

From Theory to Practice in the World of Marketing

Editors

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FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE IN THE WORLD OF MARKETING

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Editors' Note

(Prof. Dr. Baran ARSLAN & Assoc. Pro. Dr. Volkan YAKIN)

This book, titled **“From Theory to Practice in the World of Marketing”** is an original work written within a multidimensional framework that spans from the theoretical foundations of the marketing discipline to contemporary applications. The book positions marketing not only as an economic field of activity but also as a social science field that must be examined in terms of its psychological, sociological, and technological dimensions. In this perspective, the work offers a comprehensive view by addressing the theoretical debates in marketing from past to present, along with digitalization and transformations in consumer behavior.

In the first chapter, titled **“Marketing: Science? Or Art? A New Approach To An Old Question: An Enquiry Into The Theoretical Foundations Of Marketing”** and written by Hasan Göğce, the historical debates over whether marketing is a science or an art are examined in depth. The author states that marketing draws heavily on different disciplines such as economics, sociology, and psychology; however, this versatility makes it difficult for the field to establish its own theoretical infrastructure. It is emphasized that application-oriented approaches such as McCarthy’s 4P model contribute to the sector but do not sufficiently reflect the social and cultural dynamics at the core of marketing. Göğce argues that marketing should be moved beyond being merely a field that produces practical solutions and should be grounded in original theoretical foundations.

Ebru Tanrikulu’s study titled **“Instant Decisions, Eternal Effects: FoMO and Unplanned Buying on the Axis of Perceived Scarcity”** examines the relationship between perceived scarcity and unplanned purchasing behavior. The study reveals that social media interactions and the “fear of

missing out (FoMO)” feeling created by the digital age increase consumers’ tendency to make instant decisions, and as a result, rational purchasing processes are being replaced by behaviors driven by emotional impulses.

In the section titled **“AR–VR Based Experiential Marketing Approaches in Service-Focused Interaction”** by Bülent Özsaçmacı and Tolga Dursun, it is emphasized that augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technologies add an experiential dimension to marketing. The authors state that these technologies establish a strong emotional bond between the consumer and the brand in service-focused sectors and increase customer satisfaction. Thus, the study demonstrates how the experience economy approach integrates with digital marketing applications.

In Neslihan Tancı Yıldırım’s chapter titled **“The Effect of Brand Trust on Repurchase Intention”** the effects of brand trust on repurchase intention are evaluated in light of empirical data. The author reveals that brands gain value in the eyes of consumers not only through product quality, but also through trust, honesty, and the degree to which they fulfill their promises. According to the findings of the study, it has been determined that the element of trust is directly related to brand loyalty and provides a sustainable competitive advantage by increasing consumer satisfaction.

The study titled **“The Role of Social Media Marketing in Destination Branding: The Case of Dubai”** prepared by Sabahat Deniz and Seda Kaleözü, examines the role of social media marketing in destination branding. The authors state that social media is evolving from being merely a promotional tool into a dynamic communication platform that builds destination identity. The evaluation based on the Dubai example demonstrates how digital communication strategies are effectively used in the tourism sector to create a global brand image.

In their chapter titled **“The Effect of Perceived Service Quality on Consumer Cynicism”**, Baran Arslan and E. Ozan Aksöz examine the impact of perceived service quality on consumer cynicism. The research reveals that the five dimensions of service quality—reliability, physical aspects, assurance, empathy, and responsiveness—play a decisive role in consumer satisfaction and trust in the company. However, when service quality is perceived as inadequate, consumers exhibit distrust, dissatisfaction, and cynical attitudes. In this respect, the study makes an original contribution to the literature on service marketing.

In conclusion, the book **“From Theory to Practice in the World of Marketing”** integrates the theoretical foundations of marketing science with practical applications, offering a multidisciplinary perspective. The book’s studies consider marketing not just as a business function, but as a dynamic field shaped by societal change, digitalisation and consumer psychology. In this respect, the work is a valuable resource for both academics and practitioners, successfully reflecting the development process of the marketing field from theory to practice.

MARKETING: SCIENCE? OR ART? A NEW APPROACH TO AN OLD QUESTION: AN ENQUIRY INTO THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF MARKETING

Hasan Göğçe¹

Introduction

Marketing can be regarded as a nascent field of scientific inquiry. The importance of marketing as a scientific discipline has gradually increased over the past century, primarily due to the widespread acceptance of consumerism around the world and the overwhelming role of the free market in national economies. Nevertheless, the history of marketing predates its establishment as a scientific discipline. When compared to the century-old science of marketing, marketing practices, which predate the inception of money itself, are seen to have a very deep-rooted history. From this standpoint, a plethora of disciplines have been employed to bestow upon marketing a scientific character. Marketing has been shaped by diverse disciplines, primarily economics, sociology and psychology, and has developed a substantial corpus of content. In this sense, marketing can be defined as an ‘applied synthetic science’. Nevertheless, the adoption of concepts from other disciplines gives rise to another problem. This issue can be encapsulated as a failure to develop marketing-specific theories and an inability to provide a comprehensive explanation of the marketing phenomenon within the marketing literature itself. However, this situation has not been given due consideration by the majority of marketing academics. The majority of academics engaged in marketing-related research are engaged in micro-research, with a focus on identifying practical solutions to contemporary issues. Consequently, they do not seek answers to questions pertaining to the theoretical underpinnings of marketing. This

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phenomenon has led to an excessive reliance on external fields, resulting in the marketing literature becoming increasingly dependent on other disciplines. Consequently, it has given rise to significant interrogations regarding the scientific nature of marketing and its potential classification as an art.

Searching for Theory in Marketing

With the introduction of marketing as a university course, efforts to establish a scientific literature as an academic field began. The first examples of these efforts can be traced back to the works of Vaile (1941) and Alderson and Cox (1948). When compared to other social sciences such as economics, sociology, and anthropology, the history of marketing dates back further. At that time, questions began to arise as to why marketing, as a young field, had not yet gained scientific status. The first generation of marketing academics embarked on an effort to establish a theoretical framework for marketing. For example, Alderson and Cox (1948) mention the inadequacy of basic marketing principles and marketing concepts for marketing students at that time. They also state that certain formulations need to be developed to solve some problems in the field of marketing (p. 137). It is also noted that marketing students at that time were taught mainly managerial and economic terms and lacked knowledge about the true nature of marketing. Marketing, a young discipline compared to fields such as economics and sociology, has been greatly influenced by other fields. Buzzell (1963) was among the first academics to draw attention to another fundamental problem. In his article titled 'Is marketing a science?', Buzzell (1963) discussed the issue of whether marketing can be considered a science in the true sense of the word. According to Buzzell, for a field to be accepted as a science, it must meet fundamental scientific principles and rules such as systematic accumulation of knowledge, the existence of generally accepted principles, the testability of hypotheses, and the predictability of results, which he argues are not fully met in the discipline of marketing. Halbert (1965) attempted to understand why the discipline of marketing developed slowly

by asking another question. According to him, marketing is more of an applied field, which is why it develops slowly in theoretical terms. Halbert's main objection is that marketing is seen as an "applied art." This way of thinking obscures the evaluation of marketing as an academic discipline. Marketing is more than just an application area that solves certain technical problems. According to Halbert, a theory should provide a systematic logical framework, be experimentally testable, and have the ability to explain and predict human behaviour. At the same time, Halbert bases marketing on different disciplines such as economics, sociology, psychology, and finally business practices and management experience. Bartels' (1968) contribution to the subject is related to the necessity of a general theory of marketing and the components of this theory. Like other authors, Bartels argued that a general theory should not be solely application-oriented. He emphasised the necessity of a general theory to establish a knowledge system, have the power to explain events, and be able to establish cause-and-effect relationships.

These debates in the field of marketing did not only continue in the 1950s and 1960s; they continued in the following years as well (see Buzzell, 1963; Bartels, 1951; Taylor, 1965; Weiss, 1962).

Impact of Supply and Demand on the Formation of Marketing Thinking

Within this development process, starting in the 1880s, marketing has been classified according to different approaches, particularly from the application field (the part that was thought of more as an art). This classification began with the first stages of the Industrial Revolution and continued until the years when production and product supply began to exceed demand. Textbooks generally date this period from the 1800s to the 1980s. This period is also referred to as the 'traditional marketing approach.' For the period after 1980, 'modern marketing' approaches, such as social marketing and

relational marketing, have emerged. While Bartels (1962) first introduced this classification of marketing approaches, Kotler (1967) contributed to the form we know today in textbooks. The fact that every change in supply and demand reshapes marketing approaches highlights the adaptability and flexibility of marketing. However, this situation may also indirectly cause some problems for the theoretical development of marketing. First, finding concepts specific to each situation in the marketing literature for every situation that develops in the market distances marketing as a scientific discipline from forming a comprehensive theory. Of course, the historical development of marketing thought is not an attempt to form a marketing theory. However, while the historical development of marketing thinking shows us that marketing approaches change in every situation and produce new formulas for new situations, it also proves how limited its theoretical infrastructure is.

Marketing Mix

When looking at marketing literature, it is generally seen that application-oriented studies are carried out by drawing on fields such as psychology and sociology. These micro-theories are generally not linked to a comprehensive marketing theory. Micro-theories remain in their own independent fields and are used functionally in marketing application research. In fact, these micro-theories are even attempted to be adapted for marketing literature. Many books written under the name of marketing theories actually consist of micro-theories borrowed from other disciplines that seek answers to practical problems. From this perspective, it is evident that marketing literature has produced a great deal of information that can be used, especially in the field of application. In this regard, the 4P model developed by McCarthy (1964) in the 1960s has been a very useful template for the private sector and students. The 4P model was important at the time because it provided companies with the opportunity to think strategically. The marketing mix, consisting of product, price, distribution, and promotion, has been very useful for companies in developing

their marketing efforts. The marketing mix is still the most widely used marketing instrument today. On the other hand, while the 4Ps are taught as a course in schools, they are used as a pedagogical method that students can easily understand and have become an indispensable element of marketing courses.

While acknowledging the useful nature of the marketing mix and its contributions to the field, it is important to note that it also has several criticisms. For example, Kotler (2023) argues in his article titled “*A Lifetime in Marketing: Lessons Learned and the Way Ahead*” that the 4Ps still retain their importance for marketing but that services, brands, and incentives play a critical role. Kotler’s criticism is quite mild and constructive. Kotler is an important author who has mostly produced knowledge for the practical side of marketing. However, there is no evidence that he has made any effort to criticise what the 4Ps and similar concepts actually mask in the search for marketing theory or to develop this kind of thinking. Grönroos (1994) compares the 4Ps to a toolbox in his article titled “*From Marketing Mix to Relationship Marketing – Towards a Paradigm Shift in Marketing.*” The underlying criticism of this analogy is that the marketing mix, as a one-dimensional approach that provides superficial answers to all kinds of problems, does not actually solve many issues related to marketing and market actors, but rather offers superficial and temporary measures. Seth (2021) discusses this situation in his article titled “*New Areas of Research in Marketing Strategy, Consumer Behaviour, and Marketing Analytics: The Future is Bright,*” stating that marketing literature has developed with new analytical techniques. Seth (2011) also argues in his article “*Impact of Emerging Markets on Marketing: Rethinking Existing Perspectives and Practices*” that marketing literature is insufficient to understanding emerging markets and that models need to be re-constructed to include new dynamics in markets.

Perhaps due to its useful structure, the marketing mix has indirectly obscured the dynamics of sociology, psychology, and

cultural processes, which can be considered the fundamental dynamics of marketing. Useful methods such as the marketing mix have led to the neglect of marketing theory studies and their slower development. This situation has also pushed marketing academia towards instrumental thinking. The static nature of the marketing mix mostly reflects market dynamics in a one-sided manner. The marketing mix, as a model in which companies are active, consumers are passive, and there is a one-way flow from the company to the customer, has shaped the way of thinking in the business and academic worlds for a long time. As an academic field, marketing was perceived and shaped as an application-oriented sub-discipline in business schools. This weakened marketing's ability and tradition to develop its own independent theory.

Predominance of Micro Theories

Looking at the current state of marketing academia, it can be seen that it has a structure that produces temporary solutions to practical problems. Consumer behaviour studies are generally limited to research on consumers' product purchases from the company's perspective. This has led to marketing taking on a normative nature. In short, the question being asked is: How do we convince customers to buy the product? In most cases, consumers are seen as actors who need to be manipulated. Examples of micro theories from different fields include rational choice theories, technology acceptance model, impulse buying, expectation theory, planned behaviour model, and many others. These theories come from different disciplines such as sociology, psychology, and anthropology and have been developed for specific situations. As an academic discipline, marketing should certainly benefit from these theories. However, the academic literature's excessive focus on micro theories hinders the production of original theories (Göğçe, 2020; Akaka et al., 2021). There are too many independent fields, and the information produced in these fields cannot be linked to each other through middle-range theories. Combining

micro theories from fields such as psychology, economics, and sociology in marketing literature can contribute positively to theory formation efforts. In a scientific field, this function is generally performed by middle-range theories (Vargo, 2018). Middle-range theories can serve as bridges between micro theories, bringing together information from different disciplines in the theory formation process of marketing and creating a comprehensive theory. Is it correct to say that there are no middle-range theory candidates in marketing literature? However, it is possible to mention a few approaches that have the potential to become middle-range theories in marketing.

Approaches with Potential for Marketing Theory

It is not difficult to identify some approaches that are not directly mentioned in the marketing literature. For example, exchange-based approaches constitute a fairly extensive marketing literature. Early academics such as Alderson (1957) and Bartels (1962) laid the foundations for the exchange-oriented approach.

Alderson (1957) was one of the first authors who did not view marketing as merely sales techniques. According to him, marketing efforts are a social mechanism that regulates social relationships through exchange. Viewing marketing efforts in this way is one of the first studies that suggests that marketing could be a science rather than an art. Bartels (1962) similarly argued that exchange is inherent in marketing. According to him, marketing is the process of organising exchange processes to regulate the needs of society. These early authors paved the way for the scientific conceptualisation of the phenomenon of exchange, which could serve as a template for marketing.

In the following period, Bagozzi (1975) created a highly explanatory template on the types and processes of exchange in his article titled “*Marketing as Exchange*.” This approach offers a modern framework compared to the classical approach of Alderson and Bartels. In this study, exchange types were classified as simple, repetitive, and complex in an attempt

to define the boundaries of exchange. Kotler and Zaltman (1971) defined exchange relationships as long-term social processes. The authors also argued that exchange relationships should create social benefits and customer satisfaction. Here, concepts such as customer focus and benefit are actually concepts considered for the continuity of sustainable exchange relationships. It is believed that many microtheories that form the marketing literature today and have been borrowed from other disciplines are based on the exchange-oriented approach.

The exchange-oriented approach has been the dominant view in the marketing discipline for many years. As a result of the shift in supply and demand from the firm to the customer, the relational marketing approach emerged. Developments such as increased competition between companies, products becoming more similar in terms of quality and price, and developed countries transforming into consumer societies have pushed companies to view customers as partners and establish long-term relationships with them. Grönroos (1994) criticises the marketing mix for being transactional and short-term in his article 'From marketing mix to relationship marketing: Towards a paradigm shift in marketing' and emphasises the need to develop long-term, value-creating relationships with customers. Gummesson (2002) contributed to relational marketing with his 30 R's. Gummesson argued that relationship marketing should be operationalised and made efforts to create a useful template, especially for practitioners. Relationship marketing is one of the important approaches developed to the exchange-oriented approach. The concept of long-term relationships that create value for the parties has the potential to become a marketing theory from this perspective.

Another approach with theoretical potential for marketing literature is the value-based approach. In particular, Vargo and Lusch (2004) offer a significant critique of mainstream marketing and its institutional and intellectual framework in their article 'Evolving to a new dominant logic for marketing.'

In fact, the authors' criticism is related to the exchange-oriented approach and its reflections in academia. From this perspective, the Service Dominant Logic claims that the Industrial Revolution and a product-oriented understanding have influenced the business and economic world. This influence has led to the misdirection of the market and producer-consumer relationships. For example, the distinction between products and services and the definition of services as anything that is not a product. Definitions such as abstractness, non-storability, heterogeneity, and simultaneity are important in showing the impact of product-dominant logic on the marketing thought system. According to Vargo and Lusch (2004, 2008, 2011), the service is the primary entity, and products are merely carriers of services. Vargo and Lusch argue that the fundamental exchange between parties is knowledge and skills, and that physical products are only shaped by knowledge and skills. Thus, the most important focus of competition is the knowledge and skills of the actors. Finally, Service Dominant Logic argues that collaborative value creation forms the core of an exchange relationship. It can be considered a potential middle-range theory for marketing in a value-based approach.

Mainstream exchange-based marketing approaches, as well as approaches that enrich marketing literature and provide different perspectives, such as relational marketing or service-dominant logic, can be considered important turning points in the search for marketing theory as a discipline. One of the most important problems here is the micro-theoretical structure of marketing academia. Firm-focused, short-term micro research indirectly undermines marketing's ability to address phenomena in a comprehensive manner as an academic field. This is because most research is conducted within the framework of exchange-based approaches.

Conclusion

As an academic field, the discipline of marketing lacks a broad-based evaluation and classification system. For example,

in the field of management, which is also part of business faculties, there are theories such as *Organisational Ecology*, *New Institutional Theory*, *Transaction Cost*, and *Resource Dependency*, which have replaced medium-range theories (Sargut and Özen, 2010). These theories serve as an umbrella for micro studies, and scientific studies can be grouped under these umbrella concepts. In the field of marketing, approaches such as relational marketing and service-dominant logic have not received the attention they deserve from academics. It is particularly unfortunate that these significant approaches are presented as if they were marketing applications, which could be merely methods such as guerrilla marketing, retro marketing and green marketing. This results in them being given equal weight and importance. The terms ‘marketing approaches’ and ‘new approaches in marketing’ are used to describe all developments or applications related to marketing (see Varinli, 2008). This phenomenon is also evident in the domain of management, as illustrated above. For instance, studies on spiritual leadership (see Okan and Okan, 2024; Okan, 2025) have encountered difficulties in achieving a balanced theoretical standpoint. Nevertheless, the field of marketing continues to be influenced by micro-research focused on consumer behaviour. This firm-centric perspective regards the customer as a passive and manipulable actor. Furthermore, conventional marketing methodologies continue to operate from a product-centric standpoint (Vargo and Lusch, 2014). A product-centric perspective is inadequate for evaluating actors in the market holistically, incorporating macro dimensions. Another critique of conventional marketing literature is provided by Tadjeswki et al. (2019). Conventional marketing literature has focused on encouraging people to consume more and facilitating access to a wide range of products and services. The efforts that enable these activities are incentivising practitioners and academics. This criticism also underscores the company-centric nature of marketing. Consequently, mainstream marketing practices tend to disregard market failures and negativities, instead producing

knowledge within a relatively isolated sphere. The marketing phenomenon that is currently taught in educational institutions and that exerts a significant influence on the thinking of the majority of marketing academics is the subject of criticism on the grounds that it is somewhat insular and divorced from reality.

To summarise, the ongoing discourse surrounding the question of whether marketing can be considered a science or an art continues to be of interest, albeit diminishingly so, due to the paucity of medium and large-scale theories in the field. It is evident that a significant proportion of marketing academics

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INSTANT DECISIONS, ETERNAL EFFECTS: FoMO AND UNPLANNED BUYING ON THE AXIS OF PERCEIVED SCARCE

Ebru Tanrikulu¹

Introduction

With rapidly advancing technologies, new areas have emerged for society, and individuals have begun to experience changes in all areas of their lives. Undoubtedly, one of these is internet addiction and social media. The increasing use of and addiction to the internet, social media, and similar phenomena have created a fear of missing out among individuals. At the same time, it is stated that the generation born after 1990 experiences this anxiety the most (Hunt et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2022). In this context, the concept known as FoMO (Fear of Missing Out) is described as “the fear of missing out on something.” In other words, it has been defined by Przybylski and colleagues (2013, p. 1841) as “a widespread concern that others may experience rewarding experiences that the individual does not.” However, it has been stated that the concept of scarcity, which is explained as having less than you need (Mullainathan & Shafir, 2013), affects a person’s thoughts and therefore affects cognition and behavior by causing a certain state of mind (Huang et al., 2023). Scarcity, a fundamental precondition of economic behavior and a pervasive aspect of human life, is assumed to increase the perceived value of products and opportunities within the context of marketing and consumer behavior (Lynn, 1991; Osés-Eraso et al., 2008). All of these concepts are believed to influence purchasing behavior and guide consumer decisions (Swain et al., 2006; Ayvaz & Alınışık, 2018; Gupta, 2013). Unplanned purchases, the focus of this study, are defined as purchasing a product that was not planned before entering the store (Park et al., 1989).

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Consumers are expected to increase their purchases regardless of their overall shopping goals (Bell et al., 2011). Therefore, unplanned buying is important for marketers, and it is necessary to identify which variables are associated with this purchasing behavior. The increasing number of studies on these topics in recent years highlights the importance of this situation (Ning Shen & Khalifa, 2012; Öztürk et al., 2021; Şen, 2025).

As a result of the literature review, variables were identified and included in the study. As previously stated, purchasing tactics, based on the phenomenon of scarcity, encompass a significant portion of marketing activities and significantly influence individuals' interest in unplanned buying (Ayvaz & Alnaçık, 2018; Mou & Shin, 2018). Furthermore, increased internet addiction and social media use have led to the emergence of FoMO (Wang et al., 2022). Consequently, the aim of this study is to determine whether FoMO plays a mediating role in the impact of perceived scarcity on unplanned buying. This study, which examines FoMO, perceived scarcity, and unplanned buying—a distinct form of buying behavior believed to have increased its impact on purchasing behavior with the widespread use of the internet—combined variables, highlights the importance of this topic. It is crucial for marketers to take changing consumer behaviors and habits into account and develop strategies accordingly. This study is expected to provide guidance to businesses, marketing academics, consumers, and researchers.

FoMO

The rapid spread of the internet has created new areas. One of these is undoubtedly social media. Social media, known to have a significant impact on people and impacting both their work and life, has led to information sharing and addiction. In this context, it's been reported that individuals experience a fear of missing out. Mobile users, particularly in the post-90s generation, are thought to experience anxiety about missing

out (Hunt et al., 2018, p. 751; Wang et al., 2021, p. 1). The most widely accepted definition of the period is thought to have been provided by Beaqon (2006). According to this definition, published in Urban Dictionary, “FoMO (Fear of Missing Out)” refers to the fear of missing out on “something great” if you miss a party or event (Beaqon, 2006). At the same time, FoMO, defined by Cambridge Dictionary as “fear of missing out”, is explained as the anxiety of missing out on fun and exciting events, especially those shared by people on social media (Cambridge Dictionary, 2025). This concept was first studied as a research topic by social psychologist Przybylski and his colleagues in 2013 (Argan et al., 2018, p. 44). Przybylski and his colleagues (2013, p. 1841) define FoMO as “a pervasive anxiety that others may have rewarding experiences that the individual does not have.”

Nowadays, it's quite easy for everyone to access real-time information about events, conversations, and activities taking place on various social media platforms. This leads to FoMO, a constant desire to stay connected to what others are sharing and doing, which can lead individuals experiencing a fear of missing out to spend more time on social media. Platforms such as Twitter (X), Facebook, and Instagram are described as online communities that provide a high level of social connection and enable communication between users (Lampe et al., 2007, p. 435). FoMO, on the other hand, has been reported to be more prevalent among individuals who use social media platforms (Wortham, 2011; Sapadin, 2015). Therefore, these platforms are of great importance for individuals experiencing a fear of missing out. On the other hand, FoMO is also thought to be linked to psychological effects. In other words, it's suggested that technology-mediated communication can have both positive and negative effects. It's also possible to argue that a constant desire to be online can also bring potential dangers. In this sense, the use of social media platforms can be linked to life satisfaction, mood, dissatisfaction with one's current relationship status, loneliness, and boredom, as a way to avoid

negative emotions (Przybylski et al., 2013, p. 1842). For example, when an important invitation arrives on social media, a person may feel compelled to accept it. It has been found that individuals with high levels of FoMO are less able to fully enjoy the moment because they are more curious about what others are doing. FoMO, which can lead to irrational decisions, can also be defined as an “anxiety disorder” (Hodkinson, 2019, p. 70; Argan et al., 2018, p. 45). In other words, it can be defined as the feeling of tension, anxiety, and emptiness that arises when a person’s constant desire to be known is deprived of what is happening in other people’s lives, what other individuals are doing, and situations that develop outside of one’s own life (Tanhan et al., 2022, p. 76).

However, in the marketing field, FoMO is a concept studied in the context of consumer behavior (Kang et al., 2019; Kang et al., 2020; Argan et al., 2022). Targeting largely the youth market, FoMO is adopted opportunistically as a “call to action.” It aims to create consumer anxiety by creating the perception of limited stock or limited-time offers and is used commercially to increase demand for products (Hodkinson, 2019, p. 66). In this context, it should be noted that the concept is important when creating marketing strategies.

PERCEIVED SCARCITY

Scarcity can mean something not being enough and being difficult to obtain (Oxford Dictionary, 2025). Mullainathan and Shafir (2013, p. 4) define scarcity as “having less than you need.” It is fundamentally stated that scarcity theory influences individuals’ thoughts, thereby inducing a certain state of mind, which in turn influences cognition and behavior (Huang et al., 2023, p. 2). Scarcity, which is also a fundamental prerequisite of economic behavior and a pervasive aspect of human life, is divided into two types: external or environmentally induced and internal or human-induced. Within the context of marketing and consumer behavior, it is assumed to increase the perceived value of products and opportunities (Lynn, 1991, p. 43; Osés-

Eraso et al., 2008, p. 530). In this context, an increase in the amount purchased may lead to effects such as higher product appeal, shorter search times and greater satisfaction with the purchased product (Gupta, 2013, p. 12). Perceived scarcity, however, is defined as “the consumer’s perception of product scarcity for a particular style or size, strategically created by the retailer.” In other words, it stems from the belief that a particular product is scarce at a particular time and place, and that this scarcity can be intentionally engineered by marketers. On the other hand, product shortages can also occur as a result of high demand (Gupta, 2013, p. 16). It has been noted that individuals who perceive scarcity tend to compete with each other for a limited number of products and experience a sense of pride when they possess scarce products (Babakus et al., 1988, p. 39; Garretson and Burton, 2003, p. 165). A study by Suri et al. (2007) presented a conceptual framework that encompasses both the motivational and interference effects of scarcity on information processing. It has been found that individuals are more motivated to process messages with scarcity appeals and that scarcity messages increase both the choice of a good and the willingness to pay (Suri et al., 2007, 89; Mittone and Savadori, 2009, p. 453). It has also been stated that some restrictions increase purchase intentions by creating a sense of urgency and regret (Swain et al., 2006, p. 523; Ayvaz and Alınacı, 2018, p. 1).

Scarcity messages that create a sense of urgency have been observed to increase consumers’ perceived product value and can lead to unplanned buying (Zamfir, 2024, p. 27; Guo et al., 2017, p. 29). For this reason, scarcity strategies are expressed as a method used by marketers to influence consumer decision-making processes and behavior (Wu et al., 2012, p. 263).

UNPLANNED PURCHASE

Buying behavior can be planned, unplanned, or impulsive, as stated in a 1962 study by Stern. Planned buying involves rational decisions and a time-consuming search for information,

while unplanned buying is used to describe all shopping decisions made without any prior planning. Impulsive buying, on the other hand, differs from unplanned buying in that it involves rapid decision-making and experiencing a sudden and irresistible urge to buy (Rook, 1987, p. 191; Muruganantham & Bhakat, 2013, p. 150). In other words, while all impulsive purchases can be unplanned, they are not always impulsive (Iyer, 1989, p. 528). The unplanned purchases focused on in this study are thought to occur as a result of fulfilling a forgotten need or seizing opportunities presented to individuals (Bucklin & Lattin, 1991, p. 25). Another definition of unplanned buying is the purchase of a product that was not planned before entering a store (Park et al., 1989, p. 423). Kollat and Willett (1967) argued that unplanned buying can occur when individuals do not express their purchase intentions; in other words, it can be revealed by comparing alternative purchase intentions with actual outcomes.

In their study, they aimed to explore the extent to which customers' predispositions to unplanned buying differ, to explore customer characteristics associated with different predispositions to unplanned buying, and to identify some of the triggering conditions that lead to unplanned buying (Kollat & Willett, 1967, p. 21). Indeed, it has been found that the amount of unplanned purchases increases with consumers' general shopping goals set before they start shopping. Furthermore, it has been found that 70% of consumers make brand decisions in-store. In this context, marketers are reported to invest significant resources in-store to influence shoppers (Bell et al., 2011, p. 31; Neff, 2008). It has been noted that consumers' purchases may increase regardless of their general shopping goals, that purchases may also increase when choosing specific and targeted stores, and that out-of-store marketing can increase unplanned buying (Bell et al., 2011, p. 32). In this context, it is believed that unplanned buying is important for marketers and that it is necessary to determine which variables are associated with this unplanned pattern under which circumstances.

However, while existing unplanned purchase studies focus on traditional retailers, with the development of e-commerce in recent years, unplanned buying studies have been conducted in the online environment (Parboteeah et al., 2009; Ning Shen & Khalifa, 2012; Türkyılmaz et al., 2015; Öztürk et al., 2021; Şen, 2025).

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN VARIABLES AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Many retailers believe that purchasing behavior is largely unplanned. Therefore, they spend heavily on in-store marketing to encourage unplanned purchases (Bell et al., 2011, p. 31). However, online unplanned purchases are considered a key source of profit for online stores today, and opportunities to increase unplanned purchases are being explored. In other words, while physical stores typically have time and geographic limitations, online shopping allows individuals to purchase at their preferred location and time, which may increase the number of unplanned purchases (Koufaris, 2002, p. 210; Engel et al., 1993).

When looking at the source of unplanned buying behavior, it can be said that many variables are effective, and it is stated that it can be triggered by external stimuli and personal emotions (Huang & Cai, 2021). One of these can arise as a result of the perception of product scarcity. In other words, consumers' emotions can be affected by the fear of missing out, and this can trigger unplanned purchases. In summary, the perception of scarcity, which is said to trigger FoMO, can cause individuals with FoMO to make unplanned purchases. Therefore, FoMO is seen as an important opportunity that should be evaluated for customer acquisition in order to benefit from the emotional and psychological state of the target market (Şenel, 2018, p. 61; Hodkinson, 2019, p. 66; Casale & Flett, 2020, p. 89; Zhang et al., 2022, p. 2). Interest in consumer behavior in the context of FoMO is increasing day by day (Alfina et al., 2023, p. 2). Furthermore, FoMO has been found

to be effective in unplanned purchasing (Şenel, 2018; Erciş et al., 2021; Garg, 2023; Flecha Ortiz et al., 2024; Hayani & Nurlita, 2024; Hamizar et al., 2024; Pham et al., 2025; Özen & Hus, 2025).

Given that perceived scarcity has an impact on FoMO and that FoMO can also influence unplanned purchases, a mediating effect between these variables was predicted. A mediating variable conveys the effect of an independent variable on a dependent variable (MacKinnon et al., 2007, p. 593). The hypotheses formulated in this context are as follows:

H₁: Perceived scarcity has a significant effect on unplanned buying.

H₂: Perceived scarcity has a significant effect on FoMO.

H₃: FoMO has a significant effect on unplanned buying.

H₄: FoMO has a mediating role in the relationship between perceived scarcity and unplanned buying.

METHOD

Research Model

The proposed research model, designed to facilitate the interpretation of the study variables and the understanding of the relevant analyses, is shown in Figure 1. The independent variable in the model is perceived scarcity, the dependent variable is unplanned buying, and the mediator variable is FoMO.

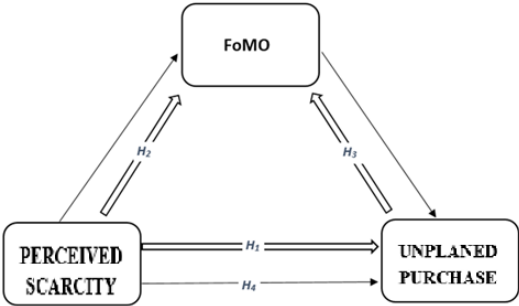


Figure 1. Proposed Research Model

Research Population and Sample

Due to the purpose and scope of the study, as well as constraints such as data obsolescence, time, and cost, a sampling method was employed. Because FoMO is particularly prevalent among younger students, the sample population consists of university students (Hunt et al., 2018, p. 753; Tanhan et al., 2022; Hodgkinson, 2019). In this context, the population consists of students of the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences at Harran University. The sample consists of undergraduate and graduate students who shop online at the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences at Harran University. Data were collected through an online survey using the convenience sampling method between 26/11/2023-20/12/2023.

The sample size calculation was based on the number of samples per item, and the ratio of the sample size (N) to the number of items (q) (N/q) was stated to range from 10/1 to 20/1 (Kline, 2011, p. 12; Hair et al., 2014, p. 100). A total of 290 students participated in the study. Furthermore, a control question and a filter question were added to the survey to increase the reliability of the findings. Prior to the analysis, the data were prepared for analysis by eliminating missing data, the control question, outlier data, extreme data, and surveys from participants who responded incorrectly to the reverse-coded question. As a result of all these, 27 data sets were eliminated, and the analysis continued with a total of 263 survey data.

Data Collection Tools for the Research

Quantitative research encompasses methods that systematically investigate social phenomena using numerical or statistical data. Quantitative research enables the formal testing of theories by formulating hypotheses and applying statistical analyses (Watson, 2015, pp. 1-2). In this study, which conducted a quantitative research, a filter question was asked in order to conduct the survey within the sample and is seen to consist of four parts; the first part includes the 4-item

“Perceived Scarcity Scale” taken from the study of Chung, Song, and Lee (2017). The second part of the survey includes the 10-item “Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) Scale” taken from the study of Przybylski et al. (2013). The third part includes the 9-item “Impulse Buying Behavior Scale” taken from the study of Rook and Fisher (1995). The final part includes demographic questions that may be relevant to the study. Because some scales lack Turkish equivalents and the original versions are widely used, it was decided to use the original versions. The scales in the study were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale, and the data obtained within the scope of the study were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and the Process Macro plug-in. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods.

FINDINGS

Demographic Findings

When the demographic characteristics of the surveys are examined, it is seen that a total of 263 individuals answered the questions, with 144 (54.8%) female and 119 (45.2%) male participants. Furthermore, in terms of marital status, 251 (95.4%) participants were single and 12 (4.6%) were married. When the findings regarding the age of the participants are examined, it is stated that the highest distribution is in the “18 years and under” group with 75.3%, followed by the “19-29 years” age group with 24.3%, which is the second highest participant group. Finally, it was determined that there are approximate levels in the income distribution, with the largest distribution being in the “3001 TL-6000 TL” range with 28.9%. In terms of the time spent online shopping within individuals’ shopping habits, the highest distribution is in the “2-5 hours” range with 56.3%. The highest frequency of online shopping was “a few times a year” at 37.6%. All these results are shown in the table below (Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

	Frequency	Percentage (%)		Frequency	Percentage (%)
GENDER			MARITAL STATUS		
Female	144	54.8	Single	251	95.4
Male	119	45.2	Married	12	4.6
AGE			MONTHLY INCOME STATUS		
18 years old and under	198	75.3	3000 TL and under	62	23.6
19-29 years	64	24.3	3001 TL-6000 TL	76	28.9
30 years old and above	1	0.4	6001 TL-10.000 TL	57	21.7
			10.001 TL-15.000 TL	29	11
			15.000 TL and above	39	14.8
TIME SPENT ON THE INTERNET			FREQUENCY OF ONLINE SHOPPING		
0-1 hour	33	12.5	Every day	20	7.6
2-5 hour	148	56.3	Several times a week	52	19.8
6-10 hour	72	27.4	A few times a month	92	35
11 hour and above	10	3.8	Several times a year	99	37.6

Validity, Reliability, and Normality Analyses

The results of exploratory factor analysis are included to test whether the basic structure of the scales is preserved for the sample group reached as a result of the field research.

Table 2. Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis on Variables

	Unplanned Buying	FoMO	Perceived Scarcity
	psa1 0.707	fomo1 0.733	ak1 0.730
	psa2 0.676	fomo2 0.588	ak2 0.693
	psa3 0.657	fomo3 0.743	ak3 0.724
	psa4 0.576	fomo4 0.501	ak4 0.679
	psa5 0.733	fomo5 0.620	
	psa6 0.690	fomo6 0.699	
	psa7 0.710	fomo7 0.636	
	psa8 0.619	fomo8 0.757	
	psa9 0.300	fomo9 0.515	
	fomo10 0.315		
Explained Total Variance	54.252	51.003	50.000
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin	0.755	0.715	0.678
Barlett	533.078	557.398	151.837
	*psa: Unplanned Buying	*fomo: FoMO	*ak: Perceived Scarcity

For the KMO sampling adequacy to be acceptable, a value above 0.50 is considered sufficient (Durmuş et al., 2016, p. 80). In this context, the KMO adequacy statistical values of the scales were found to be acceptable. It was concluded that the scales were grouped under a single dimension, as in the original. On the other hand, the factor loadings of variables with loading values of 0.32 and above can be interpreted. A high factor loading means that the variable is significantly related to the factor (Comrey & Lee, 1992, p. 243; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014, p. 702). In this case, the analyses were continued by removing items “psa9” from the impulsive buying scale and “fomo10” from the FoMO scale.

Table 3. Reliability and Normality Analyses

Variable	Item	Cronbach Alpha	(Skewness)	(Kurtosis)
Unplanned Buying	psa1	0.74	0.435	-0.978
	psa2		0.751	-0.782
	psa3		0.622	-0.965
	psa4		0.658	-0.956
	psa5		0.217	-1.291
	psa6		-0.047	-1.194
	psa7		-0.420	-1.006
	psa8		0.316	-1.211

FoMO	fomo1	0.74	0.626	-0.957
	fomo2		0.162	-1.373
	fomo3		0.310	-1.061
	fomo4		-0.381	-1.166
	fomo5		-0.007	-1.182
	fomo6		0.143	-1.201
	fomo7		0.412	-1.151
	fomo8		-0.188	-1.413
	fomo9		0.246	-1.185
Perceived Scarcity	ak1	0.67	-0.263	-1.127
	ak2		-0.034	-1.263
	ak3		-0.454	-0.988
	ak4		0.126	-1.381

Cronbach’s Alpha reliability classification, which is defined as the fit value depending on the correlation between questions, is as follows: Very low ($\alpha \leq 0.30$); Low ($0.30 < \alpha \leq 0.60$); Medium ($0.60 < \alpha \leq 0.75$); High ($0.75 < \alpha \leq 0.90$) and Very high ($\alpha > 0.90$)(14-17) (Gottems et al., 2018, p. 3). According to the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient ranges in the literature, values of 0.80 and above are considered to have high reliability (Demirkol & Tancı Yıldırım, 2018, p. 35; Arslan & Bakır, 2022, p. 26; Bakır et al., 2024, p. 108; Tancı Yıldırım & Türk, 2024, p. 104; Tancı Yıldırım, 2024, pp. 312–313). Tabachnick & Fidell (2014) state that the data exhibit a normal distribution when the skewness and kurtosis values are between +1.5 and -1.5. In this context, it has been determined that the necessary qualifications have been met.

Correlation Analysis Results for Research Variables

The data were found to have a normal distribution, and Pearson Correlation Analysis was applied to check whether there was a relationship between the variables (Field, 2009, p. 177). When the values in the correlation analysis results were examined, it was observed that there was a positive and significant relationship between FoMO and unplanned buying. Furthermore, there was a positive and significant relationship between perceived scarcity and unplanned buying. Finally, a positive and significant relationship was also found between perceived scarcity and FoMO. Fornell and Larcker (1981)

stated that when the square root values of the average explained variance were compared with the correlation coefficients, discriminant validity was achieved if the square root values were higher than the values in its respective row and column. Accordingly, when the square root values were compared with the correlation coefficients, it was observed that discriminant validity was achieved.

Table 4. Correlation Coefficients and Discrimination Validity Table

	Ort.	S.S.	1	2	3
Unplanned Buying (1)	2.6649	0.83142	(0.673)		
FoMO (2)	2.7558	0.78908	0.421**	(0.650)	
Perceived Scarcity (3)	0.0504	0.98707	0.227**	0.380**	(0.707)

****p<0.01(2-tailed) (N=263)**
*** The numbers in parentheses in the diagonal are the square roots of AVE.**

Hypothesis Test Results

This research sought to determine whether FoMO mediates the effect of perceived scarcity on unplanned buying. In this context, PROCESS Macro’s Model 4 approach, developed by Andrew F. Hayes and enabling the testing of mediating relationships, was used. PROCESS Macro Model 4 provides significant convenience for researchers by performing all the analyses required for separate mediation analysis in one go. Furthermore, PROCESS Macro analyzes the significance of the indirect effect using the modern Bootstrap Method, providing researchers with more reliable results (Bozkurt, 2023, p. 19).

In SEM applications, the overall validity of the model is assessed by fit indices such as CFI, TLI, and RMSEA. However, due to the nature of the model, the focus here is on the direction, magnitude, and conditional changes of the effects rather than overall model fit. Therefore, a direct regression-based and Bootstrap-supported analysis approach was preferred. In other words, PROCESS Macro offers a more targeted and practical solution compared to SEM. It was considered both appropriate for the research questions and a methodologically valid choice (Şahin, 2025, p. 75). In this context, the direct effects of the analysis are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Direct Impact

Variables		β	Standard Error	Critical Rate	P	R ²
FoMO <---	Perceived Scarcity	0.380	0.046	6.642	***	0.145
PSA <---	Perceived Scarcity	0.227	0.051	3.769	***	0.052
PSA <---	FoMO	0.391	0.064	6.455	***	0.183

***0,05 **0,01 ***0,001**

Furthermore, perceived scarcity has a statistically significant and positive effect on unplanned buying (H1) ($\beta=0.227$, $p<0.001$). The effect of perceived scarcity on FoMO (H2) is also statistically positive and significant ($\beta=0.380$, $p<0.001$). Finally, FoMO has a statistically positive and significant effect on unplanned buying (H3) ($\beta=0.391$, $p<0.001$). Therefore, hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 are supported.

Table 6. Mediating Effect

FoMO	Total Impact	Direct Impact	Mediating Effect	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	p	Result
Perceived Scarcity Unplanned Buying	0.191	0.066	0.125	0.070	0.192	0.000	Full mediation effect R2:%18

When the mediating effect of FoMO is analyzed, it is seen that perceived scarcity (independent variable) loses its effect on unplanned buying (dependent variable) ($\beta=0.066$, $p> 0.001$). On the other hand, PROCESS Model 4 was used with 5000 resampling and 95% confidence interval options to determine the mediating effect of FoMO between perceived scarcity and unplanned buying (Hayes, 2022). According to the results obtained with PROCESS Model 4; FoMO has a mediating role between perceived scarcity and unplanned buying. In other words, perceived scarcity indirectly affects consumers' unplanned buying behavior through FoMO (Indirect Effect (DE)=0.125; Confidence Interval (CI) [0.070-0.192]). In addition, since the Bootstrap confidence interval value obtained as a result of the Bootstrap test analysis does not include zero (0), a mediating effect can be mentioned (Hayes, 2022). Thus, it appears that hypothesis H4 is supported.

RESULT

Changing consumer behavior necessitates examining individuals' consumption experiences. Therefore, understanding how consumers behave and identifying the reasons that drive them to purchase is crucial for both marketers and business owners.

One of the variables known to influence purchasing behavior is the concept of FoMO, defined as the fear of missing out, particularly among young people. Similarly, the concept of scarcity has been reported to influence people's purchasing behavior. Perceived scarcity is reported to increase both the choice of a product, the willingness to pay, and purchase intentions (Suri et al., 2007; Mittone & Savadori, 2009; Swain et al., 2006; Ayvaz & Alnıaçık, 2018; Hodgkinson, 2019). Given that many purchases are made unplanned, consumers' emotions can be influenced by the fear of missing out, which can trigger unplanned purchases. In other words, the perception of scarcity, which is said to trigger FoMO, can cause individuals with FoMO to make unplanned purchases (Şenel, 2018; Hodgkinson, 2019). In this context, it is thought that these variables added to the study as a result of the literature review are important opportunities that should be evaluated for customer acquisition in order to benefit from the emotional and psychological state of the target market.

In addition, the main objective of the study is to determine whether FoMO has a mediating role in the effect of perceived scarcity on unplanned buying. After the necessary analyses, it was found that perceived scarcity affects unplanned buying. At the same time, it was concluded that FoMO has an effect on unplanned buying. After the mediation analysis, the effect of perceived scarcity on unplanned buying became non-significant, thus revealing the mediating effect of FoMO. In summary, perceived scarcity indirectly affects consumers' unplanned buying behavior through FoMO. When the results of the study are examined, it is seen that there are studies that have reached similar conclusions (Rook & Gardner, 1993; Beatty &

Ferrell, 1998; Eisen, 2008; Gabler & Reynolds, 2013; Zheng et al., 2013; Şenel, 2018; Kadioğlu, 2021; Erciş et al., 2021; Sayan & Uslu, 2025). Therefore, it can be stated that perceived limited time and quantity affect unplanned purchases, and the feeling of fear can also cause unplanned purchasing behavior.

FoMO appears to be manageable when designing scarcity messages. For example, time/quantity scarcity, such as the “last 5 shoes” style, can increase FoMO and trigger unplanned purchases (Hao & Huang, 2023; Feng et al., 2024). This study also concretely demonstrates that scarcity influences unplanned purchases through FoMO, an emotional-social drive (Barton et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2022). In this context, marketers can use FoMO-heavy signals when developing their strategies. Furthermore, young people’s reward sensitivity and vulnerability to peer influence increase during college, and peer presence and reward circuits are more strongly stimulated. This explains why FoMO-mediated mechanisms are more prevalent in young people (Steinberg, 2017; Chein et al., 2011). The more intense use of social media by university students can lead to FoMO, problematic technology use, etc. and may pave the way for unplanned purchases (Elhaj et al., 2020; Przybylski et al., 2013).

Given that the feeling of scarcity clearly influences consumers’ unplanned purchases, marketing professionals can be expected to develop strategies that create scarcity to increase these purchases. Furthermore, considering that FoMO is particularly prevalent among young people when determining target markets, younger generations can be considered. This study aims to understand consumers’ unplanned buying behavior. Furthermore, by understanding why individuals exhibit certain behaviors, it aims to provide guidance for relevant sectors and individuals. Future studies may recommend adding a different sample size and different variables.

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AR-VR-BASED EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING APPROACHES IN SERVICE-FOCUSED INTERACTION

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Introduction

The digital revolution is considered the beginning of the information age and fundamentally transforms communication, information access, and sharing methods (Castells, 2010). Today, advanced technologies not only increase the accessibility of information but also expand communication speed, diversity, and interaction capacity. The marketing sector is one of the areas most intensely affected by this transformation. While digitalization offers opportunities such as operational efficiency and process optimization for businesses, it also brings challenges such as increased competition, rising customer expectations, and instant satisfaction management (Kotler et al., 2022). In this context, the importance of experience-focused strategies for strengthening customer relationships, maintaining brand loyalty, and preserving competitive advantage is growing.

Experiential marketing is a strategic approach that aims to create a holistic experience by not limiting the interaction with the consumer to the product or service dimension alone, but also incorporating emotional, sensory, cognitive, behavioral, and relational dimensions (Pine and Gilmore, 1999; Schmitt, 1999). Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) technologies are innovative sub-applications of this approach. AR enables the real-time integration of digital content into physical environments, while VR allows users to experience interactive experiences in a completely virtual environment (Milgram and Kishino, 1994). Features such as high levels of immersion, interactivity, spatial awareness, and personalization

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make these technologies powerful tools for experiential marketing (Flavián et al., 2019). The literature shows that using AR and VR in furniture production, retailing, and marketing enriches the consumer experience, increasing perceived value and purchase intent (Poushneh and Vasquez-Parraga, 2017).

AR/VR applications in the furniture retail sector offer important practices that enhance the customer experience. Through AR-based mobile apps or in-store screens, consumers can view furniture scaled to their living spaces, instantly change color, texture, and design options; thereby reducing perceived risk and increasing decision confidence (Javornik, 2016). VR technology, on the other hand, supports the discovery process by transferring the physical store experience to the digital environment through virtual showrooms, deepening brand interaction, and facilitating the formation of emotional bonds (Berberovic et al., 2021). In addition, AR/VR can potentially increase operational efficiency and customer satisfaction when used in prototyping, assembly training, and after-sales services (Rese et al., 2016). Therefore, in the furniture retail sector, AR and VR, as an important subfield of experiential marketing, strengthen hedonistic and utilitarian value perceptions, thereby making meaningful contributions to brand loyalty, customer satisfaction, and purchase intent.

The Concept of Marketing From The Perspective of Social Change Theory

It can be posited that social change theory represents an extension of the ‘change’ perspective that constitutes the conceptual foundation of the marketing discipline. Bagozzi (1975) emphasizes that the change model was first interpreted to include not only the exchange of goods and services, but also non-profit organizations, political campaigns, and social services.

The theoretical foundations of the social change approach extend to the work of Homans (1958) and Blau (1964) on the reward-cost balance; this line of thinking combines the

‘economic man’ and the ‘social man’ into a single framework for marketers. With contributions from Alderson (1965) and Kotler (2002), change has evolved into a relationship marketing paradigm emphasizing trust, normative reciprocity, and long-term relationship management rather than short-term transactions. Bagozzi’s conceptualization of the ‘exchange system’ has added explanatory depth to the theory by holistically modelling the roles between actors and internal-external variables (power, persuasion, legal regulations, information asymmetries, availability of alternatives, etc.) (Bagozzi, 1975). When this relationship-focused paradigm is combined with Pine and Gilmore’s (1999) experience economy approach, change is positioned not merely as the transfer of tangible values, but as a multi-layered process in which emotional, sensory, and cognitive stimuli create lasting memories shared by the customer.

The experience economy encourages businesses to go beyond products and services and think like stage designers, turning customers into more than just buyers, but into an integral part of the experience. Schmitt’s (1999) experiential marketing framework addresses this stage regarding sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and relational dimensions, shifting the reward-cost balance in social change theory to the dimensions of perceived value and experienced impact. In this context, the norm of reciprocity operates through financial outputs and abstract benefits such as shared meaning, aesthetic pleasure, and a sense of community; value is collectively produced and accumulates as social capital (Pralhad and Ramaswamy, 2004). Vargo and Lusch’s (2008) understanding that ‘service is the essence of change’ combines with the theatrical perspective of the experience economy to pave the way for brands to build lasting relationships with their customers through consistent touchpoints. In this context, experiential design principles (e.g., theming, personalization, participatory interaction) not only enhance customer satisfaction but also nurture stakeholder-based sustainability, making social change theory

an indispensable theoretical building block in the innovative applications of the contemporary marketing ecosystem, from metaverse and AR/VR activities to AI-powered personal assistants (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

The Relationship Between the Experience Economy and Experiential Marketing

Pine and Gilmore's (1999) conceptualization of the 'experience economy' argues that economic value creation shifts from goods and services to subjective, memorable experiences. In this new phase, businesses create value by designing meaningful events that leave a lasting impression on the customer's mind; experience is a unique value component shaped by the consumer's participation and perception (Poulsson and Kale, 2004; Sundbo and Sørensen, 2013). Thus, the economy focuses on 'stages' that create sensory and emotional richness rather than tangible outputs. This transformation is embodied in Schmitt's (1999) 'experiential marketing' approach in marketing practice. Experiential marketing aims to build value beyond functional utility by offering consumers integrated experiences across sensory, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions. Smilansky (2009) emphasizes the importance of real-time and participatory brand experiences, while Salomão et al. (2022) highlight the significance of pre- and post-purchase interactions. This understanding focus on atmosphere, space, and interaction designs that enable customers to 'experience' the product.

The fundamental link between the experience economy and experiential marketing can be explained by the service-dominant logic proposition that 'service is the essence of change' (Vargo and Lusch, 2008). Experiential marketing is the operational tool of the experience economy at the business level, positioning the customer as a co-creator of the process; this position aligns with the principles of reciprocity and mutual benefit emphasized in social change theory (Pan and Crotts, 2010). Thus, experiential touchpoints generate economic and

social capital between the brand and the consumer.

In practice, experiential marketing creates loyalty and positive word-of-mouth communication by enabling consumers to form emotional bonds (Shaw and Ivens, 2005; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). The ‘memory design’ goal of the experience economy, when combined with brands’ multi-touch strategies and interactive campaigns, creates lasting relationship capital. Thus, both the value shift predicted by the experience economy at the macro level and the micro-level tactics of experiential marketing become complementary components that feed into each other in the modern marketing ecosystem.

The Fundamental Dimensions of Experiential Marketing

In experiential marketing theory, Schmitt (1999) argues that traditional marketing views consumers as rational decision-makers who value functional characteristics and benefits, while experiential marketers view consumers as irrational and emotional people who value pleasurable experiences. Experiential marketing has four key characteristics: a focus on consumer experiences, treating consumption as a holistic experience, recognizing customers as both rational and emotional beings, and the use of eclectic methods and tools. Schmitt (1999) also argues that companies are transitioning from traditional marketing focusing on features and benefits to providing customer experiences. This transition results from three developments coinciding in the broader business environment: the ubiquity of information technology, the primacy of the brand, and the prevalence of communication and entertainment.

Experiential marketing has been conceptualized using Bernd Schmitt’s (1999) Strategic Experiential Modules (SEMs) model. According to this model, experiential marketing consists of five basic dimensions: sensory (Sense), emotional (Feel), cognitive (Think), behavioral (Act), and relational (Relate) experiences. These dimensions enable consumers to have a multidimensional experience with the brand.

Sensory marketing appeals to the senses by creating sensory experiences through sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. Sensory marketing can be used to differentiate companies and products, motivate customers, and add value to products (e.g., through aesthetics or excitement). One of the fundamental principles of sensory marketing is ‘cognitive consistency/sensory diversity,’ meaning that the ideal sensory approach provides a recognizable core concept yet always appears fresh and new (Schmitt, 1999).

Emotional marketing aims to create emotional experiences that range from mild positive moods associated with the brand to intense feelings of joy and pride by appealing to customers’ inner feelings and emotions. For emotional marketing to be effective, it is necessary to understand what stimuli can trigger specific emotions and the consumer’s willingness to take a perspective and empathize (Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010). Schmitt (1999) argued that standard emotional advertising lacks emotion-evoking stimuli and the willingness to empathize because it does not target emotions during consumption.

Cognitive marketing appeals to intelligence to create cognitive, problem-solving experiences that creatively engage customers. Cognitive appeals to target customers’ convergent and divergent thinking through surprise, curiosity, and provocation (Schmitt, 1999). The aim of cognitive is to stimulate customers’ creative thinking. This requires understanding the customer’s knowledge structure, attention, and concentration resources.

Behavioral marketing enriches customers’ lives by targeting their physical experiences and showing them alternative methods (e.g., in business-to-business and industrial markets), alternative lifestyles and interactions. Rational approaches to behavioral change (i.e., rational action theories) are only one of many behavioral change options. Lifestyle and behavioral changes are generally more motivating, inspiring, and emotional and are motivated by role models (e.g., film stars or athletes) (Smilansky, 2009).

Relational marketing encompasses Sensory, Emotional, Cognitive, and Behavioral elements. It goes beyond an individual's personal, private emotions and thus connects the individual to something beyond their specific situation. Relational campaigns appeal to an individual's desire for self-improvement (e.g., the ideal future self they wish to connect with). It appeals to individuals who need to be perceived positively by other individuals (e.g., peers, girlfriend, boyfriend, or spouse; family and colleagues) and connects them to a broader social system (a subculture, a country, etc.) (Gentile et al., 2007).

Gentile, Spiller, and Noci (2007) examine experiential marketing in six dimensions: sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, relational, and value-based experience. This model is similar to Schmitt's SEM model, but also highlights the dimension of value creation in customer experience.

The Strategic Importance of Creating Experiences in The Furniture Industry

The furniture industry is a sector where consumer preferences are driven not only by functionality and quality, but also by experiential factors such as aesthetics, lifestyle, and emotional connection. In this context, creating an experience is strategically important in generating long-term value through the emotional and mental connection that customers establish with the brand, rather than simply selling products.

Increasing Consumer Engagement and Building Brand Loyalty

Furniture shopping is typically a highly participatory, planned, and emotional process. Experiential designs, store atmosphere, digital interaction, and personalized service influence consumer decision-making and increase brand loyalty (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Schmitt, 1999). Consumers seek experiences that reflect their identity and contribute to their lifestyle rather than merely functional products. IKEA does not just sell its products; it also offers customers the

opportunity to experience home environments through its store designs. Customers can explore the living spaces displayed in the store and see and experience the products in a daily life context. This experience creates a stronger bond with the brand and fosters loyalty (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Schmitt, 1999).

Creating Experiential Areas in Physical Stores

Furniture stores should go beyond simply presenting products visually to consumers and offer them ‘living spaces’ that allow them to experience the products in real-life scenarios (Pine and Gilmore, 1999). As in the case of IKEA, fictional home environments incorporated into the shopping experience make it easier for customers to imagine themselves in that living space and increase the likelihood of purchase (Tynan and McKechnie, 2009). Luxury furniture brand Roche Bobois creates modern and aesthetic living spaces in its showrooms to enhance the customer experience (URL-1). In these spaces, customers test the furniture as if they were using it in their homes, exploring designs to discover their style. Thus, purchasing transforms into an emotional experience rather than merely a product selection (Pine and Gilmore, 1999).

Delivering a Multi-Channel Experience with Digitalisation

With the increasing digitization of the furniture industry, providing customers with a consistent and holistic experience across online and offline channels has become strategic. In particular, augmented reality (AR) applications that allow consumers to see how products will look in their homes enhance the experience while reducing return rates (Poushneh and Vasquez-Parraga, 2017). Lightology, a large US-based e-commerce furniture platform, uses an augmented reality (AR) application to allow customers to realistically experience how the furniture they are considering purchasing would look in their own homes (URL-2). This technology simplifies the consumer’s decision-making process, contributing to lower

return rates and increased customer satisfaction (Poushneh and Vasquez-Parraga, 2017).

Differentiation and Competitive Advantage

In the highly competitive furniture industry, experience design is a critical strategy for differentiation beyond price and quality. Brands can establish a privileged position in the market by offering unique experiences (Pine and Gilmore, 1999). This strategic differentiation offers significant advantages, particularly regarding emotional brand loyalty and word-of-mouth marketing (Brakus et al., 2009). Herman Miller (URL-3), a brand known for its ergonomic and innovative furniture, gains a competitive advantage through the experiences it offers consumers. In the brand's stores and showrooms, products and experiences themed around healthy living and productivity are offered. This holistic experience approach increases customer loyalty to the brand and enables differentiation (Brakus et al., 2009).

Strategic Tools in Experiential Marketing: The Concept of AR/VR

Augmented Reality (AR) is a technology that enriches users' perception of their environment by superimposing digital content onto the physical world in real time (Azuma, 1997). This approach integrates real and virtual elements within the same context, allowing users to interact with physical and digital elements. The key features of AR technology include simultaneous interaction with physical and virtual objects, spatial awareness, and contextual accuracy (Carmigniani et al., 2011), visual overlay capabilities such as three-dimensional modelling and interactive explanations, and compatibility with mobile devices (Huang and Liao, 2015). Mobile device integration makes AR accessible to a broad audience, facilitating consumers' active participation in shopping processes, product visualization, personalization, and experience-oriented marketing activities. AR is an innovative marketing tool with

these features that personalizes the consumer experience and increases perceived value.

Virtual Reality (VR) is an immersive technology that provides a comprehensive virtual experience by isolating the user from the physical environment through simulations generated entirely by a computer (Jerald, 2015). In VR environments, users are immersed in a virtual world through interactive and 360-degree spatial simulations (Slater and Sanchez-Vives, 2016), experiencing a highly immersive virtual reality through a multi-sensory experience provided by visual, auditory, and sometimes tactile stimuli. This technology is typically used through special VR headsets and control devices such as Meta Vision, Oculus Rift, and HTC Vive, offering users rich experiences such as spatial interaction, object manipulation, and virtual environment exploration. The immersive nature of VR enhances brand storytelling in the context of experiential marketing, fosters emotional connections, and creates positive effects on purchase intent by enabling high levels of interaction with consumers.

The Benefits and Limitations of AR/VR Technologies in a Marketing Context

AR and VR technologies directly impact consumer experience and business performance through their strategic advantages in experiential marketing applications. First, visualizing products or services in three dimensions and in context prior to purchase increases consumer confidence in their decisions and reduces purchase hesitation (Rese et al., 2017). This reduces the risk of a mismatch between consumer expectations and the actual product, contributing to lower return rates and increased overall customer satisfaction (Scholz and Smith, 2016). Additionally, using virtual prototypes in the product development process through AR/VR technologies is more cost-effective than physical prototype production and shortens the product development time (Berg and Vance, 2017). Thus, brands can enter the market faster and test innovative products at a lower cost.

However, integrating AR/VR applications into marketing processes has limitations and challenges. The high initial investment requirement and the need for advanced technical infrastructure can create barriers to entry, especially for small and medium-sized businesses (Bonetti et al., 2018). In VR applications, some users may experience technology-related issues such as dizziness, nausea, and visual discomfort (motion sickness), which can negatively impact the user experience and limit usage time (Jerald, 2015). In AR technologies, performance differences and compatibility issues may arise between devices of different brands and models, which can create inconsistencies in the consumer experience and decrease satisfaction (Huang and Liao, 2015). Therefore, for AR/VR to be used sustainably in marketing strategies, elements such as technical optimization, user experience design, and cost management must be carefully planned.

The Psychological Effects of AR and VR Applications on Consumers in the Furniture Industry

The integration of Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) technologies into the furniture industry is not limited to operational efficiency and technological innovation, but also has a profound impact on consumers' psychological states, perceptions, and behaviors. The contextual visualization of products and the ability to personalize them in real time reduce perceived uncertainty and purchase risk, thereby increasing consumers' decision confidence (Poushneh and Vasquez-Parraga, 2017). Immersive simulations trigger consumers' mental imagery processes, activating a sense of 'anticipatory ownership'; this establishes an emotional connection with the product even before it is purchased (Scholz and Duffy, 2018). This psychological interaction strengthens brand trust and contributes to positive brand attitudes, laying the foundation for purchase intent and long-term loyalty (Flavián et al., 2019). Additionally, aligning sensory inputs with cognitive expectations increases consistency between the

product experience consumers imagine and the experience, thereby reducing post-purchase dissonance (Javornik, 2016).

From an emotional and behavioral perspective, AR and VR applications trigger positive emotional states such as curiosity, excitement, and satisfaction, which play a critical role in shaping consumer decisions in experiential marketing (Kim and Forsythe, 2008). The inclusive and interactive nature of these technologies satisfies hedonistic needs (entertainment, novelty, and aesthetic pleasure) while also addressing utilitarian needs (functional evaluation, compatibility, and ease of use) (Huang and Liao, 2015). However, these psychological effects are not always positive; excessive sensory stimulation can cause cognitive overload, and in some VR applications, adverse conditions such as dizziness, nausea, and discomfort (motion sickness) can negatively affect user comfort and interaction time (Jerald, 2015). Therefore, a deep understanding of the psychological dynamics involved in the adoption processes of AR/VR technologies is of great importance for marketers and designers; this enables technological innovations to be transformed into sustainable satisfaction, substantial brand value, and long-term customer loyalty while prioritizing consumer well-being.

Changes in Perceived Value, Satisfaction, and Quality of Experience

Integrating Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) technologies into marketing and retail processes has significantly increased consumers' perceived value. Providing consumers, the opportunity to interact with products in a virtual environment before purchasing reduces uncertainty in the decision-making process and enables them to imagine the product's usage context more clearly. Huang and Liu (2014) emphasize that when consumers can interact with virtual furniture, perceived value increases due to reduced uncertainty and enhanced visualization capabilities. Similarly, Scholz and Smith (2016) found that AR-based visualization experiences significantly increase satisfaction by enabling consumers to

make conscious and confident decisions. In particular, VR applications strengthen consumers' emotional engagement and generate positive emotional responses by offering personalized and immersive shopping experiences (Rana et al., 2022).

The findings indicate that AR and VR technologies increase consumers' experiential value perception and satisfaction through realistic product simulations and interactive personalization capabilities (Scholz and Smith, 2016). AR offers concrete interaction opportunities through realistic visualization, while VR deepens the emotional aspect of the experience and significantly improves experience quality by providing complete immersion (Rana et al., 2022). These developments strengthen consumer-brand relationships and create important psychological and experiential advantages that support brand loyalty in the long term.

Changes in Product Perception and Purchase Intentions

Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) technologies transform consumer perception and directly influence purchase intentions by making product features more precise, concrete, and easier to understand. The literature indicates that AR allows consumers better to understand a product's spatial characteristics and design details, thereby reducing perceived uncertainty and increasing the likelihood of purchase (Rese et al., 2017). Realistic visualization enables consumers to evaluate better the product's size, color, texture, and spatial compatibility, increasing their confidence level during decision-making.

Similarly, VR-based experiences significantly reduce the perceived risks and uncertainties commonly encountered in online furniture shopping by offering consumers live, interactive, and realistic product encounters (De Gauquier et al., 2019). The immersive environment provided by VR facilitates the formation of an emotional connection with the product and strengthens the desire to purchase. Research findings indicate that AR applications meaningfully increase purchase

intent by reducing product uncertainty through visualization. VR applications further increase purchase willingness by reinforcing consumers' emotional attachment to products through immersive interactions.

The Formation of Consumer Attitudes in AR and VR Experiences, Brand Image, and Trust Building

Consumer attitudes formed during AR and VR experiences play a critical role in shaping perceptions of the brand. The high level of interaction and realism offered by these technologies generates positive emotional responses and cognitive evaluations in consumers, which in turn encourage the development of positive attitudes towards the brand (Huang and Liao, 2015; Poushneh and Vasquez-Parraga, 2017). Brands that effectively utilize AR and VR technologies are perceived as innovative, customer-focused, and forward-thinking, strengthening brand value and customer loyalty in the long term (Scholz and Duffy, 2018). Positive cognitive and emotional responses facilitate brand differentiation in the market and lay the groundwork for deeper, more lasting relationships with consumers.

Additionally, AR and VR technologies are important strategic tools in building consumer trust and reducing perceived purchase risks. Realistic product simulations and virtual trial opportunities help consumers form clearer expectations about the product, thereby reducing perceived uncertainty and strengthening perceptions of transparency and reliability (Yim et al., 2017). This helps prevent size, color, or compatibility problems in online furniture shopping, thereby reducing return rates and increasing consumer satisfaction (Hilken et al., 2017). The trust environment created by using interactive technology increases consumer participation levels, strengthens purchase intent, and contributes to establishing a long-term connection with the brand.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Adopting AR and VR Technologies in the Furniture Industry

Integrating Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) technologies into the furniture industry is fundamentally transforming the industry's operations, creating significant competitive advantages and notable operational and strategic challenges. These technologies' immersive and interactive experiences are redefining consumer-brand interaction and improving critical processes such as product evaluation, purchasing decisions, and customer satisfaction. However, factors such as high investment costs, technical issues, and data security while implementing these technologies are emerging as important limitations that businesses must carefully manage.

A significant benefit of incorporating augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) in the furniture industry is the augmentation of customer interaction and engagement. The utilization of augmented reality (AR) technology has been demonstrated to enhance the level of interaction, interest, and participation in the purchasing process. This is achieved by enabling consumers to visualize products in their living spaces realistically (Scholz and Smith, 2016). Conversely, VR has been demonstrated to facilitate the establishment of robust emotional connections by its capacity to offer a more immersive experience, thereby enhancing the consumer experience through realistic simulations (Bonetti et al., 2018; De Gauquier et al., 2019). Consequently, consumers are empowered to make more informed decisions by experiencing product features visually and emotionally.

A significant benefit of AR and VR technologies is reduced product return rates. Applications such as IKEA Place or Wayfair facilitate furniture placement within a consumer's home, utilizing a virtual environment to accurately represent the product's size, color, and design compatibility. Such experiences have been shown to reduce the incidence of incorrect product selection (Hilken et al., 2017; Rese et al., 2017), which in turn can reduce business costs and increase

customer satisfaction. Furthermore, the innovative utilization of augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) can enable brands to differentiate themselves in the market and gain a competitive advantage. Evidently, brands that effectively utilize these technologies are perceived as innovative, customer-focused, and forward-thinking. This contributes to increased brand value, a strengthened positive brand image, and enhanced long-term customer loyalty (Rana et al., 2022; Scholz and Duffy, 2018).

Despite the considerable opportunities offered by augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technologies, their implementation in the furniture industry poses particular challenges. First and foremost, implementing these technologies necessitates a substantial initial investment. Cost items such as special VR headsets, licensed software, advanced graphics processing infrastructure, and technical hardware can create a significant barrier to entry, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (Bonetti et al., 2018). Furthermore, adoption rates may be lower in consumer segments with low technological literacy or limited technological access (Huang and Liao, 2015).

Technical issues represent a substantial limitation. Problems such as system performance, software-hardware incompatibilities, graphics processing errors, integration problems, and hardware failures have been shown to have a detrimental effect on the user experience (Jerald, 2015; Carmigniani et al., 2011). Such technical malfunctions have been demonstrated to have a detrimental effect on consumer satisfaction and have the potential to compromise brand image (Huang & Liu, 2014).

Finally, given that AR and VR applications collect extensive user data (personal information, behavioral data, etc.), data security and privacy issues are critical. The misuse or unauthorized access to this data has the potential to compromise consumer confidence and exert a detrimental

effect on brand reputation. Consequently, full compliance with data protection regulations, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), is imperative for businesses utilizing these technologies (Scholz and Duffy, 2018; Rana et al., 2022).

Development Potential in AR and VR Technologies

The Enhancement of Realism and Immersion

Recent advancements in augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) have led to significant improvements in the furniture industry's realism and immersion levels of applications. These developments have taken place since 2020. Integrating high-resolution and wide-field-of-view virtual reality headsets with photorealistic three-dimensional modelling facilitates consumer visualization of furniture designs within their physical environments at precise scales and with intricate detail (Berkman and Akan, 2019). The capacity for low latency and high frame rates to facilitate a natural interaction, particularly in dynamic scenarios, has been demonstrated to support the decision-making process (Slater, 2018). Haptic feedback systems facilitate the perception of tactile properties such as fabric texture, wood surface roughness, or material hardness within a virtual environment, thereby enhancing the product experience to a level comparable to that of a physical store (Varney et al., 2023).

Furthermore, AI-based real-time visual enhancement and lighting simulations have been shown to accurately reflect the appearance of furniture under various lighting conditions, thereby increasing consumers' perceptual confidence (Palanikumar et al., 2025). Eye-tracking systems and gaze-focused imaging techniques provide high-resolution views of furniture details that capture the user's interest while reducing processing load in surrounding areas, resulting in a more fluid experience (Moreno-Arjonilla et al., 2024). These technological advancements contribute to furniture retailers in two ways. Firstly, they enable retailers to transfer the physical

store experience to the digital environment. Secondly, they increase customer satisfaction and conversion rates in online sales.

Enhancements in Accessibility and Affordability

The decline in hardware and software costs is expected to encourage the adoption of AR and VR technologies by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and broader consumer audiences (Hilken et al., 2020). The market is expected to experience growth, driven by increased competition, which will reduce the cost of VR headsets, AR-enabled mobile devices, and licensed software. The advent of cloud-based platforms is set to lead to a decline in technical infrastructure requirements. For instance, virtual showroom technologies, which are currently the exclusive domain of large brands, have the potential to be made available to SMEs as low-cost subscription-based solutions in the future. This democratization will encourage consumers to participate more actively in purchasing, accelerating the adoption of AR/VR as a standard customer interaction tool in the industry.

Integration of AR and VR with Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The concept of intelligent product recommendations and personalization pertains to integrating artificial intelligence algorithms into augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) platforms. This integration aims to enhance the consumer experience by making it more targeted and effective. By analyzing users' behaviors, preferences, and past interactions, highly personalized furniture recommendations can be provided (Dwivedi et al., 2021). For instance, if a consumer spends a period examining a particular sofa model in a VR-based showroom, the system can detect this interest and suggest similar designs, matching accessories, or alternative color options. This approach sustains consumer interest while concomitantly increasing the probability of a purchase. Furthermore, the use of AI-powered AR and VR applications has been demonstrated

to facilitate users' spatial planning processes through automatic interior design suggestions, interactive customization options, and adaptable product models. Machine learning algorithms can learn user preferences over time and instantly optimize the virtual showroom's appearance or product configurations according to these preferences (De Gauquier et al., 2019).

AI-based analytical tools have been developed to continuously monitor user interactions on AR and VR platforms, aiming to improve interface design and provide actionable insights into consumer behavior patterns (Rana et al., 2022). For instance, data on the products subjected to protracted examination, the features that are customized with greater frequency, and the point at which users terminate their engagement with the application assume paramount importance in determining product placement, pricing, and advertising content. This continuous feedback loop is instrumental in ensuring that the development of AR and VR experiences is aligned with user expectations, thereby enhancing both customer satisfaction and long-term engagement with the brand.

Experiential Marketing Applications in the Furniture Sector

The advent of AR (augmented reality) and VR (virtual reality) technologies has precipitated a paradigm shift in the furniture industry, with these innovative tools being instrumental in redefining the consumer experience. Augmented reality (AR) facilitates the virtual experience of products within real-world conditions by overlaying digital content onto the physical environment. Conversely, virtual reality (VR) engenders a complete virtual environment, offering interaction with a high level of immersion. This section explores the application areas of augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) in the furniture industry, using global examples alongside case studies from Türkiye.

Augmented Reality (AR) Applications in the Furniture Industry

Furniture Placement and Visualization

Augmented reality (AR) applications facilitate furniture visualization in a consumer's living space before purchase. For instance, the IKEA Place functionality enables users to utilize their mobile devices' cameras to virtually place products within their virtual environments, such as sofas, tables, or chairs. This innovation has enhanced consumer confidence in their purchasing decisions and concomitantly reduced return rates (Rese et al., 2017). Similarly, the augmented reality application developed by Fuga Mobilya for its mobile website enables users to visualize the compatibility of color and size by placing products within a domestic environment.

IKEA Place AR Application



Fuga Furniture AR Application

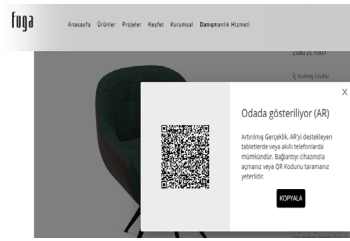


Figure 1. Examples of Placement and Visualization in the Furniture Industry

Customisation and Personalisation

As Yim et al. (2017) demonstrate, Lightology, Wayfair, and Houzz can change fabric, color, and material options for furniture in real time via AR. In Turkey, the Fuga furniture brand's digital catalogue application offers a similar functionality, enabling users to visualize various fabric and color combinations through augmented reality (AR).

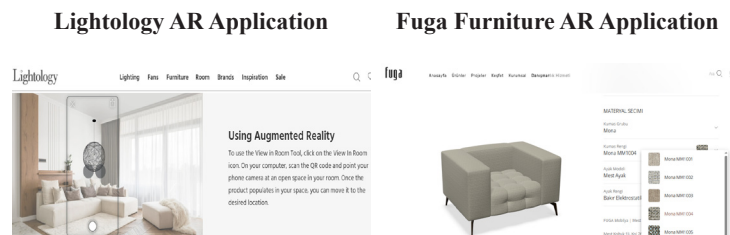


Figure 2. Examples of Customization and Personalization in the Furniture Industry

Marketing and Consumer Interaction

Marketing campaigns supported by augmented reality (AR) offer consumers interactive and immersive advertising experiences. For instance, Scholz and Smith (2016) discovered that advertisements utilizing augmented reality (AR) technology enhance brand recognition and encourage consumer participation. The utilization of QR codes has been delineated as incorporating an interactive dimension into the physical components of brand materials, including business cards, catalogues, and brochures. Potential customers can utilize their mobile devices to scan product codes, thus accessing supplementary information, navigating to product pages, or downloading the company's application. The utilization of Shopify's QR code generator facilitates the generation of codes with minimal effort.

The Danish furniture company SCANLIVING has adopted the use of QR codes to simplify the creation of an augmented product catalogue. The process necessitates scanning a code to access a three-dimensional product model. This enables consumers to examine the product from different angles and create a scaled representation within the confines of their home environment (URL-4).

Applications of Virtual Reality (VR) in the Furniture Industry

Virtual Stores and Showrooms

VR-based virtual stores enable consumers to digitally explore various products (Bonetti et al., 2018). The Italian

furniture brand Natuzzi allows customers to take store tours through VR showrooms (URL-5). Similarly, IKEA allows customers to experience various combinations by creating virtual room arrangements within the store using VR headsets (URL-6).

Natuzzi VR Application



IKEA VR Application



Figure 3. Examples of Virtual Stores and Showrooms in the Furniture Industry

Interior Design and Planning

VR platforms facilitate the exploration of various room layouts, color combinations, and design alternatives within a virtual environment. It has been demonstrated that both interior designers and consumers utilize platforms such as SketchUp Viewer and Planner 5D (Wang et al., 2018). In the context of Türkiye, the Modoko VR Project facilitates a collaborative approach to furniture arrangement within virtual environments, thereby offering a novel platform for the convergence of design and customer engagement (URL-7).

Product Prototyping and Development

The utilization of VR simulations has been demonstrated to reduce the financial expenditure associated with the fabrication of physical prototypes for furniture manufacturers, whilst concurrently reducing the duration of the product development cycle (Berg & Vance, 2017). Houzz, a popular e-commerce application specializing in home décor and furniture, offers a virtual marketplace comprising over 10 million product options. The application also provides design features, including template creation and augmented reality (AR) compatibility. In Türkiye, Lazzoni Furniture employs a virtual

modelling approach before manufacturing, enabling material selection and ergonomics testing to be conducted in a virtual reality environment (URL-8).

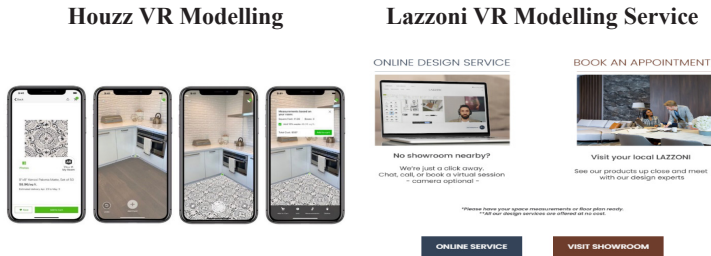


Figure 4. Examples of Product Prototyping and Development in the Furniture Industry

CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study has examined, from a multidimensional perspective, how experiential marketing strategies in the furniture industry can be enhanced through the utilization of Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) technologies. The findings indicate that the high immersion, interactivity, and personalization offered by AR and VR significantly increase consumers' perceived value and satisfaction (Flavián et al., 2019). In particular, the merits of augmented reality (AR) in terms of contextual product placement and customization, and those of virtual reality (VR) in delivering immersive showroom experiences and virtual prototyping, have been demonstrated to simultaneously cater to both hedonic and utilitarian consumer motivations (Poushneh & Vasquez-Parraga, 2017).

The extant research findings reveal that augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) applications can reduce pre-purchase uncertainties, thereby enhancing consumers' decision confidence and concomitantly decreasing product return rates (Hilken et al., 2017). These technologies have been shown to stimulate consumers' mental imagery processes, triggering a sense of "anticipatory ownership" and accelerating the development of emotional bonds with the brand (Scholz & Duffy, 2018). Consequently, it can be posited that AR/VR

applications play a strategic role in generating short-term sales increases and strengthening long-term customer loyalty and brand equity (Brakus et al., 2009).

However, it should be noted that the integration of AR/VR also entails certain operational and technical limitations. Bonetti et al. (2018) point out that high initial investment costs, technical infrastructure requirements, and device compatibility issues can pose significant entry barriers, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises. Furthermore, physical discomfort experienced by some users during VR usage (e.g., motion sickness) and performance discrepancies across devices in AR applications can adversely affect the overall experience quality (Jerald, 2015; Huang & Liao, 2015). It is imperative that strategic planning is implemented in areas such as technical optimization, user experience design, and cost management in order to ensure the sustainable adoption of these technologies.

The study demonstrates that AR and VR are not merely technological innovations, but, when evaluated within the frameworks of the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1999) and service-dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2008), also serve as powerful marketing tools that enhance firms' capacity for co-creating value with customers. The integration of the sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and relational dimensions of experiential marketing (Schmitt, 1999) through these technologies has been demonstrated to strengthen brands' differentiation potential and secure a sustainable competitive advantage.

Augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) can influence consumer well-being and brand performance within the furniture industry. However, the realization of this potential is contingent upon the alignment of technological investments with customer-centered design principles, adherence to data security standards, and the implementation of cultural adaptations that address the expectations of diverse consumer segments (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Pan & Crotts, 2010). This

approach enables brands to position their customers not merely as purchasers of products or services, but as co-creators of the experience, fostering sustainable value creation across all touchpoints.

For AR and VR technologies to achieve sustainable and widespread adoption in the furniture industry, sector-wide barriers to accessibility and cost must first be overcome. Developing low-cost, cloud-based, and subscription-based solutions is imperative to facilitate access for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (Hilken et al., 2020). It is recommended that AR-based product visualization becomes a standard practice, particularly in the context of online furniture retailing, to reduce return rates and increase customer satisfaction (Poushneh & Vasquez-Parraga, 2017). In addition, infrastructure compliant with data security and privacy regulations, such as the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Türkiye's Personal Data Protection Law (KVKK), should be established. Furthermore, these security measures should be transparent to consumers (Scholz & Duffy, 2018).

From a managerial perspective, the strategic design of augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR)-enhanced touchpoints at every stage of the customer journey has been shown to strengthen the emotional connection between the brand and the consumer, thereby fostering long-term loyalty (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). In this regard, it is argued that technology investments should not be limited solely to hardware acquisition; they should also encompass content production, user experience design, technical support, and staff training (Bonetti et al., 2018). Furthermore, monitoring user interaction data from AR/VR applications through analytical tools will enable the optimization of product development, pricing and marketing strategies through data (Rana et al., 2022).

From an academic standpoint, AR and VR's effects in experiential marketing should be examined comparatively in

terms of cultural differences, consumer demographics, and usage contexts (Pan & Crotts, 2010). Longitudinal studies, in particular, are crucial for measuring the long-term impacts of these technologies on brand equity and customer lifetime value (CLV) (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). Moreover, research focusing on user well-being can contribute to identifying ergonomic and content design principles that minimise adverse outcomes, such as cognitive overload or physical discomfort, caused by excessive sensory stimulation (Jerald, 2015). The findings of this study will provide a solid foundation for the development of user-centered, ethical, and sustainable strategies in technology design, thus benefiting both industry practitioners and academic researchers.

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THE EFFECT OF BRAND TRUST ON REPURCHASE INTENTION: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON READY-TO-WEAR CONSUMERS

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Introduction

In today's market conditions, particularly in the digital environment, there has been a notable increase in the number of companies and a rapid escalation in the level of competition. Companies must retain their customers, attract new ones and ensure continuity for a sustainable competitive advantage. The rise of digital platforms increases this importance (Arslan & Bakır, 2022, p. 1).

Companies seek to build customer loyalty in international markets to encourage repeat purchases of their goods and services. According to Arslan and Yılmaz Uz (2022: 2), researches have been conducted on loyalty-building, focusing on aspects such as the uniqueness of the experiences offered by businesses that cannot be replicated by other businesses in the same sector and the positive impressions of consumers. Customers' expectations of a purchased good or service are not limited to quality; they also prefer brands that offer them unique experiences. Furthermore, one of the factors influencing customer preferences is their sense of trust in the brand. Customers can feel love, a human emotion, towards a brand, act out of love for the brand they trust, and purchase the goods and services of these brands.

This study aims to determine the effect of brand trust levels on repurchase intentions among consumers in the ready-to-wear sector living in Turkey. Another objective of the research is to reveal the relationships between the variables in question. The first part of the study explains the concepts of brand trust

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and repurchase, followed by the analysis findings obtained from the research results.

Despite the existence of research examining the impact of brand trust on repurchase intention in marketing literature, no study has been identified that specifically address consumers in the ready-to-wear clothing sector in the province of Şanlıurfa. This research aims to contribute the results of existing studies.

Brand Trust

According to Çelikkol (2017: 273), today's marketing approach, companies should consider both tangible and intangible benefits to gain a competitive advantage. Tangible benefits include product variety, technology, and product quality, while intangible benefits include brand loyalty, brand value, brand trust, and image. Thus, gaining consumer trust to create loyal customers and ensure customer retention is one of the goals of many businesses. In this context, businesses focusing on intangible benefits such as brand trust will contribute to gaining a competitive advantage.

In the process of constructing brand trust, consumers assess whether the brand is acting in its own best interests, whether it is honest in its statements, and whether it endeavours to resolve any issues that arise. It is hypothesised that the aforementioned factors, when considered in combination, will engender a sufficient level of trust in the brand (Walter et al., 2000).

When managers fulfill the promises they make to their customers, the resulting positive outcome builds brand trust. In other words, the positive attitude customers develop over time is brand trust. When the quality of goods or services and the benefits they provide to consumers are taken into account, the resulting belief in the future is said to build trust in a brand. In marketing communications, if customers trust the brand, it can be said to be a successful brand. These brands have established themselves as trustworthy by fulfilling their promises on time and in full and respecting customer rights (Bayraktarköse and Çolakoglu, 2021, p. 30-31).

Brand trust is the formation of consumer belief that promised situations will occur. In the service sector, if consumers have the intention to repurchase, the likelihood of using the same brand's services in the future will also be high (Kotler and Keller, 2016, p.199).

Repurchase Intention

The concept of repeat purchase, a general definition would be that consumers want to buy the same brand again, decide to buy it again, and intend to buy it in the future. Consumer purchasing behavior is related to the decision-making process and directly influences this behavior. Even if some conditions change and there is a possibility that the purchase will not take place, the behavior is expected to ultimately result in the intention. When examining customer attitudes toward repurchase intention, the stronger the intention and attitude, the higher the purchase behavior (Akçadağ, 2019, p. 2-3).

After evaluating products and services, customers make their next purchase decision based on their intention to repurchase. Customers who have a positive attitude after purchase evaluate the processes from purchase to consumption. As a result, this influences their decision to repurchase the brand they previously purchased. The intention to repurchase can sometimes be realized under the consumer's control and sometimes arise depending on the circumstances. Customers' intention to repurchase a product or service is a state of mind that arises based on their purchase (Hellier et al., 2003, p.1764).

Repurchase intention is the likelihood that customers will make a subsequent purchase. Customers' consideration of repurchasing a product or service they have previously purchased is referred to as repurchase intention (Levent and Özkul, 2021, p. 109).

The internal and external characteristics of businesses influence customers' intentions to repurchase. For example, decisions related to pricing, product variety, the location of the business, and the professionalism of the staff influence

customer intent. In addition, factors such as the business's service process, music, lighting, and decor also affect the customer's intent to repurchase (Kumar and Bhatnagar, 2017, p. 67).

If the customer is satisfied with the purchase, it is generally expected that the likelihood of repeat purchases will increase. However, if the customer is highly satisfied, meaning that the purchase exceeded their expectations, the likelihood of repeat purchases will increase even more (Kotler, 2000, p. 184).

Literature Review

This section of the study reviews research conducted in Turkey on brand trust and repurchase intention. The national studies identified through the literature review are summarized as follows.

The aim of Kara and Kimzan's (2016) study is to examine the role of customer satisfaction in the relationship between brand experience and repurchase intention. In this study, participants were given a questionnaire. Factor analysis and regression analysis were used to analyze the data. The results of this study revealed a positive relationship between brand experience and repurchase intention. Brand experience plays an important role in terms of the continuity of the relationship between businesses and consumers. At the same time, customer satisfaction was found to have a mediating effect on the relationship between repurchase intention and brand experience.

The study by Armağan and Gider (2017) examined the relationship between young customers' level of interest in mobile phone brands, their satisfaction with the brand, and their willingness to repurchase the brand. Students at Adnan Menderes University's Aydın Vocational School were selected as the main population. An application was carried out. Data was obtained through convenience sampling. Based on this data, it was stated that the students' interest in the phone brand they used led to the formation of an emotional bond with that phone brand. It was found that young people could not give up

this brand as long as they used the mobile phone brand and that they intended to repurchase this phone brand.

Önen (2018) examined the relationship between three brand components (brand loyalty, brand trust, and brand preference) and applied this to the stationery sector. The survey method was applied in the stationery paint pen sector. The data obtained were analyzed, revealing that customers did not consider the levels of brand loyalty, brand trust, and brand preference of the three companies to be sufficient and that these needed to be improved. Another analysis showed that there was a significant and positive relationship between brand trust and brand loyalty. A high level of positive effect was found between brand trust and brand preference, and finally, a significant and positive effect was found between brand preference and brand loyalty.

The aim of the study by Çakırkaya and Karaboğa (2019) is to investigate whether brand authenticity has an effect on repurchase intention. According to the results of the analysis, a positive, significant, and high-level relationship was found between brand authenticity and repurchase intention. Regression analysis was performed to determine the extent to which perceived brand authenticity affects repurchase intention. A multiple regression model was established for the Torku brand and was found to be generally significant. However, it was determined that the perceived continuity variable among the independent variables in the model did not have a significant effect.

Çavuşgil Köse and Erden Ayhün (2021) conducted a study to examine whether service quality and customer satisfaction affect repurchase intention among Generation Z individuals. In line with the purpose of the study, a survey was administered to Generation Z customers who purchased products from two Starbucks coffee shops located in the center of Çanakkale province. The results of the study revealed that service quality positively affects customer satisfaction and repurchase intention. Similarly, it was found that customer satisfaction also

positively affects repurchase intention and plays a mediating role in the relationship between service quality and repurchase intention.

In their study, Yılmazel and Göktaş (2021) attempted to identify “repeat purchase antecedents” that could be seen as reasons driving customers’ purchasing behavior when shopping on e-commerce sites. To this end, a questionnaire was administered electronically to 456 individuals. An analysis was performed on the data collected through the survey method, and the model of this study was tested using confirmatory factor analysis and path analysis in AMOS 23.0. According to the analysis results, service quality, perceived value, and satisfaction were found to be effective on the intention to repurchase in online shopping. However, it was found that the image of the online shopping site did not have a direct effect on the intention to repurchase from the shopping site.

The aim of the study by Bora Semiz and Kartal (2023) is to investigate whether service quality in mobile shopping has an effect on customer satisfaction, and whether customer satisfaction has an effect on repurchase intention and recommendation intention. Links were shared on various social media channels, and data was collected from participants who had previously made purchases. According to the analysis results, perceptions related to service quality, perceptions related to ease of use, customer service, and trust were found to have an impact on customer satisfaction. At the same time, it was revealed that ensuring customer satisfaction has an impact on recommendation and repurchase.

Ekinci Furtana and Özkazanc (2023) aim to determine whether creating a sense of trust when consumers shop via e-commerce has an effect on consumer decisions. In this study, quantitative research methods were used, and a survey was prepared on the relevant topic. This survey was administered to individuals with social media accounts, and the data were analyzed using SPSS. According to the analysis results, a

positive and significant relationship was found between platform reliability, brand trust, brand loyalty, and purchase intention in e-commerce.

The aim of the Geçgin (2024) study is to examine the effect of restaurant atmosphere on behavioral loyalty and the effect of business atmosphere satisfaction on repurchase intentions. Customers of food and beverage businesses operating in the city of Van constitute the population of this study. The sample consists of customers of food and beverage establishments operating in three districts of this province (İpekyolu, Edremit, and Tuşba). A survey research design, one of the quantitative research methods, was used. The data obtained were used to examine the effect of behavioral loyalty and the establishment's atmosphere satisfaction on repurchase intention. As a result of the analysis, all hypotheses were tested in a meaningful way, and significant relationships were found between them.

Temur et al. (2025) In this study, which attempts to measure the impact of the service environment, one of the important elements of marketing, the effects of store support services, in-store quality, and product characteristics on consumers' repurchase intention were evaluated specifically in the fresh food sector. According to the analysis conducted using the PLS-SEM structural equation model, it was concluded that store support services and product features are effective in consumer satisfaction in fresh food shopping, while in-store quality has no significant effect on consumers' repurchase intentions. It was concluded that store support services and product features directly affect consumer behavior, especially in fresh food products, and that offering store services and quality products that add value to consumers increases their satisfaction and raises the likelihood of repeat purchases.

The aim of the study conducted by Köroğlu and Avcı (2025) is to reveal the effects of brands' digital marketing and customer relationship management activities on consumers' repurchase intention and, at the same time, to determine the

mediating role of brand awareness in these effects. The data for this study were collected using the survey technique, and consumers living in the province of Tokat participated in the study. Analysis of the data revealed that digital marketing and customer relationship management have a significant positive effect on repurchase intention and that brand awareness plays a mediating role in these effects.

Research Methodology

The Aim of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of brand trust levels on repurchase intentions among consumers in the ready-to-wear clothing sector in Turkey. Another purpose of the study is to reveal the relationships between these variables.

Sampling Process

The main population of the study consists of consumers in the ready-to-wear clothing sector living in Turkey. Due to ethical reasons such as “time, cost, and data obsolescence,” sampling was used instead of reaching the entire population. Considering “95% reliability and a sampling error of $(-/+)$ 5%,” the sample size was determined to be 384. (Yazıcıoğlu and Erdoğan, 2004). Data were collected using the convenience sampling method and survey technique. The surveys, conducted face-to-face and online, were administered to 737 individuals on a voluntary basis between January 1, 2025, and July 15, 2025.

Data Collection Method and Tool

The survey prepared for the research consists of three sections. The first section includes the Brand Trust scale developed by Kabadayı and Aygün (2007) and used in the study by Arslan and Bakır (2022), which is unidimensional and consists of four items. The second section includes the 4-item Repurchase Behavior scale developed by Tsai and Huang (2007) and used in the study titled “The Role of Customer Satisfaction in the Relationship Between Brand Experience and Repurchase Behavior” by Kara and Kimzan (2015). The final section of the questionnaire contains five questions

aimed at determining the demographic characteristics of the participants. The scale questions are 5-point Likert type.

Research Model and Hypotheses



Figure 1. Research Model

The hypotheses formulated in line with the objectives of the study are as follows:

H1: The brand trust levels of individuals who are consumers in the ready-to-wear sector living in Turkey have a significant effect on their repurchase intention.

H2: There is a significant relationship between the brand trust levels of individuals who are consumers in the ready-to-wear sector living in Turkey and their repurchase intention.

Methods Used

Normality tests were performed to determine the normality of the distribution of the data collected in the study. The reliability of the scales used in the study was assessed by calculating Cronbach Alpha. In addition, exploratory factor analysis was performed on the scales. Regression analysis and Pearson correlation analysis were performed to examine the hypothesized effect and relationship.

Data Analysis and Research Findings

Normality Distribution Analysis

Table 1. Normality Test Analysis

	Skewness	Kurtosis
Brand Trust		
BT 1	-,774	-,156
BT 2	-,799	-,039
BT 3	-,672	-,179
BT 4	-,866	,139
Repurchase Intention		
RI 1	-,437	-,888
RI 2	-,456	-,927
RI 3	-,054	-1,085
RI 4	-,183	-1,121

The normality of the data distribution was checked using kurtosis and skewness values. The skewness values of the scale items measuring brand trust were found to be between -0.866 and -0.672, and the kurtosis values were between -0.179 and 0.139. The skewness values of the scale items measuring repurchase intention were found to be between -0.456 and -0.054, and the kurtosis values were found to be between -1.121 and -0.888. It is stated that if the values obtained as a result of the analysis “remain between -3 and +3,” we can consider the distribution to be normal (Kalaycı, 2009). When the data was evaluated, it was determined that the normal distribution assumption was met.

Reliability Analysis

The Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale is evaluated as follows: “If $0.00 \leq \alpha < 0.40$, the scale is unreliable; if $0.40 \leq \alpha < 0.60$, the scale is moderately reliable; if $0.60 \leq \alpha < 0.80$, the scale is quite reliable; and if $0.80 \leq \alpha < 1.00$, the scale is highly reliable” (Can, 2022, p. 396).

Table 2. Reliability Analysis Results

Factor Name	Cronbach’s Alpha	Number of Items
Brand Trust	,971	4
Repurchase Intention	,895	4

Table 2 shows the reliability of the two scales used in the study, evaluated using Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficients. The Cronbach’s Alpha (α) value for the scale measuring brand trust level was determined to be 0.971, and the Cronbach’s Alpha (α) value for the scale measuring repurchase intention was determined to be 0.895. When the obtained Cronbach’s Alpha (α) values were evaluated, it was concluded that both scales were highly reliable. According to the Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient ranges in the literature, values of 0.80 and above are considered highly reliable (Bakır et al., 2024, p. 108; Nur et al., 2020, p. 16; Arslan and Nur, 2018, p. 342; Arslan and Bakır, 2022, p. 26; Tanrıku and Bakır, 2021, p. 649; Tanrıku, 2022, p. 12; Arslan et al., 2022, p. 880).

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was applied to the four items measuring brand trust level and the four items measuring repurchase intention included in the study.

Table 3. Factor Analysis Results of the Scales

	Brand Trust	Repurchase Intention
KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	0,870 (p < 0.05)	0,841 (p < 0.05)
Total Explained Variance by Factor Loadings	1 Factor 83,724	1 Factor 76,038

The KMO value of the brand trust scale used in the study is 0.870, which is statistically significant ($p < 0.00$). It was determined that the brand trust scale used in the study has a unidimensional structure. The KMO value of the repurchase intention scale is 0.841, and this result is statistically significant ($p < 0.00$). As a result of factor analysis, it was determined that the repurchase intention scale has a unidimensional structure.

Demographic Findings

Table 4. Frequency Distributions for Demographic Factors

Gender	N	%
Female	398	54,0
Male	339	46,0
Total	737	100
Marital Status	N	%
Married	394	53,5
Single	343	46,5
Total	737	100
Age	N	%
18-28	271	36,8
29-39	229	31,1
40-50	158	21,4

51-60	62	8,4
61 and above	17	2,3
Total	737	100
Educational Status	N	%
High school and below	99	13,4
Associate degree	236	32,0
Bachelor's degree	313	42,5
Graduate degree	89	12,1
Total	737	100
Monthly Income Level	N	%
25,000 TL and below	131	17,8
25.001 – 40.000 TL	93	12,6
40.001 TL – 55.000 TL	315	42,7
55.001 TL – 70.000 TL	145	19,7
70,001 TL and above	53	7,2
Total	737	100

When examining the demographic characteristics of the total 737 individuals who participated in the study, it was found that 54% of the participants were female and 46% were male. In terms of marital status, married individuals accounted for 53.5%, while single individuals represented 46.5%. Looking at the age distribution, the highest participation rate was 36.8% in the 18–28 age group, followed by 31.1% in the 29–39 age range. Twenty-one point four percent of participants are between 40 and 50 years old, 8.4% are between 51 and 60 years old, and 2.3% are 61 years old and above. When evaluating education levels, 42.5% of participants had a bachelor's degree, 32% had an associate's degree, 13.4% had a high school diploma or lower, and 12.1% had a postgraduate degree. In terms of

monthly income level, the largest group, 42.7%, had an income between 40,001 and 55,000 TL, followed by 19.7% with an income between 55,001 and 70,000 TL and 17.8% with an income of 25,000 TL and below. These findings reveal that the study’s participant profile is balanced but predominantly consists of young, educated individuals belonging to the middle-income group.

Testing Hypotheses

H1: Brand trust levels among individuals who are consumers in the ready-to-wear sector living in Turkey have a significant effect on their intention to repurchase.

Table 5. Results of Regression Analysis to Determine the Effect of Brand Trust Level on Repurchase Intention

Dependent Variable:	Non-Standard Coefficients		Standard Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Standard Error	Beta	T	
Repurchase Intention					
(Constant)	1,503	,120		12,501	,000
Brand Trust	,497	,032	,495	15,436	,000

R: 0.495 R²: 0.245 Adjusted R²: 0.244 F: 238.283 p: 0.000

A regression analysis conducted to determine how the brand trust level of ready-to-wear consumers living in the province of Turkey affects their repurchase intention revealed a significant relationship between the two variables ($R=0.495$, $R^2=0.245$) ($F=238.283$, $p=.000<.05$). The brand trust variable explains 24.5% of the variation in repurchase intention, and considering the significance tests of the regression coefficient, it was concluded that the brand trust variable ($p=.000<.05$) has a significant effect on the repurchase intention variable. Hypothesis H1 was supported.

H2: There is a significant relationship between the brand trust levels of individuals who are consumers in the ready-to-wear sector living in Turkey and their intention to repurchase.

Table 6. Pearson Correlation Analysis Result to Determine the Relationship Between Brand Trust Level and Repurchase Intention

		Brand Trust	Repurchase Intention
Pearson Correlation	Correlation Coefficient ®	1,000	,495**
	Brand Trust		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,000
	N	737	737
	Repurchase Intention		
	Correlation Coefficient ®	,495**	1,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	.
	N	737	737

*** The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).**

The Pearson correlation analysis conducted to determine the relationship between brand trust levels and repurchase intentions among consumers in the ready-to-wear sector living in Turkey yielded a correlation coefficient (r) of .495 for brand trust and repurchase intention. The correlation coefficient (r/rho) can be interpreted as follows: “between 0.00 and 0.25, the relationship is very weak; between 0.26 and 0.49, it is weak; between 0.50 and 0.69, it is moderate; between 0.70 and 0.89, it is strong; and between 0.90 and 1.00, it is very strong.” (Sungur, 2010, p. 115-116; Arslan, 2018, p. 108). A positive and weak relationship was found between brand trust and repurchase intention. Hypothesis H2 was supported.

CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS

This research was conducted to determine the effect of brand trust levels on repurchase intentions among consumers in the ready-to-wear sector living in Turkey. Another objective of the research is to reveal the relationships between the variables in question.

The main population of the study consists of consumers in the ready-to-wear clothing sector living in Turkey. Considering the number of consumers in the ready-to-wear clothing sector living in Turkey, the sample size was determined to be 384. The data was collected using the convenience sampling method and survey technique. The surveys, conducted face-to-face and

online, were administered to 737 individuals on a voluntary basis.

Normality tests were performed to determine the normality of the distribution of the data collected in the study. The normality of the data distribution was checked using kurtosis and skewness values. Factor analysis performed on the scale measuring brand trust level and the scale measuring repurchase intention revealed that both scales were grouped under a single dimension. Subsequently, when the Cronbach's Alpha values of both scales were evaluated, it was determined that both scales were highly reliable. The regression analysis conducted to determine the effect of participants' brand trust levels on their repurchase intentions revealed that the brand trust variable had a significant effect on the repurchase intention variable. Furthermore, the Pearson Correlation analysis conducted to determine whether there was a relationship between the two variables showed that there was a weak and positive relationship between the variables.

The limitations of the study include the use of convenience sampling and the survey method as the primary data collection technique. Another limitation is that the study was conducted in the ready-to-wear clothing sector, where brand trust levels are thought to be higher. Repeating subsequent studies with different sample groups is important for generalizing the results of this research. Furthermore, brand trust level was examined in conjunction with repurchase intention in this study. It is also important for subsequent studies to evaluate these two variables using different concepts.

As a result of the literature review, studies examining the relationship between these two variables in different sectors have been found in both national and international literature. However, research focusing on the ready-to-wear sector within the Turkish context is limited. In this regard, the study aims to fill the gap in the relevant field and provide original contributions on a sectoral basis.

The scientific contribution of this research is that it can guide managers in the sector in making strategic decisions regarding receivables and provide guidance to academics working in this field for their future studies.

Recommendations based on research findings:

- ✓ Research findings reveal that brand trust has a significant impact on repurchase intention. Therefore, it is important for ready-to-wear brands to develop long-term strategies aimed at building trust, particularly by demonstrating transparency, consistency, and responsiveness to customer feedback on digital platforms.
- ✓ Customer experience plays a major role among the factors that support brand trust. In this context, it is recommended to establish a strong bond with customers through personalized services and loyalty programs.
- ✓ The use of consistent, value-oriented brand messages that address consumer expectations plays a critical role in building trust in the consumer's mind.
- ✓ The weak positive relationship identified in the study necessitates a more in-depth examination of factors that increase brand trust. In this context, it is recommended that subsequent studies include mediating or moderating variables (e.g., perceived quality, customer experience, brand reputation) that may influence consumer behavior.

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THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IN DESTINATION BRANDING: THE CASE OF DUBAI

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Introduction

On a global scale, there has been a remarkable development in modern communication tools and electronic technologies, particularly in social networking sites (Alghizzawi, 2018: 59). In line with these advancements, a large proportion of the world's population uses social media to stay connected with loved ones and colleagues, to share important memories or information, to tell stories and express their creativity, to conduct and manage their businesses, to follow brands and influencers, and to capture not only what they do but also how they feel (Atherton, 2023: 6). With the advancement of digital communication environments, information channels and tourist behaviors are also transforming. Tourists now tend to take shorter and more frequent vacations, seek information before traveling, and show greater interest in new technologies (Meydan & Bayram, 2013: 33). The ease of access to new information technologies has fundamentally transformed the way information is created and disseminated. Accordingly, marketers have gained the opportunity to encourage and enhance customer engagement through the use of social media, in order to facilitate the development of awareness among tourists at the national level (Jashi, 2013: 38).

The digitalization-driven transformation offers significant opportunities across all sectors, from manufacturing to services (Farhangi & Alipour, 2021: 1). Within this process of digital transformation, social media has become one of the key tools

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shaping the competitiveness of the tourism sector. In other words, social media holds strategic importance in enhancing competitiveness in tourism (Leung et al., 2013: 3), as the influence and application of social media marketing strategies are crucial for meeting tourist demand in a globalized world. The development and increased accessibility of the internet have fundamentally altered tourists' motivations for planning and booking travel to various destinations. Companies enhance their trust in and familiarity with social networks to access reliable information by conducting travel research through websites (Jashi, 2013: 37). Consequently, due to the growing popularity of internet applications, many tourism businesses—such as hotels, airlines, and travel agencies—have begun to use the internet as one of their key marketing and communication strategies (Şahin & Şengün, 2015: 772).

The term “social media” initially refers to a set of technological applications and platforms designed to facilitate social interactions among individuals (Gretzel & Yoo, 2014: 491). Social media is defined as a group of internet-based applications that are built on the technological and ideological foundations of the internet and enable the creation and modification of user-generated content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In fact, it is not merely a new form of communication but a comprehensive online environment constructed based on the contributions and interactions of participants (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014: 28). Moreover, social media enables companies to engage directly with customers through various internet platforms, monitor customer opinions and service evaluations, and interact with these evaluations (Hvass & Munar, 2012: 93).

In the tourism sector, social media plays a significant role in tourists' information-seeking and decision-making behaviors, in tourism promotion, and in focusing on best practices for engaging with visitors (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014: 27). Social media marketing refers to the use of social media channels by

companies to promote themselves and their products. A subset of these marketing activities includes more traditional web-based promotional strategies, such as email newsletters and online advertising campaigns (Barefoot & Szabo, 2009: 13).

This book chapter emphasizes the significance of social media marketing, particularly within the context of the tourism sector. The chapter first addresses the definition, evolution, and role of social media within marketing strategies; subsequently, the tools used in social media marketing are explained with the support of current statistics. It is highlighted that social media plays a critical role in tourism and destination promotion, beyond merely serving as a platform for information search and content sharing. One of the chapter's main focal points is that, as a service-oriented industry, tourism can gain a strategic competitive advantage through the effective use of social media. In this context, social media is considered both an effective communication tool for destination marketing and a vital marketing approach for tourism businesses, with Dubai presented as a prominent example of a destination that has successfully leveraged social media for branding and promotion.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND MARKETING

Definition and Development of Social Media

With the rapid advancement of technology, the traditional understanding of media and communication has also been transformed. The emergence of Web 2.0—characterized by a dynamic and participatory approach—has introduced the concept of “social media,” defined by user interaction and two-way communication (Özutku et al., 2014: 76–77). In the literature, various definitions of social media exist within the communication discipline as well as in related fields such as public relations, information science, and mass media (Car & Hayes, 2015). Social media is “a new synergy that enables various groups of people with shared economic interests to

form a new business understanding by using applications such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube in a more comprehensive manner” (Kishnani & Sharma, 2024: 103). According to another definition, social media can be defined as “internet-based channels that enable users to engage in opportunity-driven interaction with broad or narrow audiences in both real-time and asynchronous contexts, while selectively presenting themselves” (Carr & Hayes, 2015: 50). Before 2004, internet-based applications similar to social media were referred to as Web 1.0. The concept of Web 2.0 was first introduced by O’Reilly Media, which organized the first Web 2.0 conference in 2004. After the conference, the concept of Web 2.0 was adopted, and collaboration, sharing, and creativity among users were developed through online communities. These online communities include social networks, websites, blogs, and wikis (Zafarmand, 2010: 14). Web 1.0 represents the initial phase of the internet and is defined as a structure in which users merely consumed content and traditional media was transferred to a digital environment (Genç, 2010: 486). Web 2.0 refers to the second generation of internet services in which users can produce and share content, and mutual interaction is emphasized (Genç, 2010: 486; Morva, 2016: 51). Web 3.0 is an evolving structure also known as the semantic web, and it represents a technological development process that aims to enable users to reach smarter results with less data input by interpreting data flow between systems (Genç, 2010: 486). Web 4.0, referred to as the Smart Web, is the ability of software to detect and solve problems without the need for user input, made possible by the development of algorithms and techniques that allow computers to perform learning tasks automatically (Özkök, 2019: 11).

The historical process of the emergence of social media began in 1979 with the development of the Usenet network by Tom Truscot and Jim Ellis. Usenet was a system that allowed internet users to communicate through a platform for messaging and discussion. However, the use of social media in

its current sense began with the launch of Open Diary in 1989, the first social sharing site that brought together users who wrote online diaries, founded by Bruce and Susan Abelson. The term “weblog” also started to be used in the same year, and was eventually shortened to “blog” when one of the blog users interpreted it as “we blog” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 60). Later, in 1997, SixDegrees.com was launched (Boyd & Ellison, 2007: 214–215). Accordingly, users were able to create profiles, list their friends, and as of 1998, they could chat with individuals on their friend lists. SixDegrees evolved as a tool that could help individuals connect with others and send messages. However, the site was shut down in 2000 due to insufficient interest from internet users. Between 1997 and 2001, a series of social media platforms such as AsianAvenue, BlackPlanet, and Migente emerged, featuring functionalities that allowed users to create profiles and friend lists. The next wave in the development of social media came in 2001 with the launch of Ryze, which aimed to help users build their own business networks. With the rapid advancement of the internet and technological progress, social networking sites such as MySpace in 2003 and Facebook in 2004 were established, thereby shaping the development of what is now referred to as social media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 60).

Table 1. The Historical Development of the Most Popular Social Media Platforms as of 2025

Year	Event type	Description
2003	Launch	LinkedIn launches as a professional networking service.
2004	Launch	Facebook, the most popular social networking service to date, is launched.
2005	Launch	YouTube launches as a video-sharing platform.
2005	Launch	Reddit launches as a social news aggregation and discussion site.
2006	Launch	Twitter (now X) launches as a microblogging platform.
2007	Launch	imo launches as a multi-service instant messaging client.
2009	Launch	WhatsApp launches as a mobile instant messaging service.
2010	Launch	Instagram launches as a photo and video-sharing app.
2010	Launch	Pinterest launches as a visual discovery and bookmarking platform.

2011	Launch	Facebook Messenger launches as a standalone mobile messaging app.
2011	Launch	Snapchat launches with disappearing image messaging.
2013	Launch	Telegram launches as a cloud-based encrypted messaging app.
2015	Launch	Discord launches as a free voice, video, and text communication app for gamers and communities.
2016	Launch	TikTok launches in China under the name Douyin.
2017	Launch	TikTok launches internationally.
2022	Acquisition	Twitter (X) is acquired and taken private by Elon Musk.
2023	Launch	Threads, developed by Meta and linked to Instagram, launches.
2023	Milestone	Twitter officially rebrands as X.

Source: Wikipedia, 2025

According to DataReportal (2025), these platforms represent the most widely used social media services worldwide. Table 1 illustrates their historical development, beginning with LinkedIn in 2003 and extending to the launch of Threads and the rebranding of Twitter as X in 2023. The timeline traces the evolution from early networking tools to visually oriented and mobile-first applications such as Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok (Wikipedia, 2025). This progression reflects how technological innovations, platform diversification, and shifting user preferences have transformed social media from niche communication tools into global ecosystems that influence information flows (McIntyre, 2014; Van Dijck & Poell, 2013), cultural practices (Russo, 2011) and particularly marketing strategies (Pookulangara & Koesler, 2011: 348).

The Role of Social Media in Marketing

Social media marketing constitutes one dimension of digital marketing, which also encompasses search engine optimization (SEO), email marketing, affiliate marketing, viral marketing, and mobile marketing (Chaffey et al., 2013). Within this broader framework, social media marketing can be defined as a marketing approach that utilizes content created by ordinary individuals using highly accessible and measurable platforms such as social networks, blogs, microblogs, message boards, online publications, social bookmarking, communities, and wikis (Singh & Diamo, 2019: 8).

Social media marketing can be defined as “a form of explanatory communication that triggers dialogue frequently used by consumers/prosumers or circulates promotional information about a business/product/service between the stated parties.”. Thus, consumers and producers are allowed to learn from each other’s usage and experiences, ultimately benefiting all relevant parties (Dwivedi et al., 2015: 291). Social media marketing, in its simplest form, refers to conducting marketing activities through social media platforms. Social media marketing has transformed the way brand content is designed, disseminated, and consumed (Appel et al., 2020), and it has shifted the power of shaping brand image from marketers to consumers’ online content (Nijssen & Ordanini, 2020). When used strategically for marketing activities, social media marketing plays a vital role in reaching customers and establishing a personalized relationship with them (Appel et al., 2020; Dwivedi et al., 2021). In summary, social media marketing is defined as the use of social media or social networks to market a product, a company, or a brand. In this context, it is observed that marketing products and services on social media affects both the consumer and the business.

In the era of Marketing 4.0, social media elements have become a significant platform that addresses consumer behaviors such as information acquisition, expressing opinions, purchasing behavior, post-purchase communication, and evaluation from various aspects (Mangold & Faulds, 2009: 358). It is observed that some researchers describe social media marketing as a platform situated under marketing communication platforms (Keller, 2016: 69). According to Miller and Lammos (2011), social media marketing consists of the steps of listening, measuring, optimizing, and engaging. The use of social media as an advertising platform to promote a product or service is referred to as social media marketing. Fundamentally, it involves creating and sharing content aimed at encouraging customers to visit the website, increasing brand

awareness, and fostering user engagement (Hossain et al., 2025: 15).

Undoubtedly, the most important function of social media marketing is to promote a product, service, or brand by enhancing its reputation, awareness, and credibility directly to consumers in online environments (Köksel, 2012: 28). Social media is increasingly being used by businesses to retain existing customers, acquire new ones, build trust, increase brand awareness, and strengthen brand image (Mills, 2012: 162).

According to the social media marketing approach in the relevant literature, the benefits of social media marketing can be identified as follows (Güçdemir, 2017: 110):

- Gaining insight into the interests and tendencies of target audiences,
- Increasing product or service sales,
- Raising brand awareness,
- Generating ideas for new marketing strategies,
- Identifying and engaging customers and potential customers,
- Enhancing web and social media traffic.

Social media is increasingly being utilized in commercial activities, and businesses initially determined their social media marketing strategies through intuition and trial-and-error methods. Today, there are virtually no marketers who do not make use of social media platforms. Businesses now consider social media as the most essential component of their marketing strategies. The use of social media applications is recommended for the following marketing purposes (Ananda et al., 2016: 173):

- To turn influential individuals into product/brand advocates by using them as means to influence customers.
- To function as instruments of public relations and direct marketing.

- To allow the personalization of customers' online experience and enable product customization.
- To involve customers in concepts such as co-creation, innovation processes, product reviews, or advertising.

The characteristics that make social media marketing preferable can be listed as follows (McDonald, 2019, as cited in Destici, 2020: 17–18).

- *Speed*: Through the content shared on various social media platforms, brands are able to reach tens of thousands of users globally in a very short time—even instantly.
- *Accessibility*: In search engine-based studies, social media ranks among the top results due to its compatibility with search engine algorithms. This has made the use of social media essential for brands to increase their access to large audiences.
- *Popularity*: Social media platforms are characterized by the constant and real-time flow of evolving information, making them dynamic and perpetually active environments.
- *Engagement*: Social media engagement refers to the degree to which content created by a brand on these platforms reaches and resonates with users. This reciprocal interaction is typically demonstrated through user behaviors such as liking, commenting, or sharing, which serve as indicators of increased engagement.
- *Monitoring*: Brands possess the power to monitor users who interact with their content on social media platforms and conduct detailed analyses to assess the behavioral tendencies of their target audience (McDonald, 2019, as cited in Destici, 2020: 18). Moreover, community-based social networking sites are a smart way for brands to grow. Such social networking systems are considered one of the most powerful and fastest means of marketing.

that nearly all digital communication now takes place via social media. The amount of time spent on these platforms is also noteworthy: users spend an average of 18 hours and 41 minutes per week on social media (Datareportal, 2025). This situation highlights the strategic importance of designing digital content and marketing activities with a social media-oriented focus. User behavior reveals that individuals use an average of 6.86 different social media platforms per month (Datareportal, 2025). This level of diversity necessitates that brands move beyond focusing on a single platform and instead develop omnichannel social media strategies. Gender distribution also offers significant insights for marketing targeting. According to the data, 54.7% of social media user identities belong to men, while 45.3% belong to women (Datareportal, 2025). This distribution underscores the need for tailoring social media campaigns to specific target audiences. The number of social media users increased by 1.4% (72 million people) on a quarterly basis and by 4.7% (241 million people) on an annual basis (Datareportal, 2025). This upward trend shows that social media platforms not only have a sustainable user base, but also a growing digital interaction environment.

Basic Tools Used in Social Media Marketing

The field of social media marketing is changing very rapidly. Therefore, it is not possible to cover social media marketing in its entirety in this study. However, this study provides detailed information about social media marketing tools. The April 2025 data published in collaboration with We Are Social and Meltwater provides marketers with insightful information, showing the intensity of social media app usage on mobile devices through the active user index (Figure 2).

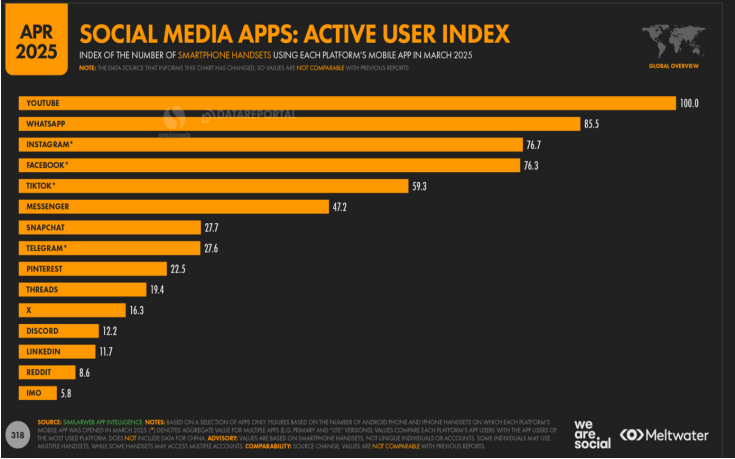


Figure 2: Mobile Active User Index for Social Media Applications in 2025

Source: Datareportal, 2025

As of 2025, YouTube ranks as the most widely used social media application on mobile devices (index value: 100.0). This highlights the considerable strength of video-based content in terms of both accessibility and user engagement. Both small-scale and large-scale businesses develop their marketing strategies using videos to deliver their products and services to target audiences on YouTube (Mutlu, 2017: 67). WhatsApp, ranking second with an index value of 85.5, despite being an instant messaging application, is increasingly utilized by businesses as a direct communication tool in areas such as customer service and reservation systems (Datareportal, 2025). WhatsApp provides commercial brands with the capability to initiate private chats with users through its direct messaging infrastructure. With over one billion users, understanding the level of trust users place in brands on this platform, as well as their willingness to share personal information with them, stands out as a significant area of research in terms of marketing strategies (Zarouali et al., 2021: 252). Instagram (76.7) and Facebook (76.3) indicate that social media campaigns are primarily carried out through visually-driven and interaction-

focused platforms. Instagram's number of monthly active users has reached two billion (Datareportal, 2025). Thus, brands and businesses create corporate accounts on Instagram to carry out marketing communication activities, while also offering consumers the convenience of online shopping through these accounts. Positive user-generated content regarding a brand's product or service enhances brand awareness (Güçdemir, 2014: 48). The use of brand names, advertising slogans shared via hashtags, and features such as tagging, text content, link integration, and location tagging are among the elements that make Instagram an interactive platform (Kırcova & Enginkaya, 2015: 61). Slogans and hashtags (#) play an important role in capturing the attention of the target audience. The most distinctive feature of Instagram advertisements is that they are tailored to the characteristics of the target audience. In other words, not every advertisement may align with everyone's interests. Therefore, ad content has the ability to reach specific audience segments (Sabuncuoğlu & Gülay, 2016: 118). For instance, users who have liked hotel pages several times are more likely to be shown advertisements, services, videos, and images related to hotels, vacations, and travel.

Instagram is one of the most important platforms that contributes to marketing activities for both small and large-scale businesses. In fact, small businesses can expand their market reach and gain access to a larger user base by conducting marketing activities through Instagram, thereby enhancing their competitive advantage. Large-scale businesses also primarily use Instagram as a promotional tool and frequently invest in advertising. Michael Kors is recognized as the first brand to advertise on the Instagram platform (Kırcaburun, 2017: 63). An analysis of this post reveals that it contained a wide range of user engagement, including comments, complaints, suggestions, experiences, and discussions about the brand and its products.

Facebook is currently a social media platform with over one billion users (Singh & Diamo, 2019: 125). As of January 2025, Facebook has reached 2.28 billion users (Datareportal, 2025). Moreover, the number of daily posts shared on the platform exceeds the number of users by a factor of ten. An analysis of these posts reveals a wealth of user-generated content, including comments, complaints, suggestions, experiences, and discussions related to brands and products. In fact, such content constitutes a valuable repository—almost a treasure trove—for brands. Responding to interactions on Facebook, engaging in communication with consumers, and sharing their emotions contribute significantly to increasing brand awareness, as these actions help brands reach both existing and potential customers (Kawaf & Istanbuluoglu, 2019). In addition, businesses implement a variety of social media marketing strategies and tactics through Facebook, such as interacting with product/service/brand fan pages, organizing contests and events, adding links for easy access to brand offerings, sharing posts that include giveaways, and placing advertisements. Thus, these practices enhance brand visibility on social media, help generate potential customers, and increase purchase intention (Akar, 2013).

Among the emerging platforms, TikTok (59.3) has become a highly effective tool for reaching the younger user segment through short videos (Datareportal, 2025). The TikTok application is based on a short-form video concept and provides users with a wide range of audio and music options, along with the ability to add special effects and filters. The application also allows users to directly upload videos recorded on their phones; it offers a “reaction” feature through which users can record and share responses to other videos. Additionally, it includes a digital well-being feature that alerts users when they spend more than two hours on the app (Guarda et al., 2021: 38).

Social Media Marketing and the Tourism Sector

The Strategic Importance of Social Media for Tourism Enterprises

Today, social media platforms have become marketing tools through which businesses directly communicate with their customers (Barutçu & Tomas, 2013: 9). This phenomenon is largely attributed to technological advancements and the widespread use of the internet (Alan, 2018: 493). The tourism sector is among the industries that benefit the most from social media. Therefore, for tourism enterprises, conducting marketing activities on social media, engaging in promotional efforts, organizing campaigns across various areas, and adapting to social media strategies have become critically important.

When examining the purchase intentions and behaviors of customers in the tourism sector, it becomes evident that the internet and social media exert a significant influence at various stages—such as evaluating multiple options, recalling past experiences, conducting research and gathering information, making purchasing decisions, and engaging in post-purchase behaviors (Odabaşı & Odabaşı, 2010: 3).

In tourism, where production and consumption occur simultaneously, the sharing of tourists' positive and negative experiences on social media and travel-related websites plays a significant role in influencing the travel intentions and decision-making processes of other users. In this context, social media can also be considered a highly cost-effective tool for tourism marketing, as it is used to attract potential tourists from the target audience before purchasing tourism services that they otherwise have no opportunity to experience beforehand (Eryılmaz & Zengin, 2014: 45). According to Çiçek et al. (2013: 5), the use of social media platforms by tourism businesses offers several key benefits to tourists, customers, and guests. These benefits include: providing detailed information about the destination and the business; enabling travel planning

that reduces the need for intermediaries; allowing customers to access comprehensive information through online social media platforms; facilitating comparison of alternatives from multiple perspectives; and offering the opportunity for direct communication and online reservation.

According to a study that examines social media marketing from a business-oriented perspective, there are seven stages for an effective social media process (Weber, 2009: 252). These stages are as follows:

- Businesses should clearly identify their target consumers.
- They should demonstrate their marketing capabilities.
- Consumer engagement and cohesion must be ensured.
- The business should manage and analyze its online activities.
- Businesses must determine the level of participation.
- Feedback and collected data should be utilized for the benefit of the business.

When the tourism-related literature is examined, it is observed that studies on social media have generally adopted a consumer-oriented approach. In their study on tourism, Cox et al. (2009) and Dwityas and Briandana (2017: 196) addressed tourists' social media usage behavior in three phases: before the trip, during the trip, and after the trip. These phases are as follows:

- *Pre-trip*: Tourists obtain information from content shared on social media and generally engage in passive participation. At this stage, desires and demand emerge, information is gathered, and transactions such as reservations are carried out (Dwityas & Briandana, 2017: 196).
- *During the trip*: Tourists actively produce content by sharing photos and videos on social media (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014).

- *Post-trip*: A significant relationship has been identified between unforgettable tourism experiences and social media sharing behavior, where experiences are evaluated and reflected upon (Arslan & Şimşek, 2022: 748).

In 2024, the travel and tourism sector contributed USD 10.9 trillion to the global economy, accounting for 10% of the world's GDP (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2025). From this perspective, digital marketing tools in the tourism industry—particularly social media—hold strategic importance due to their ability to reach large audiences efficiently and at low cost (İmre, 2020: 1661). In contemporary business environments, social media facilitates the dissemination of products and services to millions of users, enables the provision of personalized content to tourists, and contributes to the enhancement of customer relationship management. These platforms allow businesses to obtain direct customer feedback, refine their services accordingly, and promptly communicate potential changes. Moreover, social media enhances the online visibility of businesses (Gedik, 2023: 309). In other words, social media brings the visibility of tourism products and experiences to the forefront in the marketing of tourism (Chu et al., 2020; Minazzi, 2015). The relationship between tourism marketing and social media has a significant impact on the tourism industry and is gaining increasing importance. Social media platforms serve as an effective tool for tourism businesses to promote their brands and enhance their visibility (Uluok & Saygili, 2024: 132). Furthermore, social media platforms are viewed as an effective means by destination managers for attracting potential travelers and promoting a wide range of tourism products and services. Similarly, for travelers who use social media, gathering information, resolving inquiries (such as through the use of hashtags, tagging destination managers, and sharing posts), and sharing their experiences (through images, reels, vlogs, blogs, or comments) has become inevitable. These forms of content sharing have been found

to significantly influence the travel decision-making process (Kishnani & Sharma, 2024: 103).

A Case Study of Social Media Marketing Practice: Dubai

Social media marketing plays an increasingly decisive role in the promotion of destinations (Güdek, 2021: 126). Within this context, Dubai emerges as one of the leading tourism destinations that has successfully adopted and implemented social media strategies. Geographically, Dubai is located in the Middle East and is one of the seven emirates of the United Arab Emirates. As the second-largest emirate by land area, it is strategically positioned along the banks of Dubai Creek, a natural inlet of the Persian Gulf (Sameh et al., 2018).

In terms of tourism performance, Dubai hosted 18.72 million international visitors in 2024, representing a 9.15% increase compared to 17.15 million visitors in 2023 (Global Media Insight, 2024). Beyond these achievements, Dubai emphasizes its long-standing tradition of hospitality as a cornerstone of its tourism sector. Building on this foundation, the government's primary strategy is to position the emirate as a leading global tourism destination and commercial hub, thereby strengthening its economy. In line with this vision, the city offers a wide spectrum of attractions, ranging from natural and historical sites such as deserts, mountains, and heritage houses to modern architectural landmarks, luxury developments, and expansive shopping malls (Sameh et al., 2018).



Figure 3: Jumeirah Burj Al Arab, Dubai

Source: Tripadvisor, 2025

Dubai can be regarded as one of the most prominent examples of a city brand that has rapidly established global recognition by capitalizing on the dynamics of globalization (Govers, 2012: 48). This global positioning has been further reinforced through strategic marketing initiatives such as the #MyDubai campaign, launched by the Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM). The campaign encourages users to share their personal experiences in the city, thereby fostering widespread production of user-generated content and contributing significantly to the construction and dissemination of Dubai's brand image (Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism, 2019).

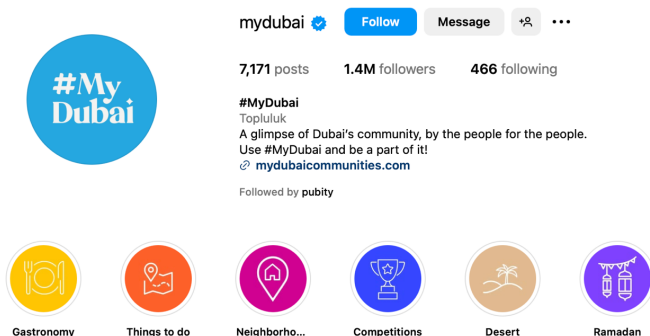


Figure 4: Digital Destination Marketing Carried Out Through the #MyDubai Instagram Account

Source: MyDubai. (n.d.). #MyDubai [Instagram profile].

The branding of a destination and the strength of its image are often positively associated with the extent to which it is able to capture a significant share of tourism activity (Çevrimkaya, 2023, p. 1907). A comprehensive framework for destination branding can be constructed by drawing upon theories of place and destination marketing, while also incorporating strategies from services, product, portfolio, and corporate branding (Stephens Balakrishnan, 2008, p. 63). Within this context, the #MyDubai campaign has significantly enhanced Dubai's digital destination image and generated millions of interactions on visually driven platforms such as Instagram (Govers & Go, 2018; visitdubai.com). Moreover, an analysis of data from Dubai Tourism indicates that social media strategies have had a tangible impact not only on brand image but also on actual tourist demand. These findings provide a strong foundation for evaluating the effectiveness of Dubai's social media marketing, whether by linking digital campaigns to visitor numbers or by conducting comparative benchmark analyses.

CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS

Today's business environment has become more complex than ever before, and especially in the hospitality sector, an active presence on social media is more essential than ever

(Hossain et al., 2025: 21). Social media is regarded as one of the most effective marketing tools, enabling brands to connect with potential consumers and engage with them by earning their trust (Harb et al., 2019: 31). The use of social media as an advertising platform to promote a product or service is referred to as social media marketing (Hossain et al., 2025: 15).

Social media marketing offers businesses in the travel and tourism industry a low-cost, effective, and wide-reaching promotional tool. It provides numerous advantages, ranging from enhancing brand awareness and image to increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty. Through social media, businesses can promote their products and services to millions of users and, by offering personalized content, gain the opportunity to improve their services based on customer feedback. Moreover, these platforms enable the rapid dissemination of updates related to destinations and help increase online visibility (Gedik, 2023: 309). In other words, the use of social media channels in the context of tourism allows the hospitality sector to shape and enhance brand image, reputation, customer attitudes, and loyalty, as well as to boost sales (Hossain et al., 2025: 15). This has made the effective and strategic use of social media tools a necessity for tourism businesses.

Social media enables interaction through various means by which users can connect with a brand or business on any social network (Cerrahoğlu, 2021: 22). At the same time, consumers have been empowered by the facilitation of acquiring and sharing information related to products or services (Kapoor et al., 2018: 531). However, this intense flow of information may occasionally hinder access to reliable and useful content, thereby causing information overload (Kapoor et al., 2018: 532). In such cases—particularly within the tourism sector—consumers who are unable to access trustworthy information may experience hesitation in choosing destinations or service providers, which can delay their booking decisions. Therefore, it is of great importance that businesses present their social

media content in a transparent, accurate, and user-friendly manner in order to mitigate information overload.

The role of social media in destination marketing has been increasingly recognized and is attracting widespread attention (Liu et al., 2025: 3). Social media, which significantly influences tourist behavior, frequently utilizes videos in destination marketing to enhance the sense of presence, social connectedness, and entertainment for viewers (Liu et al., 2025: 3). At this point, the high revenue potential of the tourism sector has intensified competition, thereby rendering destination marketing more complex. This is because effective destination marketing is grounded in meeting customer expectations and ensuring satisfaction (Şengül & Çelik, 2023: 601).

Considering the unique structure of the tourism sector, the sharing of tourists' positive or negative experiences at destinations on social media platforms has been found to significantly influence the preferences of other users. Moreover, accurate and effective posts made by all stakeholders involved in tourism at the destination level are also recognized to have an impact on tourism consumers (İmre, 2020: 1664).

The experiential and intangible nature of the tourism product poses certain risks for tourists prior to purchase. Therefore, it is of great importance for hotel businesses to mitigate these risks through social media content supported by high-quality visuals that help to concretize the services offered (Bayram et al., 2016: 427). Social media marketing provides businesses with the opportunity to establish more interactive relationships with customers, gain a better understanding of their needs, receive real-time feedback, reach broader audiences at lower costs, and build loyal customer communities (Gedik, 2021: 186). In this context, social media has emerged not only as a communication tool but also as a strategic marketing platform for tourism businesses.

In conclusion, the rapid increase in the number of social media users, driven by digitalization and improved internet

accessibility, has led to the intensification of competition within social media environments. These developments have further heightened the importance of social media marketing. In the tourism industry as well, marketing activities are increasingly being conducted with strategies tailored to various social media platforms in order to effectively reach target audiences. However, marketing efforts in tourism should not be limited solely to social media networks. A multifaceted strategy should be adopted—one that includes video and content-sharing platforms, virtual tour applications, influencer collaborations, joint initiatives with other destinations, and the active involvement of destination stakeholders. Through the effective implementation of social media marketing strategies, both brand demand can be increased and a sustainable competitive advantage within the sector can be achieved.

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THE EFFECT OF PERCEIVED SERVICE QUALITY ON CONSUMER CYNICISM: AN APPLICATION IN TOURISM SECTOR

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Introduction

In today's intensely competitive environment, it is seen as an extremely important factor for companies to increase their service quality in order to perform successfully in the race to provide services. Especially the diversification of services and the increase in the number of businesses increase this competition and make quality service delivery compulsory (Altan et al., 2003, p.2). However, since services are intangible, heterogeneous, and have characteristics such as simultaneous production and consumption, firms concretize and distribute their services to consumers. Especially in terms of intangibility, services make it difficult for consumers to evaluate the quality of the service they will receive before the purchase process. For this reason, the concept of "perceived service quality" is generally used instead of the concept of "service quality" in the relevant literature (Grönroos, 1984; Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988). Perceived service quality is defined as the consumer's general judgment about the superiority and even excellence of the product or service (Aksaraylı & Saygı, 2011, p.22).

In recent years, while the contribution of primary sectors such as agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, mining and manufacturing-oriented secondary sectors to the economy has been declining, the economic contribution of the service sector, which is a tertiary sector, has shown a rapid increase, and in addition, it contributes significantly to both national

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income and employment in direct proportion to the level of development of countries (Koç, 2017, p.28). One of the service sectors that makes such an important contribution to the economy is undoubtedly the tourism sector. As a matter of fact, the tourism sector is the fastest growing major industry in the world (Das, 2013, p.2). The indispensable supply source of this sector is hospitality establishments. This is because hospitality businesses are service businesses that meet many needs of individuals traveling for various reasons, mainly the need for overnight stays (Bayat & Gürçam, 2018, p.119).

The main purpose of hospitality businesses operating in the tourism sector, which has a critical importance in terms of income and employment in the national economy, is to increase the profit rate by maintaining their existence in an intensely competitive environment. The realization of this objective depends on producing and providing services in a way to create customer satisfaction and loyalty. However, from time to time, this level of satisfaction and loyalty of consumers towards companies may develop in the opposite direction. This situation is referred to as “consumer cynicism” in the literature. As a matter of fact, consumer cynicism is a concept that expresses many negative emotions such as distrust, dissatisfaction and unmet expectations that consumers feel towards businesses.

The quality level that consumers feel towards the services they receive is affected by many factors and also affects many consumer behaviors. For this reason, it is important to determine the factors that may cause consumer cynicism in the service-intensive tourism sector. Perceived service quality in the literature is generally associated with customer satisfaction (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988; Spreng, MacKenzie, & Olshavsky, 1996), loyalty (Caruana, 2002), word-of-mouth communication (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996), and behavioral intentions (Baker & Crompton, 2000). However, no study has been found that addresses the relationship between perceived service quality and consumer cynicism. Cynicism

has generally been examined in the context of advertising (Obermiller & Spangenberg, 1998), brand messages (Odou & de Pechpeyrou, 2011), or organizational behavior (Dean, Brandes, & Dharwadkar, 1998), with no direct link established to service quality. This indicates a gap in understanding how service quality in the tourism sector shapes not only satisfaction and loyalty but also negative consumer attitudes (e.g., cynicism, distrust). Determining the relationship between these two variables and filling this gap in the literature reveals the originality of the study.

Based on all these, the purpose of this study is to determine the effect of the level of quality perception of individuals who purchase services from hospitality businesses on consumer cynicism. Another aim of the study is to reveal the relationship between both variables.

In line with the aim of the study, answers to the following questions will be sought:

-Does the level of quality perception of individuals who purchase services from hospitality businesses have an effect on consumer cynicism?

-Is there a relationship between the level of quality perception of individuals who purchase services from hospitality establishments and the level of consumer cynicism?

Conceptual Framework

Perceived Service Quality

The concept of service, which was first used in the business literature, was included in the marketing discipline at the beginning of the 20th century and was considered as one of the subjects of marketing. Towards the end of the 20th century, the concept of “service marketing” emerged as a new field related to service in an article written by Lynn Shostack (1977) (Uçan, 2007, p.10). In this context, when we look at the definition of service, it is expressed as all of the activities that provide benefit and satisfaction by satisfying the demands and needs

of consumers (Gümüş & Korkmaz, 2014, p.10). Providing this satisfaction shows the quality of the service. Therefore, quality is seen as indispensable not only in the manufacturing sector but also in the service sector (Eleren & Kılıç, 2007, p.241). As a matter of fact, quality and service phenomena have been an important activity throughout all times of humanity and are characterized as concepts that continue to maintain their importance today. The concept of “service quality” emerges from the combination of these service and quality concepts (Yumuşak, 2006, p. 20) and service quality is one of the most important factors in the efficiency of the service provided (Cengiz & Kırkbir, 2007, p. 264).

Services are composed of intangible elements and as such, they can be quite difficult to evaluate in consumer perceptions. In fact, researchers sometimes have difficulty in defining and measuring the concept of service quality (Wisniewski, 2001, p. 380). For this reason, the concept of “service quality” is generally used as “perceived service quality” in the literature (Akdu, 2010, p.49). This is because consumers’ perception is decisive in determining service quality (Altunışık, 2009, p.30) and perceived service quality is interpreted according to the degree and direction of differences between perceptions and expectations (Fick & Brent Ritchie, 1991,p.2). In this context, perceived service quality is defined as the output of an evaluation process in which consumers compare their expectations before using a service with the experience of the actual service (Akbaba & Kılınç, 2001, p.163).

Buttle (1996, p.9) states that perceived service quality consists of five dimensions: reliability, physical assets, assurance, empathy and enthusiasm. These dimensions and their definitions are given in the table below.

Table 1: Five Dimensions of Perceived Service Quality

Dimensions	Definition
Reliability	It includes the fulfillment of the service promised to consumers in a reliable, accurate and timely manner.
Tangibles	Service-related facilities, equipment, personnel and communication equipment.
Assurance	It includes the knowledge, courtesy and trust of the employees providing the service and their ability to fulfill the service in question.
Emphaty	It includes efforts to provide attentive and personalized attention to the customers receiving the service.
Responsiveness	It includes the willingness of service providers to help customers and provide fast service.

Reference: Buttle, F. (1996). SERVQUAL: review, critique, research agenda. European Journal of marketing, 30(1), 8-32. Adapted from page 9.

Consumer Cynicism

The concept of cynicism, which emerged as a way of thinking and living in Ancient Greece in the 500s BC (Brandes, 1997, p.7), was characterized as a school of living an idealistic life by isolating from society (Güven, 2016, p.155). Over the past 2500 years, the definition of the concept has been expanded, and it has been associated with negative emotional states that include emotional factors such as contempt, distress, shame, etc., reflecting the negative perceptions of the individual (Abraham, 2000, p. 269) and causing distrust as an outcome of all these (Güven, 2016, p.155). Therefore, the concept of cynicism, which basically leaves justice, honesty and sincerity aside and is replaced by individual interests, has been expressed as a behavior exhibited by individuals who find flaws, find it difficult to like or do not like at all, and have a heavy critical side (Erdost et al., 2007, p. 514).

The concept of cynicism, which initially belonged to philosophy and was introduced to literature in later periods, attracted the attention of social sciences researchers towards the middle of the 20th century and began to be addressed by different disciplines. These researchers have addressed

many issues such as occupational (job) cynicism, employee cynicism, organizational cynicism, organizational change cynicism (Helm, 2004, p. 345). However, when the literature on consumer behavior is examined, it is noteworthy that such a deep-rooted concept has not been addressed until the 21st century. In a 2004 study conducted by Helm based on consumer interviews, consumers' consumption relationships were evaluated and individuals with low levels of dispositional trust were characterized as "cynical consumers" and this behavior of consumers took its place in the literature as "consumer cynicism". As a matter of fact, Helm (2006, p.3) stated that consumers may have negative emotions, that these negative emotional states are compatible with the basic formation of consumer cynicism, and that consumers may show cynicism specific to consumers.

After Helm's study, various studies on consumer cynicism and various definitions have been made within the framework of these studies. For example, Chylinski and Chu (2010, p.798-799) emphasize that consumer cynicism, as an outcome of feelings of suspicion, distrust and defensiveness, reveals the process of emotional, cognitive and behavioral reactions that cause alienation of individuals. Laczniak et al. (2001, p.69) point out that consumer cynicism reflects a belief that companies are far from empty promises and honesty, and that consumers often feel angry in their relationships with companies, and therefore react to the company by experiencing dissatisfaction and boycott the companies they do not like and warn other consumers not to shop from these companies. Similarly, Van Dolen et al. (2012, p.308) argued that an individual with a negative attitude, being in a structure that argues that businesses are dishonest and selfish, reflects consumer cynicism. Therefore, consumer cynicism is stated as a form of consumer resistance and social criticism against the normalized subjectivity presented to consumers by marketing firms (Mikkonen et al., 2011: 101).

Method

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of the level of quality perception of individuals who purchase services from hospitality businesses on consumer cynicism. Another aim of the study is to reveal the relationship between both variables.

Sampling Process

The main mass of the research consists of individuals living in Istanbul who have purchased hospitality services in the last year. However, “due to time and cost constraints, sampling was used and it was determined that the sample size was 384 with 95% reliability and 5% sampling error” (Yazıcıoğlu & Erdoğan, 2004). A questionnaire survey was conducted using snowball sampling method to collect the data. Data were collected through face-to-face and online surveys. The questionnaires were applied on a voluntary basis to 400 individuals who lived in Istanbul between 01.12.2023 and 01.02.2024 and purchased hospitality services in the last year.

Data Collection Method and Tool

The data required for the research were collected by applying the questionnaire method. The questionnaire prepared for the research consists of three parts. The first section includes the scale developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1991), which consists of 22 items and 5 dimensions. The second section includes the scale developed by Helm et al. (2015), which consists of 8 items and one dimension. In the third section, 5 questions measuring demographic characteristics were included.

Research Model and Hypotheses

Figure 1: Research Model



The hypotheses developed in line with the model and purpose of the research are as follows:

H1: Perceived service quality levels of individuals living in Istanbul and who have purchased hospitality services in the last year have an effect on the level of consumer cynicism.

H2: There is a significant relationship between the perceived service quality levels of individuals who live in Istanbul and have purchased hospitality services in the last year and the level of consumer cynicism.

Methods Used

The data obtained in the study were analyzed using “SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) for Windows 25.0 program”. Compliance with the normal distribution in the data was examined with Q-Q Plot drawing. If the skewness and kurtosis values are between “ ± 1.96 , the data are normally distributed” (Can, 2022, p.87). Compliance with normal distribution was checked with normality tests and kurtosis and skewness values. Accordingly, it was determined that the data met the assumption of normal distribution. The reliability of the scales used in the study was calculated with Cronbach Alpha. In addition, explanatory factor analysis was conducted for the scales. Regression analysis was conducted to determine the effect of perceived service quality level of individuals living in Istanbul and purchasing hospitality services in the last year on consumer cynicism. In addition, Pearson Correlation analysis was conducted to reveal the relationship between both variables.

Data Analysis and Findings of the Study

Reliability Analysis

The Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale is evaluated as “if $0.00 \leq \alpha < 0.40$ the scale is not reliable, if $0.40 \leq \alpha < 0.60$ the scale is low reliable, if $0.60 \leq \alpha < 0.80$ the scale is highly reliable and if $0.80 \leq \alpha < 1.00$ the scale is highly reliable” (Can, 2022, p. 396; Arslan and Bakır, 2023, p.38).

Table 2 shows the reliability analysis of the scales used in the study.

Table 2: Results of Reliability Analysis

Factor Name	Cronbach’s Alpha	Item Number
Perceived Service Quality	,891	22
Physical elements	,814	4
Reliability	,851	5
Ease	,807	4
Assurance	,901	4
Empathy	,897	5
Consumer Cynicism	,857	8

According to the reliability analysis applied to the scale used in the research, the Cronbach’s Alpha (α) value of the social burnout scale was determined as 0.891 for the perceived service quality scale and .857 for the consumer cynicism scale. According to the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient ranges in the literature, values of 0.80 and above are considered highly reliable (Demirkol & Tancı Yıldırım, 2018, p.35; Tanrıkuu & Bakır, 2021, p.649; Arslan & Bakır, 2022, p.26; Tanrıkuu, 2022, p.12; Arslan et al., 2022, p.880; Bakır et al., 2024, p. 108; Tancı Yıldırım & Türk, 2024, p. 104; Tancı Yıldırım, 2024, p. 312–313). The obtained result showed that both scales used in the study were highly reliable.

Factor Analysis

The KMO value (0.892), which tests the suitability of the data set measuring service quality perception for factor analysis, is an appropriate and excellent value for factor analysis. Since Bartlett’s test, which serves the same purpose, has a

significance level = 0.00 and meets the condition of $p < 0.05$, it was decided that the data were suitable for factor analysis. As a result of the factor analysis applied to measure the perception of service quality, it is seen that the statements in the scale used are grouped under five dimensions. These are physical aspects, reliability, enthusiasm, assurance and empathy, respectively. The total variance explained was determined as 73.095%.

Table 3: Factor Analysis Results Regarding the Variables for Measuring the Level of Perceived Service Quality

Scale Subscales	Items	Load Values	Variance Explained (%)
Physical Elements	PE 1	,719	25,330
	PE 2	,724	
	PE 3	,657	
	PE 4	,674	
	R 1	,773	
Reliability	R 2	,792	12,891
	R 3	,701	
	R 4	,805	
	R 5	,812	
Ease	E 1	,754	12,663
	E 2	,655	
	E 3	,689	
	E 4	,777	
Assurance	A 1	,771	11,672
	A 2	,726	
	A 3	,789	
	A 4	,710	
Empathy	E1	,778	10,539
	E2	,756	
	E3	,670	
	E4	,646	
	E5	,706	

KMO: ,892 Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (p): 0.00 Total Explained Variance (%): 73,095

The KMO value (0,877), which tests the suitability of the data set measuring the level of consumer cynicism for factor

analysis, is an appropriate and perfect value for factor analysis. Since the Bartlett’s test significance level = 0.00 and the condition of $p < 0.05$ was met, it was decided that the data were suitable for factor analysis. As a result of the factor analysis applied to measure the level of consumer cynicism, it is seen that the statements in the scale used are gathered under a single dimension. The total variance explained was determined as 71.697%.

Table 4: Factor Analysis Results Regarding the Variables for Measuring the Level of Consumer Cynicism

Scale Subscales	Items	Load Values	Variance Explained (%)
Consumer Cynicism	CC 1	,771	71,697
	CC 2	,678	
	CC 3	,666	
	CC 4	,721	
	CC 5	,622	
	CC 6	,739	
	CC 7	,801	
	CC 8	,683	

KMO: ,877 Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity (p): 0,00 Total Explained Variance (%):71,697

Demographic Findings

The demographic distribution of the women who participated in the study is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Distribution of participants according to demographic characteristics

Gender	N	%
Female	216	54,0
Male	184	46,0
Total	400	100
Marital Status	N	%
Married	156	39,0
Singel	244	61,0
Total	400	100
Age	N	%

18-28	101	25,25
29-38	109	27,25
39-48	87	21,75
49-58	53	13,25
59 and above	50	12,5
Total	400	100
Income	N	%
Less than 20000 TL	119	29,75
20001-30000 TL	99	24,75
30001-40000 TL	81	20,25
40001-50000 TL	56	14,0
50001 TL and above	45	11,25
Total	400	100
Education	N	%
High school and below	71	17,75
Associate's degree	94	23,5
Bachelor's degree	110	27,5
Undergraduate		
Graduate degree	125	31,25
Total	400	100

Testing the Hypotheses

H₁: Perceived service quality levels of individuals living in Istanbul and who have purchased hospitality services in the last year have an effect on consumer cynicism.

Table 6: Regression Analysis Result to Determine the Effect of Perceived Service Quality on Consumer Cynicism

Dependent Variable:		Non-Standard Coefficients		Standard Coefficients	
Consumer Cynicism		B	Std. Error	Beta	T
	(Constant)	-,114	,039		-2,917
	Perceived Service Quality	-,1,016	,019	,939	-14,591

R:0,639 R2:0,582 Adjusted R2:0,571 F:298,171 p:0,000

As a result of the regression analysis performed to determine how the perceived service quality variable, which is thought to have an effect on consumer cynicism, affects consumer cynicism, it was revealed that there is a significant relationship between both variables ($R=0.639$, $R^2=0.582$) ($F=298.171$, $p=.000<.05$). Perceived service quality explains 58.2% of the change in consumer cynicism and considering the significance tests of the regression coefficient, it is concluded that the perceived service quality variable has a significant effect on the consumer cynicism variable ($p=.000<.05$, $T=-14,591$). H1 hypothesis was supported.

H₂: There is a significant relationship between perceived service quality levels and consumer cynicism levels of individuals who live in Istanbul and have purchased hospitality services in the last year.

Table 7: Pearson Correlation Analysis Result to Determine the Relationship between Perceived Service Quality and Consumer Cynicism

		Perceived Service Quality	Consumer Cynicism
Perceived Service Quality	Pearson Correlation	1	-,690**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
	N	400	400
Consumer Cynicism	Pearson Correlation	-,690**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
	N	400	400
**. Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between perceived service quality levels and consumer cynicism levels of individuals living in Istanbul and who have purchased hospitality services in the last year. The

correlation coefficient takes values between -1 and +1 and the relationship is interpreted according to these values. The correlation coefficient (r/ρ) can be interpreted as “a very weak relationship between 0.00-0.25, a weak relationship between 0.26-0.49, a moderate relationship between 0.50-0.69, a strong relationship between 0.70-0.89 and a very strong relationship between 0.90-1.00” (Sungur, 2010, p.115-116). The sig. (p) value obtained as a result of the Pearson Correlation analysis is .000. Since the value of $p=.000$ is less than .05, it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between these two variables. Since the correlation coefficient value between perceived service quality and consumer cynicism level is $r=-.690$, it is concluded that there is a negative and moderate relationship between them. In other words, as the level of perceived service quality increases, the level of consumer cynicism decreases. H2 hypothesis is supported.

CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aims to determine the effect of the level of quality perception of individuals who purchase services from hospitality businesses on consumer cynicism. In addition, another aim of the study is to reveal the relationship between both variables.

The main mass of the study consists of individuals living in Istanbul who have purchased hospitality services in the last year. Due to ethical reasons such as time, cost and obsolescence of the data, sampling was used. Data were collected by snowball sampling method and survey technique. Face-to-face and online questionnaires were administered to 400 individuals on a voluntary basis.

Normality tests were conducted to determine the normality of the distribution of the data collected in the study. The kurtosis and skewness values were used to check whether the data were normally distributed. When the data were evaluated, it was concluded that the data were normally distributed for both variables. The reliability of the scales used in the study was

evaluated by calculating Cronbach Alpha. When the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients of both scales were evaluated, it was determined that they were highly reliable. In addition, explanatory factor analysis was conducted for the scales. As a result of the analysis, it is seen that the perceived service quality scale expressions are grouped under five dimensions and the consumer cynicism scale expressions are grouped under one factor.

Regression analysis was conducted to determine the effect of perceived service quality levels of individuals living in Istanbul and who have purchased hospitality services in the last year on the level of consumer cynicism. As a result of the regression analysis, it was concluded that perceived service quality has a significant effect on consumer cynicism.

A regression analysis was conducted to determine the effect of perceived service quality levels on consumer cynicism among individuals living in Istanbul who had purchased hospitality businesses in the past year. The regression analysis concluded that perceived service quality had a significant effect on consumer cynicism.

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to reveal the relationship between perceived service quality levels and consumer cynicism levels of individuals living in Istanbul and who have purchased hospitality services in the last year. As a result of the analysis, it was concluded that there is a negative and moderate relationship between perceived service quality level and consumer cynicism level. In other words, as the perceived service quality increases, the level of consumer cynicism decreases.

The limitations of the study are the use of snowball sampling method as one of the sampling methods and the survey technique as the primary data collection method. Another limitation is that the study was conducted with hospitality consumers who are thought to have high consumer cynicism. It is important to repeat future studies with different

sample groups in different sectors in order to generalize the results of this study. In addition, perceived service quality and consumer cynicism were examined together in this study. It is also important to reveal the relationship between both concepts and different concepts in future studies.

As a result of the literature search, the fact that there is no study examining the effect of perceived service quality on consumer cynicism in both national and international literature reveals the originality of the study.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations have been developed:

- ✓ Hospitality businesses can reduce consumer cynicism by improving service quality. In this context, improvements in reliability, empathy, responsiveness, physical elements, and safety are important.
- ✓ It is recommended that customer feedback be collected regularly and evaluated not only with a focus on complaint resolution but also with a proactive service development approach.
- ✓ Employees' direct interactions with customers play a critical role in reducing consumer cynicism. Therefore, employees' communication skills, service quality awareness, and motivation should be increased.
- ✓ The principle of transparency should be maintained in service delivery on digital platforms, exaggerated promises should be avoided, and realistic information should be provided to customers.
- ✓ Considering the impact of perceived service quality on customer loyalty and brand image, businesses should prioritize investing in quality in their strategic planning.
- ✓ It should not be forgotten that increasing consumer cynicism can lead to customer loss and negative word-of-mouth communication. Therefore, managers should view sustainably improving service quality as a strategic necessity.

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