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**A RESEARCH ON THE EXAMINATION OF ONLINE SHOPPING  
PERCEPTIONS OF THE Z GENERATION WITHIN THE SCOPE OF DIGITAL  
MARKETING**

**Hüseyin KOÇARSLAN**

Assoc.Prof.Dr.,Selcuk University/Beyşehir Ali Akkanat Faculty of Business

ORCID: 0000-0002-6681-538X

**Halime KILINÇ**

Selcuk University, Institute of Social Sciences

ORCID: 0000-0002-8989-9870

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**Abstract**

In today's digitalized world, it is seen that businesses tend to use the internet and social media both gain new customers and make more sales. This situation has revealed the concept of digital marketing. This type of marketing combines the new methods, understanding and customer experiences brought by digitalization with traditional marketing principles. Digital marketing is a preferred type of shopping with advantages such as saving time and affordable prices, as well as the opportunity to easily access and compare the products they are looking for. Digital marketing is considered to be very important for the Z generation, which is known to use digital tools and platforms widely and spend a lot of time in these digital environments. This study was conducted to examine the perceptions and purchasing behaviors of Generation Z on digital marketing and online shopping. In this context, the perceptions of the participants about digital marketing and online shopping, and the variables of gender, department, age and monthly income were also evaluated statistically. The research was carried out on the students of business, management information systems and social work departments studying in the Beyşehir district of Konya. A total of 156 students participated in the study. In the study, simple random sampling method was used.

According to the results of the research, 93.6% of the participants have made shopping online; 37.2% of the participants shop online 1-2 times a year; 52.6% of the participants shop online because they find discounted and low-priced products; 55.8% of the participants were found to buy clothing and accessories. It has been determined that among the factors of online shopping, the participants mostly agree with the service quality, system quality and trust dimensions with the least subjective form, ease of use and attitude dimensions.

**Keywords:** Digital marketing, Generation Z, Online shopping.

## Öz

Günümüzün dijitalleşen dünyasında işletmelerin interneti ve sosyal medyayı hem yeni müşteriler kazanmak hem de daha fazla satış yapmak için kullanma eğiliminde oldukları görülmektedir. Bu durum dijital pazarlama kavramının ortaya çıkarmıştır. Bu pazarlama türü, dijitalleşmenin getirdiği yeni yöntemler, anlayış ve müşteri deneyimlerini geleneksel pazarlama ilkeleriyle birleştirmektedir. Dijital pazarlama, zamandan tasarruf ve uygun fiyat gibi avantajlarının yanı sıra tüketicilerin aradıkları ürünlere kolayca ulaşma ve karşılaştırma imkanı ile tercih edilen bir alışveriş türüdür. Dijital araçları ve platformları yaygın olarak kullandığı ve bu dijital ortamlarda çokça vakit geçirdiği bilinen Z kuşağı için dijital pazarlamanın oldukça önemli olduğu değerlendirilmektedir.

Bu çalışma, Z kuşağının dijital pazarlama ve online alışverişe yönelik algılarını ve satın alma davranışlarını incelemek amacıyla yapılmıştır. Bu kapsamda katılımcıların dijital pazarlama ve online alışverişe yönelik algıları ile cinsiyet, bölüm, yaş ve aylık gelir değişkenleri de istatistiksel olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Araştırma Konya ili Beyşehir ilçesinde öğrenim gören işletme, yönetim bilgi sistemleri ve sosyal hizmet bölümü öğrencileri üzerinde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmaya 156 öğrenci katılmıştır. Araştırmada basit tesadüfi örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmıştır.

Araştırma sonuçlarına göre katılımcıların %93,6'sı internetten alışveriş yaptığı; Katılımcıların %37,2'sinin yılda 1-2 kez internetten alışveriş yaptığı, %52,6'sının indirimli ve düşük fiyatlı ürünler buldukları için internetten alışveriş yaptığı ve %55,8'inin giyim ve aksesuar satın aldığı tespit edilmiştir. Diğer taraftan katılımcıların online alışveriş faktörleri arasında en çok hizmet kalitesi, sistem kalitesi ve güven boyutlarına katıldıkları, öznel form, kullanım kolaylığı ve tutum boyutlarına ise en az katıldıkları saptanmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Dijital Pazarlama, Z Kuşağı, Online Alış-veriş.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

As a result of technological developments, the widespread use of mobile devices and the internet has changed people's lifestyles, shopping styles, and consumption habits (Ryan, 2016: 1660). This situation has brought "digital consumers" in front of businesses. In the face of this situation, businesses started to communicate with their customers through digital media and similar new ways. In this respect, it is important for businesses to understand these new requests, moods, and behaviors of their customers (Alan, Kabadayı & Erişke, 2018: 493).

Thanks to digital platforms and digital channels, businesses better promote their products and services at less cost to larger customer masses and provide consumers with a faster and easier recycling opportunity by offering after-sales service opportunities (Ryan, 2016: 1660).

In the 21st century, which is called the digital age, it has made a significant impact on the concept of marketing and took it out of traditional dimensions. In this process, the phenomenon of marketing goes through many changes and developments both in terms of spatial, process, and method. Digital marketing is becoming an increasingly widespread type of marketing that companies and brands attach

importance to. One of the most important reasons underlying this can be shown as the widespread use of digital products and technology by individuals and the fact that digital life takes up a significant portion of individuals' time.

Digital marketing; It is an efficient marketing method using digital channels. These channels are; internet, social media, and mobile platforms. Here, the basic principles of marketing remain valid and applied, as well as new understandings and new customer experiences in marketing. Today, digital marketing offers its customers unique approaches and new experiences.

Considering that social media is a platform that attracts the attention of millions and keeps them together, it is not possible for the business world to ignore this situation. Therefore, businesses use social media and online shopping to win new customers and to make sales. On the other hand, there are many predictions that large and medium-level companies will fall behind their competitors when they do not allocate a budget for digital marketing and do not care about this issue. Therefore, companies are now trying to promote themselves in the digital environment and increase their sales potential.

Today, consumers' interest in digital marketing is increasing. Customers may prefer shopping in the digital environment for reasons of time, affordable prices, and easy access to the products they are looking for.

This study, it was tried to measure the perceptions and consumer behaviors of Generation Z participants on digital marketing and online shopping. The statistical significance of the participants' perceptions on digital marketing and online shopping, and the variables of gender, department, age, and monthly income were evaluated.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Technological factors are important factors that directly or indirectly affect the business (Tekin, 2014: 39). While businesses that adapt to technological changes catch important opportunities, others may face the threat of not being able to survive (Yükselen, 2006: 75). Today, businesses' being successful in their fields of activity and gaining new markets largely depends on the effective and efficient use of information systems (IS) and technologies (Şahin, 2014: 43).

Marketing is an economic, social, psychological, cultural, and applied science that deals with the exchange relationship between buyer and seller (Altunışık et al., 2014: 27). Digital marketing is the marketing of products or services using digital technologies, primarily over the Internet, but also through mobile phones, display advertising, and other digital media (<http://lexicon.ft.com/Term?term=digital-marketing>), D.A 11.03.2019 ). Digital marketing is a term for the targeted, measurable, and interactive marketing of goods or services using digital technologies to reach and retain customers. The main purpose of digital marketing is to promote brands, shape preferences, and increase sales with various digital marketing techniques (Todor, 2016: 52).

Digital Marketing highlights how digital technologies make marketing more effective. Because it allows for individual attention, better campaign management, and better product and marketing design and implementation (Urban, 2003). The reason

why it is one of the most popular methods of digital marketing is that information is available at a very low cost (Kierzkowski et al., 1996).

Many experts believe that digital is not just another channel for marketing, it brings a new approach to marketing and a new understanding of customer behavior (<http://lexicon.ft.com/Term?term=digital-marketing>, ET 11.03.2019). With the developments in information communication technology, concepts such as telemarketing and internet marketing have opened new horizons for marketing (Yükselen, 2006: 75). In this sense, it is seen that technology affects the marketing process in two main points. They are an opportunity for new products and a description of new processes (Perreault, Cannon, & McCarthy, 2013: 66).

The digital revolution has shaken the core of marketing as it offers consumers greater price transparency and often the chance to dictate price. Digital marketing reveals the changing reality of the cyber business world of cyber consumers and increasingly complex, dynamic, and global markets (Wind and Mahajan, 2002: 43). Moreover, the rapid development of online services and the World Wide Web (www) and interactive media has taken most consumer marketers by surprise (Parsons et al., 1998: 31).

Changes in consumer behavior are one of the most important issues affecting the marketing strategies of companies. With the increasing use of digital media by consumers, more companies are using digital marketing to reach their target markets (Smith, 2011: 489). In this sense, the close relations of consumers with the digital world have made it necessary for companies to consider the digital field in their marketing. In addition, second-generation internet-based applications increase marketing efforts by enabling companies to implement innovative forms of communication and create content with their customers. To improve digital marketing interaction, marketers should focus on relationship-based interactions with their customers (Tiago & Veríssimo, 2014: 703).

There are several previous studies to measure consumers' perceptions of digital marketing and online shopping. Turan (2011) conducted research on the factors that determine online shopping consumer behavior. Yılmaz and Tümtürk (2015) conducted a study to investigate the factors affecting online shopping intention. Cesur and Tayfur (2015) conducted a study to investigate perceived consumer risks in online shopping behavior. This research will contribute to the literature with its findings and results on consumers' perceptions of digital marketing and online shopping.

Digital technology is changing how consumers relate to products and markets. The fact that internet marketing and social media have a significant impact on the behavior of consumers and the way companies do business has made it necessary for companies to adapt to the new reality. In this respect, it can be said that marketers face new challenges and opportunities in this digital age. The concept of cyber consumer clearly shows the need for new marketing approaches to meet their changing needs (Wind & Mahajan, 2002: 44; Yasmin et al., 2015: 69; Todor, 2016: 51). Consumers' comments on the goods and services produced by businesses can affect other consumers positively or negatively (Hacıhasanoğlu, 2017:1). It is no longer easy to deceive customers powered by digital technology. Now, when choosing a brand, customers protect themselves from false claims and campaigns of brands in line with the advice of their peers (Wind & Mahajan, 2002: 44; Kotler et al., 2017: 29). In addition,

although the scientific literature is not clearly defined, it is claimed that there are important gaps in digital marketing skills in the sector (Royle & Laing, 2014: 65).

### **3. MATERIAL AND METHOD**

This study is a descriptive and cross-sectional study. The research was carried out on the students of business, management information systems and social work departments studying in the Beyşehir district of Konya. A total of 156 students participated in the study. Data were collected in March 2019. An Ethics Committee decision was not taken since the research data were collected in 2019. This article complies with the principles of scientific research and publication ethics. Research questionnaire form, including 5 socio-demographic questions; A total of 54 questions were applied, of which 10 were multiple-choice on the online shopping behavior of the participants and 39 were to measure consumers' perceptions of online shopping and digital marketing. The research questionnaire form was taken from the master thesis study by Genç and Salman in 2018. The 39-question scale of the research consists of 8 factors. The research questionnaire form was taken from the master thesis study by Genç and Salman in 2018. The 39-question scale of the research consists of 8 factors and these factors are given below:

- Factor 1: Ease of use and attitude,
- Factor 2: Perceived risk,
- Factor 3: Store recognition,
- Factor 4: System quality and trust,
- Factor 5: Service quality,
- Factor 6: Perceived benefit,
- Factor 7: Subjective norm,
- Factor 8: Information quality and functionality

The validity reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha value) of the online shopping consumer perception scale was found to be highly reliable, with a value of 0.916. The research data were evaluated in the SPSS package program. Data; Percentage, frequency and mean distributions were interpreted by Student's t-test, ANOVA test, and Chi-square tests.

#### 4. FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The findings obtained from the research questionnaires are given below.

**Table 1:** Distribution of Participants by Socio-Demographical Characteristics

		<b>Number (n)</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Woman	94	60,3
	Male	62	39,7
<b>Age</b>	17-20 years old	100	64,1
	21-25 years old	56	35,9
<b>Department</b>	Management information systems	57	36,5
	Social service	51	32,7
	Business	48	30,8
<b>Class</b>	1st Class	85	54,5
	2.nd Class	71	45,5
<b>Monthly Income Status</b>	less than 500 TL	69	44,2
	501-799 TL	43	27,6
	800-1199 TL	25	16,0
	over 1200 TL	19	12,2
<b>Living place</b>	Big city	65	41,7
	Province	33	21,2
	District	35	22,4
	Village-town	23	14,7
<b>Total</b>		<b>156</b>	<b>100,0</b>

**When the participants of the study were analyzed socio-demographically;**

- 60.3% of the participants were women; 64.1% of them are in the 17-20 age range, 36.5% of them are students of management information systems; 54.5% of them are first year students; 44.2% of them have a monthly income of less than 500 TL; It was determined that 41.7% of them grew up in metropolitan cities.

**When the purchasing behavior of the participants regarding online shopping is examined;**

- 93.6% of the participants shop online,
- It is seen that 37.2% of the participants do their online shopping mostly 1-2 times a year, 32.7% shop every 2-3 months.
- It is 100 TL or less of the monthly money that 66% of the participants allocate for online shopping,

- 32.1% of the participants learned about shopping from social media and 25% from friends and acquaintances;
- 67.9% of the participants always use the same sites and applications for online shopping;
- 52.6% of the participants preferred online shopping for discounted and low-priced products;
- The products that 55.8% of the participants buy primarily in online shopping are clothing and accessories;
- It was determined that 70.5% of the participants made the most of their online shopping payments by credit/debit card.
- 68.6% of the participants visited shopping sites that they know and trust before shopping online;
- It was determined that the most effective factor in the purchasing decision of the participants in online shopping was the suitability of the price with a rate of 43.8%, the fact that they had done shopping before and had no problems with a rate of 37.2%.

**Table 2:** Distribution of Participants' Averages of Answers to Online Shopping Scale Questions.

<b>Most and Least Participated Survey Questions</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
The protection of my personal information affects my decision to shop online.	4,3077	,80012
The ease of returning the purchased product affects my decision to shop online.	4,1859	,88576
Ease of payment influences my decision to shop online.	4,1538	,82816
The reliability of websites/apps influences my decision to shop online.	4,1410	,75732
I come across news and advertisements about internet shopping sites/applications in the media.	4,1090	,67751
The accuracy of the information presented affects my decision to shop online.	4,0577	,63490
The people in my social circle influence my decision to shop online.	3,3205	,99019
I think that online shopping sites/applications keep their promises to their customers.	3,1667	,82566
I think that online shopping sites/applications are honest.	3,0385	,78604
Although there is a store, I prefer to shop online.	2,9487	1,00190
Online shopping is more enjoyable than traditional shopping.	2,8590	1,07433

**When the answers given by the participants were examined;**

- It was determined that the participants mostly agreed with the dimensions of "Protection of my personal information affects my decision to shop online" and at least "Shopping online is more enjoyable than traditional shopping".

**Table 3:** Distribution of Averages by Participants in terms of Online Shopping Factors

<b>Online Shopping Dimensions</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Service quality	156	1,00	5,00	4,0085	,68674
System quality and trust	156	1,00	5,00	3,9631	,61553
Store recognition	156	1,80	5,00	3,8410	,55543
Information quality and functionality	156	1,00	5,00	3,8141	,69379
Perceived benefit	156	1,00	5,00	3,7692	,71928
Perceived risk	156	1,00	5,00	3,5657	,84056
Ease of use and attitude	156	1,00	5,00	3,4776	,62257
Subjective form	156	1,25	5,00	3,3045	,94796

**When the answers given by the participants were examined,**

- In terms of the factors of digital marketing, it was determined that the participants mostly agreed with the dimensions of service quality, system quality and trust, with the least subjective form, and ease of use and attitude dimensions among the factors of online shopping.

**When the participants were evaluated in terms of online shopping factors according to socio-demographic variables;**

- No significant difference was found in terms of online shopping factors according to the gender, department, age and monthly income level of the participants ( $p > 0.05$ ).

- When the distribution of the averages in terms of online shopping factors according to the variable of the place where the participants grew up was examined, it was found that the students who grew up in the province participated in the ease of use and attitude dimension of digital marketing more than the students who grew up in the district ( $p < 0.01$ ); It was determined that those who grew up in the district took into account the perceived risk more than those who grew up in the province ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**When the online shopping behaviors of the participants were compared according to their gender;**



- What is the main reason why you prefer online shopping? When the answers to the question were examined, it was found that male participants mostly agreed with the options "I don't have time for traditional shopping methods" and "Because I couldn't find the product outside of the internet" options more than female participants.

- Which products do you buy most from the Internet? When the answers given to the question are examined, the female participants choose "Clothing and accessories" and "Cosmetic, cleaning, personal care products" more than the male participants; It was determined that male participants preferred the "Electronic devices" option compared to female participants.

- "Which do you prefer as a payment tool in online shopping?" When the answers to the question were examined, it was determined that female participants preferred the "Payment at the door (cash, credit or debit card)" option more than male participants.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The impact of the digital age, also called the 21st century age, on human life and businesses is increasing day by day. In this process, the marketing phenomenon experiences many changes and developments both spatially, as a process and as a method. This understanding brought by this age has revealed the concept of digital marketing. Digital marketing is now becoming an increasingly common type of marketing that companies and brands attach importance to. One of the most important reasons behind this can be shown as the widespread use of digital products and technology by people and the fact that digital life takes place in a significant part of their time.

Digital marketing is a term for targeted, measurable and interactive marketing of goods or services using digital technologies to reach, convert and retain customers. Digital marketing is an efficient marketing method that uses digital channels. These channels are the internet, social media and mobile platforms. While the basic principles of marketing are still valid and applied here, new understandings and new customer experiences are also emerging in marketing. Today, digital marketing offers unique approaches to its customers and provides new experiences.

Customers, the most important element of digital marketing, prefer traditional marketing, but their interest in digital marketing has increased considerably today. Customers may prefer digital shopping due to the convenience of time, reasonable price and access to the products they are looking for.

In this study conducted on university students, consumers' perceptions and consumer behaviors on digital marketing and online shopping were tried to be measured. According to the results of the research, 93.6% of the participants shopped online; the frequency of online shopping is at most 37.2%, 1-2 times a year; The first reason for choosing online shopping is 52.6% because they find the products offered for sale on the Internet at a discount and low price; It has been determined that clothing and accessories are in the first place with a rate of 55.8% for online shopping. It was

determined that among the online shopping factors of the participants, they mostly agreed with the dimensions of service quality, system quality and trust, with the least subjective form and ease of use and attitude dimensions.

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