

## THE PERCEPTIONS OF THE CUSTOMERS STAYING AT HOTELS TOWARDS ONLINE SHOPPING

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### ABSTRACT

Via the developments in Web 2.0 technology, customers can shop online using computers and smart phones. With the purpose of increasing their share in the industry, the companies that conceived the importance of internet shopping aim at making their all products available for their current and potential customers. Understanding how online shopping is organized and patterned is significant for companies. Thus, the aim of this paper is to measure the perceptions of the customers staying at hotels regarding online shopping. To achieve the goals of this study, a study was undertaken on 386 customers who preferred to stay at 5-star hotels in Afyon to see the effect of using internet as a tool of promotional activity after the manufacturing of the products that satisfy the needs and wishes of current and potential customers. Convenience sampling is utilized in this study. In the study the data which is obtained through a face-to-face survey was analysed using SPSS 22.0, the statistical package for social sciences.

**Key words:** Internet, marketing, shopping

### ÖZET

Web 2.0 teknolojisindeki gelişmeler neticesinde bilgisayar ve akıllı telefonlar sayesinde müşteriler internetten alışveriş yapabilmektedirler. İnternet alışverişinin önemini kavrayan işletmeler pazar payını arttırmak amacıyla ürünlerinin tanıtımını mevcut ve potansiyel müşterilerine ulaştırma amacı gütmektedirler. İşletmeler açısından internet kullanılarak yapılan alışverişin nasıl şekillendiği önem arz etmekte olup, bu sebeple otel işletmelerinde konaklayan müşterilerin internet üzerinden alışverişe ilişkin algılarının ölçülmesi istenmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, potansiyel ve mevcut müşterilerin istek ve ihtiyaçlarını karşılayan ürünleri ürettikten sonra onlara tutundurma faaliyetleri için aracı olarak kullanılan internetin etkisini görebilmek açısından Afyon ilinde bulunan beş yıldızlı otelleri tercih eden 386 müşteri üzerinde araştırma yapılmıştır. Bu çalışmada kolayda örnekleme yöntemi seçilmiştir. Araştırmada müşterilere yüz yüze anket yöntemi uygulanarak elde edilen veriler SPSS 22.0 istatistik programı yardımı ile değerlendirilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İnternet, Pazarlama, Alışveriş

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The internet has become widespread after the 90s. Thanks to the technological developments, today internet is not used only to have some enjoyable time, but it is also used to obtain information, do research and do shopping. Now, we can easily do many of our transactions and duties online using smart phones, tablets and computers.

The objective of this study is to see the effect of using internet as a tool of promotional activity after the production of the products that satisfy the needs and wishes of current and potential customers. Consequently, a study was undertaken on 386 customers who stayed at 5-star hotels in Afyon. The aim is to find out the factors of online shopping which have a significant effect on the customers' choices. By undertaking this study, the researcher aims to identify variables such as the demographic characteristics of the customers, the time they spend online and the frequency of their online shopping.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

E-trade is defined as shopping for products and services using internet. According to another definition, selling online and the distribution of products are also essential parts of e-trade and online shopping (Heidari, 2009; Şahin, 2014).

Online shopping is an alternative to traditional marketing methods. In addition, today online shopping has emerged as a fast-growing sector. The proliferation of computers, mobile phones and tablets also helps the development of online shopping. If customers shop online, they have far more alternatives (Enginkaya, 2006; Armağan and Turan, 2014). Some of the most important reasons that led to the proliferation of online shopping are the limited time customers have for shopping, the unavailability of a product in the regions the customers are living and the lack of variety in a product the customers are looking for (Usta, 2006).

The most important factor in the development of online shopping is the development of the internet (Lian and Lin, 2007). The internet allows companies and customers to do shopping without any restriction on time and place. During this shopping process, the connection between the seller and the buyer is maintained online (Odabaşı and Oyman, 2007). According to Sexton (2008), in contrast to the traditional marketing practices, companies expect to have a long-term relationship with the customers via marketing online. Shopping online offers significant opportunities for both companies and the customers. From the perspective of customers, shopping online helps them reduce the time spent during shopping and transportation.

One way of attracting customers to internet websites is using advertisements on social media (e.g. facebook, twitter and instagram) and traditional media (e.g. television, radio and newspapers) to advertise the website addresses of the companies. It is argued that the middle-aged and elderly people find the advertisements on traditional media more positive and secure. (Vural and Öz, 2007)

In his study entitled "The attitudes of students at Faculty of Communication towards online shopping", Silkü (2009) observed that gender, age and income do not have a significant effect on shopping online. As for Teo's (2002) study, it was observed that males

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do more online shopping compared to the females. In terms of age, it was observed that young people spend more time on internet. However, as their income is not sufficient, the people who do online shopping mostly consist of the middle-aged people who have a job and a good income. (Sim and Koi, 2002)

In our country, the people over 50 have a negative attitude towards online shopping. At the same time, the people with lower incomes have a negative attitude towards shopping online. (Dündar and Yörük, 2009; Armağan and Turan, 2014).

While online shopping was around 25 % in Turkey in 2013, it is around 70 % in developed countries. In our country, it is the younger generation who often uses the internet. It was observed that some people do not prefer to shop online as they do not think online shopping is safe. (DPT, 2015)

According to the TÜİK data published in April in 2016, the percentage of internet users in Turkey is 61 %. The data shows that the percentage is 70 % for males while it is 52 % for females. In the first three months of 2016 (January, February and March), social media tools (Facebook, twitter and instagram) are observed to be the most commonly used internet pages. According to the data from 2016, ordering products and services via internet makes up the 34,1 % of all the transactions. Between April 2015 and March 2016, customers did shopping the most on clothing with 60 %, travel tickets, car rental and so on with 29.7 %, household goods with 25.8 %, mobile phone, camera and so on with 21 % and food, cosmetics and so on with 19.8 %. The most common problems faced during online shopping are the delays in shipping and the delivery of the wrong or damaged items. The benefits of online shopping for customers are as follows: (Küpoğlu, 2008; Şahin, 2014; TÜİK,2016)

- The customers have the chance to buy products or services from anywhere on earth
- The customers have access to more qualified products that they cannot find in their region
- They can buy products or services for a more reasonable price
- They can reduce the time they spend during the purchase and they can also reduce the costs of transportation

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. The Purpose, Significance and Scope Of The Study**

This study was undertaken on 386 customers who stayed at five-star hotels in Afyon. The aim is to identify the factors that have an effect on online shopping. In this study, the effects of the demographics of the customers, the time they spend on the internet and the frequency of online shopping are analysed.

#### **3.3 Data Analysis Tool and The Scale**

A survey is used as the data collection tool. While preparing the questions, the studies of Silkü (2009), Armağan and Turan (2014), Karabulut (2013) and Şahin (2014) are utilised. The survey consists of two parts. The first part consists of the questions regarding the demographics and the frequency of customers' internet use and the second part consists of questions regarding the benefits of online shopping. The items, except for the first part, are

prepared according to five-point Likert Scale. The significance rate for the reliability of the 11 questions is calculated as 0,847.

### 3.3 The Context and The Sample

The context of the study is Afyon and the participants consist of the customers that stayed at two hotels. After excluding the participants who incompletely filled in the forms, 336 participants are included in the analysis.

### 3.4 The Limitations of The Study

The findings of this study portray the perceptions of the customers that stayed at five-star hotels in Afyon. Because of the limitation on time and the high cost of travel, the study is restricted to this context.

### 3.5 Data Analysis and The Hypotheses of The Study

The data that was obtained by directing questions to the hotel customers was analysed using SPSS 22.0.

The hypotheses are:

**H1:** Customers can shop faster online.

**H2:** The internet offers more variety of products for customers.

**H3:** Online shopping saves time.

**H4:** Online shopping allows the customers to see and compare the properties such as price and quality simultaneously.

**H5:** I take the advice of my friends/acquaintances seriously while shopping online.

**H6:** I can be a permanent customer of a website where I have shopped online and liked the experience.

**Table 1: The percentages of the gender of the participants**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	215	64
Male	121	36
Total	336	100,0

According to Table 1, 64 % of the participants that stayed at the hotels are females while 36 % are males.

**Table 2: The distribution of the marital status of the participants that participated in the study**

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	183	54,5
Single	143	45,5
Total	336	100,0

As seen in Table 2, 54,5 % of the participants are married while 45,5 % of them are single.

**Table 3: The distribution of the participants with regard to age**

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-25	47	14
26-35	122	36,3
36-45	97	28,9
46-55	42	12,5
56 ve üzeri	28	8,3
<b>Total</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>100,0</b>

As seen in Table 3, 14 % of the participants are between 18-25, 36,3 % are between 26-35, 28,9 % are between 36-45, 12,5 % percent are between 46-55 and 8,3 % are 56 and above.

**Table 4: The distribution of the participants regarding monthly income**

Monthly income	Frequency	Percentage
1500-2500	16	4,8
2501-3500	87	25,9
3501-4500	152	45,2
4501 ve üzeri	81	24,1
<b>Total</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>100</b>

When the monthly income of the participants is analysed, it is found that the income of 4,8 % of the participants is between 1500-2000 TL, 25,9 % is between 2501-3000 TL, 45,2 % is between 3501-4500 and 24,1 % is 4501 and above.

**Table 5: The distribution of the participants with regard to the time they spend on internet**

Time	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 hour	32	9,5
1-3 hours	72	21,4
4-6 hours	157	46,7
7-9 hours	47	14
10-12 hours	17	5,1
13 hours and more	11	3,3
<b>Total</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>100</b>

As can be seen in Table 5, the most frequent time interval is between 4-6 hours. In addition, all the customers in the study connect to internet daily.

**Table 6: The distribution of the participants with regard to their frequency of online shopping**

Frequency of online shopping	Frequency	Percentage
1-2	87	25,9
3-4	66	19,6

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5-6	98	29,2
7 and above	85	25,3
<b>Total</b>	336	100

As seen in Table 6, while the frequency of the online shopping is 1-2 times for 25,9 % of the participants, 29,2 % of the participants, who are the biggest group, shop online 5-6 times.

**Table 7: The distribution of the participants regarding the level of their perception of online shopping**

	n	Average	Standard deviation
Shopping online is faster.	336	3,69	1,02
Shopping online is easier.	336	4,07	0,98
Internet offers more variety of products.	336	4,24	1,02
Shopping online saves us time.	336	4,19	1,02
Internet helps us do shopping faster.	336	4,68	0,88
Online shopping provides the opportunity to simultaneously see and compare the companies regarding price and quality.	336	4,02	0,90
Online shopping saves travel expenses as sellers and buyers do not need to come together.	336	4,51	1,03
It is essential that I know the legal regulations regarding online shopping.	336	2,92	1,12
I take the advice of my acquaintances seriously while shopping online.	336	4,28	0,90
I feel more comfortable while shopping online.	336	3,91	0,88
I can be a loyal customer of a website with which I am content after doing shopping.	336	3,88	1,17

**Chi-square=626,254, p<0.001**

As seen in Table 7, the average rating for the item ‘shopping online is faster’ is 3.69, it is 4.07 for ‘shopping online is easier’, it is 4.24 for ‘it provides more variety’, it is 4.19 for ‘it saves time’ and it is 4.68 for ‘shopping online helps us do shopping faster’. Furthermore, the average for ‘Online shopping provides the opportunity to simultaneously see and compare the companies with regard to price and quality.’ is 4.02, it is 2,92 for ‘It is essential that I know the legal regulations regarding online shopping’ and the average for ‘I take the advice of my acquaintances seriously while shopping online.’ is 4.28.

**Table 8: The hypotheses of the study**

Hypotheses	n	Average	Standard	t-test	p-value	Result
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			deviation			
<b>H1: Customers can shop faster online.</b>	336	3,69	1,02	47.475	<0.001	Significant
<b>H2: The internet offers more variety of products for customers.</b>	336	4,07	0,98	45,887	<0.001	Significant
<b>H3: Online shopping saves time.</b>	336	4,19	1,02	43.814	<0.001	Significant
<b>H4: Online shopping allows the customers to see and compare the properties such as price and quality simultaneously.</b>	336	4,02	0,90	30.884	<0.001	Significant
<b>H5: I take the advice of my friends/acquaintances seriously while shopping online.</b>	336	4,28	0,90	46.026	<0.001	Significant
<b>H6: I can be a permanent customer of a website where I have shopped online and liked the experience.</b>	336	3,88	1,17	36.972	<0.001	Significant

As seen in Table 8, all the hypotheses are confirmed as significant.

### 4.RESULTS

According to the TÜİK data released in April in 2016, the percentage of internet users in the total population is 61. It is observed that while this percentage is 70 for males, it is 52 for females. In the first three months of 2016 (January, February and March) the most commonly used web sites are observed to be social media (Facebook, twitter and instagram). According to the data in 2016, the percentage of online shopping for products and services is 34,1. Between the dates April 2015 and March 2016, the biggest amount of shopping is done in clothing with 60 %, travel tickets, car rental and so on with 29.7 %, household goods with 25.8 %, mobile phone, camera and so on with 21 % and food, cosmetics and so on with 19.8 %. The problems which are encountered the most are the delays in delivery and the delivery of wrong or damaged items. (TÜİK, 2016).

One group of people who abstain from online shopping stated that they are afraid to provide their credit card details while another group stated that they find online shopping confusing and complicated. (Mert, 2012). The use of virtual cards may be more appropriate for the customers who have security concerns. Upon topping up their virtual card, customers can comfortably buy the products they prefer. In addition, there is no need in being afraid as they do not type their credit card number into the website.

Internet substantially changes customer behaviour. It can be deduced from the results of the survey and the analysis of the hypotheses that shopping online not only saves customers' time, expenses and travel costs, but also it increases the variety and quality of products considering the price.

As five-star hotels are chosen as the context in this study, it was found out that the overall income of the customers is high. This study was undertaken only in five-star hotels in Afyon. However, for future research, undertaking studies in other cities with more participants and also including the low-income groups in the surveys will more likely yield new and useful results.

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