



# The Effects of Real– Time Content Marketing on Consumer Emotions and Behaviors: An Analysis on COVID–19 Pandemic Period

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*This study, carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic in Turkey, aimed to provide suggestions for creating a successful real-time content marketing strategy. For this purpose, data were collected from 319 participants using the online questionnaire technique. Outcomes of the analysis indicate that while positive perception toward real-time content marketing campaigns can lead to positive emotions, negative perception toward real-time content marketing campaigns can lead to negative emotions. It was also found as an important result that both positive and negative emotions affect negative consumer behavior during the pandemic period. In addition, negative emotions as a mediator variable strengthen negative consumer behavior. As a result, it can be said that real content marketing campaigns also have negative consequences on consumer behavior during pandemics. Consequently, marketing authorities should continue their real-time content marketing activities with this result in mind.*

## **ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND**

The structure of the market is constantly changing from the past to the present. Technological, demographic, economic developments, globalization, sustainability, and changes in consumer behavior are reshaping the market structure (Yadav et al., 2020). Enterprises conduct researches to solve the structure of the market, increase sales, and differentiate from competitors. As a result of researches, they can review and update their marketing strategies (Paul, 2019). The ease of access to technology and the internet has also caused changes in consumer behavior (Czaja & Lee, 2007). Businesses that are aware of the changes caused by technology in consumer behavior have started to digitize their marketing activities to reach their target audiences online as well as traditional marketing understanding (Ryan & Jones, 2009).

The effect of digitalization on marketing has created a new type of marketing called digital marketing (Bala & Verma, 2018). Digital marketing has made it possible for brands to reach their consumers faster and easier. It can be defined as the marketing of the goods and services of the enterprises to their consumers with the use of digital channels (Kiani, 1998). Digital marketing has become one of the most widely used marketing methods to promote and present products and services to the target audience (Yasmin et al., 2015). Digital marketing has digital marketing tools that enable it to reach consumers on digital platforms (Chaffey & Smith, 2017). The strategies used by digital marketing can include real-time marketing, content marketing, search engine optimization, affiliated marketing, viral marketing, social media platforms, email marketing, PR tools, etc. (Kumar & Singh, 2020; Lieb, 2013).

Real-time marketing is one of the marketing strategies that is frequently used in digital marketing (Tehci, 2021). Real-time marketing campaigns are used by companies competing and survive in digital market environments. Real-time marketing strengthens effective communication with the target audience through digital channels (Scott, 2011). Especially companies that seeing the positive reactions of consumers to real-time marketing campaigns frequently use these campaigns (Willemsen et al., 2018). Real-time marketing campaigns aim to create value for the consumer. With this aim, real-time marketing campaigns and content marketing started to be used together for creating value (Mazerant et al., 2021). Real-time content marketing campaigns create a snowball effect on consumers. In this way, they can influence large audiences' emotions in a short time. Besides real-time content marketing campaigns provide frequently mention the brand on social media platforms (Scott, 2011). This situation is considered a great success in terms of brand-consumer interaction. However, care should be taken when implementing real-time content marketing campaigns. Giving the right message at the right time is the most important factor that the brand should pay attention to. Consuming digital content within seconds is an inevitable reality of real-time marketing (Lu et al., 2016). For this reason, the mistakes that can be made to allow them to be noticed by the target audience instantly. As a result of right or wrong strategies, consumers' emotions, and consumer behaviors are affected positively or negatively.

Content marketing campaigns are the most widely used digital marketing tools (Nikunen, 2017). According to the research conducted by Smart Insights in 2019, businesses accept content marketing as the most effective and profitable digital marketing tool (Kotane et al., 2019). Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach that aims to communicate with the target audience by creating content suitable for the customer audience. Thus, companies attract the attention of existing and potential customers and create profitable customer actions as a result (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). This marketing tool prepares interesting, entertaining, educational, and supportive information in line with the wishes and expectations of the target audience. In this way, it strengthens brand image, the relationship between brand and target audience (Lieb, 2012). Content marketing can be implemented by any company. However, must

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