with sore activities.

RB: Companies operating in pulses industry cannot engage in social media, only can perform as sales-focused. Why people want to interact with pulses? The aim of the social media is brands and people to talk mutual through getting closer together. Already brands make mistakes for this reason.

Question 3: Could you please specify which is/are the most suitable platforms for a company selling pulses to engage and why?

BR: I think that Facebook is the most suitable platform rather than the others for a company selling pulses products. I estimate that the target group consists of women between the ages of 25 and 55 who cook at home, and I consider that this target group is more active in Facebook. Furthermore, YouTube channels prepared for foods and food/recipe websites should be the right platforms for such brands. However, videos prepared for YouTube should only be supporting to Facebook page, because videos prepared for foods have been watched more on Facebook rather than YouTube channels according to a research.

MB: Specifying the true social media channel to communicate with client is the most critical part of social media management. Since it is related to food, it should be presented with tempting photos, real-time communication (for ex. a recipe before an important event such as Christmas dinner) or user generated content with special campaigns. Instagram would be the most suitable channel for that.

ML: It is not possible today to offer only one platform. Companies can communicate with consumers via mutually providing strategies. On social media, the community is created and is directed to perform an activity. Here, the communication is ensured. Then, the consumers are connected in the market, so the ecosystem is completed. Therefore, it can be said that only one platform is not enough without establishing a communication ecosystem.

RB: Video platforms expressing the benefits of the pulses, food platforms explaining how to cook, the instagram, blog, snapchat, periscope and younow accounts of the pulses

experts such as healthy life phenomenon, Canan Karatay or Refika Birgul could be the most suitable platforms.

Question 4: Do you think that health and taste issues are getting trendier in the case of pulses on various social media platforms?

BR: For 10-20 years fast food consumption have been dramatically increasing and today people around the world understand that this type of a consumption is harmful for human body. Therefore, the trend has headed towards the healthy foods that are beneficial for human body. Today, to be careful on what to eat, to find good tastes with good products, to make sport, to have a healthy body have been supported by both brands and governments. For example, calory of the food/drink is written on the package or menus of the restaurants in Japan. Moreover, huge brands like Coca Cola have established their communication strategies based on “to move”. In order to sustain the same communication in all platforms, they perform on social media in the same way. Moreover, people today share the foods they eat and also their acts on social media. Therefore, we can see more acts and taste. Eating good foods, performing a good activity, having a well body, in short living well have been appreciated on social media.

MB: Awareness of healthy nourishment increases each day. This is a huge advantage and opportunity for pulse brands. Building a well-living content and promote the brand with native advertising with the contents not only focus on food, but also uses other subjects related to healthy lifestyle would be empower the communication and helps to build strong relationship with audience.

ML: Yes, I think these are the trends that for communication aims companies need to put emphasis on

RB: Yes.

Question 5: What do you think about the role and the effect of celebrity endorsements for social media usage in pulses industry?

BR: Throughout the history, celebrities who are seen as idols by people have been wondered, and have been tried to learn what they do. Formerly, we had learned what they do through only newspaper, magazines and TVs. However, they share many acts with their followers today on social media. Whenever the celebrities desire, they can share any messages or photos with their millions of followers without any broadcasting. In this situation, the power of the celebrities on social media appear in terms of brands. Today brands can convey their messages to millions of people in an easy way such as sharing a photo on Instagram through celebrities.

MB: Working with a celebrity helps to recognize and spread easily, as long as you keep it naïve and simple is better for that kind of communication and don't forget that you are talking with "real people"

ML: Here, it is needed to ask these questions: "Which celebrity it is? Celebrities on TV or celebrities on social media who have more follower than in TV?" Both of them have different effects. Therefore, companies should decide which celebrity to use according to the aims and plans of the company.

RB: Absolutely it is so influential. It is one of the fundamentals of brand awareness. We use it for companies not to have enough media purchasing budget. Also, it is used to reach inaccessible target audiences.

Question 6: How would you conceptualize brand awareness?

BR: Especially in capitalist system supporting individualism, being an individual, being genuine and unique are evaluated as so important. The distinctive features of the brands are seen as the shape of self-expression in the society by consumers. Therefore, brands try to differentiate themselves in the market with specific and unique attributions like people. For example, two products having the same features adopt different facts in order to differentiate from each other. Here emotions have appeared. Therefore, today brands have started to market some emotions and value judgements, while marketing the

functional features of the products. One of the similar drink brands markets the emotion of “entertainment”, while the other one establishes a communication with consumers on “friendship”.

MB: Talking with the same tone of voice on every media and channel and finding a “purpose” to speak with people.

ML: I am aware of the X brand, because it touched to my life, it made me feel, it made me believe. I did not realize the brand, the brand realized me.

RB: By access.

Question 7: Do you think that social media engagement is related to brand awareness? If yes, in which ways?

BR: Brands should make themselves realize on social media platforms like on other platforms, and should always be active in order to be in the minds and lives of the consumers. For example, unsocial friends who do not come to the activities, are the last people in our minds to invite when organizing a party. Therefore, the brand which shows itself in right time and place while being active on social media, is the first brand recalled during shopping.

MB: When people connects to your brand with social media engagement, it is unquestioningly helps your brand’s awareness raise since it is a direct way of communication which is the best way to engage with people.

ML: Social media cannot be used alone for brand awareness. If it is supported with different communication platforms and models, it can be more useful. Therefore, it can be said that social media engagement cannot bring brand awareness alone.

RB: Yes. We have some formulas to use for this. We compare these results with brand researches.

Question 8: How do you think that companies should use social media platforms? Is there any specific “recipe” that companies should follow?

BR: For me, there is no only one formula for brands to use social media. Since communication is a two-way process, the features of the target group are important as far as the norms of the brand. Brands should determine the communication type and strategy they conduct on social media according to the features of the people they will talk with. Therefore, it will not be right to use the same communication strategy for all brands. However, we can mention about a rule that all brands should be “up-to-dated” in social media communication.

MB: I do not think there is a specific recipe, it shouldn't be. Every brand needs to build its on way of its social media usage.

ML: Brand should use social media as consumers do. Therefore, the same sincere language should be used. Brands should follow the recent media issues and language, and not hesitate to use it, but sometimes should give opposite reactions. They should not drop back of the users and not create negative perceptions about themselves.

RB: It can be done according to the target audiences using platforms, target audiences what to talk it can be done.

Question 9: Do you think that companies which utilize social media have a competitive advantage than companies not using social media? Why?

BR: Since today social media come into the lives of people, brands have to make themselves recall on social media as it is on other platforms in order to go to the fore. I think that brands should be alive like human and should be closer to the consumers as if they are the friends of consumers.

MB: Yes, I do. Not being there is to shut a door which opens a direct communication, engagement, awareness and real-time marketing.

ML: Especially the strategies supported by retail bring much bigger benefits. Today we do not direct the consumers. The direction is determined by the consumers and it has a marvellous speed. It will be so hard to engage together for brands not to value to the consumers' lives, not to talk with them, not to listen to their critiques and not to express themselves. Such brands would only have the way decreasing the prices. Social media could provide awareness and connection between brands and consumers through true communication strategy and planning. However, it can be again said that only social media usage cannot provide big advantages for companies.

RB: Yes, they have some advantages. The chance of whom to win that starts to the competition is higher and they get the biggest share of pie. However, it is not valid for every sector. There is no logic to open an account for a company selling CNC stalling.

Question 10: Do you think the utilization of social media can affect a company's sales? If yes, in which way?

BR: Consumers' establishing an emotional relation with the brand is a facilitating way to include the brand into the life. Therefore, it can be said that brands coming into the lives of the consumers and being a friend of them in daily life through communicating via social media will establish an emotional relation with consumers. I think that consumption is not done only with logic, but also emotions have an important role during shopping.

MB: Online shopping is very common in Turkey, even more than some well-developed Europe countries. In that case, being able to communicate with your audience while they are leaning to buy is a plus.

ML: Through supporting social media strategy with other platforms such as activities conducted in stores, social media performance could be directed to the sales. For me, the

most significant thing is that it provides sales sustainability through establishing connections with the users.

RB: It is a mistake to look at the sales issue from only social media perspective. The brand becoming in the place where the customers are, wins the game. The formula is such simple. Even if it does not affect the sales today, it provides positive contribution to the brand awareness and brand perception. And this leads to increase in sales in the long-term.

6.3 EVALUATIONS OF THE INTERVIEWS

6.3.1 Dimyat Bakliyat

Dimyat Bakliyat was represented by Mr. Zeki Denizci who is the general manager of the company. Mr. Denizci evaluates social media utilization of companies for commercial reasons as positively that social media is thought as an effective way to inform consumers about commercial activities of the brand. Mr. Denizci thinks companies in pulses industry have to engage in social media in order to reach to the consumers easily. Moreover, Mr. Denizci considers that visual sharing through food magazines and social media platforms are the best ways for companies operating in pulses industry.

Mr Denizci evaluates healthy foods as super foods and considers that these foods should be introduced appropriately to the consumers due to their increasing need. Furthermore, Mr. Denizci thinks celebrities could affect people about brand awareness and considers that it is no significant which platform to use, the important thing is to work with the true famous person. Moreover, Mr. Denizci evaluates brand awareness as the sense of final consumers in the purchasing process.

Mr. Denizci considers that some social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram can be useful for creating and increasing brand awareness. Moreover, Mr. Denizci considers that companies should firstly determine their target audience and then should appear in the platforms where consumers are. Furthormer, Mr. Denizci thinks that social

media is a quick and controllable platform for companies, so it is advantageous to utilize social media. Also, Mr. Denizci considers that utilization of social media could affect the sales of companies through introducing new products and responding immediately to the consumers on social media platforms.

6.3.2 Damla Bakliyat

Damla Bakliyat was represented by Ms. Sevda Kuvvet who works as food engineer in the company. Ms. Kuvvet evaluates social media usage of commercial companies as a logical option to increase recognition of a brand. Moreover, Ms. Kuvvet thinks tracking of advertisements in social media is very low, so engaging in social media is evaluated as not so useful by Damla Bakliyat. Furthermore, Ms. Kuvvet thinks that engaging in Facebook is one of the best platforms for pulses companies.

Ms. Kuvvet considers health and taste issues about pulses will be more remarkable in social media. Furthermore, Ms. Kuvvet thinks bloggers are important due to their high-number followers in order to introduce pulses products on social media. Also, Ms. Kuvvet evaluates brand awareness as recognition of a specific product when thinking of a brand.

Ms. Kuvvet considers that social media engagement is not related to the brand awareness. Moreover, Ms. Kuvvet considers that companies should form a social media team in order to operate in social media platforms professionally. Furthermore, Ms. Kuvvet thinks that social media advertising is not enough for companies to get competitive advantage. Also, Ms. Kuvvet considers that utilization of social media could be a small effect on sales of companies, but it could have a bigger effect on brand awareness.

6.3.3 Dokuzlar Bakliyat

Dokuzlar Bakliyat was represented by Mr. Halil Güngör who is one of the managing directors in the company. Mr. Güngör evaluates social media as one of the ways to be known and preferred by target consumers. Furthermore, Mr. Güngör advocates that advertising companies are going to invest in social media more. Therefore, engaging in

social media is logical for the future of the brands. Moreover, Mr. Güngör advocates that people with high income do not eat pulses more. Thus, the company thinks that companies should research the platforms people following in order to reach the targeted consumers.

Mr. Güngör considers that agriculture and pulses are so vital for Turkish society and visual media is evaluated more important to make health and taste issues get trendy. Moreover, Mr. Güngör thinks that many people follow celebrities' behaviours and celebrity endorsement should be used in order to increase the awareness about pulses on social media. Also, Mr. Güngör correlates brand awareness with honest production and using true advertising strategies. Furthermore, Mr. Güngör considers that social media engagement is related to brand awareness. However, Mr. Güngör thinks that all of the media platforms about advertising should be used in order to create brand awareness.

Mr. Güngör considers that firstly Facebook and also the other social media platforms should be used easily by companies due to its cheapness. Moreover, Mr. Güngör thinks that social media is a fast way to communicate with consumers and an easy way to change negative perceptions and emotions of the customers due to the society's emotional frame of mind. Furthermore, Mr. Güngör considers that social media can convey the message of the company easily and quickly to the consumers and the company advocates that reaching more consumers could bring more consumption, production and profit for companies.

6.3.4 Reis Gıda

Reis Gıda was represented by Ms. Ayfer Demirel who is the public relations and advertising director of the company. Ms. Demirel evaluates social media as the cheapest way to reach to the consumers. Furthermore, Ms. Demirel advocates that through social media companies could inform consumers on the benefits of pulses and so they can increase their recognition. Moreover, Ms. Demirel advocates that every media platform should be used in order to reach to the target market, while some of them can be used more for effectiveness to convey campaigns conducted by companies.

Ms. Demirel considers that there are lots of websites on foods, health and taste that social media is important to make pulses products get trendier. Also, Ms. Demirel thinks that celebrities could be used on social media platforms as it is on other media platforms in order to impress consumers. Moreover, Ms. Demirel evaluates brand awareness as consumers' recognition on a specific brand and correlates it with the trust concept. Ms. Demirel gives importance to the brand awareness issue that the company made Nielsen company research a brand awareness study in 2009. Furthermore, Ms. Demirel considers that social media engagement is not related to the brand awareness.

Ms. Demirel considers that in the advertising campaign process, planning is so vital that companies should combine their advertising process with their mission, vision and aims. Moreover, Ms. Demirel thinks that other media platforms are more influential than social media in order to affect the consumers. Therefore, Ms. Demirel advocates that social media is only one of the platforms that has a minor effect on consumers' perceptions and argues that companies should use all of the platforms in order to get competitive advantage. Also, Ms. Demirel considers that companies could reach to the consumers easily via social media and advertising on social media such as Facebook that can bring companies more detailed information about demographic structure of the consumers. Therefore, companies can make better advertising planning to their target audiences.

6.3.5 Yayla Agro

Yayla Agro was represented by Mr. Mustafa Topal who is one of the managing directors of the company and an expert in the industry of pulses. Mr. Topal in his interview highlighted the role of the social media as an essential tool for increasing market exposure, creating visibility, being accessible by more audience, building and maintaining brand awareness.

Mr. Topal expressed his positive thoughts regarding the social media engagement of companies that operate in the industry of pulses saying that none industry is in a position to deny the power of social media. Moreover, Mr. Topal considers that social media is one of the most powerful channels to give the right message to your target market while

in terms of target audience and showing exposure a pulse company should absolutely use LinkedIn and YouTube. Mr. Topal believes that Twitter should also be used as a side support to these two platforms in order to give simple and short messages and keep a company's presence in front of more audience.

As far as 'health and taste' issues are concerned, Mr. Topal argues that the power of social media has substantial effects to advertise pulses in a positive/trendy way. For instance, he observes that 'Stay Healthy' is a motto appearing almost everywhere around us due to the fact that people are getting more and more cautious regarding their nutrition. An example of that, Mr. Topal mentions, is the fitness accounts on Instagram where people post all the time the various types of food that keeps them healthy and in a good physical condition. In addition, he adds that there has been a big turn in the nutrition habits of the new generation underlining that *'especially, 18-35 years old audience already started to believe that pulses are the new playmaker if you want to stay healthier rather than choosing fast-food products as it was popular back in 90's'*.

Regarding the role of the "celebrity endorsements" on the social platforms Mr. Topal said that he did not had the chance to make a solid observation in his industry but he commented that endorsement are still dominant in other Industries for social media usage. Brand awareness was conceptualized as the level of consumer consciousness of a company. According to Topal, brand awareness measures a potential customer's ability to not only recognize a brand image, but also associate it with a certain company's product or service. He considers that achieving brand awareness is the most initial challenge for new brands while maintaining high levels of brand awareness is a tough challenge for the already established brands.

Mr. Topal holds that social media engagement is related to brand awareness due to the fact that social media enables a company to reach more people at a significantly lower cost than other traditional marketing channels. Therefore, this helps your new buyers to recall the brand and keep it on top of mind in a cost effective way. Furthermore, Mr. Topal underlines that only social media can reach B2C and B2B with large audience in a very quick, cost effective and visual way.

Mr. Topal states that companies which utilize social media have a competitive advantage from those which do not in terms of creating and maintaining brand awareness. Moreover, Mr. Topal observes that in every industry there will always be pioneers and followers. Nevertheless, there will always be a way for the followers to turn their disadvantage of “following” into an advantage by having a solid background and know how to utilize social media. According to Topal, Apple and Samsung is the perfect example of how one company does not have the absolute advantage to another.

Last but not least, Mr. Topal thinks that social media use can have a positive effect on a company’s sales and that sale and marketing teams (usual managers of the social media accounts of a company) should always work hand in hand in order to generate sales and maintain brand awareness. Mr. Topal concluded by saying that when a company has social media tools, its sales channels should definitely be accessible to its consumers depending on the product or service.

6.3.6 Sezon Bakliyat

Sezon was represented by Mr. Mehmet Erdogan the Executive Committee Chairman of the company. Mr Erdogan, in his interview emphasized the fact that there is a necessity for the companies to actively engage and utilize the social media characterizing the later as a reality that should not be underestimated. That is on the grounds that social media have a huge audience aging from 7 to 70 years old and that makes it an important mean to exchange information with no regard to location.

Mr. Erdogan argues that social media engagement is imperative due to the fact that companies are able to reach the final consumer, view and evaluate their comments regarding the products in a very quick manner. Moreover, Mr. Erdogan considers that the most important platforms for a company that manufactures and sells pulses to engage are primarily Facebook and Twitter. Sezon Pirinc also retains a LinkedIN account in order to provide information regarding the company as well as an Instagram and Pinterest account.

Furthermore, Mr. Erdogan considers that health and taste issues are not only a “trend” appearing on the various social media platforms, but also an essential attribute of pulses that should definitely be underlined by companies operating in the specific industry. Also, Mr. Erdogan argues that in this way companies are able to reach two different target groups. The first one includes those who follow a healthy nutrition while the second one includes those who do not. In this case the brand’s aim is twofold. Firstly, to increase pulses consumption for the ‘healthy nutrition’ group and secondly to convince the second group to change their unhealthy nutrition habits.

Mr. Erdogan when asked about the role and the impact of celebrity endorsements on social media he replied that famous people had always been attractive to the consumer and this is also valid in the case of the social media. On social media celebrities have the power to attract consumer attention due to their popularity.

As far as brand awareness is concerned, Mr. Erdogan focused on the purpose of the term saying that awareness should create positive impressions when a consumer hears the name or sees the logo of a specific brand. According to his understanding, there are two different levels of brand awareness, the brand which is known and the brand which is remembered. Mr. Erdogan explained that brand awareness is beneficial for a company in case the targeted consumer has positive feelings towards the specific brand and recalls the brand with a certain frequency. Also, Mr. Erdogan mentioned about the importance of reaching the proper target audience.

When asked whether Mr. Erdogan thinks that social media engagement is related to brand awareness or not he replied that nowadays almost every brand’s target audience is using social media and for that reason social media can be used in order to create brand awareness. Furthermore, he underlined that companies due to the low cost of the medium are able to advertise and make pr in the frequency they wish too. In addition to that, he referred to the advantages provided by the adoption of the Web 3.0 technology saying that nowadays companies are able to reach and analyze the target audience they wish to in an easier way on the grounds that advertisements are directed to the consumers based

on the key words they search for. As a result, Mr. Erdogan concluded that social media can be used in favor of brand awareness.

Mr. Erdogan argues that the key points in social media utilization by companies are to be honest and humorous. That is on the grounds that social media is not as formal as the more traditional marketing tools. In advance, Mr. Erdogan considers that companies which engage in social media have definitely a competitive advantage compared to those which do not. Mr. Erdogan explains that when a consumer comes in contact with a brand either with a post, a tweet or a comment, he establishes a relation with that brand. The brand automatically turns into a brand which knows and not any brand.

Last but not least, Mr. Erdogan argues that social media engagement can have a positive effect on a company's sales. Mr. Erdogan explains that when companies establish good and honest relations with the customers, they boost their products forward on shelves. The various campaigns from time to time in combination with the right message can make the consumer try the product. A satisfied customer then definitely brings more customers.

6.3.7 Mobilike Advertising Agency

Mobilike, the leader company in mobile advertising in Turkey was represented by Ms. Yagmur Demirtutan, the Project Executive of the company. Ms. Demirtutan when asked her opinion on social media utilization by companies for commercial reasons stated that "social media is every client's dream". That is due to the fact that social media are free media. Another advantage of social media is the ability to reach directly the end-user/final consumer. Ms. Demirtutan stated that companies try to take advantage of the benefits provided by social media in a high degree and they achieve it in cases they are able to do it.

Ms. Demirtutan holds that companies which operate in the industry of pulses should definitely engage in social media since the social media usage penetration in Turkey is really high, 90% of internet users retain a Facebook account and spend 3 hours per day in average on different social media channels. This constitutes a huge opportunity for

every sector including the pulses industry which needs to take part and create a unique way to communicate with its target audience.

When asked her opinion on which are the most suitable platforms for a company selling pulses to engage and why she replied that this constitutes the most critical part in social media management. Ms. Demirtutan said that since the industry has to do with food then companies should choose those platforms where food can be presented with tempting photos, real time communication (for instance a recipe before an important event such as Christmas dinner) or user generated content special campaigns. Ms. Demirtutan suggested that Instagram would be the most suitable channel for achieving that.

As far as “health and taste” issues are concerned Ms. Demirtutan stated that awareness on healthy nutrition issues is increasing every day and this constitutes a big advantage and opportunity for the companies operating in the specific industry. Furthermore, Ms. Demirtutan suggests that building a well-living content and promoting the brand with “native advertising” with contents not only focused on food but also other subjects related to healthy lifestyle would empower the communication and help to build a strong relationship with the audience.

When it comes to celebrity endorsements Ms. Demirtutan underlined that working with a celebrity helps you to get recognized and spread easy on the various platforms but companies should not exaggerate and keep it naïve and simple. Moreover, Ms. Demirtutan added that companies should not forget that they are dealing with “real people”. In other words, celebrity endorsements should be used carefully on the grounds that they can function either in favor or against a brand image.

Ms. Demirtutan conceptualized brand awareness as the ‘purpose’ to communicate with people. For her it is essential to talk with the same voice/way on every media and channel and find the proper reason when doing that. Furthermore, Ms. Demirtutan considers that social media engagement is definitely related to brand awareness. This is because social media engagement helps a company to increase its brand awareness in a direct way of communication and engagement with the customers.

When asked whether Ms. Demirtutan thinks that companies should follow a specific “recipe” in social media engagement, she replied that every company/brand is unique and that is why there should not be a specific plan than companies should follow. Ms. Demirtutan recommended that every brand needs to build its own way on social media usage.

In addition, Ms. Demirtutan evaluated that companies which utilize social media channels have a competitive advantage from those who do not. Ms. Demirtutan explained that the absence in the specific field is like “shutting a door which opens a direct communication, engagement, awareness and real-time marketing”.

Last, Ms. Demirtutan expressed her positive thoughts regarding the effects of social media utilization on a company’s sales by referring the example of online shopping. More specifically, Ms. Demirtutan said that online shopping is very common in Turkey, even in comparison with other well developed European countries. That is why; companies through social media should communicate and teach their audience how to buy in direct from the company. Direct sales, is another plus of social media engagement.

6.3.8 Milklab Advertising Agency

Milklab, a new generation digital agency in Istanbul operating in the fields of digital marketing, motion graphic and interactive technologies was represented by Mr. Murat Ersoy, the co-founder of the company.

Mr. Ersoy positioned himself in favor of social media utilization by companies saying that brands should be where their consumers are and communicate with them. Mr. Ersoy explained that companies should not only view social media as a way to advertise. Instead they should realize them as a tool for keeping a close contact with their target audiences and use them to present stories that their clients could benefit out of them. Mr. Ersoy concluded that social media utilization could only be beneficial for a company when its primary purpose is the communication with the audience and not only advertisement.

According to Ersoy companies which operate in the industry of pulses should definitely engage in social media. Mr. Ersoy explains that consumers are not like they used to be in the past. Nowadays, consumers have an active role and they are those who show the way to the brands and direct them on which kind of communication strategy they should follow. From this perspective, the companies operating in pulses industry should definitely engage in social media and try to establish good relations with their customers by sharing beneficial knowledge and information for them. It is of great importance for a brand to acquire a place into the consumers mind before the action of sale. That is why social media engagement is so important. Mr. Ersoy suggests companies to utilize social media in order to get a place into the consumer's mind and then with other supporting in-store activities make them feel familiar with the brand.

When Mr. Ersoy was asked which he thinks is the most suitable platforms for a brand that operates in the sector of pulses to engage he replied that it is not possible to choose only one. Mr. Ersoy suggested that companies should operate in various platforms and through them; they should try to create bonds with the customers. That is on the grounds that these very same customers who are active on social media are those who are going to visit the supermarket as well. Companies should also be there to contact them as well. To sum up, brands should engage in various platforms so that they will be able to establish a more comprehensive / "eco-system" communication strategy.

Mr. Ersoy considers that current trends, like "health and taste" issues in the case of pulses are wrong strategies for companies to follow. On his point of view, trend issues should stop being used as a means to come in contact with the consumers.

As far as the effect of celebrity endorsement on social media is concerned, Mr. Ersoy clarified that there are two different categories of celebrities. Those who are well-known through more traditional channels like television and those who are popular in the various social media platforms based on the amount of followers they retain. Mr. Ersoy proposed that before choosing a celebrity, brands should re-consider their initial aim or what they try to accomplish since celebrity endorsements have different effect depending on which category you choose.

Mr. Ersoy described “brand awareness” as follows “I am aware of the X brand because X brand touched my life, make me feel it, make me believe it. I did not discover the brand. The brand discovered me”. In other words, Mr. Ersoy emphasized the power of the brand personality to generate brand awareness on the consumer.

Mr. Ersoy supports that brand awareness is related to social media engagement. Nevertheless, he thinks that social media should not be used as the only means to create brand awareness but more as complementary to others. In this way social media utilization can be beneficial.

Mr. Ersoy recommended companies to utilize social media in the very same way consumers use them. That is by being honest, brave and familiar. Being honest, he adds, is of crucial importance even if in some cases you give an opposite reaction.

Mr. Ersoy thinks that companies which utilize social media are for sure many steps forward from those who do not. That is because social media can boost sales on the retail sector. Mr. Ersoy argues that brands are not in a position anymore to direct the consumer. On the contrary, nowadays the consumers are those who show the companies which way to follow. For Ersoy, the brands which do not care about, do not communicate, listen or pay attention to the consumers, their comments and suggestions will not be able to follow the developments in their sector. Social media is the best way to increase awareness through creating good relations and strong bonds with the customers.

Lastly, Mr. Ersoy underlined that social media although valuable are not able to increase sales all alone. It is imperative to be utilized as a part of a more comprehensive communication strategy where other channels would also support the establishment of an honest and familiar relation with the customers for long term brand sales.

6.3.9 Buro Advertising Agency

Buro, a well know advertising agency established in 2009 in Istanbul was represented by Ms. Ceren Orun Erkmen who works there as a copywriter.

Ms. Erkmen in her interview highlighted the necessity that companies should engage in social media. She explained that brands should find ways to become a part of the consumers' life and social media engagement is one of them. That is on the grounds that nowadays consumers are spending a lot of time on the various social media platforms and brands should be there where consumers are.

As a copywriter, Ms. Erkmen suggests that companies should first research where their consumers are. If the target audience is spending more time on traditional media like television, radio etc. then those brands should primary focus on establishing a relationship with their customers through them. Nevertheless, Ms. Erkmen underlines that even for those brands social media engagement is considered as an essential investment for the future since more and more age groups are engaging day by day on the various social media platforms and this is a reality that should not be underestimated. Based on that she considers that companies operating in the industry of pulses should engage in the various platforms since every pioneer brand should not only think about the present but also its future survival and success.

Ms. Erkmen argues that one of most important platforms that a pulses brand should engage is Facebook. That is because she considers that the target audience of a pulses brand, mainly female consumers aging from 25-55, are more active in Facebook than any other platform. Next to that, she suggests that pulses brands should also use the YouTube channel in order to increase exposure showing off various recipes. She advises that pulses companies should keep the videos short so that they will also be able to post it at the same time on Facebook. She added that according to a recent research, the number of consumers who watch food recipe related videos on Facebook is considerably bigger than those who watch this kind of videos on YouTube.

As far as ‘health and taste’ issues on social media are concerned, Ms. Erkmen said that exposure on ‘health and taste’ should not be realized as totally a trend but the result of a 10-20 year procedure. She explains that people after 10-20 year fast food consumption saw the negative effects on their body and decided to change their nutrition habits and way of life. This new way of thinking and living has seen much exposure and many companies have used ‘health and taste’ issues as a core element of their strategy.

Concerning the issue of “celebrity endorsements” on social media, she stated that people/consumers had always been curious about the lives of celebrities who were realized as their idols. Therefore, consumer curiosity/interest on the way celebrities live and behave has been the core element in directing the marketing strategies of the brands which they utilized celebrities for consumer attraction. She underlines that nowadays this is much easier since a celebrity endorsement on social media can attract millions of consumers’ reactions just with a simple “click”.

Ms. Erkmen conceptualizes “brand awareness” as the effort of a brand to differentiate itself among many other brands with the same characteristics. She argues that social media engagement is definitely related to brand awareness on the grounds that brands should be there where their customers are and effort in acquiring a place in the consumer’s life. She advocates that brands should be active in social media since customers usually buy the brand they know and they are familiar with.

Ms. Erkmen states that there is no specific “recipe” that brands should follow when it comes to social media engagement. That is due to the fact that in social media, there is an interaction between the brand and the consumers. Therefore, brands should shape their strategy according to the profile of their target group. That is why; every brand should follow its own individual way in social media engagement. Nevertheless, she highlights that there are some general rules/guidelines that brands should follow in order to be successful in the specific domain. For her, one of the most essential rules for brands is to retain themselves “updated” with the developments on the social media field.

Ms. Erkmen supports that brands which utilize social media have a competitive advantages from those which do not. Her logic is based on the assumption that social media is one more exposure channel with a large audience. As a result brand which are not there where consumers are and do not remind them their existence, are condemned to be forgotten.

Ms. Erkmen advocates that social media can have an effect on a brand's sales. She explains that through social media utilization brands are able to become part of a consumer's life and establish strong bonds of trust with the consumers. In her opinion, this plays a major role on the consumers purchasing decision. She highlights that purchasing is not only mathematics.

6.3.10 Rabarba Advertising Agency

Rabarba, one of the leading digital agencies in Istanbul founded in 2007, was represented by Ms. Dimag Mercan, who works there as a digital strategist.

Ms. Mercan considers that companies pay much more attention than they should on social media engagement. She thinks that all kind of brands do not have to engage in social channels or at least not in all of them.

Ms. Mercan advocates that a company which operates in the sector of pulses is not able to engage in social media but only speak about sales. She thinks that there is no reason for consumer to establish a relation with a pulses brand. Furthermore, she underlines that this is considered to be as the bigger mistake that companies do, try to engage in social platforms without having anything to say.

When Ms. Mercan was asked which she thinks are the most suitable platforms for a company selling pulses to engage she replied the following: The platforms which enable video displays explaining the benefits provided by pulses, various recipes with pulses as well as through the personal social media accounts of nutrition experts like Canan Karatay and Refika Birgul. These platforms could be Instagram, blogs, snap chat, periscope and

other similar applications. She added that “health and taste” issues are getting more and more trendy nowadays in the various social media channels.

As far as the role of “celebrity endorsements” on the various social media platforms, Ms. Mercan commented that endorsements have very significant effect on increasing brand awareness. She stated that “celebrity endorsements” are mainly used for those customers that they cannot afford to advertise in multiple channels. In this way they attract the interest of target groups that is hard to be reached.

Ms. Mercan conceptualized “brand awareness” as equivalent to “access” while she related social media engagement with brand awareness and explained that there are specific formulas that digital agents use in order to measure this relation.

Ms. Mercan recommended companies to engage in social media in accordance with their target audience and its characteristics and follow a strategy based on their behavior. Furthermore, she advocates that companies which engage in social media definitely have a competitive advantage from those which do not since she explains that pioneers always acquire the biggest share of the pie. Nevertheless, she comments that this is not the case for all kinds of brands and all the sectors.

Last, Ms. Mercan supports that it is not possible to increase sales only through social media. She admits that in the long run social media can increase awareness and create positive feelings for a specific brand but she insists that the basic formula for increasing sales is for the brand to be where the target audience is.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In this thesis, the attitudes of the companies which operate in the Turkish pulses industry regarding the effects of social media usage in relation to brand awareness have been analysed via in-depth interview method with six companies in pulses industry and four advertising companies which are experts on social media. In this context, there were interviewed with Dimyat Bakliyat, Damla Bakliyat, Dokuzlar Bakliyat, Reis Gıda, Yayla Agro and Sezon Bakliyat; and also Buro Advertising, Mobilike Advertising, Milklab Advertising and Rabarba Advertising.

Pulses products are one of the main nutritional sources in the world. The types of the pulses can be classified as bean, dried bean, red and green lentil, chickpea, peas, soybeans, broad beans, kidney beans and etc. Pulses types have been produced almost all around the world. Bean is the main pulses product that has the biggest production volume and cultivation area. Then chickpea, lentil and kidney bean comes. According to the statistics, 58,7 million tons of pulses have been produced in 63 million ha production fields in the world in 2013 and %60 of the production consists of dried beans, chick pea and lentil. Although pulses products are important for human health and it is a main nutrition source, it is expected that the production areas, volume and per person consumption of pulses will decrease in the upcoming years.

In Turkey, mostly chickpea, dried bean and lentil have been produced and Turkey is an important exporter of pulses kinds. The biggest production of pulses have been made in Southeast Anatolia, Central Anatolia and south of the Marmara regions.

Brands are today so significant to reach consumers effectively that establishes communication between consumers and producers. In the globalizing world, the role of the brand have increased day by day and new techniques and methods have been created by companies and marketing experts related with brand management every day.

Today consumers could reach all of the information about everything through the advance in information and communication technologies. Therefore, competition in all industries have increased and companies operating in every sector have to give more importance to the brand related issues.

There are many concepts and terms about brand today such as brand identity, brand personality, brand image, brand loyalty, brand equity and brand awareness that are correlated with each other. Related with the topic of this thesis, brand awareness has been evaluated in terms of the perspectives of companies in pulses industry with the effects of social media.

Social media usage has increased every day due to the developing technology. Billions have social media accounts today in the world and people can easily share their feelings, situation, personal information, photographs, videos and other contents. And information could easily spread of all over the world in seconds.

Beside the personal usage, social media is important for also companies and industries. Lots of people today give importance advertisements conducted in social media platforms. And many big companies use the social media tools in order to reach their target audiences and increase brand awareness and brand loyalty.

In this thesis, the impact of social media usage and tools on brand awareness in Turkish pulses industry and the attitudes of the companies on the issue has been investigated. In general, all pulses companies which participated in the current research use social media channels as a communication tool of their marketing strategies. Nevertheless, most of them are not active users in terms of daily engagement and info updates. Though, all of them emphasized the importance of social media utilization in terms of reaching greater audiences, creating visibility, increasing and maintaining brand awareness, market research and customer service.

Concerning the ability of social media to reach huge and miscellaneous audiences, all companies highlighted that social media is a reality that should not be neglected.

Therefore, even brands which operate in the sector of pulses should engage and through them establish relations with their consumers. Mr. Erdogan (Sezon) in his interview points out that nowadays almost every brand's target audience is using social media and for that reason social media can be used in order to create brand awareness. Mr. Topal (Yayla Agro) in his interview highlighted the role of the social media as an essential tool for increasing market exposure, creating visibility, being accessible by more audience, building and maintaining brand awareness. Additionally, he expressed his positive thoughts regarding the social media engagement of companies that operate in the industry of pulses saying that none industry is in a position to deny the power of social media.

As far as brand awareness is concerned all companies interviewed, stressed the important role of social media on increasing and maintaining awareness. For instance, Miss Demirel (Reis) in her interview makes a special reference on the periods of campaigns. She said that social media engagement is a good and quick way to increase awareness in campaign periods. Moreover, she talked about the necessity that companies utilize social media next to other communication tools for reaching more effective and comprehensive marketing strategies.

Most of the companies argued that the most suitable platforms for brands to engage are those with visual characteristics enabling the displays of food recipes. Facebook, YouTube and Blogs were the most common preferences, while LinkedIn, Instagram and Pinterest were also mentioned among the most appropriate choices. For example, Mr. Topal (Yayla Agro) considers that social media is one of the most powerful channels to give the right message to your target market while in terms of target audience and showing exposure a pulse company should absolutely use LinkedIn and YouTube. He believes that Twitter should also be used as a side support to these two platforms in order to give simple and short messages and keep a company's presence in front of more audience.

Another frequently referred issue on the interviews contacted was regarding the ability of the various social media platforms to transfer information in a quick and low cost manner. All companies talked about the importance of being able to provide and acquire information in low costs. Increasing visibility in front of big audiences in very low costs

were highlighted as one of the most beneficial characteristics for brands engaging in social media platforms. Next to that, quick transfer of information from brands to consumers and vice versa was also a very frequent referred subject. Mr Gungor (Dokuzlar Bakliyat) talked about the importance of reviewing and evaluating customer comments and complaints in a quick manner.

As far as, whether social media engagement can have a positive effect on a brand's sales, most of the companies supported that this is possible in case social media used complementary to other more traditional communication channels.

“Health and taste” issues were viewed not only as a trend but as a substantial characteristic of pulses that should definitely be emphasized by brands operating in the sector through various communication channels.

Celebrity endorsement was also positively seen as a way to attract consumer interest from time to time and many companies suggested that celebrities' media accounts can be used in benefit of brands operating in the sector of pulses.

Regarding, brand awareness conceptualization replies varied in terms of description of the term. Other companies described awareness as the level of consumer consciousness of a company while others used more sales directed definitions like consumer buying preference in opposition to other brands.

Last but not least, most of the companies considered that social media engagement is considered to be a competitive advantage for many companies. Being pioneer is very important in every sector and social media were majorly realized as a modern and trendy way to advertise. Companies underlined that brands should utilize social media in order to establish good relations and strong bonds with the consumers speaking to them in an honest, humorous and familiar way. In this way, social media within the concept of a more comprehensive marketing strategy can have a positive effect on a brands sales while maintain and increase awareness among a broad audience.

All of the advertising agencies supported that brands should utilize social media. Most of them consider that social media engagement is nowadays imperative for plenty of reasons and suggest that companies should find ways to benefit out of them. Only one agency commented that social media is not ideal for all kind of brands.

In general, the agents underlined the benefits provided to companies with social media engagement as follows; Firstly, social media are free media. This is one of the most important characteristics highlighted in the majority of the interviews conducted. The fact that brands are not obliged to invest big amounts of money on promotion and advertisement in order to make themselves visible in front of large audiences is considered to be one of the major advantages provided by social media utilization and engagement.

In addition, social media have a huge; keep growing audience with no age, sex, location, social or economic status limitations. Ms. Demirtutan (Mobilike) in her interview underlines that social media usage penetration in Turkey is really high. She states that 90% of internet users retain a Facebook account and spend 3 hours per day in average on different social media channels. In other words, this constitutes a big opportunity for the brands which are now able to reach and establish relations with any kind of audience and direct their strategies towards a specific target group by simply pressing some buttons. In the same way, consumers are also able to come in direct contact with the brands, establish relations or ask for information while working; walking, resting, shopping, etc. Hence, new technologies have enabled both brands and consumers with a direct, constant no location based communication. Social media experts suggest brands to be where their customers are, if their customers are on social media then social media utilization and engagement is imperative. Ms. Erkmén (Buro) adds that even brands with a more traditional channel reachable target audience should utilize social media and realize engagement as an investment for the future in a constantly developing technological era. Another issue highlighted in the interviews of the various social media experts, besides the advantages provided by the use of the various social media channels, is the issue of “interaction”. Web 2.0 technologies have enabled brands and consumers to communicate and establish relations in a completely different way than before. In this new era,

consumers are not passive recipients but active decision makers. Consumers are those who actually guide the brands on deciding which strategies to follow in order to approach them. Brands which do not listen and understand their consumers are convicted to fail. Experts consider that establishing relations and creating strong bonds with the consumers, have essential effects on increasing brand awareness and consequently sales. Murat Ersoy (Milklab) in his interview emphasizes the issue of “interaction” and suggests companies to primary use social media not as a method to advertise but as a tool for keeping a close contact with their target audiences and present them stories that they could benefit out of them.

Social media experts realize social media as a quick and easy way to listen and understand customers needs and wants. This enables companies to adopt the most proper strategies for persuading their target audiences. Nevertheless, social media should not be utilized or understood separately from other communication channels. As Murat Ersoy argues, social media is only one part of an ecosystem and brands should utilize them complementary to other communication channels in order to achieve a more comprehensive and effective communication strategy. Only in this way social media will have an effect on sales.

When it comes to pulses industry and social media engagement, most of the experts interviewed argued that brands which operate in this sector should definitely claim for acquiring a place into that and like other brands utilize the benefits provided by the specific communication channel.

For brands operating in the sector of pulses the most suitable platforms proposed were Facebook, You Tube and Instagram. In the industry of food, and more specifically in pulses, as Ms. Mercan (Rabarba) points out, platforms which enable video displays explaining the benefits provided by pulses, showing various recipes with pulses as well as personal social media accounts of nutrition experts like Canan Karatay and Refika Birgul are the most appropriate tools to use. In addition to that, advertisers consider that attractive issues like “health and taste” as well as various celebrity endorsements can be used in the sector of pulses in order to awaken the interest and boost brand awareness. Last but not least, another essential suggestion is the way that companies talk with their

consumers. Experts highlighted that brands should be honest and make their customer feel familiar with them.

Specialists consider that even for more traditionally reached audiences like the audiences of pulse brands, social media engagement can be beneficial. As we have already mentioned above, the key point on social engagement is “interaction”. Interact means establish relations and bonds and acquire a place in the consumer’s life. Brands who achieve to be remembered and trusted are brands who survive long term and social media are a free channel with a keep growing audience. Therefore, brands operating in the industry of pulses should definitely use social media complementary to their major channels in order to achieve a more comprehensive and substantial communication strategy. Besides that, nowadays young social media users, only some years after, will also be part of a pulses brand’s target group. In the end, future investments are imperative for the long term survival of brands.

To sum up, it can be said that social media has an important effect on brand awareness and brand related issues of the companies in pulses industry and these recommendations could be offered to the companies about creating and strengthening the brand awareness in the pulses industry;

- The companies hire social media experts or agree with a social media consultancy company to manage social media accounts effectively in order to create and develop their brand awareness.
- After detailed analyse, companies should renew their own websites and open required accounts on social media platforms.
- In order to develop brand awareness, they should work with professional marketers for the future and sustainability of their brands.
- There should be constituted professional marketing teams in these companies.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Name & Surname:

Permanent Address:

Place and Year of Birth:

Foreign Language:

Primary Education: (Name of School and Year of Graduation)

Secondary Education: (Name of School and Year of Graduation)

Undergraduate: (Name of University and Year of Graduation)

Postgraduate: (Name of University and Year of Graduation)

Name of Institute:

Name of Master's Program:

Publications:

Working Life : (This section must be in order starting with the latest workplace, together with the beginning year and withdrawal year)