

T.R.
ISTANBUL SABAHATTIN ZAIM UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE EDUCATION INSTITUTE
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION



**THE ANALYSIS OF E-COMMERCE STRATEGY IN THE
BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT AND THE IMPACT ON
CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR**

MA THESIS

Obaddah SHAKAKI

Istanbul
January-2024

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THESIS APPROVAL

This study has been approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for MA Degree
in Business Administration

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DECLARATION OF SCIENTIFIC ETHICS AND ORIGINALITY

I hereby certify that this MA thesis entitled "The Analysis Of E-Commerce Strategy In The Business Environment And The Impact On Consumer Buying Behavior" is my own work and that I have acted in accordance with the principles of scientific ethics and academic rules in the preparation of this thesis. I have collected and used all the information and data according to the scientific ethics and thesis writing guidelines of Sabahattin Zaim University. I have fully cited all direct and indirect quotations and all sources I have used in this thesis, both in the text and in the bibliography.



Obaddah SHAKAKI

Istanbul, January-2024

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ABSTRACT

THE ANALYSIS OF E-COMMERCE STRATEGY IN THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT AND THE IMPACT ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR

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The internet revolution has birthed and stimulated an explosive growth in e-commerce changing the way customer search and shop for goods and services. There are several positive sides to online shopping, including convenience, larger assortment of products and most of all lower services. This has resulted in many customers preferring online shopping to in store physical shopping. Although the online shopping industry is maturing, there are still segments with potential. Thus far, some segments of consumers are reluctant to join the online shopping wagon. This hesitation could be ascribed to factors such as security, and privacy. For online businesses to alleviate these bottlenecks and rope in these potential online customers, a detailed understanding of the factors that influence online shopping behavior will be required.

The purpose of this research is to understand how e-commerce strategies, including social media campaigns and e-paper advertisements impact the online buying behavior of expatriates living in Istanbul. Internet based questionnaire was used to gather data focusing on information regarding the sources from which consumers obtain information about online shopping including but not limited to promotions, security, delivery speed, pricing, user-friendliness, and other price and nonprice factors.

It was found that, word of mouth and e-paper advertisement significantly impact on consumer online buying behavior whiles social media and television advertisement were less successful in influencing consumer buying behaviors. In line with these findings, it is recommended that E-commerce companies employ targeted marketing

approach by actively engaging in direct customer outreach in as intimated by significance of the word of mouth recommendations.

The result of this study is significant and provides valuable insights into Istanbul based and more broadly Turkiye based expatriates' online shopping behavior.

By understanding the key factors that influence online shopping behavior of this market segment, businesses can better cater to their customers' needs and preferences. Ultimately, this can lead to increased sales and customer satisfaction, helping businesses to thrive in the competitive e-commerce landscape.

Keywords: B2C e-commerce, Consumer behavior, the Internet.



ÖZET

İŞ ORTAMINDA E-TİCARET STRATEJİSİNİN ANALİZİ VE TÜKETİCİ SATIN ALMA DAVRANIŞINA ETKİSİ

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İnternet devrimi, müşterilerin mal ve hizmet arama ve alışveriş yapma şeklini değiştirerek e-ticarette patlayıcı bir büyümeyi doğurdu ve teşvik etti. Online alışverişin kolaylık, daha geniş ürün yelpazesi ve en önemlisi daha düşük hizmetler gibi birçok olumlu yanı vardır. Bu da birçok müşterinin online alışverişini mağazadan fiziksel alışverişe tercih etmesine yol açmıştır. Online alışveriş sektörü olgunlaşmakta olsa da, hala potansiyeli olan segmentler bulunmaktadır. Şimdiye kadar, tüketicilerin bazı kesimleri online alışveriş vagonuna katılma konusunda isteksiz davranmıştır. Bu tereddüt, güvenlik ve gizlilik gibi faktörlere bağlanabilir. Online işletmelerin bu darboğazları hafifletmesi ve bu potansiyel online müşterileri çekebilmesi için online alışveriş davranışını etkileyen faktörlerin detaylı bir şekilde anlaşılması gerekecektir.

Bu araştırmanın amacı, sosyal medya kampanyaları ve e-gazete reklamları da dahil olmak üzere e-ticaret stratejilerinin İstanbul'da yaşayan gurbetçilerin çevrimiçi satın alma davranışlarını nasıl etkilediğini anlamaktır. İnternet tabanlı anket, promosyonlar, güvenlik, teslimat hızı, fiyatlandırma, kullanıcı dostu olma ve diğer fiyat ve fiyat dışı faktörler dahil ancak bunlarla sınırlı olmamak üzere tüketicilerin çevrimiçi alışveriş hakkında bilgi edindikleri kaynaklara ilişkin bilgilere odaklanan verileri toplamak için kullanılmıştır.

Ağızdan ağıza iletişim ve e-gazete reklamlarının tüketicilerin online satın alma davranışlarını önemli ölçüde etkilediği, sosyal medya ve televizyon reklamlarının ise tüketicilerin satın alma davranışlarını etkilemede daha az başarılı olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Bu çalışmanın bulgularına dayanarak, E-ticaret şirketlerinin ağızdan ağıza pazarlamanın etkisi doğrultusunda doğrudan müşteri erişimine aktif olarak katılarak hedefli pazarlama yaklaşımını kullanmaları önerilmektedir.

Bu alıřmanın sonucu nemlidir ve İstanbul'da ve daha geniř anlamda Trkiye'de yařayan gurbetilerin online alıřveriř davranıřları hakkında deęerli bilgiler sunmaktadır.

İřletmeler, bu pazar segmentinin online alıřveriř davranıřını etkileyen temel faktrleri anlayarak mřterilerinin ihtiya ve tercihlerini daha iyi karřılayabilir. Nihayetinde bu, satıřların ve mřteri memnuniyetinin artmasını saęlayarak iřletmelerin rekabeti e-ticaret ortamında bařarılı olmalarına yardımcı olabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: B2C e-ticaret, Tketicici davranıřı, İnternet.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

THESIS APPROVAL	i
DECLARATION OF SCIENTIFIC ETHICS AND ORIGINALITY	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ÖZET	vi
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
CHAPTER I	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Problem Statement	3
1.3 Research Objectives and Research Questions.....	4
1.4 Significance of the Study	5
1.5 Limitations of the Study.....	5
1.6 Research Hypotheses	6
1.7 Thesis Structure.....	6
CHAPTER II	7
LITERATURE REVIEW	7
2.0 Introduction	7
2.1 The Concept of Marketing	7
2.2 Marketers' Uncontrollable Factors	9
2.3 Mediums of Consumer Interaction	13
2.4 The Internet as a Marketing Channel and Consumer Trust	14
2.5 Products Sellable Through the Internet.....	17
2.6E-Commerce strategy: Integrated Marketing, Performance and Productivity.....	19
2.9 Consumer Buying Behavior in Business	21
2.10 Importance of Consumer Buying Behavior	22
2.11 Consumer Behavior in the Context of E-Commerce	23
2.12 Factors Influencing B2B and B2C Ecommerce Performance.....	24
2.13 The Effect of COVID-19 on E-Commerce and Consumer Behavior	25
2.14 Research Gaps and Future Directions	26
CHAPTER III	27
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	27

3.1 Research Design.....	27
3.2 Population	28
3.3 Sampling Method	29
3.4 Snowball Sampling Method	29
3.5 Questionnaire Design and Pre-Testing.....	31
3.6 Ethical Considerations	31
3.7 Definition of Variables.....	32
3.8 Data Analysis Techniques and Methods	33
CHAPTER IV.....	34
RESULTS AND DISSCUSION	34
4.1 Socio-Economic Traits.....	34
4.2 General Information on E-commerce.....	35
4.2.1 Sources of Inspiration for Catching Up with Life Trends	35
4.2.2. Important Factors to Consumers While Shopping.....	36
4.2.3 E-Commerce Attraction Factors	37
4.2.4 Information Type Customers Search for on E-Commerce Sites	38
4.3 Factors that Influence Consumer Behavior under E-Commerce	38
4.4 Results of Hypothesis Testing.....	39
4.4.1 Summary of Hypotheses Testing	41
CHAPTER V	43
CONCLUDING REMARKS	43
5.1 Findings.....	43
5.2 Conclusion and Discussion	44
5.3. Recommendations	45
BIBLIOGRAPHY	47
APPENDIX A:.....	59
QUESTIONNAIRES	59
CURRICULUM VITAE.....	63

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: Product Classification	18
Table 4. 1: Economic And Cultural Traits Of The Participants.....	35
Table 4.2: Sources Of Inspiration For Catching Up With Life Trends.....	36
Table 4.3: Important Factors To Consumers While Shopping	37
Table 4.4: Analysis Of Coefficients.....	40
Table 4.5: Hypotheses' Outcome	41
Table 4.6: Model Summary.....	41
Table 4.7: ANOVA	42



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Determined important aspects	12
Figure 2.2: Factors influencing high-income and developing economies (EE).....	12
Figure 2.3: Product purchasing behavior conceptual framework	12
Figure 2.4: An Integrative Model of Internet Shopping Consumer Trust.....	16
Figure 3.1: The variables used in the study.....	33
Figure 4.1: Sources of Inspiration for Catching Up with Life Trends	36
Figure 4.2: Important Factors to Consumers While Shopping	37
Figure 4.3: E-Commerce Attraction Factors.....	38
Figure 4.4: Information Type Customers Search for on E-Commerce Sites	38
Figure 4.5: Factors that Influence Consumer Behavior Under E-Commerce.....	39

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In the past few decades, electronic gadgets like laptops, smartphones, and tablets have become household necessities and have transformed our everyday lives. The widespread use of electronic gadgets along with the rapid expansion of internet infrastructure and social networking sites have resulted in an increasing amount of time spent online. In response to the increased online time, e-commerce has emerged as an alternative to traditional firms, to take advantage of and has offered businesses and consumers a range of new opportunities and of course challenges. E-commerce involves several activities, including buying and selling goods, and transmitting money or data through the internet.

E-commerce has become ubiquitous in the world of retail and has quickly spread among organizations and consumers alike, with businesses reaching their clients more swiftly and easily. Today, every e-commerce company is within reach of every consumer affording them the opportunity to be able to sell to clients all over the world. Thus far, e-commerce seems to be a success for both businesses and consumers. Clients can now have access to a wider range of products, able to make orders 24/7 without leaving their homes with even expansive customer care and support. The popularity of online marketplaces and the increasing accessibility of technology have increased consumers' options. This has profoundly impacted consumer buying behaviors, with many shoppers opting for online marketplaces instead of physical stores.

Over the past decade, Turkiye's e-commerce sector has grown substantially. It has become increasingly appealing for businesses seeking to expand (Yasar, 2020). This appeal stems from the over 68 million internet users who represent over 80% of the population as of 2021 (DataReportal, 2021). Further drivers of growth of e-commerce in Turkiye include high smartphone use, a high and growing youth population, rapid urbanization (Coskun & Ozkan, 2015) and supportive socio-cultural dynamics like high literacy and social media usage rate (EY, 2020). High digital connectivity coupled

with an increasing middle class and increasing disposable income has propelled the rapid growth in e-commerce in Turkiye. Turkish Business-To-Consumer (B2C) e-commerce spending hit £7.2 billion in 2018, ranking third in the Middle East region (Deloitte, 2019). Local companies like Hepsiburada, N11, and Gittigidiyor dominate the online retail space with a market share of about 60%. These companies are however facing increasing competition from international players like Amazon (EY, 2020). Despite challenges relating to logistics, digital infrastructure, skills gap, regulation and consumer trust (Arslan & Altuna, 2015), Statista, (2021) forecast that Turkish B2C e-commerce will reach £15 billion by 2025.

According to Kotler and Keller (2012), the first consideration when making a purchase is the product's price and whether that price is reasonable given the product's quality. Scarpi et al. (2014) and Bauboniene et al. (2015) also content that the price is a significant factor influencing consumers' buying decisions. Cheung, et al., (2003) distinguished between customer characteristics and environmental influences.

To understand the factors influencing online purchasing decisions will require a systematic study. Essential demographic variables like age, and gender, have been identified as crucial factors in determining individuals' motivations for engaging in online shopping.

According to Kottler and Keller (2016), the decision to make a purchase plays a vital role in consumer behavioral models. They further emphasized that consumer purchase behavior is affected by multitudes of factors, including the decision-making process, social influences, and demographic characteristics (Kottler & Keller, 2012). In order to enhance marketing effectiveness, researchers have focused on studying the decision-making process of online buyers and how it can be impacted by various factors.

The phenomenal advancement of science and technology, coupled with the convenience, variety, and accessibility offered by online shopping, has made it an appealing choice for consumers across different age groups. The 2019 Corona virus global pandemic increased the pace and has prompted a somewhat forceful shift towards digital commerce. These evolution of consumer preferences has attracted critical investigation in line with the increasing interest of businesses in understanding

how to attract and maintain consumers on their online stores and the factors that shape their buying behaviour.

1.2 Problem Statement

The rapid growth in internet connectivity, and smart phone penetration along with the pervasive growth of e-commerce has revolutionized the dynamics between businesses and consumers (Al-Qeisi et al., 2014). As online shopping become convenient and accessible, businesses are incorporating diverse e-commerce strategies to stay competitive in the digital marketplace (Kumar & Reinartz, 2016). In line with this, interest in the use of social media influencers and models to increase customer engagement has been on the rise. However, the extent to which these strategies influence consumer purchasing behavior has not been examined.

Despite the increasing importance of e-commerce, studies investigating e-commerce in general and their impact on consumer purchasing behavior is scanty (Al-Qeisi et al., 2014; Kumar & Reinartz, 2016). The growth in importance of e-commerce calls for the assessments of the impact of the various e-commerce strategies in attaining business objectives and their influence on the decision-making processes of consumers. Moreover, it is necessary to identify the factors that inspire consumers to engage in online purchases and how businesses can employ this knowledge to formulate successful e-commerce strategies (Chen & Barnes, 2007).

The COVID-19 pandemic and its associated lockdowns further restricted consumers' ability to visit physical stores thereby forcing them to resort to online shopping to circumvent the restrictions on physical contacts (Dwivedi et al., 2020). With the increased importance of online sales, it has become imperative for companies to examine the ramifications of e-commerce strategies on consumer buying behavior as well as to explore the prospects of e-commerce in the post-pandemic business landscape.

Despite the convenience and accessibility that online shopping offers, retailers still face significant challenges in comprehending and meeting customer needs. Numerous studies have investigated various facets of e-commerce and consumer behavior; however, there remains a gap in the existing literature regarding the impact of strategies on consumer purchasing behavior within the present business environment (Al-Qeisi et al., 2014; Kumar & Reinartz, 2016). The purpose of this study is to analyze

the influence of e-commerce strategies on consumer behavior placing particular emphasis on comprehending the driving forces behind consumer buying behavior. This will enable retailers and businesses to acquire a deeper understanding and respond effectively to these factors, thereby formulating efficient e-commerce strategies to accomplish their objectives in the digital marketplace and enhance the overall online shopping experience.

1.3 Research Objectives and Research Questions

E-commerce has become a significant player in the progress and advancement of businesses competitiveness. Several factors, including website security, delivery and tracking, customer satisfaction, and user-friendliness, influence the perceptions and responses of consumers during online purchases. The purpose of this research is to examine the influencing factors of electronic commerce. This study has specific objectives, which are:

- To analyze the effects of social media campaigns on consumers' purchasing behavior.
- To investigate the influence of television advertisements on customers' purchasing decisions.
- To examine the effect of e-paper advertisements on customers' purchasing behavior.
- To study the effect of word-of-mouth recommendations and customers' purchasing habits.

The research focuses on the impact of four prominent marketing strategies on consumers' buying behavior. These strategies are television commercials, social media advertisements, word-of-mouth recommendations, and e-paper advertising. The research questions for which answers are sought are as follows:

- a) To what extent does social media campaigns influence customers' purchasing habits?
- b) To what extent does TV adverts impact on customers' purchasing behavior?
- c) To what extent does e-paper advertising affect customers' purchase habits?
- d) To what extent does word of mouth recommendations influence customer purchase decisions?

The study seeks to answer these questions by employing a Likert style questionnaire to collect data on their purchasing habits and attitudes towards the different advertising mediums. To identify trends and patterns, the survey data will be analyzed using statistical methods to establish the causal/correlational relationship between the advertising mediums and consumer purchasing habits thus, providing insights into the effectiveness of each advertising medium.

This will be beneficial for businesses aiming to get the maximum returns on their investments on advertising /marketing.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study's findings have practical relevance and significance for organizations seeking to initiate and/or evaluate their e-commerce strategies to effectively draw and hold customers in marketplace. E-commerce businesses may be able to improve their online sales performance and stay competitive.

Also, this study contributes to the body of knowledge on e-commerce and consumer behavior by contributing to the closure of the gap in existing literature. It offers a thorough examination of e-commerce strategies and how they affect consumer purchasing decisions. This study could also serve as the foundation of further research.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

In interpreting the results of this study, cognizance should be taken of the following. First, the generalizability of the results may be limited since the sample only includes foreigners, specifically Arab and Middle Eastern expatriates residing in Istanbul province. Thus, the findings may not be applicable to other residents and/or immigrants from other regions, reducing the external validity of the study.

Another limitation is associated with the data collection process. The data was gathered during the third wave of COVID-19 lockdowns in Turkiye. The participants' responses may have been influenced by pandemic-related restrictions and changes, impacting their income levels and attitudes toward online shopping. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data regarding how e-commerce strategies influence purchasing behavior introduces the possibility of social desirability bias, potentially affecting the reliability of the results.

1.6 Research Hypotheses

For this research, a quantitative methodology has been employed to examine the hypotheses. A Likert scale questionnaire was used to gather data from respondents. Multiple regression analysis was conducted on the gathered data to evaluate the study's hypotheses. The formulated hypotheses for this study are as follows:

H₁: Social media campaigns significantly affect consumer buying behavior.

H₂: Television Commercials (TVCs) significantly affect consumer buying behavior.

H₃: E-paper advertising significantly affects consumers buying behavior.

H₄: Word of mouth recommendations have a significant impact on consumer buying behavior.

1.7 Thesis Structure

This thesis is systematically and chronologically structured and consists of five chapters. The chapters are organized as follows:

CHAPTER 1: This chapter provides the background and problem statement of the study, emphasizing its significance and addressing its limitations.

CHAPTER 2: The second chapter comprehensively reviews existing theoretical and empirical studies related to the topic.

CHAPTER 3: The chapter details the research methodology explaining the data collection and statistical procedures used.

CHAPTER 4: This chapter presents the study results. It provides a comprehensive explanation of the test results obtained from all the descriptive and statistical methods used in the study.

CHAPTER 5: This chapter summarizes the study's findings, draw conclusions and offer some recommendations.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter extensively reviews the literature on consumer purchasing behavior and e-commerce strategies. It examines the concept of marketing, the factors that a marketer can and cannot control and the merits of the various marketing strategies in the online commerce space.

2.1 The Concept of Marketing

Marketing is a generic term used to imply the set of activities aimed at communicating, and persuading consumers to purchase a product or a service. Marketing is an expensive and time-consuming endeavor (Groeger & Buttle, 2014) and ought to be done right to yield the expected results. It can be a time-consuming endeavor, demanding substantial dedication to accomplish marketing goals.

The marketing mix is a crucial tool in the marketer's arsenal. Borden (1965) coined the term to comprise 12 elements. These, according to Goi, (2009), are product planning, pricing, branding, distribution channels, personal selling, advertising, promotions, packaging, display, servicing, physical handling, and fact finding and analysis. However, these elements have been merged into what is now commonly known by the acronym 4Ps of Promotion, price, place, and product (Kotler, 2005).

The Product in the 4Ps seeks to emphasize the importance of knowing the product, its qualities and usefulness in undertaking a successful marketing campaign. The price underlies the law of demand from economics which emphasize the linearity in the demand for a product and its prices. Meaning a marketing campaign may still fail if the price is not right for the targeted consumer group. Place underlies the importance of the process of intermediation. That is, the entire chain from the production of a commodity to its successful delivery and/or accessibility to the target consumer group. The last but certainly not the least is promotion which emphasize the impact the advertising and marketing medium and strategies has on achieving the marketing goal.

The 4Ps framework has faced criticism for its production-oriented approach (Goi, 2009), leading to the inclusion of additional Ps to accommodate non-production

industries. Booms and Bitner (1981) proposed an expanded 7P model for service marketing by introducing people, physical evidence, and process as supplementary factors. People encompass all the individuals involved in the chain of delivery of the service while processes and physical evidence pertain to the procedures, mechanisms, and setting in which the service is provided.

Despite being widely discussed in academic literature for over four decades, it is crucial to emphasize that the marketing mix is not a theory in the scientific sense of the term. Rather, it is a conceptual framework that identifies the tools available to marketing managers in configuring their offerings to meet consumer needs (Londhe, 2014).

The increasing importance of e-commerce has resulted in the factors, place, and physical evidence, in the marketing mix to be closely associated with the characteristics of the marketing medium. Effective marketing strategies now necessitate providing comprehensive product information to ensure customers have a thorough understanding of their purchases. This aids in building brand trust and reduces the risk associated with online purchases (Wang & Chang, 2013; Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983; Kopalle & Lehmann, 2006). Also, price is a key factor considered by buyers in choosing what to and not to buy (Hiransomboon, 2012).

Customer centric marketing emphasize building relationship with customers and can often be thought to maximize marketing impact. Customer centric marketing focus on informing customers about products, supporting them throughout the purchasing process and perhaps even following up to offer post sales services. Recent studies suggest increasing importance of ethics in customer receptiveness with corporate social responsibility and sustainability becoming important factors in consumer decision-making. Firms that can demonstrate a commitment to these values are likely to be more persuasive in attracting and retaining customers (Mohr, Webb, & Harris, 2001; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001; Dangelico & Pujari, 2010).

The widespread use of social media has amplified the reach of word-of-mouth marketing, which has long been recognized as one of the oldest forms of information sharing. Word-of-mouth marketing involves the verbal or electronic transfer of non-commercial information from one person to another about a service, a product or brand (Huete-Alcocer, 2017). It is a highly effective marketing tool that requires minimal

resources. Chen and Yuan (2020) emphasize the importance of word-of-mouth marketing noting that consumers heavily rely on recommendations and opinions from their trusted friends and family members.

In today's globalized and interconnected world, the influence of word-of-mouth recommendations extends beyond personal networks. A solitary recommendation from any part of the globe can considerably influence consumers' consumption behavior and attitudes (Zhang et al., 2019). This influence can be far reaching. As a result, numerous marketers, including multinational corporations and small to medium-sized enterprises, give prominence to word-of-mouth marketing in marketing tool kit.

In the past, relying on word-of-mouth marketing posed challenges for marketers. However, the emergence of social media technologies has transformed the scene and made it less daunting, allowing marketers to devise effective word-of-mouth marketing strategies that influence customer attitudes and behaviors (Groeger & Buttle, 2014). According to Hernández-Méndez et al. (2015), approximately 90% of individuals consider recommendations from friends and family about a brand to be valuable and trustworthy.

Recent surveys have indicated that 88% of individuals rely on social media and search engines for making shopping decisions. Interestingly, Hernández-Méndez et al. (2015) found no significant difference in trust levels between online reviews and recommendations from close connections. Consumers in the UK exhibit an equal willingness to place trust in online reviews. Major e-commerce platforms like Amazon, eBay, and AliExpress heavily depend on customer reviews to grow their customer base and boost sales and profits (Hidayanto et al., 2017). As a result, word-of-mouth marketing plays a pivotal role in the success of these e-commerce giants.

2.2 Marketers' Uncontrollable Factors

Consumer behavior is influenced by a range of factors that a marketer cannot control, including demographics, commodities, supply-related factors, social, economic, cultural, personal, consumer psychographics and psychological factors (Harrell & Frazier, 1999; Czinkota & Kotabe; 2001; Solomon & Stuart, 2003). These factors and their interplay are very instrumental in determining consumer behavior.

For instance, age, gender, educational background, and income level have all been found to impact online purchasing behavior (Kotler, 2005). Other important characteristics that influence purchasing behavior include financial, family, and social position, and employment. Sumarwan, (2003) notes that social interactions among customers can significantly impact their buying decisions while Schiffman and Kanuk, (2000) and Kotler, (2005) contend that socio-cultural factors, such as family, informal and quasi relations, socioeconomic class, culture, and sub-culture, are important determinants of consumer purchasing patterns.

Undertaking a purchase online requires personal, digital, and social know how and characteristics (Chen, Lu, & Wang, 2017). This social knowledge is obtained from various sources, such as friends, evaluations from other consumers, and debates on Internet forums (Hajli, 2015). To better understand and influence consumer behavior, marketers need to be aware of the dynamic interplay of these various factors and their impact on the consumer's decision-making process.

Recently, there has been an increasing interest in ethical and sustainable production with these considerations increasingly becoming key determining factors in what consumers choose to buy. Consumers now place increasing importance on the ethical and social responsibility practices of the companies they engage with (Kim, Han, & Yoon, 2018) and are increasingly prioritizing eco-friendly and environmentally sustainable products and brands (Zhang & Hu, 2021).

Demographic and socio-economic factors including age, gender, income, education, and geographic location, significantly influence consumer behavior (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Younger consumers tend to lean towards technology related products, while older consumers show a preference for health-related products. Also, income and education levels play a significant role, with higher-income individuals more inclined to purchase luxury items (Zhang et al., 2018).

Consumer psychographics include psychological and social factors that influence consumer behavior, such as personality traits, values, beliefs, and lifestyle (Solomon et al., 2019). Personality traits like introversion or extroversion can influence shopping behaviors, while values and beliefs can impact consumer attitudes towards products. Figure 2.1 illustrates the significant factors influencing consumer behavior as documented by Dangi, et al., (2020).

Consumer behavior is also influenced by various macroeconomic factors like inflation and unemployment. The impact of these macroeconomic factors on developing and developed economies may differ. In high-income economies, consumers typically have higher disposable incomes, and higher purchasing power which translates to high demand for normal and luxury goods (Chen et al., 2020). On the other hand, consumers in developing economies are more likely to have less disposable income and limited resources, making their purchasing decisions more influenced by price and value for money considerations (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Cultural factors, including religion, values, and beliefs, can also influence consumer behavior in both high-income and developing economies. Technological factors such as the availability of internet connectivity can impact attitudes towards e-commerce and consumer behavior in both high-income and developing economies (Chen et al., 2020).

Social relations such as family, peers, and reference groups can significantly influence consumer behavior in both high-income and especially developing economies. However, the nature of social relationships may differ between these economies. For example, in some developing economies, social relationships may be more hierarchical, with the opinions of authority figures carrying greater weight in purchasing decisions (Kotler and Keller, 2016). Hence, marketers need to consider these additional factors in crafting their marketing strategies.

Other factors such as product features/quality, and price maybe outside of the control of the marketer even if there are under the control of the organization/business. The quality of a product is one of the key determinants of consumers' decision to buy or not to buy and it is impacted by cost, technology, and the quality of raw materials. Consumers are more likely to purchase products they perceive as high-quality (Solomon et al., 2019) and affordable (Kotler and Keller, 2016).

Supply-related factors refer to issues of inventory and inventory management and the transportation of products to customers. According to Zhang et al. (2018), customers are likely going to favor businesses they believe have ready inventory and can make expeditious delivery. For example availability of inventory, and delivery speed can significantly impact consumer behavior.

Even the traditional marketing Ps of price, promotion and product need to be adapted to the target customer base to maximize impact. For example, promotional strategies

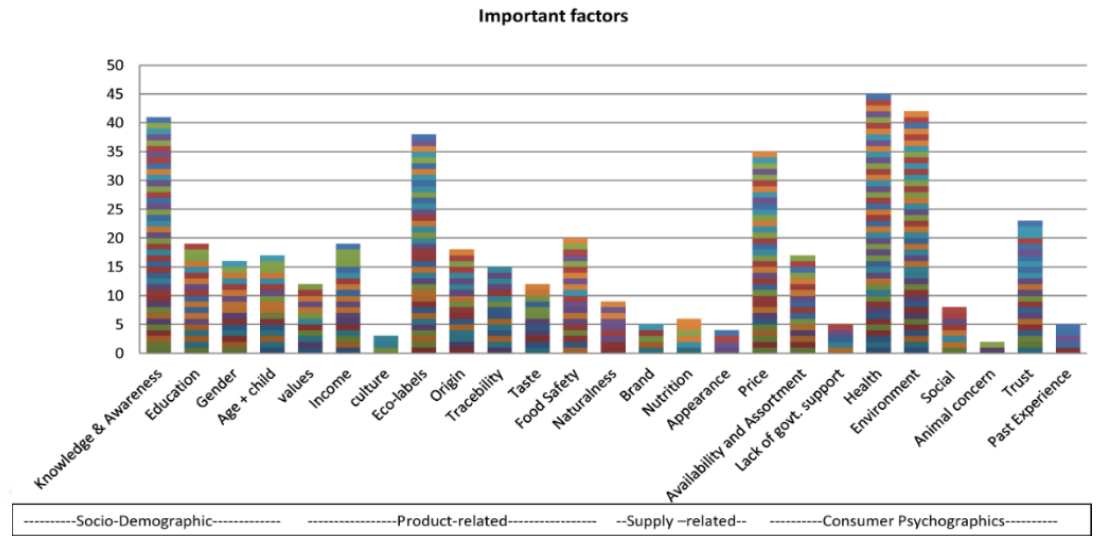


Figure 2.1: Determined Important Aspects.

Source: Dangi, Gupta, and Narula, 2020

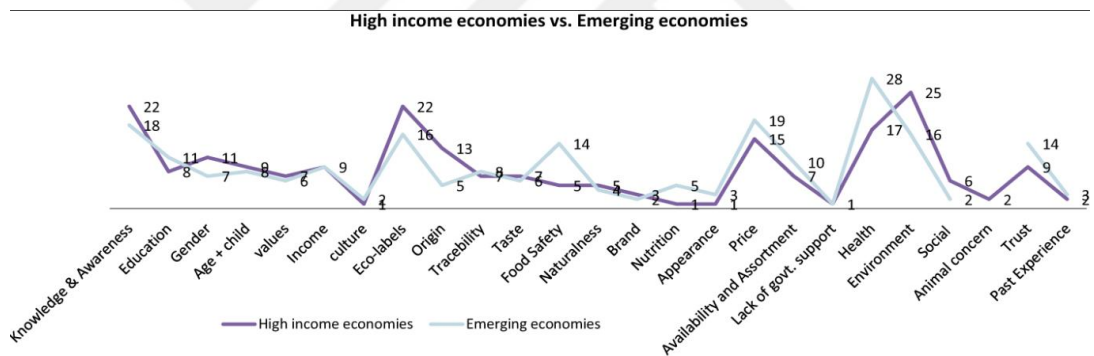


Figure 2.2: Factors influencing high-income versus developing economies (EE)

Source: Dangi, Gupta, and Narula, 2020

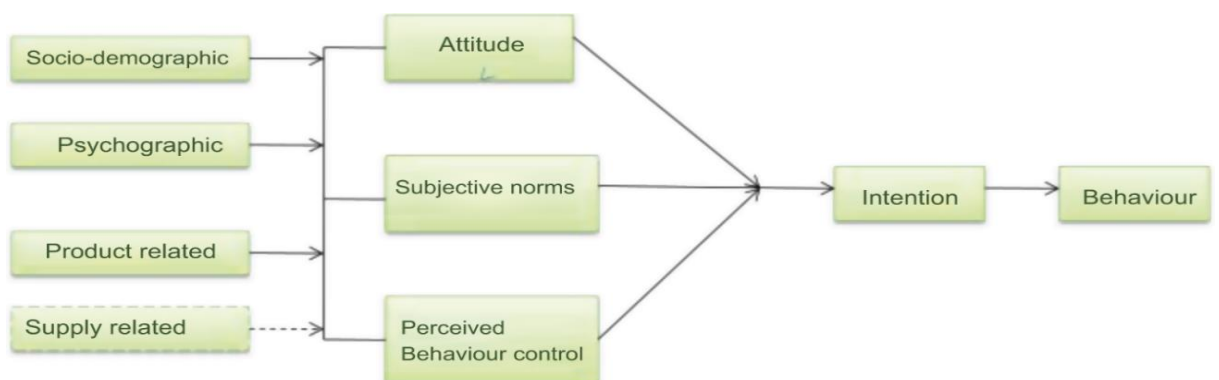


Figure 2.3: Product Purchasing Behaviour Conceptual Framework

Source: Dangi, Gupta, and Narula, 2020

in developing countries may need to be more price-oriented to appeal to cost-conscious consumers (Kotler and Keller, 2016).

The process leading to a consumer purchasing a product or a service can be divided into stages. These stages are need-recognition, information search, comparing alternatives, purchase, and post purchase evaluation.

This post purchase evaluation can influence their future purchasing decisions and their willingness to recommend the product to others (Kotler and Keller, 2016). Figure 2.2 and 2.3 presents product purchasing behavior conceptual framework as proposed by Dangi, Gupta, and Narula, (2020).

2.3 Mediums of Consumer Interaction

Effective advertisement involves establishing a special bond with consumers, by ensuring engaging discussions, and providing timely feedback (Malthouse et al.,2018). Advertising messages when appropriately designed, can enhance people's understanding and knowledge of products and services. Kim et al. (2018) stresses the importance of persuading customers to make purchases as a critical aspect of advertising. Kaur and Hundal (2017) contend that advertisement is essential in getting consumers to know and the to appreciate the distinctive qualities of goods and services. Until recently, television was widely considered the dominant advertising medium because of its ability to attract a sizable audience.

Research demonstrates that advertising has a substantial impact on consumers and can be very instrumental in creating and shaping brand equity and image. The perception of brands can also be influenced by age-related factors. Schultz (2020) underscores the substantial investments made by companies and marketers in customer research to gain a better understanding of consumer decision-making and influencing factors. Also, the importance of developing advertising campaigns that resonates with the target demographic group and will evoke their emotions and sentiments in relation to the product or service was emphasized. According to Alalwan (2018), the effects of advertising are crucial in determining the stability and profitability of both local and global companies. Recognizing the temporal lag between advertising investment and sales results highlights the importance of maintaining consistent advertising efforts over time.

Marketers ought to optimize the returns on advertising expenditures for each product (Davtyan & Cunningham, 2017). This can be done by ensuring that additional advertising expenses are offset by the increase in sales revenue induced by the advertisement. Kim et al. (2018) identifies three key concepts essential to creating effective and appealing advertising. They propose that advertising should be designed to present credible facts, utilizing simple tools and tactics. This is they suggest can be achieved through the inclusion of photographs or images, which enhance the credibility and authenticity of commercials. Television is very ideal in this regard and serves as the primary source of widely disseminated messages and visuals. Just as television enculturates by imbuing the cultural norms of society, it can enculturate consumers towards a particular product or brand (Alalwan, 2018).

In contrast, Schultz (2020) has pointed out some disadvantages of TV advertising, such as a lack of information about the offered product or service. Although TV commercials can be beneficial for companies in promoting newly launched products, TV advertisements may not be suitable for brands that have difficulty in covering unserved consumer base or segments. Until recently, newspapers were a fundamental form of mass communication in both developed and developing countries. Even now, a significant section of consumers, especially elderly consumers still rely on newspapers for information (Sama, 2019).

Currently, customers are adopting contemporary and technologically advanced mediums of promotions, purchasing, and selling items, and learning about new products or services. The internet and current means of advertising have made it simpler for people to obtain the most information with the least amount of time, money, and energy (Khachatryan et al., 2018).

2.4 The Internet as a Marketing Channel and Consumer Trust

Internet marketing has unique and shared characteristics with traditional marketing channels. The global reach of the internet is an advantage along with its ability to store volumes of information in several virtual places and giving information to users on demand. To aid in understanding the process of internet marketing, various frameworks have been created. One of them is Welz's five-component approach, which includes lead nurturing, one-on-one interaction, conclusion, business transaction, and completion (Welz, 1995).

As the number of active internet users worldwide is about 4.33 billion, online marketing platforms present an appealing potential for firms to shift their marketing activities online. However, it is becoming increasingly challenging for companies to capture the attention of customers. Therefore, businesses must optimize their online approach to achieve the desired outcomes. Each type of internet advertising serves a specific purpose and including all of them in a strategy is crucial.

Trust is crucial in determining consumer behavior and decision-making, both in physical stores and online, as indicated by recent research. Mayer, et al., (1995) defines trust as the willingness of one party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other party will fulfil important actions for the trustor, even without close monitoring or control. Establishing trust in online environments is particularly crucial in building relationships with customers, although it tends to be lower compared to face-to-face interactions in brick-and-mortar stores (Cassell and Bickmore, 2000).

The trustworthiness of Internet merchants translates indirectly to consumer trust in online shopping, as highlighted by Cheung and Lee (2006). Factors such as perceived integrity, competence, and security control of Internet merchants, as well as third-party acknowledgement and legal framework, play a crucial role in shaping consumer trust. Also, the reliability of e-commerce websites heavily depends on the provision of adequate privacy and security measures. Singh and Sir Deshmukh (2000) suggest that high level of technical expertise may contribute to perceived trustworthiness. Moreover, e-commerce websites that provide information about customer services, office address, contact phone number, and a help button can enhance the perception of trustworthiness among online merchants.

Studies have demonstrated that providing accurate information can influence customer attitudes and reduce perceived risks associated with a product (Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983). Therefore, having comprehensive product information is crucial in assuring consumers of protection from potential risks when making online purchases (Wang & Chang, 2013). Successful marketing strategies extend beyond pricing to attract customers by expanding the arsenal of strategies to include other controllable factors, such as the principles of the marketing mix (Kotler, 2005) and the 7Ps of marketing (Booms and Bitner, 1981). Figure 2.4 illustrates the perceived trustworthiness of Internet merchants, as documented by Cheung and Lee (2006).

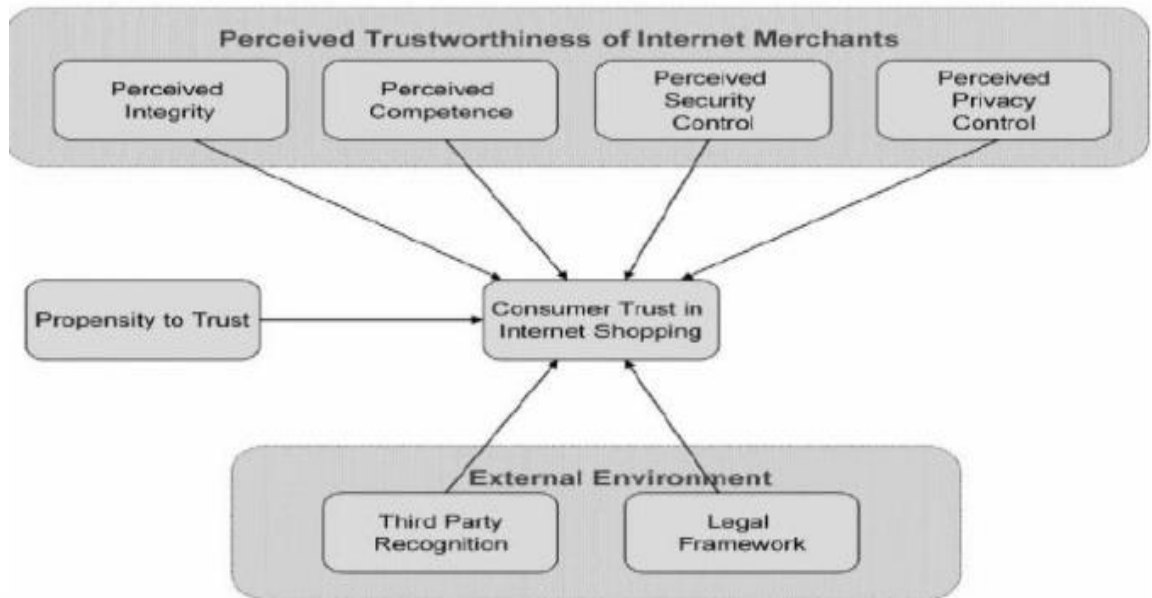


Figure 2.4: An Integrative Model of Internet Shopping Consumer Trust

Source: Cheung & Lee, 2006

As consumers gain access to more products, their expectations rise, particularly regarding safety, timely delivery, and convenience (Chu and Choi, 2011). This trend is expected to persist, as indicated by the 60 percent of consumers who, during the pandemic, tested various online businesses and expressed their willingness to continue doing so even after the pandemic ends (Deloitte, 2021). However, loyalty will depend on their digital experiences, and businesses must focus on developing connections through digital channels. Conversational commerce, for instance, allows brands to improve their checkout experience, automate promotions and shipping prices, and provide fast customer support, creating a seamless digital experience for consumers (Meyer & Schwager, 2017). The pandemic has also given rise to small, independently owned enterprises that offer a more personalized shopping experience with unique products and excellent customer service. These businesses are supported by social media influencers, and 83 percent of consumers prefer to shop at locally owned businesses (American Express, 2021). To compete with larger marketplaces, businesses must provide engaging shopping experiences, such as generating tailored content and using shoppable social media, and offer free delivery, which is preferred by 64 percent of consumers (Walker Sands, 2019).

To reach consumers, advertisers have had to experiment with new channels such as voice shopping, linked TV, and messaging applications, which has resulted in an

estimated 13% surge in digital ad growth (eMarketer, 2021). However, established social media platforms have become increasingly competitive, leading firms to cultivate consumer connections across multiple channels and raising the cost of customer acquisition.

The pandemic has also highlighted the need for businesses to focus on individual customer demands and to reassess their operations. This is an ideal time for entrepreneurs and merchants to invest in omni-channel strategies and pivot their business strategies to provide relevant and timely solutions that compensate for lost in-store sales while preparing for future growth (Deloitte, 2021). Companies can also embrace new methods of being customer-focused and adaptable to future-proof their businesses (Grewal et al., 2021). This is especially important for service and logistic focused companies for which internet and e-commerce is extremely important.

2.5 Products Sellable Through the Internet

The effectiveness of internet marketing in reaching customers depend highly on the features of the services and products being promoted (Peterson et al., 1997). Peterson et al., (1997) formulated a framework to classify goods and services along three dimensions. In the first dimension, they suggested that goods and services in a nonbipolar fashion along low-cost, frequently purchased goods to high cost infrequently purchased goods. They then argued that, when a purchase requires physical delivery, the more frequent the purchase and the smaller the cost, the more likely that there would not be an internet-based marketing strategy that fits (Peterson et al., 1997).

The second dimension is value proposition which captures whether the goods are tangible and physical or intangible and service related (Peterson et al., 1997). They then contend that internet-based marketing is best suited for certain types of intangible or service-related goods.

The last dimension as proposed by Peterson et al., (1997) is the degree of differentiability. This, they argued that, in the absence of significant product differentiation, sellers are likely to engage in extreme price competition. On the contrary, when significant product differentiation exists, sellers use the internet and internet based marketing as an effective market segmentation mechanism for guiding buyers to their ideal product or service.

Table 2.1 provides an illustration of the three dimensions and offers examples of products and services. By incorporating a formal categorization of products and services into their analysis, companies can assess the characteristics of their offerings and how they specifically influence internet marketing.

Table 2.1: Product Classification

Dimension 1	Ratio	Dimension 2	Ratio	Dimension 3	Ratio	Products and services
Low initial investment,	36%	Used frequently the value offer is real or physical	37%	The opportunity for differentiation is strong.	29%	Purchased commodities include wines, soft drinks, and cigarettes. Low possibility for differentiation Eggs and milk
		Intangible or physical value proposition Informational	43%	High possibility for differentiation	23%	Differentiation potential of online newspapers and magazines is poor. Quotes from the stock market
Infrequently, high outlay Purchased commodities	54%	The value proposition might be tangible or physical.	12%	High possibility for differentiation Low possibility for differentiation	14%	Ingots of precious metal with known weight and purity purchased commodities include stereo systems and vehicles.
		Intangible or informational value proposition	8%	High possibility for differentiation Low possibility for differentiation	34%	Packages of software Vehicle finance and insurance

Source: Phau & Meng Poon, 2000

2.6 E-Commerce strategy: Integrated Marketing, Performance and Productivity

Incorporating multiple social media platforms in a campaign is a crucial component of an effective integrated marketing strategy. Focusing on a specific business objective, such as gathering customer feedback, increasing website traffic, building email lists, driving sales, and enhancing brand participation, should be clearly defined and measurable (Shetty & Pai, 2021). It is important for brands and companies to establish a baseline measure of their target market before beginning any campaign in order to monitor the campaign's progress and overall success. Social media platforms have evolved over time, offering businesses of all sizes the opportunity to choose the most suitable platform for their target audience.

When making purchasing decisions, consumers increasingly rely on information and recommendations they encounter on social media (Pütter, 2017). Therefore, it is crucial for businesses to establish and sustain a prominent online presence on diverse social media platforms in order to impact the purchasing decisions of potential customers. This influence should span from the initial interaction to post-purchase behavior (Zafar et al., 2019). Building a strong connection between the brand and the customer necessitates continuous engagement and interaction.

Ceyhan (2019) affirms that social media plays a pivotal role in influencing customers when they seek information about a specific product. Naturally, individuals strive to find the best solutions to their problems, and social media marketing provides businesses with an opportunity to showcase their products or services, motivating people to engage with different social media platforms. Compared to traditional advertising methods, social media marketing has the advantage of reaching broader audience (Alavi et al., 2019). Social media is seen as a space for like-minded individuals to connect to share their thoughts, opinions, and ideas. Members of these (virtual) social groups have a sense of belonging making advertisement via such platforms more effective than mainstream media (Duffett, 2017).

2.7 Shopping Attitudes of Foreigners in Turkiye

Several studies have explored the distinct shopping and purchasing idiosyncrasies of foreigners in Turkiye. These studies have sought to examine the retail, and e-commerce activities of tourists, expats, and/or migrants. Smith's (2018) for example conducted an ethnographic study of European and American tourists in Istanbul and

Ankara found a strong preference for buying locally produced handicrafts and products viewed as authentically Turkish. The findings showed that foreigners chiefly value cultural immersion over material consumption when shopping in Türkiye. As such, they actively seek boutiques, bazaars and e-commerce sites offering authentic merchandise deeply rooted in Turkish culture. These merchandises are shopped for chiefly as souvenirs to take home as a token of their travels. Therefore, e-retailers are likely to attract foreigners by offering and highlighting domestically made artisanal wares over mass-produced imported alternatives.

Other studies have also highlighted the tendency of foreign shoppers to prioritize convenience, accessibility and affordability when making purchases in Türkiye as key determinants shaping their attitudes. A survey by Johnson and Brown (2019) revealed that tourists are more likely to shop from e-commerce sites offering multilingual interfaces, seamless cross-device experiences, frictionless payment gateways and rapid delivery. This indicates that augmenting platform accessibility and streamlining services are vital for enhancing engagement amongst potential foreign market segments. The scholars also noted a great propensity among visitors to purchase household supplies, packaged foods and handicraft items from cheaper hypermarket chains and independent retailers rather than premium outlets. Hence competitive pricing aimed at value-conscious tourists alongside convenience-enhancing features could be helpful in accelerating foreign e-commerce adoption.

As Turkish municipalities and agencies seek to attract higher incoming tourist flows post-pandemic, collaborative e-commerce partnerships have been implemented between online travel agencies and leading domestic retailers to integrate trip planning with retail therapy for driving spending (Yilmaz, 2021). Tax-free shopping schemes and flexible VAT refunds are also being expanded to boost foreign visitor expenditure by permitting recuperation of charges on services and products purchased locally (Erdogan, 2020). These policy developments will further incentivize foreign shoppers and could have positive ripple effects on Turkish e-commerce industry growth.

2.8. Impact of Foreign Shopper Attitudes on Turkish E-Commerce

Türkiye is a favorite destination for tourists, digital nomads, expats, diplomatic and international migrants. These non-native residents and/or visitors indulge in and contribute significant proportion to e-commerce revenue in Türkiye. A recent national

survey of online retailers by Garcia and Wilson (2020) revealed that nearly 35% of Turkish e-commerce sales across key product categories are attributable to non-resident buyers. They project that the foreign shopper contribution could reach over 40% by 2025 based on tourism arrival forecasts and immigration trends. This indicates the immense potential of overseas market segments to directly stimulate growth and expansion of the e-commerce industry in Turkiye. This however will require online and e-commerce enterprises to prioritize multilingual platform creation and improvements, cross-border delivery infrastructure and international payment gateway integration to boost foreign shopper acquisition and retention.

Also, foreigner shopping attitudes and purchase patterns can indirectly impact local e-commerce consumer behavior. In a survey by Lee and Kim (2021), it is documented that positive reviews and recommendations of foreigners positively impact online shopping attitudes among Turkish citizens and can inspire trust among Turkish citizens previously wary of e-commerce. The researchers posit that foreigners serve as opinion leaders and their satisfaction with Turkish online retailers acts as a crucial social proof for local buyers still doubting brand legitimacy or service quality. Therefore, ensuring service excellence for foreign users has indirect benefits in terms of building credibility and enhancing local adoption. With over 68% internet penetration, the local Turkish consumer base offers huge latent potential that can be activated by leveraging positive foreign influencer perceptions regarding local e-commerce players.

Recognizing the contributions of foreign shoppers, municipalities and retailers have responded through collaborative promotional initiatives like the Istanbul Shopping Festival aimed at boosting tourist flows and retail expenditure during off-peak seasons (Dedeoglu, 2020). The Turkish government has also expanded tax-free shopping schemes and flexible VAT refund mechanisms allowing tourists to recuperate charges on shopping done at local stores (Yavuz, 2022). Such policy accommodations have increased the propensity for leisure shopping amongst visitors which could translate into valuable gains for domestic e-commerce enterprises. Therefore, operationalizing suitable foreigner market centric strategies can unlock substantial opportunities.

2.9 Consumer Buying Behavior in Business

Comprehending consumer purchasing behavior is vital for businesses to thrive in today's highly competitive landscape, whether in online or offline settings (Ramya &

Ali, 2016; Sharma, 2014). According to Ramya and Ali (2016), consumer buying behavior encompasses the process of identifying, researching, and making decisions when purchasing a product or service. Sharma (2014) highlights the significance of investigating and recognizing customer activities within this process to effectively influence their behavior.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound global impact on consumer behavior (Eger et al., 2019; Peng & Chen, 2021). Peng and Chen (2021) observe that the pandemic has led many families to face unfavorable financial conditions, resulting in a shift in consumer focus towards basic and essential products and services, rather than luxury items. Salunke et al. (n.d.) also report a sustained decline in global purchases of jewelry and automobiles, primarily due to their prohibitive cost and non-essential nature.

In the online space, search engines like google are crucial in informing customers and thus influencing consumer buying behavior (Ramya & Ali, 2016). In offline settings however, word-of-mouth (WOM) advertising play significant role in shaping consumer behavior (Ramya & Ali, 2016). The pandemic has upended physical interaction changing social, economic, and political activities globally (Eger et al., 2019), underscoring the importance of business readiness to quickly adapt to consumer and global threats and trends.

2.10 Importance of Consumer Buying Behavior

Consumer behavioral research is essential in helping marketers understand the factors that impact customers' purchasing decisions. By understanding how people come to decide to buy a product, marketers can identify market gaps, determine which items are in demand, and which ones are outdated. Recently, the exponential increase in data and data models have afforded marketers the ability to create machine learning driven algorithms to model consumer behavior and preferences. This enables marketers to create personalized and targeted marketing campaigns (Chen et al., 2021).

Also, a comprehensive understanding of consumer dispositions and behaviors allows marketers to select the most effective strategies for promotional campaigns. Understanding customer preferences and behavior is key in reaching and engaging with customers and prospective customers. Shi et al., (2020) contend that positive

emotions evoked by advertisements can trigger a more favorable attitude towards a brand, increased the likelihood of purchase.

An analysis of consumer behavior should also uncover various aspects: individuals' beliefs and sentiments towards different options (brands, products, etc.); factors influencing consumers' decision-making among different choices; consumer behavior during the research and shopping processes; and how customers' surroundings (friends, family, culture) impact their decision-making (Solomon, 2019). This information assists marketers in tailoring their marketing strategies and product offerings to cater to customer needs and preferences, ultimately leading to higher sales and customer loyalty.

2.11 Consumer Behavior in the Context of E-Commerce

Consumer behavior in the context of e-commerce has garnered significant research attention due to the rapid growth of online shopping and how it impacts consumer behavior. Consumer behavior in e-commerce involves a complex process encompassing various activities and decision-making steps that culminate in the final purchase decision. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), consumer behavior is influenced by multiple factors, including personal, psychological, social, and cultural aspects.

Trust is a critical factor in influencing human behavior and more so in influencing consumer's decision to purchase and use a good or service (Gefen, 2000). Trust refers to consumers' willingness to rely on the seller. This includes the belief that the product or service will be delivered, and their personal data kept safe by the seller. It has been documented that trust plays a positive and critical role in customers' decision to make a purchase especially online (Li & Zhang, 2002).

Contrary to trust is risk. Risk is the perceived probability that a seller will not deliver on what has been promised. Thus, the uncertainty associated with a purchase (Lee & Turban, 2001). This is a significant factor influencing consumer behavior on e-commerce platforms. Risk can stem from several factors, including financial risk, performance risk, and privacy risk. It has been shown by Bhatnagar, et al., (2000) that perceived risk negatively impacts consumers' attitudes towards online shopping and their purchase intentions.

Besides trust and perceived risk, factors such as website design friendliness, product information, and customer service can be critical in shaping consumer behavior in e-commerce (Sinha & Mandel, 2008). Website design and user friendliness are essential in pulling consumers towards certain e-commerce websites. This perhaps is the first and most important step. A well-designed website with intuitive navigation and clear product information can positively influence consumers' behavior towards online shopping (Lee & Koo, 2015). Adequate product information and good customer service are also crucial factors that impact consumers' behavior in online shopping. Having comprehensive product information and reliable customer service can positively influence consumers' behavior towards making online purchases (Parsons & Lefrere, 2010).

2.12 Factors Influencing B2B and B2C Ecommerce Performance

Several studies have sought to document the determinants of B2B and B2C in Turkiye and globally with Gibbs, et al., (2002) contending that a different set of factors drive B2B and B2C e-commerce. In Wong (2003), the role played by both global and local factors in internet commerce are emphasized and the contribution of the information and communication technologies highlighted.

Governmental support is also found to be necessary in stimulating the growth of e-commerce and in fostering technological innovation and entrepreneurship. This support can take several forms including but not limited to subsidies, fiscal and tax incentives. Molla and Licker (2005) studies the adoption of e-commerce in developing countries and highlighted the significance of e-readiness, which encompasses various aspects such as human resources, technological capabilities, commercial infrastructure, and governance resources. The findings of their study suggested that the adoption of e-commerce in developing countries is more influenced by internal organizational factors rather than external determinants.

Weixin (2006) conducted a study on the expansion of e-commerce in China. They considered diverse factors such as IT infrastructure, economic and political reforms, and national policies. Ardura, et al., (2008) analyzed data from 1996 to 2003 in a study to estimate the future path of e-commerce in Spain. They used data such as the number of internet users, technological advancements, legislative changes, the affordability of computers, and the prevalence of servers with the ".es" domain implementing security

protocols per one thousand users. The study revealed that each component examined played a crucial role in predicting the evolution of online shopping in Spain.

2.13 The Effect of COVID-19 on E-Commerce and Consumer Behavior

The COVID-19 global pandemic has affected the global economy, including the e-commerce sector. COVID related Lockdowns and social distancing measures have compelled consumers to change their shopping habits from physical stores to online platforms. As a result, there has been an unprecedented surge in demand and growth in the e-commerce industry.

Acosta et al. (2020) reveals that the pandemic has accelerated consumer adoption of e-commerce. They reported that about 60% of consumers surveyed reported having increased their online shopping frequency during the pandemic. Also, 48% of consumers reported purchasing products online that they used to buy from physical stores. Convenience and safety concerns were identified as the primary drivers of this shift to online shopping.

Grigore et al. (2021) also conducted a study on consumer behavior and e-commerce platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was found that consumers were more inclined to purchase essential products online, such as groceries and personal protective equipment. The study also highlighted a change in consumer preferences, with an increased focus on local and sustainable products.

According to Statista (2021), the global pandemic led to a significant increase in global e-commerce sales. In 2020 for example, e-commerce sales grew by 27.6% while e-commerce sales totaled \$4.28 trillion. It was further projected that e-commerce sales will continue to grow post pandemic due to the acculturation of consumers to online shopping.

Lee and Shin (2020) examined the effects of COVID-19 on consumer buying behavior in South Korea and documented that online shopping among South Korean consumers experienced a substantial increase during the pandemic. They also found an increase in consumer trust in e-commerce platforms, which resulted in a shift towards online shopping.

2.14 Research Gaps and Future Directions

There is an exhaustive body of literature on e-commerce and consumer behavior. However, there are still significant gaps that need addressing. First, although many studies have examined various aspects of consumer behavior, there is a lack of research on the influence of various e-commerce marketing strategies on consumer behavior. This study intends to fill the gap by investigating the relative strengths of the different e-commerce strategies on the purchasing behavior of foreign, primarily Arab, consumers in Istanbul.

Secondly, as the COVID-19 pandemic has expedited the expansion of e-commerce, it is essential to conduct additional research to understand the enduring impacts of the pandemic on consumer behavior and e-commerce strategies. Subsequent studies could delve into how consumer behavior and e-commerce strategies will transform as the pandemic continues to shape the business environment.

Also, further research regarding the influencing triggers of consumers to engage in online purchases is required. Psychological factors such as trust and perceived risk and their impact on consumer behavior as regard e-commerce could be examined.

Finally, with the ongoing technological advancements, research on the emerging e-commerce trends and their impact on consumer behavior is necessary. Future studies could explore emerging technologies like virtual and augmented reality and examine how they can be integrated into e-commerce strategies to enhance the overall consumer experience.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology and testing procedures used in this study to test the various hypothesis. It covers the research design, the target population, the sampling methods employed, the data collection instruments used, and the statistical techniques applied.

3.1 Research Design

In every research, the choice of methodology is essential in robustly testing the hypothesis of any study. This will require the explicit statement of the object of the study and assess the options available in appropriately testing such hypothesis. In choosing the methodology, it is important that the choice be aligned with the research question, purpose, and context to ensure its relevance and appropriateness in producing accurate results (Venkatesh et al., 2013, p. 22).

This study seeks to examine the effects of the different e-commerce strategies on consumer buying behavior. Specifically, the impact of social media campaigns, TV commercials, e-paper advertising, and word of mouth recommendations on consumer buying behavior is investigated.

A quantitative research approach was adopted to test the study's hypothesis. This approach involves using statistical techniques and methodologies to analyze the relationships between the variables ((Julinsyah, 2014; Saunders et al., 2009). Beyond the primary focus of the research, which is to determine and compare the impact of e-commerce strategies on consumer buying behavior, consumer demographics and e-commerce-related information were gathered from the participants for a qualitative commentary and discussion.

In gathering the data, an online, self-administered questionnaire was used. Questionnaires have become popular, time, and cost efficient, and effective tools for gathering data when the sample required is large (Ilieva et al., 2002; Wright, 2005). The questionnaire was partitioned into four sections. The first section sought respondent demographic information to learn about the characteristics of the study subjects. The second section sought information related to respondents' perceptions about e-commerce and the factors they deem key motivating or demotivating factors

influencing their usage of e-commerce. In the third section, information on the dependent variable, the frequency of online purchase, was gathered using a Likert-style question. The fourth section sought information on the independent variables by also using a Likert style question to gain insights into respondents' exposure to the various e-commerce strategies. A brief letter of introduction was prefixed to the questionnaire to provide an explanation on the purpose of the research and to assure respondents of data confidentiality and related concerns.

Multiple regression analysis was deemed the appropriate statistical technique to use for this study. Multiple regression is a widely used statistical method that allows researchers to examine the relationships between a dependent variable and a (set) of independent variables (Gujarati & Porter, 2009). By analyzing the connections between independent variables and a dependent variable, multiple regression makes it possible to determine the directional relationship and to predict the values of the dependent variable given the values of the independent variables (Cohen et al., 2003).

Also, multiple regression analysis aids in identifying the degree to which each independent variable contributes to explaining the variance in the dependent variable. It helps identify intensity of the impact of the independent variables on the dependent variable, thus determining their relative importance in predicting the dependent variable (Cohen et al., 2003).

3.2 Population

Since this study is seeking to analyze the impact of E-commerce strategies on consumers' purchasing behavior, with a focus on foreigners living within the Istanbul province, the target population for the study is any foreigner who currently lives in Istanbul and who has engaged in purchasing behavior through E-commerce platforms. Narrowly however, the study will focus on foreigners of Middle Eastern and/or Arab origin living in Istanbul province. Respondents of any age, gender, educational and/or income level. Istanbul province is the most populous province in Turkiye, with a considerable number of foreigners residing in it (Kadam & Bhalerao, 2013). According to the Turkish Statistical Institute, Istanbul had the highest number of foreigners in Turkiye as of 2022, hosting about 35.4% of the immigrant population in Turkiye.

To ensure the representativeness of the sample and the generalizability of the study's findings to the population, it was necessary to use a suitable sampling method, considering the population size, which is in the thousands. Sampling must be representative. That it must guarantee that the sample adequately represents the population (Neuman, 2014). In order to capture a wide range of perspectives and viewpoints on the subject under investigation, each participant was restricted to providing a single response.

3.3 Sampling Method

The population of this study is the foreign residents of Istanbul province, Turkiye during COVID-19 lockdown (Akkucuk & Esmailpour, 2018). Due to the size of the population, it was necessary to employ an appropriate sampling technique. Any chosen sampling technique should guarantee that the sample is a true reflection of the population and that the study's findings can be generalized to the population (Neuman, 2014).

In similar studies, non-probability sampling techniques are often used when studying a population who are not easily accessible. (Babbie, 2016). Etikan and Bala (2017) define non-probability sampling as a technique that solely relies on the researcher's judgment without incorporating any probability-based methods. One of the most widely used non-probability sampling technique, which has been adopted in this study, is the snowball sampling method.

3.4 Snowball Sampling Method

Snowball sampling involves identifying and recruiting participants through referrals from already chosen or identified study participants. This method depends on the social networks of the participants, who are asked to refer other individuals who meet the study's criteria (Kumar, 2014). This can help in getting the required numbers from the target population (Babbie, 2016).

The unprecedented disruption triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic and enforcement of tight national lockdowns essentially rendered conventional in-person modes of questionnaire distribution unfeasible, as face-to-face engagement with potential respondents for research became impossible during prolonged periods of enforced physical distancing and mobility restrictions. In light of the public health risks and

practical constraints imposed by the crisis context, adapting the study's sampling strategy to leverage contactless digital channels offered safer and more convenient alternatives for accessing and engaging respondent groups.

Specifically, a virtual snowball sampling approach was incorporated that initially involved recruiting a small cohort of participants through WhatsApp messaging, before encouraging them to refer the survey to their networks and contacts using convenient digital sharing mechanisms on popular messaging and social media services. This viral referral-based technique enabled the researcher to effectively capitalize on existing social connections and spheres of influence within online communities that sampled respondents were embedded in, to transmit questionnaire links and drive participation numbers.

WhatsApp was chosen as the primary vehicle for disseminating survey invitations owing to its widespread adoption as the messaging platform of choice across the study population. Furthermore, the underlying structure of virtual snowball sampling methodology, whereby existing respondents recruit future subjects from their digital networks, conferred strategic advantages of overcoming barriers resulting from lockdown-imposed mobility limitations by facilitating accelerated reach across fragmented target groups, while retaining empirical integrity through traceable sequence chains as subjects channeled the questionnaire to new connections within their virtual communities via seamless, frictionless sharing mechanisms on integrated social platforms.

Virtual Snowball sampling has been found to be effective and efficient, especially when dealing with remote populations. Sadler, et al., (2018) employed virtual snowball sampling to recruit refugees for a survey on mental health and found that the method resulted in a diverse sample of participants who would have been difficult to access through traditional means. Birnholtz, et al., (2013) also used virtual snowball sampling for a social network analysis and concluded that the method effectively recruited active social media users and yielded a diverse representative.

In this study, the questionnaire was published on various social media (mainly WhatsApp) groups, and group members invited to share it with friends and their online groups. Data was collected between June 1 to June 17, 2021. This coincided with the

COVID-19 lockdown. Subsequently however, data was also collected after the lockdown was lifted.

3.5 Questionnaire Design and Pre-Testing

Selecting an appropriate data collection instrument is crucial to the research process, and for this study, a deductive and quantitative approach was adopted using a questionnaire. A questionnaire consists of a series of questions, both open-ended and closed-ended, which allow the researcher to investigate the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Well-designed and structured survey questions ensure that the responses obtained from a large number of participants are precise and provide valuable information (Ikart, 2019).

The questionnaire used in this study is developed upon reviewing similar studies. The questionnaire consists of four sections. Section one gathers demographic data, section two gathers data on the perception of respondents on e-commerce and related issues and section three focuses on the main concern of this study, consumer buying behavior. Specifically, it measures the frequency with which respondents shop online using a Likert scale. The fourth section also uses a Likert scale type questions to gather data on the significant triggers of consumers e-commerce buying decisions. Prior to the data collection, the questionnaire underwent pre-testing to ensure that respondents understood the questions and to address any ambiguities.

Following the pre-testing, the questionnaire was found to be error-free and data collection commenced. Initially prepared in English, the questionnaire was later translated into formal Arabic to minimize any misinterpretation. The use of a well-validated questionnaire in this study aligns with previous research emphasizing the importance of questionnaire design and validation for accurate and reliable data collection (Girdano et al., 2017; Mokhtari et al., 2019). Moreover, the adoption of online surveys during the lockdown period aligns with the increasing body of literature acknowledging the potential of online data collection methods in situations where traditional approaches may be unfeasible (Harris et al., 2020; Zhu et al., 2021).

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations play a vital role in studies involving human participants. These considerations aim to minimize any potential negative impact on the individuals

involved. Therefore, to ensure that ethical standards were upheld, the researcher obtained approval from the Research Ethics Committee at Sabahattin Zaim University. To guarantee adherence to ethical guidelines, the researcher emphasized that participation in the study was voluntary and based solely on the participants' agreement, without any form of coercion. The researcher also avoided asking any sensitive or biased questions that could potentially cause harm or discomfort. Participants were assured that their responses and data would be treated as confidential, and only the research findings would be shared publicly. The researcher maintained strict confidentiality and did not disclose any information to third parties for any purpose.

3.7 Definition of Variables

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between consumer e-commerce behavior and e-commerce marketing strategies. Specifically, we sought to find the impact the e-commerce strategies have on consumer online purchasing frequency (behavior). In our formulation, the variable that impacted, the consumer buying behavior is the dependent variable while the variables that impact, the e-commerce strategies are the independent variables.

Social media campaigns, Television Commercials (TVCs) E-paper advertisements and word of mouth recommendations are taken to be the independent variables. In this study, a social media campaign means a targeted marketing initiative that utilizes one or more social media channels to promote and support a product or brand and/or or achieve specific business objectives. These campaigns are more focused, measurable, and directed compared to regular social media activities. TVCs are segments of television programming that are created or sponsored by companies to promote their products or services. E-Paper Ads on the other hand are electronic versions of traditional newspapers that can be easily distributed and stored digitally. It is important to note that electronic newspapers are distinct from print newspapers with online editions. Lastly, Word of Mouth (WOM) advertisement involves the oral recommendation of a brand or product by an acquaintance. It can range from simple exchanges like sharing the time of day to narratives about true or fictional events. In the digital era, WOM may also occur through direct communication between friends and acquaintances on social media platforms.

This study sought to investigate how the independent variables, namely Social Media Campaign, Television Commercials (TVCs), E-Paper Ads, and Word of Mouth, influence the dependent variable, which is consumer buying behavior.

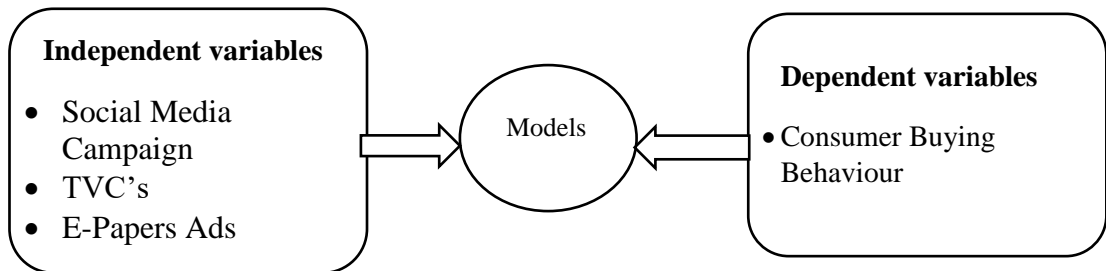


Figure 3.1: The variables used in the study.

3.8 Data Analysis Techniques and Methods

The objective of the study is to examine the association between the dependent variable and independent variables. Specifically, it seeks to explore the influence of the independent variables, namely TVCs, Electronic paper advertisements, and word of mouth marketing, on consumer purchasing behavior. To achieve this, various statistical methods and analytical techniques were employed. Data analysis methods are collections of techniques used to derive findings. After performing data cleaning, coding, and editing, the data was analyzed primarily using multiple regression.

Multiple regression has become popular in quantitative research because of its flexibility and its ability to determine the relationship between linear and nonlinear relationships (Berger, 2012). Multiple regression analysis is a powerful tool for examining the relationships between multiple independent variables and a dependent variable. Daoud (2017) highlighted that the credibility of arguments in a regression analysis is highly dependent on the standard error of estimations. A lower value of the standard error of predictions implies a more reliable regression analysis. The ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) is used to test the overall significance of the model and the individual significance of each independent variable in the model.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The empirical findings are presented and discussed in this chapter.. Specifically, we present the demographic and behavioral factors of the respondents and the results documenting the relationship between e-commerce strategy and consumer buying behavior. This chapter is divided into four sub-sections. Sub-section one delineates the socio-economic traits of the respondents. Sub-section two present findings on the general information about E-commerce. sub-section three presents the findings on the factors that influence consumer behavior and sub-section presents the regression results and tests the study's hypothesis.

4.1 Socio-Economic Traits

The economic and cultural traits of the participants are displayed in Table 4.1. The survey included 283 male (representing 65.6%) and 148 female (representing 34.4%) respondents. 29.7 percent of the respondents were within age 30 to 40 years, indicative that e-commerce is more attractive to middle-aged people. Regarding education, 28.5 percent of respondents had primary-level education, while 18.6 percent had a secondary school certificate, 20.2 percent had a diploma, and 22.3 percent had a bachelor's degree. In terms of their level of understanding of e-commerce, 36.4 percent, indicated that they have over 80% understanding of e-commerce.

Table 4. 1: Economic and Cultural Traits of the Participants

Socio-demographic variables	Sub-variables/ means	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	283	65.66
	Female	148	34.34
Age group	17-30	127	29.5
	30-40	128	29.7
	40-50	91	21.1
	Above 50	85	19.7
Level of education	Primary	123	28.5
	Secondary School Certificate	80	18.6
	Diploma	87	20.2
	Bachelor's degree	96	22.3
	Illiterate	45	10.4
Level of Understanding About E-commerce	0-20	112	26
	20-40	100	23.2
	40-60	34	7.9
	60-80	28	6.5
	80-100	157	36.4

4.2 General Information on E-commerce

4.2.1 Sources of Inspiration for Catching Up with Life Trends

The sources of inspiration for catching up with life trends is presented in Table 4.2. The results of the survey showed that the majority of the 289 respondents (67%) indicated that they usually get inspired by social media to catch up with life trends. This was followed by friends and family with 112 respondents (26%) relying on their family and friends for inspiration. Only fifteen individuals (3.5%) reported being inspired by observing random people, while another 15 individuals (3.5%) indicated that they search online by themselves to keep up with life trends. The data is presented in Table 4.2 and Figure 4.6.

Table 4.2: Sources of Inspiration for Catching Up with Life Trends

Sources of Inspiration	Number of responders	Percent (%)
Social Media	289	67
Family & Friends	112	26
By just observing random people	15	3.5
None- I search online by myself	15	3.5
Total	431	100

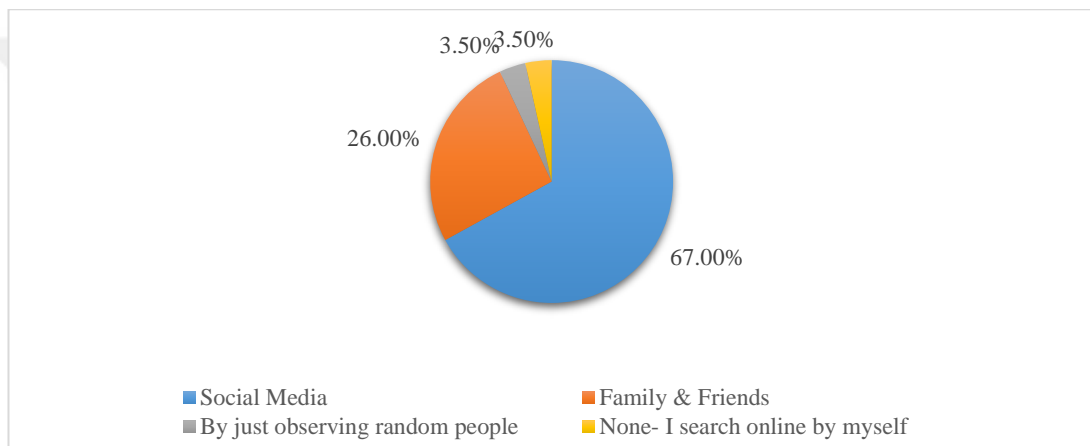


Figure 4.1: Sources of Inspiration for Catching Up with Life Trends

4.2.2. Important Factors to Consumers While Shopping

This section examined the factors that are most important to individuals while shopping, and the results are presented in Table 4.3 and Figure 4.7 below. According to the findings, 143 respondents (33.2%) indicated that personal factors are more important to them while shopping. This was followed by social factors, which were considered important by eighty-nine respondents (20.6%), and cultural factors, which were considered important by 78 respondents (18%). Physiological factors were considered important by fifty-six respondents (13%), while 65 respondents (15.2%) indicated that none of the above factors were important to them while shopping.

Table 4.3: Important Factors to Consumers While Shopping

Important Factors	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
Personal factors	143	33.2
Physiological factors	56	13
Cultural factors	78	18
Social factors	89	20.6
None of above	65	15.2
Total	431	100

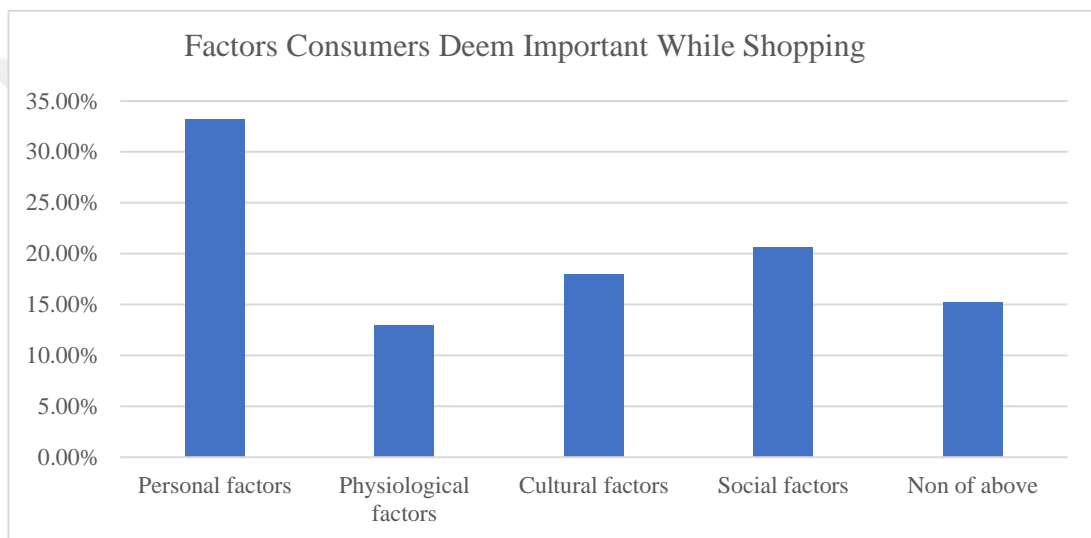


Figure 4.2: Important Factors to Consumers While Shopping

4.2.3 E-Commerce Attraction Factors

Figure 4.8 presents the results of the factors that attract customers to e-commerce websites. The results show that 112 respondents (26%) indicated that fast delivery is the most attractive factor for them when shopping on e-commerce websites. More products being available was considered an important factor by 89 respondents (20.6%), followed by virtual auctions which were attractive to 76 respondents (17.6%). Security was considered important by sixty-five respondents (15.2%), while 89 respondents (20.6%) indicated that other factors not listed in the survey such as discounts and sales promotions, loyalty programs and rewards, free shipping and returns, and product reviews and ratings were attractive to them when shopping on e-commerce websites.

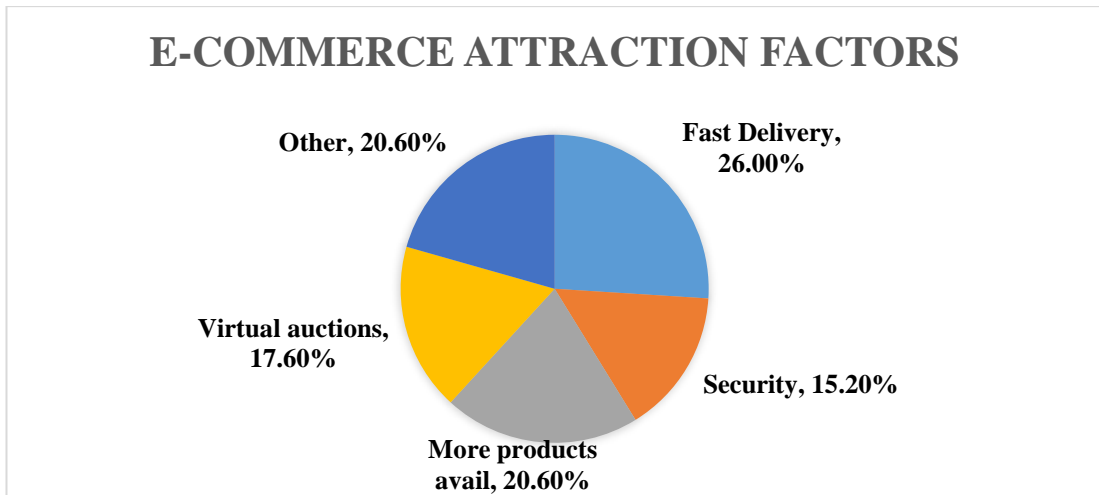


Figure 4.3: E-Commerce Attraction Factors

4.2.4 Information Type Customers Search for on E-Commerce Sites

Among the respondents who were surveyed, 156 respondents (36.2%) indicated that they search for other types of information regarding products on e-commerce sites. The second most searched information was about the product origin, which was chosen by ninety-eight respondents (22.7%). Health information was considered important by seventy-six respondents (17.6%), while price was searched by 67 respondents (15.5%). Only thirty-four respondents (8%) indicated that they searched for terms and conditions of the products on e-commerce sites. Figure 4.9 below presents the results of the survey.

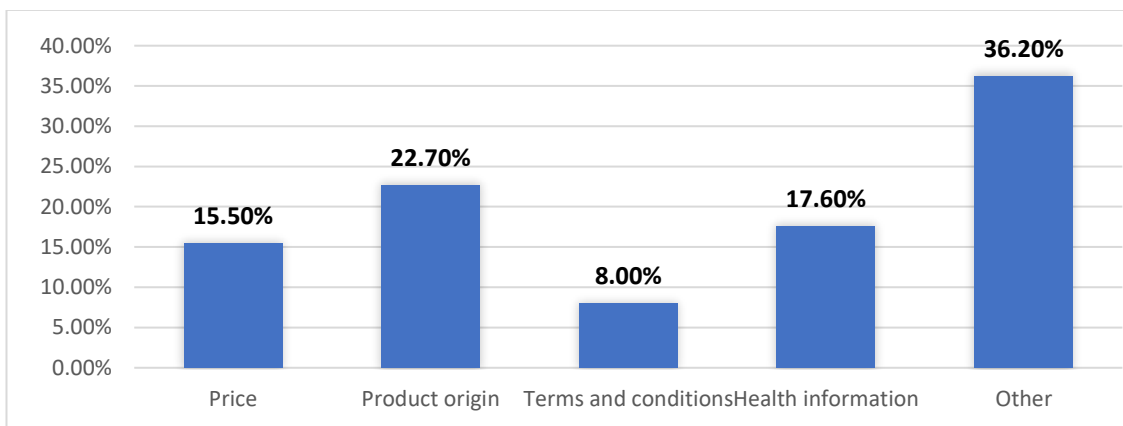


Figure 4.4: Information Type Customers Search for on E-Commerce Sites

4.3 Factors that Influence Consumer Behavior under E-Commerce

The data in Figure 4.10 shows that easy access to information is the most important factor influencing buying behavior under e-commerce, selected by 26% of

respondents. Privacy is also a key concern, selected by 20.6% of respondents. Other factors, such as good customer service and low cost of assessing information, were selected by 18% and 15% of respondents, respectively.

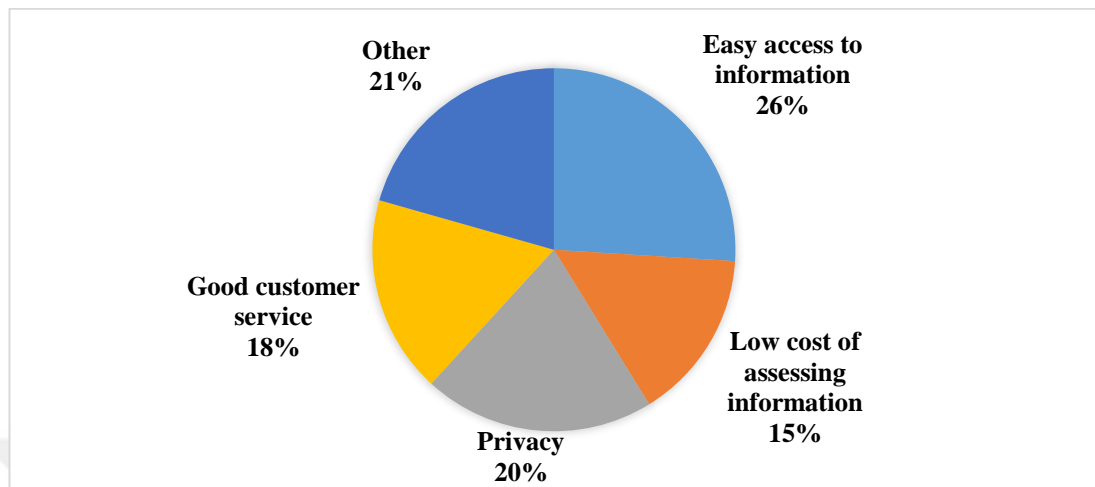


Figure 4.55: Factors that Influence Consumer Behavior Under E-Commerce

4.4 Results of Hypothesis Testing

This section tests the hypotheses formulated for this study. To examine the relationship between the dependent variable (consumer behavior) and multiple independent variables (social media campaigns, TV commercials, e-paper adverts, and word-of-mouth), the statistical technique of multiple regression analysis was employed. Hypothesis testing in multiple regression analysis involves assessing the significance of the independent variables in explaining the variation observed in the dependent variable. It is crucial to examine the coefficients in regression analysis to determine the nature of the relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

Following the method described by Hoque and Alam (2019), the significance p-value for each dependent variable's value was calculated. A p-value below 0.05 indicates a significant correlation between the dependent and independent variables. As shown in Table 4.4, the p-value for social media is 0.159 which is greater than 0.05, indicating a non-existence of a significant association between social media marketing and customer purchasing behavior. Similarly, the p-value for television advertising is 0.271, suggesting a non-existent of a significant linear relationship between television commercials and consumer purchasing behavior. Although these non-existent significant relationships could be attributed to many factors, the researcher believes that weak execution of social media and TV advertising campaigns where strategic

audience targeting is lacking, optimal media budgets or integration across platforms may have diluted their effectiveness and statistical links with consumer behavior.

However, the p-values for e-paper advertisement and word of mouth are 0.004 and 0.003, respectively. Both of these are below 0.05 indicating a significant relationship between e-paper advertisement and word of mouth and consumer purchasing behavior. This indicates a significant linear relationship between these factors and customer purchasing behavior.

It is also worth emphasizing that a Beta score of 0.238 for e-paper advertising means that for everyone standard deviation increases in e-paper advertising, the outcome variable (consumer behavior) increases by 0.238 standard deviations, while holding all other variables constant. Similarly, a Beta score of 0.208 for word-of-mouth means that for everyone standard deviation increases in word-of-mouth, consumer behavior increases by 0.208 standard deviations holding all other variables constant.

Table 4.4: Analysis of Coefficients

Module	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	1.844	0.301		6.118	0.000
Social media campaigns	0.96	0.068	0.109	1.412	0.159
Television commercials	-0.085	0.071	-0.88	-1.104	0.271
e-paper advertisements	0.209	0.071	0.238	2.931	0.004
Word of mouth	0.209	0.068	0.208	3.059	0.003

Dependent Variable: Consumer Buying Behavior

The results of the multiple regression analysis present in Table 4.4 therefore leads to the following conclusions.

- a) The rejection of H_1 which contends that social media campaigns have significant effects on consumer buying behavior.

- b) The rejection of H₂ which posits that TVCs have a significant effect on consumer purchasing behavior.
- c) The failure to reject H₃ which contends that e-paper advertisement significantly affect consumer buying behavior and
- d) The failure to reject H₄ which contends that word-of-mouth recommendations significantly affect consumer buying behavior.

4.4.1 Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Based on the results presented in Table 4.4, and the conclusions drawn above, Table 4.5 summarizes the outcome of the hypotheses tested.

Table 4.5: Hypotheses' Outcome

Hypotheses	T Value	Sig.	Result
H ₁ : Social media campaigns significantly impact consumer buying behavior.	1.412	0.159	Rejected
H ₂ : Television Commercials (TVCs) significantly impact consumer buying behavior.	-1.104	0.271	Rejected
H ₃ : E-paper advertising significantly impact consumers buying behavior.	2.931	0.004	Failure to Reject
H ₄ : Word of mouth recommendations have a significant impact on consumer buying behavior.	3.059	0.003	Failure to Reject

Table 4.6 summarizes the model as shown in the model summary in Table 4.6. From Table 4.6, it can be concluded that the multiple regression analysis used in this study is reliable with a low standard error estimate of 0.656 as in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Model Summary

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.362 ^a	0.131	0.113	0.656

Predictors: (Constant), Word of Mouth, Television Commercials, Social Media Campaigns, E-paper Advertisement

To further check the model, an ANOVA analysis is done, and the results is found to be significant with a significance value of 0.000 and an F-value of 7.342, indicating that the regression model employed in this research is not spurious. Thus, the findings of the study are valid and useful in making decisions regarding the critical factors affecting consumer purchasing behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 4.7: ANOVA

Model	Sum Of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	12.629	5	3.157	7.342	0.000 ^b
Residual	83.851	195	0.430		
Total	96.480	199			

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer buying behavior.

b. Predictors: (Constant), word of mouth, social media campaigns, television Commercials, E-paper Advertisement

CHAPTER V

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This section summarizes the study's findings and draw conclusions. It also makes some recommendations based on the implications of the study's findings and conclusions.

5.1 Findings

The rise of computers, social media and the pandemic has brought prominence to e-commerce. This study sought to find out the core factors that attract immigrants in Istanbul to e-commerce websites, the kind of information consumers search for on e-commerce platforms and the factors that affect consumer behavior and trust for ecommerce platforms. This information is descriptively analyzed.

The study used a Likert 5-point questions questionnaire to gather data on the main e-commerce strategies, particularly the marketing strategies that impact consumer buying behaviors. This is analyzed quantitatively using a multiple regression framework.

From the information gathered, social media was found to be the most popular source from which respondents get information on new and trendy products with 67% of all respondents affirming to this. 26% of the respondents said family and friends were their main source of information and inspiration for catching up with life trends with a negligible, 3.5 and 3.5 declaring that their source of inspiration was by watching random people and by searching on the internet themselves were the source of information and inspiration for catching on trendy products. 33.2% of the respondents indicated that their personal factors account for their decision when shopping online while 20.6% indicated that their decisions are determined by social factors.

On what attracts respondents to e-commerce websites, most respondents, 26%, indicated that the speed of delivery was their priority while 20.6%, 17.6% and 15.20% indicated variety, and other factors, virtual auctions, and security as their key priority on shopping on e-commerce websites. Beyond the purchasing decision, respondents indicated that they often search for information on e-commerce websites regarding product origin, 22.7%, health information, 17.6%, price, 15%, terms and conditions, 8% and other kinds of information 36.2%

Easy access to information was ranked the highest factor determining respondents' behavior under e-commerce with 26% while privacy, customer service, low cost of access information accounted for 20%, 18%, and 15% of customer e-commerce behavior.

On the main hypothesis of the study, social media campaigns and TVCs were found to not be a very successful strategy in influencing the target population's online shopping decisions. Word of Mouth and e-paper adverts were however found to be significant determinants of respondents online shopping frequency.

5.2 Conclusion and Discussion

The decision to purchase online is influenced by several factors. These include pricing, trust in online platforms, urgency, and service quality. Providing a clear and comprehensive information about products and services reduces the uncertainty and increase consumer confidence. Pricing is crucial as customers price is mostly the predominant factor consumers consider when making purchasing decision. Consumers can easily compare prices, look for discounts, and free shipping options on different online shopping platforms. Maintaining high service quality is also important, and e-commerce companies should focus on offering customer care that addresses the needs of their customers.

The study also found factors such as product availability, security, and reliable service delivery, as well as safeguarding customer privacy and data against potential threats and fraud to be important in influencing consumer buying behavior.

From the analysis, it is found concluded that e-paper advertisement and word of mouth recommendations significantly impact customer purchasing behavior. Word of mouth was also found to have a significant impact on online purchasing behavior and has emerged as a crucial marketing tactic for promoting goods or services without requiring substantial investments.

Thus, it is be concluded that, electronic paper advertisements and word of mouth recommendations play a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior perhaps because customers often rely on recommendations and reviews from friends and family, as well as advertisements featured in electronic papers.

On the hypothesis, it is concluded that, the class of respondents being pre-dominantly middle age, Arab and Middle Eastern who are more likely to be conservative are less likely to own a television set and also are less likely to be in social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram. This could skew their source of information towards e-papers which they rely upon for information and recommendations from their close circles.

5.3. Recommendations

The section offer recommendations based on the findings of this study. The findings of the study suggest that the change in consumer purchasing behavior extends beyond the shift from physical stores to online platforms meaning that e-commerce business will have to position themselves to compete in the post-pandemic e-commerce market which will but grow. Furthermore, there has been a considerable rise in the diversity and range of products and services available. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a direct impact on the financial situations of households worldwide, exacerbated by unemployment and rising prices of goods. As a result, consumers have shifted their focus towards essential and necessary items rather than luxury products. This has resulted in a sustained decline in the purchase of high-end goods like jewelry and cars, as they are costly and considered non-essential.

The research revealed several drawbacks to online shopping, including delayed delivery, fraudulent activities, and insufficient payment options, which negatively impacted e-commerce sectors. These findings suggest that e-commerce businesses must engage in both online and offline activities to attract consumers, capitalize on loyal customers to promote their brand, and ensure on-time delivery of products.

Given the uncertain duration of the COVID-19 pandemic and its potential to change consumer behavior, e-commerce businesses must develop models that respond quickly to short- and medium-term changes. Additionally, they must stay ahead of the trends to meet future customer expectations. The study also emphasized the importance of communication strategies in altering customer behavior and proposed that policymakers utilize their influence to encourage spending during the pandemic.

Establishing sophisticated online platforms and ensuring effective communication are crucial for attracting online customers. Hence, e-commerce companies must ensure that their online offerings maintain high standards of quality and provide secure,

convenient, and user-friendly payment options. Recognizing that some customers may encounter difficulties with online payment systems like debit and credit cards, e-commerce companies should also consider offering a cash-on-delivery option to accommodate their preferences.

Furthermore, policymakers must use strategic communication to encourage spending during the pandemic while being aware of the impact of media reports on customer behavior.

Based on the study's findings, we suggest that E-commerce companies employ a targeted marketing approach by actively engaging in direct customer outreach. Even when utilizing social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram, it is recommended to directly message this particular group of customers, as this approach is more likely to yield favorable outcomes in terms of customer attraction and retention. Additionally, the implementation of digital showrooms could be an intriguing option, allowing shoppers to upload photos or create avatars to virtually try on products.

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APPENDIX A:
QUESTIONNAIRES

**E-COMMERCE STRATEGY AND ITS IMPACT ON CONSUMER BUYING
BEHAVIOUR**

Dear Respondent,

I am student pursuing a Master's in Business Administration degree at Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University. As part of the requirements for graduation, I am required to prepare a thesis. This research is to gather data for the preparation of my master thesis on "**E-COMMERCE STRATEGY AND ITS IMPACT ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR**". The study aims to determine the impact of various e-commerce strategies on consumer buying behavior during COVID-19.

I declare that all responses given by you will be strictly kept confidential and will be used solely for academic purposes.

Thank you.

OBADDAH SHAKAKI

MA Student

Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University

Questionnaire

1. Socio-Demographic

	Male
	Female
Age	
	17-30 years
	30-40 years
	40-50 years
	Over 50 years
Education Level	
	Primary
	High School Certificate
	Diploma
	Bachelors
	Illiterate
Level of Understanding of E-Commerce	
	0-20
	21-40
	41-60
	61-80
	81-100

2. General Information on E-Commerce

What is your source of inspiration for catching up with life trends	
	Social Media Family and Friends By just observing random people None, I search online by myself
What are the important factors to you while shopping	
	Personal Factors Physiological factors Cultural factors Social factors None of the above
What attracts you to e-commerce	
	Fast delivery Security More products Virtual Auctions Other: Please state _____
What kind type of information do you search for on e-commerce sites	
	Price Product origin Terms and conditions Health information Other

Factors that influence consumer behaviour under e-commerce

- Low cost of assessing information
- Privacy
- Good customer service
- Easy access to information
- Other

3. Consumer Behavior towards E-Commerce.

	Very often	Often	Neutral	Not very	Rarely
How often do you shop online					

4. E-Commerce Strategies and Consumer Buying Behavior

	strongly	agree	Neither	disagree	strongly
My buying decisions are influenced by social media campaigns					
I rely on Television Commercials (TVCs) for my buying decisions					
E-paper advertisement influences my buying decisions					
I rely on word-of-mouth suggestions for my buying decisions					

CURRICULUM VITAE

Obaddah Shakaki

 Dubai United Arab Emirates

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY	A hard working knowledgeable and target oriented Sales Manager offering Three years of experience developing and maximizing in Printing Materials sales. Builds and maintains a loyal client base through strong relationship building skill's, and excels at devising strategies for increased sales. Skilled in brining out the best in staff, able to manage affectivity and recruit talent Diligent in building and retaining accounts by providing support and attentive service. Expertise in marketing strategies, product promotion and merchandising to achieve market penetration. Successful record of expanding network connections through persuasive brand imaging. Driven to succeed a valuable addition to a forward thinking company with strong opportunities for progress	
SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time Management• Staff Training and Development• Shipping and Receiving Oversight• Verbal and Written Communication• Decision Making• Problem Solving• Team Recruiting and Onboarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relationship Building• Customer Service• Brand Marketing• Customer Order Management• Competitor Analysis• Sales Targeting
WORK HISTORY	SALES MANAGER <i>01/2018 to CURRENT</i> SBC Stationery and printing equipment's Dubai, UAE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Managed order cycle to enhance business development and maintain sustainability and customer satisfaction.• Monitored customer buying trends, market conditions and competitor actions to adjust strategies and achieve sales goals.	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborated with internal teams and suppliers to evaluate costs against expected market price points and set structures to achieve profit targets. • Pushed Product revenue to new levels with more than 2 Million in yearly sales.
EDUCATION	Bachelor of Business Administration Business Management <i>11/2017</i> United Arab Emirates University , United Arab Emirates AL AIN

